To Know the Isthmus of Panama, it is necessary to become acquainted with two distinct places: The Republic of Panama and the Panama Canal Zone. The Zone is a strip of territory leased to the United States by the Republic for the purposes of the maintenance and defense of the Panama Canal. It stretches for five miles on either side of the Canal and bisects the Republic into two roughly-equal sections. The Canal Zone is under the jurisdiction (although not the sovereignty) of the United States. The Republic of Panama is a completely independent nation.

The Panama Canal Zone is essentially North American. It is clean, efficient, utilitarian. According to the terms of the treaty between the United States and Panama, all residents of the Canal Zone must be employees of the U.S. Government or members of their immediate families. Only exception is for employees of firms provisioning ships transiting the Canal, steamship agencies or companies holding government contracts for construction work in the Canal Zone. There is no private enterprise in the Zone — and, here in the tropics,

Panama's little ponies are tough

Unde Sam becomes landlord, doctor, caterer, hotel-keeper, recreational director and launderman, as well as employer. Quarters are built along the palm-lined avenues of the Zone towns of Cristobal, Ancon and Balboa. Military bases for the U.S. Army and Navy are efficiently arranged throughout the Zone. United States Government stores supply employees with all the necessities and many of the luxuries of life at duty-free prices so that the average Canal Zone resident lives on a superior scale to what he could maintain in the United States on the same wage basis.

The Republic of Panama, which is essentially Latin, will be more entertainingly foreign to visitors from North America. Panama has its own National Government with a President elected for a six-year term by popular vote; three Vice Presidents; a Cabinet of six members; Governors for each of the seven Provinces; and a National Assembly elected by popular vote and responsible for the legislative work of the Government. The official language is Spanish — and the architecture, national customs, and the beautiful costumes are reminiscent of Old Spain and the early "conquistadores."

Colon (on the Atlantic Side) and Panama City, which is the Republic's capital (on the Pacific Side) are the two principal Panamanian cities. By special arrangement, visitors to the Isthmus pass both the Zone's and the Republic's immigration and customs requirements when they arrive at the ports or airports. For this reason, the visitor to the Isthmus may wander freely from one place to the other and may cross the international frontier at will and as often as he pleases.

The Republic has five separate regions, each with its own distinctive interest and characteristics. Be sure to visit as many of these regions as you can.

REGION NO. 1 . . . The two terminal cities of Colon and Panama, and the Panama Canal Zone. Pages 12 to 43 in this booklet.

REGION NO. 2 . . . Province of Bocas del Toro and the Atlantic coast of Colon Province which includes such historically important places as Porto Bello and Nombre de Dios — and such interesting people as the San Blas Indians. Pages 46 to 49.

REGION NO. 3 . . . The Central Provinces which may be reached by car on the new Inter-American Highway — and which are famous for their cattle country and their cowboys, as well as their historical interest. Pages 58 to 61.

REGION NO. 4 . . . The Pearl Islands, Taboga, and Darien which offer unparalleled deep-sea fishing, perfect island scenery, and the most primitive Indians of the Isthmus. Pages 64 to 67.

REGION NO. 5 . . . The Chiriqui Highlands which offer mountain scenery and climate; coffee fincas and orange groves; trout fishing and excellent hunting. Pages 72 to 75.
But the visitor to Panama should not confine himself to the Canal Zone and the two terminal cities of the Republic.

Panama is a land of many contrasts in scenery, in people, in customs and in costumes — and the traveler should by all means visit as much of the Republic as possible. For details on how to visit any or all of these regions, the Panamanian Government maintains a tourist information office. Ask for details, reservations, or suggestions. Their English-speaking staff will be glad to assist you and there is no charge for service.

Panama is a land of many CONTRASTS in scenery, in people, in customs and in costumes.
The visitor from North America will probably find the Republic of Panama more interestingly foreign than the Panama Canal Zone. This is because Panama's cultural background stems from Spain and from Hispanic rather than Nordic customs.

Generally speaking, Panama is a Catholic country — although there is complete freedom of worship. Church processions of children dressed in white, of priests in their ecclesiastical robes, and of "penitentes" carrying banners are a common sight, even in the streets of the capital. In addition, a great part of the social life centers around the Church ... with religious holidays a time not only for worship, but for general visiting and merriment reminiscent of European customs.

The language of Panama is Spanish — and many visitors comment on its purity, since it has been remarkably little corrupted from its Castilian origin.

Among the truly Hispanic customs which still prevail in Panama in spite of the influence of the Canal Zone are the "paseo," the Carnival, and the insistence upon the importance of "the family" in the scheme of living. The "Paseo" is the custom of promenading around the central Plaza of each city on Sunday evening during the band concerts. The young ladies walk arm in arm in one direction while the young men walk around the other way. Compliments are paid in passing by the young men to the girls of their choice ... and, after a few weeks of this curious courtship, the couple consider themselves engaged. In Panama City, the "paseo" can best be witnessed in Plaza de Independencia on Sunday evenings after 9 o'clock.

The Carnival which is truly Hispanic in character is described on other pages of this booklet. (Numbers 36 to 39.)

The importance of "the family" in the general scheme of living cannot be over-estimated in Panama. There is a strong loyalty among members of each family, a definite attempt on the part of each member to maintain the Family's Reputation, and a strong feeling of protectiveness for the feminine members. Even with the example of the Canal Zone so close, no young Panamanian girl of good family expects to have the freedom of action which her North American sister takes for granted.

Architecturally Panama City and the towns of the Interior Provinces demonstrate their Hispanic origin. The streets are narrow and open onto great Plazas or squares of well-kept gardens. The houses are made of concrete or stone and, in almost every case, have narrow iron-ruled balconies on the outside and are built around a court or "patio" inside.

Gastronomically Panama is worth knowing, for there is great variety in the dishes and native drinks. Try "puerco con patacones" at the Union Club some late evening or "seviche" as an appetizer. Buy an "empanada" from one of the street vendors or, better yet, go for an entirely Panamanian meal just for the experience! The Panama Tourist Commission will make all the necessary arrangements.
"CULTURA HISPANA"

PANAMA'S COLONIAL BACKGROUND

CROSSROADS OF THE WORLD
On Christmas Day of the year 1502—"about the hour of Mass"—four tiny vessels, their yards askew and their decks littered with wreckage, dropped anchor off the mouth of the Chagres River. Christopher Columbus, on his fourth voyage to the New World, had been cruising along the northern coast of the Isthmus of Panama—searching for a strait that would lead to the Indies. Tropical storms and contrary winds had battered his little fleet so that he had been forced again and again to return to this cove at Porto Gordo where repairs could be made. As the sun sank behind the distant mountains that evening and the brilliant colors of the afterglow faded in the rapidly falling dusk, the tired old man in the after-cabin of the flagship was nearer his goal than he dreamed for. Although the strait he sought did not exist, he was anchored that night at the mouth of the river which, within a few years, was to become a part of the main highway for the transportation of the treasures of the Incas across the Isthmus... and within a few miles of the spot where, four hundred years later, the audacity and ingenuity of a nation still unborn would result in the Panama Canal.

Seven years later, Spanish colonists arrived on the Isthmus and established settlements at San Sebastian and at Nombre de Dios. The quest for gold was the magnet that drew these adventurers to the Castilla del Oro. Before long trouble broke out with the Indians as a result of the Spaniards' ruthless pillaging and the natives retaliated with ambushes, so that it was unsafe to leave the settlements except...
in well-armed parties. The colony at San Sebastian was soon abandoned and its survivors, reinforced by the arrival of a new expedition under Enciso, settled on the Gulf of Darien, where the town of Santa Maria de la Antigua sprang up. It was from Santa Maria that Vasco Nuñez de Balboa set out on the expedition that resulted in his discovery of the Pacific Ocean on September 25, 1513.

A line of posts was soon established across the Isthmus between Nombre de Dios on the Caribbean and the Indian village of Panama on the Pacific. In 1519, Pedro Arias d’Avila, the governor, moved his capital from Santa Maria to Panama where he established a new city whose wealth and importance surpassed that of the legendary cities of Cipango that Marco Polo had described.

In the latter years of the Sixteenth Century, the new settlement of Porto Bello gradually replaced Nombre de Dios, whose unhealthy climate had earned for it the title of the “graveyard of Spaniards.” Each Spring this little village was galvanized into seething activity when the galleons arrived from Spain to bring to the colonists their yearly supply of stores and merchandise and to carry away the gold, silver, and precious stones that had been taken from the Indians. Treasure-laden ships from Peru carried their cargoes to Panama from whence they were packed across the Isthmus to Porto Bello by mule train and bullock cart. Soldiers and sailors thronged the streets, and merchants set up their booths wherever space could be obtained. It is said that during the fortnight the fair of Porto Bello lasted, the volume of business transacted amounted to no less than thirty to forty million pounds sterling.

Piracy and smuggling flourished as a result of Spain’s monopolistic trade policy, which prohibited other nations from trading with her colonies. In 1513, Norman and Breton corsairs began to hijack an occasional Spanish ship homeward bound from the New World. When the Spaniards began to arm and convoy the treasure ships, raids

Las Bovedas,
Panama City

CROSSROADS OF THE WORLD
were staged on the colonies themselves. After his attacks on Nombre de Dios and Cartagena in 1572, Sir Francis Drake was the terror of the Spanish Main until death ended his career on the eve of an attack on Porto Bello in 1596. In 1668, Henry Morgan captured and sacked Porto Bello ... and returned in 1671 to perpetrate the crowning atrocity of the century by attacking and burning the city of Panama, after an epic journey across the Isthmus from San Lorenzo.

Two years after the destruction of Old Panama a new city was established a few miles farther up the coast—but already the rivers of treasure from Peru were diminishing to a trickle and the importance of the Isthmus to Spain was decreasing. In 1718, it was deprived of its autonomy and made an administrative province of the vice-royalty of New Granada. Porto Bello was captured and its fortifications reduced in 1739 by an English squadron under Admiral Vernon (after whom George Washington's home on the Potomac was named) and, although both the forts of that settlement and at San Lorenzo were rebuilt in 1751-52, they were not called upon again to withstand an attack.

In 1810, the provincial government of New Granada at Bogota proclaimed its independence from the Spanish rule.

The oldest church in use in the Americas of Joseph Bonaparte and, after the final victory of Simon Bolivar in 1819, united with Ecuador and Venezuela to form the Republic of Colombia. Panama revolted from Spain in 1821, and joined the Colombian Republic to form the Grenadine Confederation under the presidency of Bolivar. During the succeeding sixty-five years Central America was the scene of innumerable uprisings and changes of government which finally resulted in the formation of the present Republic of Colombia in 1886, with Panama as a dependent province.

On November 3, 1903, following the failure of the Columbia government to ratify a treaty with the United States by which the latter country would be given a concession to assume the assets of the French company then engaged in work on the trans-Isthmian canal—and undertake to complete the project, Panama revolted and proclaimed an independent state under the presidency of Dr. Manuel Amador Guerrero.

The United States immediately recognized the new republic, the Bunau-Varilla-Hay Treaty was drawn up and signed, and the two countries embarked upon an era of mutual respect and cooperation that promises to endure.
The Golden Altar . . . Rescued from Morgan by a Quick-thinking Monk

CROSSROADS OF THE WORLD
The "Tamborito" originated

with the primitive dances of the slaves who were brought to Panama by the early colonists. Gradually it has taken on new character until it is now a strange medley of modern coquetry overlaid on a background of primitive, sinuous movements and expressive of this most cosmopolitan country.

Centuries ago, when the slaves were first brought to Panama to work on the great "haciendas," their masters sometimes granted them permission to hold gatherings in the yards or in the mines. At these gatherings, they amused themselves by dancing and into these dances they wove their homesickness for their native lands; their despair for their lost liberty; and their reminiscences of their former mode of life. Thus they solaced their unhappiness with the weird music of their drums; their incomprehensible songs; and their primitive dance routines.

Some of these routines were designed to depict the movements of the animals in the jungles. "The idyll of the ostriche," for example, brought the woman into the dance circle first. Imitating the measured steps of this animal, she lifted her feet softly and slowly, moving her hips rhythmically, twisting and turning to provoke the male. The man then entered the ring with a great leap, as if compelled by irresistible desire. She, as if frightened, then flogged him with her skirt—but at the same time continued her coquettish movements, repeating the scene over and over again and making it more alluring every time.

Such a routine was always received with great applause or "rebulu" from the audience—

and this "rebulu" is today an integral part of the dance.

The drums of the slave days were the same as those used today: the major drum, barrel shaped, not too small, could be played on either of its leather-covered ends. This major drum, or "Caja" as it is called in Panama, is played with two "bolillos" or sticks, and is used to carry the basic tune. There are two minor drums: the "Pujador" and the "Repicador." These are cylindrical, made of wood, and with only their upper end covered with leather. Of these two, the "pujador" gives the music its minor and mournful beat—and the "repicador" with its higher and gayer tone directs the movements of the dance. Both minor drums are played with the bare hands and the "repicador" is often lifted clear of the floor by the player's feet to raise the pitch of its music.

The simple originators of the "Tamborito" had also a primitive sense of humor which took the form of mimicking their masters. When caught at this favorite pastime by their owners, they excused their rude gestures by saying that they were part of their dances. Thus, they gradually incorporated into the dance, genuflexions and movements of the body which signified their opinion of the laughable customs of their masters.
“TAMBORITO”

PANAMA’S NATIONAL DANCE

LAND OF THE POLLERA
A long time later, when the mixture of the slaves and their Spanish owners had produced the race known as “Criollos,” these dances were modified for more sensitive audiences and the “Tamborito” moved from the yards and the mines into the “patios” of the Criollo homes. The themes of the songs were corrupted and new lyrics invented. There were happy songs and sad ones, songs of love and of hate, and also songs which were mere witty “takeoffs.” These new lyrics and their accompanying gestures soon became integral parts of the “Tamborito” as it was celebrated until the beginning of the 20th century. It was during this period that the “Pollera” (the costume now in use) took the place of the rags of the slaves and, with the introduction of this beautiful full-skirted dress, the “Tamborito” acquired the grace it still has today.

Modern civilization, jazz on radios, and fast transportation combined with the influences of new foreign nationalities typified by the American residents of the Canal Zone, will probably result in still further modification of the “Tambor de Orden,” as it is sometimes called. The 20th century has already added the music of the flute, the cornet and the bass violin to the drums. And so the “Tamborito” grows. A dance of life and beauty, expanding to embrace new subjects for its lyrics, to mimic new “funny and strange customs,” to add to its musical instruments. But still it retains forever, the weird primitive beat of the drums and the heartbroken wail of the homesick slaves.

(A complete description of the choreography and music of the “Tamborito” will be furnished on request to the Panama Tourist Commission.)