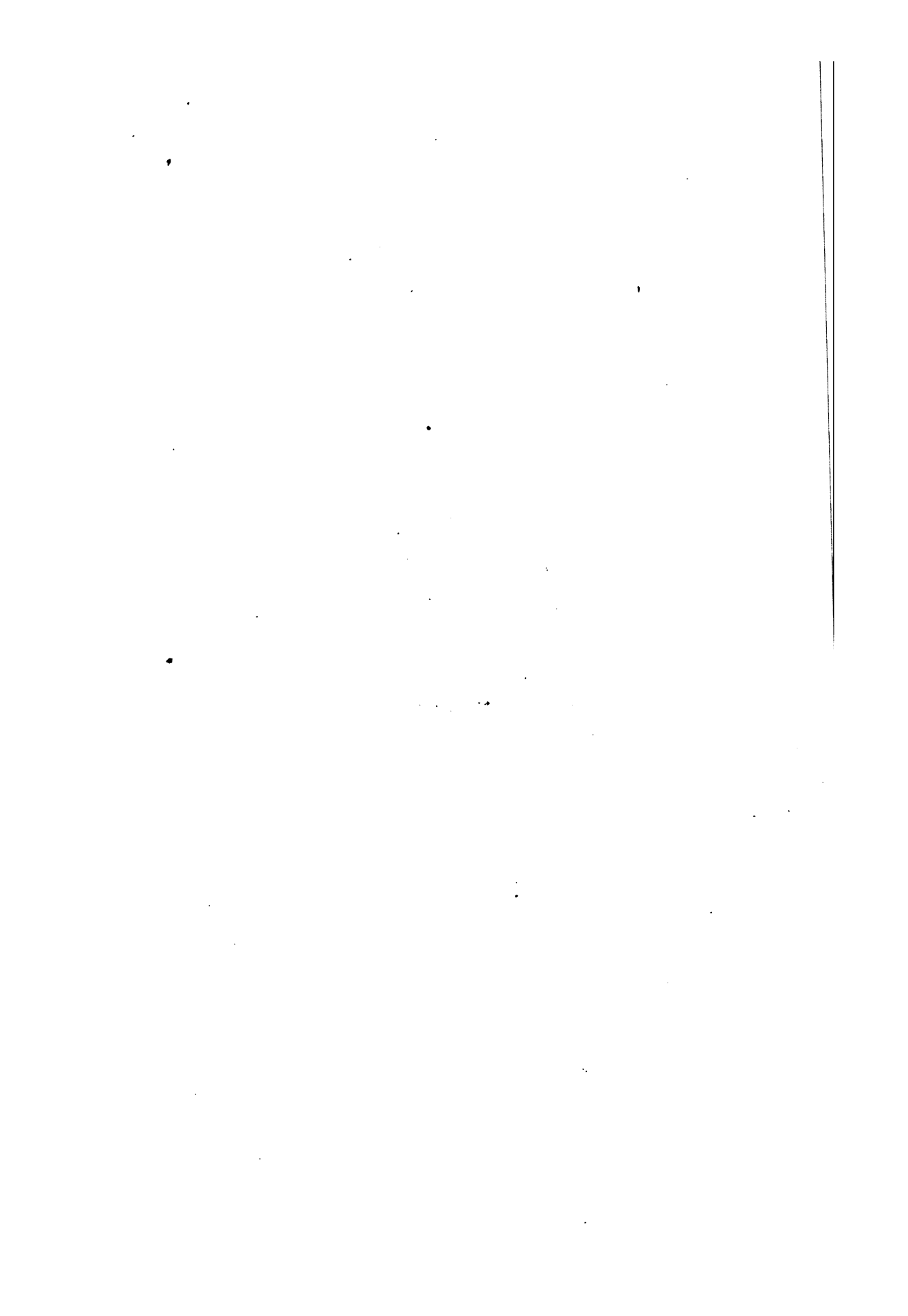


On the Canal Zone



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1890



Thomas Graham Grier



ON THE
CANAL ZONE

PANAMA

BY

THOMAS GRAHAM GRIER

1908

PRESS OF
THE WAGNER & HANSON CO.
170 SOUTH CLINTON STREET
CHICAGO .



F. 15
E. 84

Dedicated to the Memory of
my Father

JOHN ALEXANDER GRIER

formerly Chief Engineer

in the

United States Navy.

He spent three years cruising in
these Southern waters.

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BY
THOMAS GRAHAM GRIER

INTRODUCTORY



HE Isthmus of Panama, discovered by Columbus in 1502, has an interesting history. Before the year 1515, a Spanish adventurer, Balboa, had crossed the isthmus and discovered the Pacific Ocean. Between 1515 and 1521 the Spanish Government made every effort possible to discover a water-way across the isthmus.

Panama, at the site of old Panama, was created a city in 1521. About 1521 a road, wide enough to accommodate two carts abreast, was built from Nombre de Dios, on the Atlantic side, to Old Panama, on the Pacific side. About 1531 this road was extended to Porto Bello, on the Atlantic side.

In 1849 the stake, marking the beginning of the railroad, was set at Aspinwall, now Colon. The Panama Canal Company was organized by M. de Lesseps in 1879, and M. de Lesseps made his first trip to the isthmus early in 1880.

Work commenced on the Canal in February, 1883; in February, 1889, M. de Lesseps' Company went into the hands of a receiver. Approximately \$266,000,000 had been expended. The receiver estimated \$100,000,000 would complete the canal if locks were used, and eight years would be required.

Five years after the appointment of a receiver, the New Panama Canal Company was established. In 1898 the Comite Technique, composed of seven French engineers, reported that a Canal, which would be equal to all the demands of commerce, could be completed in ten years at an estimated cost of one hundred million dollars.

In 1898 sentiment in the United States was strongly in favor of an isthmusian canal under American control. In 1899 Congress authorized the President to have an investigation made as to the most practical isthmusian route for a Canal under the complete control of the United States.

The report of a Commission appointed by the President was made in November, 1901. The New Panama Canal Company, realizing their position and lack of funds, offered to sell or transfer its Canal property to the United States for \$109,141,500. The receiver's estimate of the value of the property that passed into his

hands was \$90,000,000. The United States offered \$40,000,000 for the assets of the New Panama Canal Company, which offer was accepted.

In February, 1904, the treaty with the Panama Government was ratified, and that strip of land, ten miles wide and fifty miles long, known as the "Canal Zone," was created. The United States, in this treaty, paid to the Republic of Panama \$10,000,000, and further agreed to pay \$250,000 annually, beginning nine years after the ratification of the treaty. "The Canal when constructed and the entrances thereto shall be neutral in perpetuity," is also a part of the treaty.

The Canal Commission arrived at the isthmus in April, 1904; about seven hundred men were at work at Culebra, all machinery in a deplorable condition, quarters inadequate and health conditions menacing. It took two years to get an organization together and build quarters; in fact, quarters are not all completed as yet.

In 1906 dirt began to fly, and every month sees an increasing amount moved. The plans of our best engineers are being carried out under military control, and the Canal will be built if the American people will stand by the men who are giving their efforts to complete one of the largest undertakings of modern history.

My interest in this work led me to take a trip to the isthmus for personal investigation. While there I wrote letters home, describing things of interest to me and what I thought would be of interest to my friends. I took my camera and was fortunate in having friends with cameras also who were as interested as I.

Over eighty of these pictures were taken with my camera, the others by my friends. I have compiled these letters and these photographs in book form. It is not intended as a literary or artistic production, as a man engaged in other occupations has but little time to re-edit his material.

I hope, however, that it will give to those who read this book some idea of life on the Canal Zone and of the work on the great Panama Canal.

THOMAS GRAHAM GRIER.



The Steamer Colon in New York.

EN ROUTE FOR THE ISTHMUS OF PANAMA



On Board Steamer Colon.

February 15th, 1908, to February 21st.

It was cold and sleety in New York City when we left Pier 57 at the foot of West 27th street February 15th, at 3:12 P. M. Our leaving time was 3 P. M., but at the end of the pier a man stood waving a red flag. This meant that shipping in the river was in our way. At 3:12 P. M. he waved a white flag and no time was lost in backing the Steamer Colon into the stream, enroute for the Isthmus of Panama. The City of Cristobal is the destination of this steamer.

The Panama Railroad and Steamship Company, which operates this line (a government company), state the distance from New York to Colon is 1,980 miles, Colon lying just east of north of Cristobal. The full page illustration shows how closely the two towns are connected.

The course the vessel follows is almost straight south until it reaches the eastern end of the island of Cuba, and then the course is southwest through the Caribbean Sea.

The City of Colon is almost directly south of Pittsburg. It is difficult to realize that the Canal is so far East. In fact, the City of Colon is about as near London, England, as it is to Seattle, Washington.

The schedule time for this ship is five and a half days from New York to Colon; other vessels of the same line take seven days. No stops enroute. Warm climate is reached in approximately 48 hours after we leave New York; depending somewhat on general weather conditions, and unless storms come up, the last four days of the sail are summer weather.

The Steamer Colon is a comfortable, well-arranged, and well-managed steamer, about 5,000 H. P. twin screws, and is equipped with its own refrigerating and electric light plants and wireless telegraph station. Several years ago fever was more or less prevalent on these steamers, and the annoyance from mosquitoes when lying in the harbor was great. But for the last two years, on account of the excellent sanitation of the canal zone, both fevers and mosquitoes have practically disappeared. Formerly everyone slept under mosquito netting, both on shipboard as well as on shore; but this has not seemed to be a necessity for two years. I have been informed, however, that about three or four grains of quinine and a small portion of rum is administered to the crew several days before arrival at Colon; continued while there, and for several days after leaving on the return trip to New York. Whether the other vessels have been free from fevers I do not know, but the Steamer Colon has had none for a long time, and I presume the same is true of the others.

The Panama steamship line is operated mainly for the employees of the Panama railroad, and Isthmus Canal, and to carry freight. The passenger accommodations are taxed to the utmost, especially during the spring and summer months, when many are coming north for their vacations, the employees in certain classes of work being allowed six weeks' vacation each year, and it is intended that this vacation shall be spent away from the Isthmus, it being a matter of health.

The rate for a passenger, not in any way connected with the government, for the best cabin is \$90.00; while for the cabin of less desirable location it is \$70.00. A much more favorable rate is made for the Canal employees and their families, and while they may not receive the accommodation that one may have who pays the high rate, they are given preference when travel is heavy, and passengers having no connection with the work are not taken, or if they do secure tickets it must be through some influence and an urgent necessity. There are other lines which have steamers making the trip, but the sailing time is longer. The Panama steamship makes the quickest and most direct passage, and for business, or for one having a limited time at one's disposal, the Panama line is the most desirable.

Monday.—Though the ship is heavily loaded with freight, she rolls so much that many of the passengers are sick. Today we have had to have the racks on the table to hold the dishes, and every now and then when an extra roll comes, crash goes some crockery, and



A View from Cristobal looking North. To the right is the Shed of the Railway Station at Cristobal, back of that is the Commission Store. The houses beyond the Commission Store are in Colon, and the street on which they front, and which is parallel to the Railroad, is Front Street, Colon,

exclamations fill the air. We upset the Worcestershire sauce bottle and put a few glass saucers on the floor. I stood up writing today, and swayed like a tall pine tree. It has been windy and cloudy for 48 hours, but not stormy. The sun has just begun to shine, and it will be clear this afternoon (Monday, February 17th).

This is Tuesday, February 18th, about 10 A. M. We have reached the warm climate, and it is comparatively smooth today. The sun shines bright, and the ladies are putting on their summer dresses. There are about ten children aboard. Today all the seasick passengers seem to be about, and a full quota sat down to breakfast. It would do you good to see me eat. I have had eight square meals up to date, and will not miss any, and oh! so lazy! Talk about loafing, I have it down to a fine art.

Meals are served three times a day. Breakfast at 8 A. M., lunch at 12:30, and supper or dinner at 6 P. M. I find myself ready at the sound of the gong; strange how good it is to eat when one is hungry.

The weather is superb, not warm, but spring-like. We are merging from winter into summer through the gentle intermediary of spring, and doing it all in five days. 'Tis a commentary on the progress of our times.

Today we sighted the Bahama Islands. A mild excitement prevailed among some of the passengers. One lady cried because the sight of land made her homesick. The land was so far off that it very much resembled fog or clouds on the horizon. It is strange to note the difference in temperament in people. The pendulum of mental attitude towards humanity and life swings to the two extremes in this small company of travelers. We all seem different, yet the officers of the ship are equal to the task of handling the work, they are all diplomats.

I was told today that all permanent residents of the Isthmus must be vaccinated, and the ship's surgeon would vaccinate the passengers who needed it. Smallpox is not prevalent, but precautions are seemingly taken on all matters. I started in on two-grain quinine capsules last night, and will follow the regulation until I am well away.

On Tuesday night, February 18th, it started to become oppressively warm, and Wednesday morning it was hot. A complete transformation of the passengers and officers, white linen trousers, white hats, tan shoes and white shoes. The ladies are now all gowned in summer attire. I repacked my trunk, putting away my winter clothes, and took out my summer ones. It was a hot and oppressive job.



An Officer in White, without his Coat. The Coats are of Linen.

Wednesday, February 19, about 6:30 A. M., we sighted the east end of Cuba and had the Island in sight for three hours. We could see the green verdure but slightly, a beautiful bunch of clouds hung low and cast a shadow, the view was pleasing but would not give one any idea of the character of the Island.

About 11 A. M. we sighted the west end of Hayti or San Domingo. The land was covered with haze and looked like shadows against the background of blue sky. The vessel is making 15 miles an hour now, which should land us at the dock at 9 A. M. Friday, the 21st.

I am now wearing summer underwear, low shoes, negligee shirt, and light summer suit. Four days ago the heaviest winter clothing.

'Tis Thursday, February 20th, about 9 A. M. The ship has been rolling and pitching since last night and we have a few sick ones. I have just been driven from the deck by a sudden shower.



It was raining as the Steamer Colon approached the Dock at Cristobal and the View was Misty.

THE ARRIVAL AT CRISTOBAL



On February 21st, 1908, the steamer arrived at the dock about 9:30 A. M., but it was a half hour before we were all passed by the doctor of the port. All passengers who are to remain upon the Isthmus were vaccinated, but those who are to stay for a week or ten days are permitted to land without being vaccinated. All the preliminary work was done while at sea by the ship surgeon, who hands to the doctor of the port his list of names. We gathered in the dining saloon and as our names were called were allowed to pass out. Our passengers were all in good shape, so the affair was soon over. The most interesting part of the disembarkation was the meeting between the waiting husbands and the incoming wives and families.

Our baggage was taken to the Pier Eleven of the Panama railway, the most important pier and freight shed on the Isthmus, where a custom inspector examined mine and allowed me to pass on to my hotel in Colon. A colored man put it on a truck and took it to the street, where he secured a dirt cart, or what looked like one, the vehicle being propelled by a diminutive mule and managed by a small colored boy. In Colon silver money of the country, i. e., the Republic of Panama money, is two for one in United States



Pier No. 11 as Viewed from the Deck of the Steamer Colon, when she Docked for Disembarking Passengers.



Pier No. 11, showing Closer View. Vessels Unloading Freight.

money. The charges for hauling the baggage was 50 cents gold for the trunk, and 25 cents each gold for my other two pieces; making two dollars "silver." As is customary with many of the baggage transfers the manager of this complete transportation company tried to hold me up, but I had been advised before of the difference in money values. I came from the wharf in a carriage and this outfit also tried to speculate on my supposed innocence. However, since the first two occasions I have had no further trouble.

My hotel, the Imperial, is a three-story frame structure. The office, bar-room, bowling alley, billiard and pool-room, and stores are on the ground floor. On the second floor is the social room or parlor, a very large dining room, kitchen, and a few bed rooms. On the third floor all bed rooms. A porch runs nearly all around the building on both the second and third floors. The bed rooms are two styles, inside and outside rooms; you enter the outside rooms from the porch. The rooms have one door and one window. The walls and ceiling are plain matched boards painted a light lead color, the floor is bare with the exception of one small piece of matting for a rug by the bed. The furniture consists of a good bed, white enamel and brass, a rocking chair, two other cane-seated chairs, a large bureau, a wash stand, center table, several clothes poles, and a rack with eight pins to hang clothes on. There is a push button to call the maid or porter. There is but one electric light in the room.

The partitions are about 9 feet 6 inches high and the ceiling at least 11 feet. This makes it possible for the air to circulate and also to hear all that your adjacent neighbor says. The air blows through your room in the evening almost like a gale, and the nights are cool and comfortable at this time of the year in Colon and Cristobal because of these "trade winds."

I have one of the good rooms and it cost \$2.50 per day, American money. The room as a sleeping apartment could not be better, but is not much in appearances. The bed is provided with a mosquito netting, but the breeze is sufficient to drive away any wandering mosquito; in fact, the first night the wind blew through the room so strongly that it was with difficulty that I kept the netting in place. These nettings were an absolute necessity two years ago, but now with the constant fight against the mosquito they are used less and less.

My bed consists of a bedstead, springs, a mattress, one sheet, one bed spread, and two pillows. You do not sleep under the sheet, but on it. The bed spread you pull over you when you go to bed, and then kick it off when you are asleep; then towards morning you wake up and pull it up over you. It gets cool towards morning; a rain at night makes the morning cooler. I am told that during the rainy season the rain in the interior makes it cool enough to even find that a blanket is comfortable.



Imperial Hotel.



Residence of Railroad Official: one of the Healthy Spots. You can see the Wind blowing the Trees. In Colon, Near Washington Hotel.



Inside the Door was a Bar: It was a real Department Store: you could buy Shirts, Cigars, Coffee, Tea, Etc.



A View looking West: Royal Mail Steamship Docks, Colon Railroad Station to the Right. The Railroad runs along the West Side of Front Street. The Railroad Station is about One Block from the Imperial Hotel.

The commissary department makes living comparatively inexpensive for the employes of the Isthmus Canal commission and the Panama Railroad company. I thought I would investigate how things were for others living in Colon who did not possess the government privileges. I found that butter sold at \$1.25 a pound, silver. One pound loaves of bread, 15 cents. Meat, \$1.00 silver a pound, and this price was for liver, too, about good enough for cat meat. Ice sufficient for a family of four costs 75 cents a day. The above items are all given in silver and are only one-half these figures in American money. Sugar seemed cheaper, only 10 cents silver, and very good. Rice seemed cheaper, and also tea and coffee; but both tea and coffee are very inferior to what we get in Chicago. Tea was for sale at 20 cents a pound, and I wondered who paid for the packing. Flour and lard are very poor, and corn meal an impossible thing to consider as food. Fresh eggs are 5 cents gold each, 10 cents silver, and I have seen them advertised at 70 cents gold a dozen.

The above was obtained from two house-keepers who have to depend on the local stores for supplies. One of these ladies also stated, for an eight-room apartment, finished, she said, like the loft of a barn, cost \$87.50 per month in gold. Her husband is interested in three stores, and the rent of the smaller ones was \$3.00 gold per day. When you looked at the size you had to admit the price was steep.



The Panama Government Building and Post Office, Colon.



Panama Railroad Offices.

Household help is plenty, some good, but mostly very inefficient. Wages \$15.00 gold per month. I am here during the dry season, but a few questions brought out some of the difficulties of housekeeping, and reasons for increased expenses of living. Clothes and merchandise will mildew in a day, or even in less time in the rainy season. A man at luncheon said that he hung up his hat at midday, and when he took it down in less than an hour and a half the band was covered with mildew. I thought this was a joke, but another man said no! He has had a pair of shoes turn green in the night, and that clothes hung up in a closet would be ruined in a short time. To prevent clothes from mildewing it seems a custom to have an electric light burning all the time inside the closet.

I went further in my search on this mildew proposition to see what the stores had to say. In a cigar and stationery store they showed me a cabinet or cupboard in which they kept all the tobacco, cigars and cigarettes, except what was in the show case, and in the cupboard was a light. They explained that the stock in the case deteriorated rapidly unless the sun shone on it. The wife of the proprietor gave this information and volunteered the further fact that they kept a lighted incandescent lamp in the piano, and also kept moth balls in the piano. She said moths, roaches, fleas, and centipedes were plenty in Colon. There was a roach in my room; it was two and a half inches long. But housekeepers must know about the others, and a closer acquaintance with foreign insects is not desired.

A resident of Cristobal has a deep and wide closet or wardrobe which has an electric light under the lower shelf; he informed me that it was the only way he had of keeping his clothes and certain other articles from being ruined by the dampness. A resident of Culebra whom I met said that he had an air-tight room in which a light was kept burning all the time; in this "dry room" his family kept their clothes.

My investigation on mildew brought me a few more items on household economy. Good apples 35 cents a pound silver, and California grapes \$1.00 silver per pound. Also that fruit of any kind, except oranges and bananas, are imported, and as far as I can find out this seems to be generally true, and from the nature of the country seems strange. I have seen some cocoanuts on the trees, but these may not be classed as fruits.

My housekeeping friends also called my attention to the milk and cream. They said that evaporated milk was what they used, and the only other kind that they could get was goat's milk. I thought I saw a pitcher of real milk tonight at dinner at the Cristobal Hotel; the first I had seen since I left the Imperial Hotel, New York. But, no! The pitcher of milk was condensed milk mixed and bottled up in the kitchen and put in a pitcher. You must realize, however, in the above impressions on food and house-

keeping I am getting what the inhabitants of the city of Colon have to contend with; not what the government employes get, who are supplied from the government stores. On this milk question it should be mentioned that at the commissary quarters condensed milk is served. The cans are labeled at this hotel "Evaporated Milk," from Highland, Illinois.

I saw an empty wooden box in which evaporated milk had been shipped. On the side is burned in large letters, "Keep in a cool, dry place," which instruction, I think, is about the most difficult for any housekeeper to follow.





American Quarters, Colon, as Viewed from the Washington Hotel.

AN ACCOUNT OF INVESTIGATION ON WASHINGTON'S BIRTHDAY



On February 22nd the day was clear, with occasional light showers. It was a holiday for the Americans on the isthmus. In Colon the "Red Men" had a street parade and barbecue. The town was filled with people who are working along the line of the railroad, and merrymaking was the order of the day.

In the morning I took breakfast at the Washington (Commission) Hotel, and remained around the quarters until the parade passed by. By the quarters I mean the American quarters in Colon, said to be the healthiest spot on the isthmus, and reminds one of a delightful ocean resort. Near the quarters, stranded on the beach, is the hull of one of the French barges.

We spent the time during the morning in the city of Colon and at the quarters in Cristobal; taking our noonday meal at 11:30 A. M. at the Cristobal Hotel, conducted by the I. C. C. (the Isthmusian Canal Commission). The noonday meal starts at 11 A. M. and the hotel is open for service until 1 P. M.

After resting a short time four of us started out on a tour of investigation. Our steps took us along the commission's property. The first point of interest was the corral where the wagons and mules are kept, and well kept; not a single mule kicked while I was there. I took a picture of the collection of wagons, and a picture of a building now used as a stable, but where employes of the commission and railroad used to sleep. It looked like tough quarters, but things are better now.



The Red Men's Parade on Palm Avenue, Cristobal, Washington's Birthday, Feb. 22, 1908.

The machine shop was the next place, and it is certainly a surprise to see such a complete and well ordered and equipped shop. This, I understand, is the only shop on the isthmus operated by the Panama railroad. The machinery of the shop is driven by old French engines which have been rebuilt; and some of the construction tools, such as cranes and cars left by the French, have been put in working order at this shop. Also several old French locomotives have been rebuilt here. There are other machine shops along the canal, but they are part of the canal organization.

We visited the round house and it looked like one of our own railroads in the States. In many of the stalls two engines were



Washington Hotel as Viewed from the American Quarters, Colon.



Corral where Mules and Wagons are kept.



Stable that Used to be Sleeping Quarters.



P. R. R. Round House, Cristobal.



Negro Quarters and Mess at Cristobal.

standing, and about 30 engines in all were in the round house. Remember this was on Washington's birthday and possibly a few extra engines may have been on hand, but the freight engines are in the round house or yard during the day.

The railroad is used during the day for hauling construction material for the canal work, and moving the dirt from the excava-



Old French Bucket Dredges, back of Negro Quarters at Cristobal.

tions. The only other trains allowed are four passenger trains each way. The freight for the Pacific steamships line begins to move from 5:30 P. M. and continues all night if the quantity of freight to be hauled requires. A train carrying commissary supplies and ice leaves Colon at about 4 A. M. The only ice plant



An Unloading Crane or Hoist used in the work of the Canal.

operated by the government is here in Cristobal. There are two other ice plants on the isthmus, one in Colon and one in Panama, owned by private capital.

Right near the round house was a coal hoist and chute that unloads the coal from the car and puts it in bins at an elevation, which enables the engineers to coal up their engines by gravity, a great saving in time and physical exertion.

The negro quarters were near, and our visit to them impressed me how much they are like children. There are some very good negroes working, but the large majority are inefficient and irresponsible unless under the direct guidance of an overseer, and then even their irresponsible nature makes it a difficult matter to handle them.

The harbor back of the negro quarters had a number of pieces of abandoned French machinery. I photographed some of the dredges. The dry dock further on is sufficient size to take care of the largest dredges and tugs used on the canal. An old French barge or sea-going clapnet, self-propelled, was in the dock being repaired.

The commissary warehouse or Mount Hope is a building 500 feet long and 100 feet wide. It is built of frame and corrugated iron, and is divided into three sections by fire walls. They burned one store house down and now great care is observed. At this warehouse all the supplies for the canal (not food) is received and redistributed according to requisition. Very heavy machinery ordered for special work may not be unloaded here, but from the looks of the stock it seemed as if everything could be found in this place.



French Barges or Clapets'



A General View, Pier and Dry Dock used by the Canal Commission.



A Closer View, showing Dry Dock in the Center and Shops on the Right.



Entrance Old French Channel.

By the time we reached the warehouse we had placed one mile between us and Cristobal, and I was hot and tired, but we had one more place to see—the reservoir for supplying water to Cristobal and Colon. I was told it was about a mile, but a mile up hill on railroad track and through jungle seemed like many miles. We passed pumping station and filter plant, and on and on we trudged. When we reached the top of our climb the view was one mass of green foliage on all sides, a regular jungle picture. Of course the reservoir looked all right, and we made haste to get back to rest our tired feet.

All along our climb we could see small huts perched on hillside; negroes and Chinamen cultivating small banana fields surrounded by the dense tropical growth, trees covered with vines.

Our afternoon jaunt had taken about five hours. At 6 P. M. we dined, rested until a little after 8, then made tracks for the Imperial Hotel, stopping on several errands. By 10 P. M. I was in bed sound asleep.



Old Pipe and Abandoned Machinery left by the French.



Here is the View you have of the Quarters at Cristobal when you look towards the North. There is a Carriage Drive on the Other Side of the Engine and Car in the Foreground.

A SHORT DESCRIPTION AND INVENTORY OF CRISTOBAL



The steamers of the Panama Steamship Line at one time used to dock at Colon, but now the company have a dock along the south side of Cristobal. If you walk directly away from the steamer across the tracks to the road you are at the quarters in Cristobal. Turning to the left and walking along the road you come to a point of land on which is the De Lesseps residence and official headquarters. Continuing in your walk you round the corner and have in plain view the curving Avenue of Palms, which borders the east side of the quarters; it is sort of a V-shape point. At the very point the land has had an elevation above the sea level for many years, but further inland less than three years ago it was a marshy, muddy hole, which has been all brought up to a satisfactory grade. And on this place are many houses, a commission hotel, a commission club house for employes, fire department, post office, police station, market, railroad station, commissary department store, cold storage warehouse, ice plant, bakery, laundry, and not the least, Pier 11 where the vessels unload their freight and passengers.

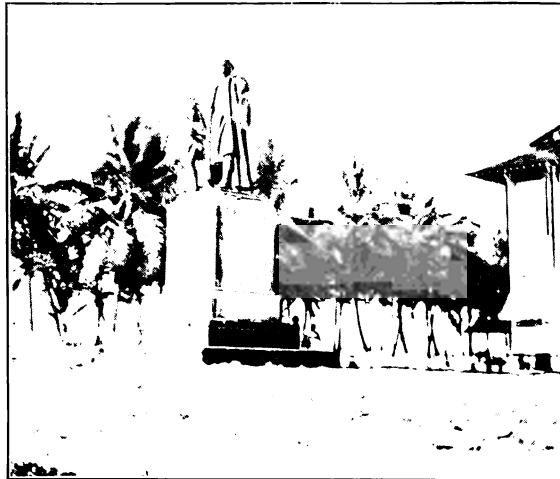
When passengers disembarked from the steamer Colon we did not get off under the protecting cover of Pier 11, but just about 550 feet to the west of it. But we had to follow our baggage, which was taken there by our stewards.



De Lesseps' Residence, now Used by the I. C. C. It is within a Three Minutes' Walk from the Dock.

Turning to the right as one leaves the pier we come to the cold storage warehouse, and right along the avenue in order come the ice plant, laundry and bakery.

The cold storage plant is as complete as any in the Chicago stock yards and is managed with the greatest care. There are air-cooled rooms, rooms near the freezing point and rooms away below



Statue of Columbus and Indian Maiden in Front of De Lesseps' House.



Turning the corner at De Lesseps' House, you come upon Palm Avenue. There are a double row of palm trees and a good road. The View of the Red Men's Parade shows the Avenue better. This illustration shows the green grass walk by the sea wall.

the freezing point. Every piece of meat as it comes from the States is wrapped in a thin cloth to keep it clean; additional heavy cloth that looks like burlap is put over this for further protection and cleanliness. Everything is spotless.

In this tropical country it does not take long for food stuffs to spoil, and consequently the care is most essential. The families of the government employes are supplied with food stuffs from this place,



Cold Storage Plant; next to this is the Ice Plant, then the Laundry and then the Bakery.

as are also the commission hotels and messes. Four hundred and fifteen thousand pounds of fresh beef per month is sent to the hotels and messes, and two hundred thousand pounds for family trade.

The cold storage warehouse receives from New Orleans every ten days one hundred and fifty tons of fruit and vegetables, of which eighty tons are potatoes. Two hundred and fifty barrels of apples are received every five days. Eight hundred gallons of milk, in cans, is received every five days and is bottled in the storage plant. (You do not get any of this at the commission hotels.) Two hundred cases of eggs (thirty dozen to the case) are received every five days.

Pork, mutton, veal, fowl and anything in season in New York can be obtained. The family trade by this means have a New York market brought to their door. The prices are published weekly, so the housewife knows what she has to pay.

The storage plant is in a building three stories high, no basement. The first floor is for meats, ice, milk, butter, eggs. The second floor, "air cooled," is for fruit and vegetables.

The ice plant makes 63 tons of ice a day, and occupies the ground floor to the west of the storage rooms.

The printing plant, operated in connection with the Panama railroad commissary department, occupies the third floor. It does all the railroad printing and turns out over 2,000,000 individual pieces of printed matter monthly; mostly forms and blanks used in railroad service. There are seven presses. This plant does all its own book ruling and book binding, composition and stereotyping. It is a modern self-contained plant. Every machine is run by an individual electric motor. A fairly large stock of paper is carried and every effort made to give economical results in operation.

The class of men working in the printing plant are all native, or West Indians, except foreman and superintendent. Under proper supervision it is stated that these men make efficient workmen. While they are slower than Americans their work is very satisfactory.

A coffee roasting plant has recently been installed on the third floor over the ice plant, the idea being to roast coffee on the isthmus instead of sending it to New York. This will save time and also the transportation expense to and from New York.

The laundry does all the washing for the steamship line, for the commission hotels and for employes on the canal work and railroad. Two hundred and seventeen employes were at work in February, the majority women. It is warm work, but the buildings are open and well ventilated. All machines are electrically heated and operated except two steam heated mangles. Seventy-four electric hand irons are used. The work is in charge of a superintendent and two assistants.



These 3 Illustrations give an Interior View of the Laundry at Cristobal. Another Department as large as one of these rooms is about completed. With the Laundry at Ancon, the workers on the Canal Zone will begin to feel that relief is in sight. Clean clothes are a great boon in a hot climate and the Laundries have been overcrowded with work.



Two Groups of Employes in the Laundry.

The bakery adjoining the laundry bakes all the bread for the commission hotels and is a model, up-to-date plant. The bakery also furnishes pies, pastry and rolls. The dough mixers are white, but the majority of the help is colored, but nowhere can you see greater cleanliness than in this place. Every employe seems to have a personal pride in the work. Clean white clothes and cap are donned every day. An ice cream department or factory will be started, all milk used being brought in cold storage from New York.





Panamanian Fire Department, Colon.

A FIRE IN COLON



On the night of February 23rd I was tucked under the bed spread by ten-thirty, but not for a full night's sleep. Suddenly it seemed pandemonium broke loose. I jumped to my feet, looked at my watch; 'twas just a little after 2 A. M., February 24th. The locomotive whistles were blowing and people shouting; it was a fire. Without waiting I rushed out on the porch in my night clothes and joined three others. Two blocks to the south of us a frame structure was sending aloft huge flames. The wind was blowing strongly, and while we watched another building caught. By this time our crowd of spectators, women and men, had increased to over twenty, and no ceremony was observed in regard to clothes. The fire began spreading, the night was as bright as



The American Fire Department at Cristobal.

day. I retired to my room, dressed, packed all my things and made ready for a hasty exit, then again joined the watchers. There were very few who did not do the same as I did. From our elevated position we could see the firemen. They were driven back time and time again from the heat, but would return to the fight. The buildings were of frame, of light structure, and soon the entire block was ablaze.

A bucket brigade was formed to throw water on the three men who were holding the nozzle of one of the fire hoses; they were fighting to keep the fire from spreading across the street. We watched them with intense interest, for if it did spread and the area of the fire increased, it would be beyond the power of the two available fire companies. The heat grew stronger and stronger, our anxiety waxed greater, but about 4 A. M. the structure began to fall and the fire was under control. The streets were full of people carrying household articles; carts were loaded down, and even colored women with big bundles on their heads were a common sight. At 4:30 we felt safe to retire, but at breakfast it was a sleepy crowd. Yet all were thankful that they were not out camping on the streets, as were many of the poor unfortunates whose abiding places and homes had been destroyed.

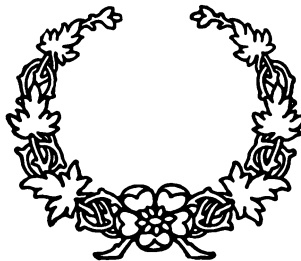
The American fire department is at Cristobal and it is a picked body of men; they certainly can hustle. You get a different view of things standing around in pajamas and bare feet. I am not saying much about the Colon fire department, made up of Panamanians,



Chemical Engine, part of the Equipment of the American Fire Department of the Canal Zone.

only they are strong on blowing bugles and making noise and a little weak on throwing water.

This fire was a commentary on the commissions' foresight. The proprietor of the hotel said that a fire like the one of this night two years ago would have wiped Colon off the earth, but the new fire department of Panamanian government and the one of the commission, together with the water works system, saved the city. Two years ago all the protection the city had was a few water tanks. I hardly expected to see the efficiency of these improvements demonstrated, but my commendation cannot be too strong for the canal commission; they are doing wonders and have great odds to contend with.





Interior View of Bachelor Quarters at Paraiso.

COMMISSION CLUB HOUSES



With so many men and no sources of entertainment for them, a problem presented itself to the Canal Commission, a problem that was partly solved by building four Commission Club Houses, one at each of the following places: Culebra, Empire, Gorgona and Cristobal.

These houses are provided with a gymnasium, a bowling alley, pool and billiard room, library, a room for games, checkers, chess, etc., an entertainment room, barber shop, shower baths, and in the wide, cool corridor chairs and tables are provided and soft drinks and ice cream served. Cigars and tobacco are also sold.

An agreement of co-operation was entered into by the Isthmian Canal Commission with the International Committee of the Young Men's Christian Association for supervising club privileges. The Commission built and equipped the club houses. The committee supplied the secretaries. These secretaries organize and conduct the activities of club life, and while the ownership and control of the property rests in the Commission, a committee of five representing the Commission act in an advisory capacity.

The secretaries are bonded and are accountable to the Commission for all expenses and receipts. Money can only be spent when voucher is approved by the General Secretary. The Association is to be as near self-supporting as possible. Membership dues, fees or receipts from any other source will be expended in the conduct of the work, and the extent of the privileges depend upon the income.

The membership of the club is limited to the white "gold" employes of the Canal Commission and the Panama Railroad. Special action on others not in the employ of the government is required.

No initiation fee is charged, but dues are payable in advance. Four dollars for a quarter year, seven dollars for a half year, twelve dollars for a full year. Charges are made for pool 2½ cents per cue, billiards 30 cents an hour, bowling 10 cents a game; lockers are one dollar per year.

Membership tickets in any Y. M. C. A. will be honored for their unexpired value. Members can have tickets issued to guests, and if you are a stranger just walk up to the secretary and introduce yourself, and if you are just down there looking around they will take a chance on you and some hot days you will be very glad to take advantage of the courtesy. There is nothing equal to a good shower bath, and you will find them at every club house.

I commented upon the genial hospitality of the Y. M. C. A. secretaries and their associates, and was met with the response that it was their belief that Christianity was a life to live and not simply a creed to believe. "We are practicing what we believe the Bible teaches us to do. The needs of all men are not the same. The Commission recognize the physical and mental necessity of providing meeting places, and we make it our aim that it will be a place for wholesome recreation. We have our Bible classes on week night, we have Sunday clubs organized voluntarily, who arrange for speakers in the entertainment hall, either men from abroad or prominent men who are prepared to give talks on vital subjects of the day."

The ladies are extended the privileges of the club on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons, and are also admitted to public entertainments.

**Reading
and
Writing Room.**



**Game Room:
Checkers,
Chess, Etc.**



**Pool and
Billiard Room.**



**Bowling Alley
and
Gymnasium.**



The entertainment hall may be rented by social organizations or clubs for dances, concerts or entertainments. A piano and a stereopticon are part of the equipment.

Educational classes similar to those in the states are organized. Baseball nines and bowling teams are very active. There are four secretaries and one traveling secretary. There are also four assistant secretaries, but these assistant secretaries are also physical instructors.

The committee who are called "advisory" are:

Colonel Wm. C. Gorgas.

Mr. W. G. Tubby.

Mr. H. L. Strentz.

Mr. J. Bucklin Bishop.

Mr. A. Bruce Minear.

These men, I am informed, approve of the building of four more club houses, if that is correct. They are wise men. You take men living in rooms, comfortable though they are, and eating in "hotels" where food tastes the same day after day (and the cooks are just as poor as poor can be), why he just naturally wants to go out somewhere, and there is no place to go. Every little country town has its country grocery store for a neighborhood club, but along the canal where the dirt flies is the most lonesome place when the sun goes down. The most confirmed bachelor just can't help getting married down there; what they need is more married quarters and a few more club houses.

Wm. H. Baxley of Culebra, J. Floyd McTyier of Empire, Ralph R. Wolf of Gorgona, and M. J. Stickel of Cristobal are secretaries and have club houses; and F. C. Freeman travels around helping out.

But the boys that put you through the paces are Robt. Goodman, C. H. Gifford, T. F. La Rose and Robt. E. Gourlie.

These are physical instructors and assistant secretaries. It's worth while to know them all; you may go down to the canal zone some time and you can make yourself at home if you behave.

