

Recd 7/24-44  
AMERICAN CONSULATE GENERAL  
Caracas, Venezuela; July 12, 1944  
V-2  
P1/3

Dear Folks,

Well, here we are at last, all duly arrived in Caracas. We had a fairly pleasant trip. As planned, we left Washington the evening of July 6th and went south on the Silver Meteor of the Seaboard Railway. The train was quite late in arriving in Washington, so we had to wait a long time in the station. The car we were in was air-conditioned and comfortable, especially at first. Later, during the following day, it gradually got warmer, and travelling through Florida it was quite hot. The train kept right on losing time, so that we didn't arrive in Miami until after eight o'clock Friday evening.

Pan American had made a reservation for us at the Miami Colonial, which is on Biscayne Boulevard near Flagler St. It is more of a regular commercial hotel than I imagine many of the others are; the rooms are small and not well furnished compared with the Raleigh. The prices were about the same, however. The building looked rather cheesy, and was of cheap construction, like so many things built during the various Miami booms. We went there direct from the train and hit the hay early.

The next morning trouble began. We went to Pan American and were informed that due to the arrival of several priority passengers, we had been off-loaded and would not be able to leave until Friday. I notified the hotel and we settled down for a long wait. Saturday afternoon we went out to see Ninnie and Aunt Vonie. I found them in better shape than I had expected. Ninnie looks very well. She is plump and has good color. Her limp is hardly noticeable when she walks, but she says that she can't walk any distance without getting terribly tired. All she does is go to a grocery about a block away to do the shopping. Aunt Vonie looks pretty bad because of her nose. Daddy will remember that a part of the nostril had dropped off the last time she was home. Now, almost half her nose is gone on one side, and a large part of it on the other. Poor old dear, she tried to hide behind a handkerchief. Although she is more bent and considerably deafer than in 1936, she is perfectly clear in mind, which is a great blessing. However, the old zip which was so characteristic of her is fading; she complained that "I'm not any good any more". Another time, she said, rather sadly, I thought, "William, I'll be ninety in September". Daddy will remember that she never used to tell anyone how old she was, even after she was eighty. Still, all in all, she is a very remarkable old lady, and our visit with them was much more pleasant than I expected.

Late Saturday afternoon we went out to Coral Gables to see some friends of Philinda's. They were awfully nice, and we had a grand time. There was a regular party. We went to a

V-2  
P2/3

very good restaurant for dinner and then to the Coral Gables Country Club for a dance. It was the only dance we had been to all the time we were home, and we had a wonderful time. The Club is a magnificent place: "Just like the movies!" The only trouble was that it was very hot, and this applies to the entire time we were in Miami.

Philinda's friends, the Blissess, told us that the house next to them was vacant; they were taking care of it, and suggested that we move in to spend the five days until we could leave. We gladly accepted; it would have been most pleasant. However, when I went to Pan American Sunday to give them our address, they told me that we had been reinstated, and would therefore leave Monday morning. We spent the early evening with the Blissess, and got up at 3:15 a.m. in order to be ready to leave at five. We made it all right. At the air field, we had another scare, and were told that we had been off-loaded again, but at the last minute it worked out all right and we got off.

The trip down was uneventful, except that I felt slightly air sick about half the time. We stopped to refuel at Cienfuegos, Cuba, Port-au-Prince, Haiti, Ciudad Trujillo, Dominican Republic, and Curaçao. Since the plane was delayed in leaving Miami, the stops were very short, and we didn't get to see anything except the station waiting rooms. Lunch was served in flight. We arrived at La Guaira a little after six in the evening, where we were met by Vice Consul Williams of this office, and Vice Consul Cory and his wife of La Guaira. They got us through Immigration and Customs in a hurry and ~~we~~ Williams drove us up to Caracas in his car. My car has arrived, but we thought it would be better not to make the long, winding, dangerous drive for the first time at night. Also, there are the licensing requirements to be met.

We went at once to the Hotel Ambassador, where we are still staying. Most of the people there are Americans, and the manager, a Viennese refugee, is most kind and attentive. The food is good, but the room is dark and gloomy, and the bathroom equipment leaves much to be desired. The hot water never appears, and the drain for the shower is a tile displaced from the middle of the floor. The water meanders over most of the bathroom before finally finding its way to the drain. We are therefore planning to move as soon as possible into a furnished house whose owners are going to the States for a two-month vacation soon. We can live there for a couple of months until we find a suitable apartment or house for ourselves and the furniture arrives. We do not expect our furniutre for at least six weeks or more.

The Consul General, Mr. Moffitt, is very kind and I think we will get along well. I was disturbed to find that the office opens at eight, which means that I have to get up at 6:30 in order to be here on time. That is fine for the sportsmen who like to play games in the later afternoon, but it doesn't please me at all.



V-3  
P3/3  
However, when I must, I can. The office is in a former residence of fairly recent construction. Like all the houses here, it is built around a patio off which the offices open. There are two floors, the Consul General's office being upstairs and most of the rest on the ground floor. The work is of a strictly routine nature, and I fear there will be little of interest. It is all administration. However, Mr. Moffitt may go to the States in September for an operation; if so, I will be in charge of the office.

It is too soon yet to give you any impressions of Caracas. The weather is cool and pleasant, a great relief after Washington and Miami. This is the rainy season (although not the rainiest part) and it is cloudy much of the time with showers from time to time. Next week I hope to be able to give you a better picture.

Philinda joins me in sending you all our love.

As ever,

