

Puerto, Barrios
December 2, 1954

Dear Annette,

Left Barrios at about 7:30 a.m. for Guatemala City via railway. The first class fare allowed me to ride in the last coach which differed from any other coach by having a woven bamboo covering over the seats. The train is of the narrow-gauge type with small engines and kerosene lamps. The road bed is just rough enough to make the train go sideways and up and down at the same time. Ten hours of this was calculated to dislocate a vertebral disc. The passengers retain their friends until about three blocks out of the city when the train starts to gain too much momentum for the non-paying passengers to jump from the train. Likewise, in approaching a station the village people jump aboard and ride the train to a halt. A dozen or so porters claim your baggage. Actually there is more room in second class cars than in the crowded first-class car. The countryside is even more exotic than Assam but in ways very similar. The hills and mountains are covered with dense jungles of high trees which, from my position in the train, seemed to be impenetrable. As the railway follows the valley of the Motagua River, it is relatively flat. Ledo, Assam could be compared with this valley with mountains, however, on both sides. The flat part of the valley supports many banana trees, other areas are grown to dense jungle with vines sealing in the vegetation. The ground is damp to wet and many places with standing water and the types of plants which