

## Notes of a Tourist

1939

*Lawrence April 8*

Although we returned from South America Sunday evening, April 2, we think that we should write a little more about our visit to our southern neighbors. The general unconcern of many regarding South America was illustrated the morning of March 19 when some of the passengers on the Nieuw Amsterdam declined to land at Bahia, Brazil, in the belief that there was nothing worth while to be seen.

Bahia, or Sao Salvador, is the capital city of the Brazilian state of Bahia, and at one time was the capital of Brazil. It has a magnificent land locked harbor, as large as Douglas county, and twenty-five years ago, before the rise of Sao Paulo, it was the second city in Brazil in population. For many years it was the world's greatest diamond shipping port, later giving away to South Africa, with its Kimberly mines.

Bahia was also the central port for many years for the importation of slaves from Africa, and so great has been the influence of the negro in the city and state that today ninety per cent of the population is either wholly black, or of mixed blood. On account of the great numbers of persons of colored blood, the city has been dubbed by some as the "Old Mulattress."

Bahia is eight hundred miles northeast of Rio de Janeiro, and five hundred miles from the eastern point of Brazil, which is also the easternmost point of South America. The whole coast line of Brazil must be over 3,500 miles.

Personally, I was greatly interested in visiting this city as I wanted to see what could be accomplished by a population so largely negro. I had been in Haiti where I was oppressed by the extreme poverty of the people, and I expected to find somewhat the same conditions in Bahia, but I was pleasantly surprised.

I had read of dirty, ill-smelling streets there, and perhaps they have them, but I did not see any such. On the contrary I saw well kept buildings, clean streets, beautiful parks and statuary, wonderful beaches, and a friendly, courteous people, where young and old waved us an interested and happy welcome.

There are more than three hundred churches there, the cathedral being said to be the finest in Brazil, and we had the opportunity of visiting several. Besides having fine modern elevators to take one from the lower to the upper levels of the city, there is also an electric street railway; wide, well paved streets, and one or more drives leading from the wharf to the upper levels.

We were sorry that it was Sunday because the stores were closed and iron shutters prevented any view of interiors. At one place we passed a public market in which fruit, vegetables, birds, fish, fowls and handicraft were shown, but the better merchandise, to meet the tourists fancy, was at the dock, where well made baskets, hammocks, butterfly ware, hard wood boxes, native dolls and many other articles, nearly all of native make, were offered.

After our ride over the city and our return to the dock we left our car, and were surprised a few moments later to have our driver bring us our rain coats, which carelessly we had left in his car. At the dock we saw a tiny marmoset, a little chattering monkey, of about twice the weight of a mouse. This was the only monkey we saw in South America. It was attached to a basket by a cord tightly fastened to the very root of its tail. This permitted the monkey to climb about with no danger of hanging itself.

The city has some good hotels and restaurants, but it was more convenient for our passengers to eat on the boat. Bahia is hot and after our ride and shopping, we were ready for the air cooled dining room of our ship.

I came nearly overlooking our first stop, which was at the "Bolsa" or commercial museum, where we were shown how cacao is processed.

A framed picture showed the portraits of the members of the faculty of the agricultural college and while they might not compare with the cultured beauty of the faculty at K. U., they would hold their own with the men, good and true, who comprise the faculty at Manhattan. In other words, it was a fine looking group of men.

While Bahia is on the eastern shore of Brazil, strangely enough the city lies on the east side of the bay and faces west. It was founded in 1549, three hundred and ninety years ago, and has a population estimated at 350,000. The mean temperature is 78 degrees and the rainfall 52 inches annually.

Six glorious nights and five days followed. Nights with cooling

breezes and days under soft clouds which veiled the sun. It would have been Paradise had it not been for the ship's entertainers who, fearing that we would be lost without a program, always prepared to keep us busy. How we longed at times to be left alone, simply to enjoy the loveliness of the ride, without a man-made program.

Never, however, did a ship have a captain who was more thoughtful. Captain Bijl would slow the engines that we might pass certain interesting places at just the right time. We moved very slowly while passing Bridgetown, Barbados, and exchanged salutations with the sister ship Staatendam, which at anchor, was discharging its passengers for a day on the island.

Again at Martinique we glided slowly by its capital, Fort de France, where the Empress Josephine was born and is still revered; by the two Pitons, about four thousand feet high, and on to Mt. Pelee, which has added to its height since 1902 when it destroyed some forty thousand persons at St. Pierre, until now it is about a mile high. We saw St. Pierre, abandoned after the eruption, taking on new life, and noted the church towers, which survived the destruction of that terrible day, when only one life was spared, and that a man in prison.

Oddly enough a current magazine carried an interesting story of the Mt. Pelee disaster.

By this time the passengers were loosening up a bit and were getting acquainted. Had the trip continued another ninety days, most everybody would have met all his fellow passengers, and probably would have liked them.

Among those we met were Mr. and Mrs. Jacob S. Emery, of Danville, Ill., who was a cousin of the late Peter Emery, of Lawrence, and a second cousin of Solon Emery.

Mr. Emery told an interesting story of his cousin. It seems that Peter was employed in a large dry goods store in New York and had advanced rapidly until he became the assistant to the manager of the hosiery department. Arrangements had been made for the two of them to go abroad to buy goods, when suddenly the manager and buyer died. Peter Emery, his assistant, was the logical man to make the trip, but some busybody sent word to the management that Emery was not yet of age, and therefore was too young to undertake such a responsible trip.

The "Big Boy" of the company asked young Peter to come to his office and asked him his age. Peter replied that he was perfectly willing to tell him, but would first like to ask a few questions himself. Being permitted to do so, he asked: "Do you think I am qualified to buy your hosiery?" and other similar questions each of which was answered in the affirmative. Peter then said: "These things being so, do you want me to tell you my age?" The manager said "no" and young Peter made his first trip abroad and did it successfully.

Jacob Emery's father was the Emery of Bullene, Moore & Emery of Kansas City, whose firm name was later changed to Emery, Bird, Thayer. It was Mrs. Thayer, whose husband was a member of the firm, who gave to Kansas University the fine collection now housed in Thayer Museum.

Some years ago Solon Emery and Paul Friend visited the Jacob Emery home in Danville and Mrs. Emery inquired about Paul, who evidently had made a very favorable impression with the family.

W. C. S.