

DRIVING TO...

MANAGUA, NICARAGUA?



(A Guide to The Pan-American Highway through Mexico,
Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras and Nicaragua)

by

WILLIAM F. BAGGERMAN

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PREFACE

During 1946 and probably for the indefinite future a trip down the Pan-American Highway south of Mexico City and on to Managua, Nicaragua could not be considered as a usual pleasure trip. Travel is difficult and more than the ordinary risks will need to be assumed by those who travel to Managua.

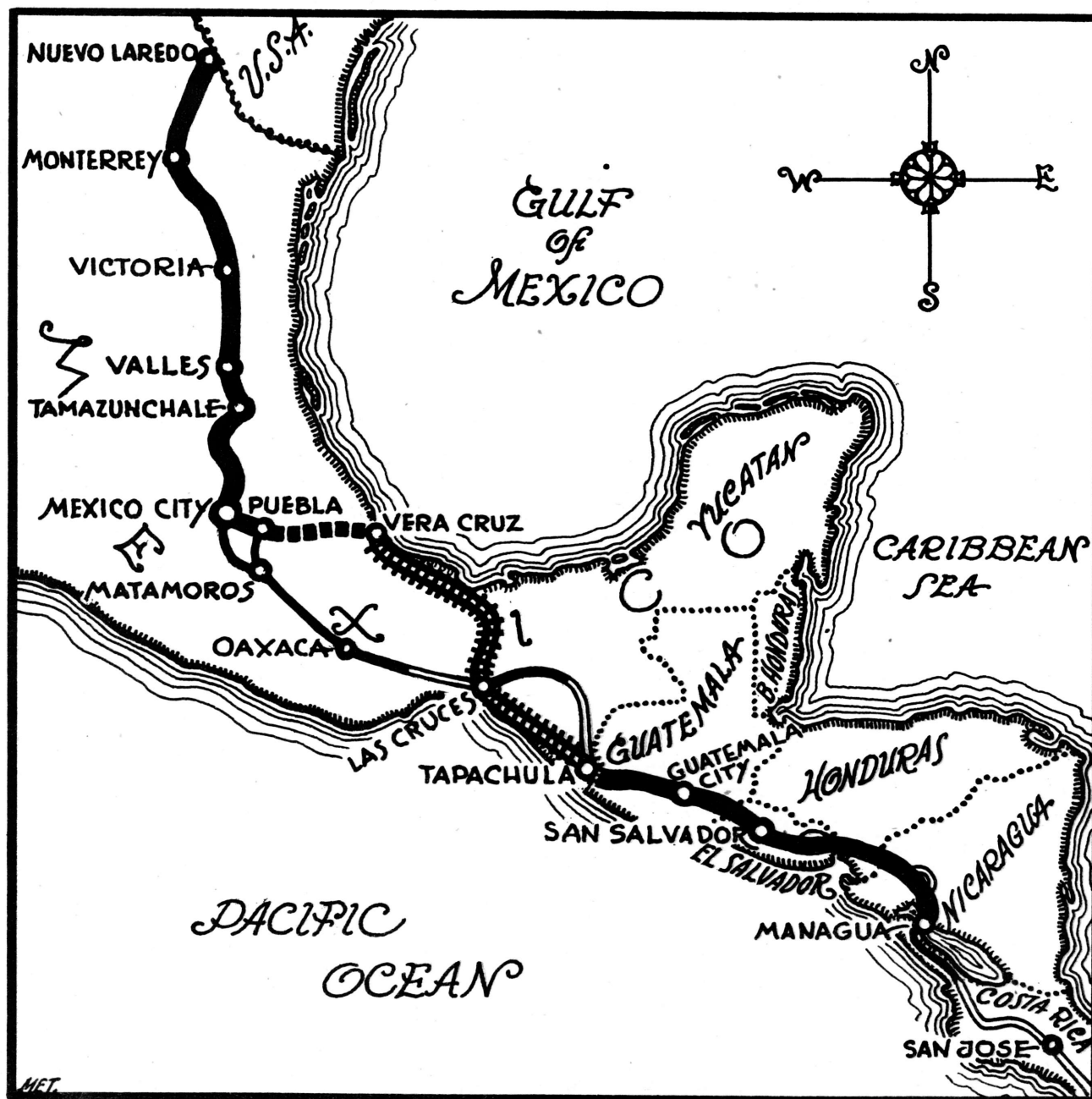
The Author believed that a practical guide book could be most helpful by naming and commenting on specific hotels, restaurants, and other facilities of interest to motorists, this plan has been followed. The information contained in the following chapters is opinionate, but largely based upon observations of the Author.

The Pan-American Highway in Central America as a route for through travel is in the stage of early use and information contained in this guide will need to be considered as subject to change.

THE AUTHOR

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THE ROUTE OF THE PAN-AMERICAN HIGHWAY, LAREDO, TEXAS TO MANAGUA, NICARAGUA

CHAPTER I

PLANNING YOUR TRIP IN ADVANCE

WHAT CAN I EXPECT? An automobile trip over the completed sections of the Pan American Highway from the United States to the Nicaraguan-Costa Rican border is a thrilling adventure--and one now within the attainment of the average traveler. The trip is difficult and sometimes exasperating, but never without intense interest as the 2600 mile route unfolds.

Mitla, the Gulf of Tehuantepec, Chichicastenango, Quiche, Panajachel, Tegucigalpa, Managua and many other names known before only in travelogues, now loom up as places seen ahead through the windshield of your car.

The highway as a through route is still in the early period of its use. The feeling of camaraderie that now arises between the adventuring motorist and his fellows--other Americans enroute, Public Roads Administration engineers, American consular officials and English speaking Latin Americans remains in the memory of those who have made the trip, after the scenic and spectacular events have dimmed.

It is now possible to drive without difficulty from Laredo, Texas by way of Mexico City, to a point fifty miles south of Oaxaca, Mexico, a distance of about 1,100 miles. Several rivers must be forded south of Oaxaca, but during the dry season many tourists successfully continue on to Tehuantepec or Ixtepec and at one of these points arrange for the railroad shipment of their auto to Tapachula, near the Guatemalan border.

Between Tapachula, Mexico and the border of Costa Rica the highway is with the exception of paving in El Salvador and Nicaragua, gravel surfaced and in varying condition of repair.

Now a word about preparations, to motorists who would make the trip. Thorough advance planning will be well repaid and some of the principal details follow below:

AUTOMOBILE Mechanic motorists driving even Model A Fords have during the past year successfully made the trip. For those however, not able to make their own repairs, too much importance cannot be placed on most carefully determining in advance that the car to be used is in near perfect condition and that it will not overheat during continuous mountain driving.

HOUSE TRAILERS Many times the trip becomes far more difficult for those who have a house trailer. The primary factors limiting the size of the trailer are: the efficiency of the cooling system of the auto, engine horsepower, and

adaptability of the trailer to effective tie-down on the flat car for the railroad shipment through southern Mexico.

In any event it would seem that making the trip with a trailer of greater than twelve foot length would be most difficult.

The Willys civilian model Jeep has proven to be an ideal car for trailer towing on this trip. This car performs well at high altitudes and the engine maintains a safe operating temperature during continuous mountain driving in low gear.

GASOLINE For sometime the gasoline supply in Mexico has been extremely erratic, but gasoline stations are numerous. In Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua the gasoline is imported and the price varies between \$.34 and \$.55 (U.S.) per gallon. There are relatively fewer places to buy, but shortages do not often occur.

Carrying at least two auxiliary five gallon cans of gasoline is suggested.

TIRES For the present and perhaps for the indefinite future, tires are and will remain one of the most difficult and expensive articles to obtain in all Central America. Starting the trip with a new set of heavy duty tires and at least two spares is a minimum safe requirement.

Free air is a service seldom found outside the larger cities. Its a good idea to carry a tire pump, tire gauge, tire valves and a supply of hot-patches.

SPARE PARTS Automobile parts such as fan belts, spark plugs, fuel pumps, etc. are second only to tires in scarcity. Carrying a group of these spare parts is recommended.

ROAD MAPS Almost equal to the task of obtaining tires and spare parts "south of the border" is that of obtaining highway maps indicating the route of the Pan-American Highway beyond Mexico. In effect there are no local sources of maps after departure from Mexico.

The Standard Oil Company of New Jersey through its affiliates will supply excellent road maps. The "Pictorial Map of the American Continent" obtained from Colonial Beacon Oil Company (Esso Touring Service), 30 Rockefeller Plaza, New York 20, N. Y. indicates the addresses of these affiliate companies.

The International Travel Division of the American Automobile Association, Pennsylvania at 17th Street, Washington 6, D. C. has several maps and will supply members with descriptive pamphlets. The AAA booklet "Mexico by Motor" is useful.

Conoco Travel Bureau of the Continental Oil Company, Denver, Colorado will send a "Touraide" on Mexico. Though this booklet contains information only on Mexico it is particularly helpful.

GUIDE BOOK Once it is used, the book New World Guides to Latin American Republics by E. P. Hanson (Duell, Sloan and Pearce, publishers) will seem as indispensable to the motorist in Central America as a spare can of gasoline. This easy reading encyclopedic little book is a source of information on about every subject of interest to travelers, from road information to the location of

hospitals staffed by American physicians.

PASSPORT A U.S. passport is a ten dollar expense well justified even though the countries to be visited may approve travel on tourist permits. Border officials resolve doubts in favor of a person carrying a passport, the same is not true for those with the less official appearing tourist permits.

VISAS A frequently followed custom of travelers is obtaining all necessary visas before leaving the U. S. That plan is not suggested for this motor trip since the period within which a visa must be used is sometimes of short duration, also the period of required use varies according to the country. The tourist who has been delayed enroute may arrive at an international border only to find that his visa has expired before use. The most dependable plan is that of securing a visa for the next country to be visited while in the capital city of the adjoining country.

A visa for Mexico may be easily obtained in Laredo, Texas, however while in Mexico City the visa for Guatemala should be obtained. In Guatemala City secure a visa for El Salvador. The route of the Pan American Highway does not pass through the capital of Honduras so a visa for that country and also for Nicaragua will need to be obtained while in San Salvador.

Only Guatemala requires applicants for visas or tourist permits to present passport photos. Five photos are needed to obtain a tourist permit and three for a visa. Extra copies of the photo used for a U.S. passport are acceptable.

IMMUNIZATION According to the U.S. State Department circular usually sent with a passport it is mentioned that Guatemala requires a health certificate to indicate vaccination for smallpox. The Guatemalan consular official at Mexico City stated that the certificate is not needed when the tourist has a U.S. passport. Even though it seems that the immunization requirements indicated by the State Department are not enforced by the Central American immigration authorities a full series of inoculations to protect against diseases prevalent in these tropical countries is worth considering.

HEALTH Dysentery is the most frequent health problem among tourists. Care should be taken to avoid unboiled water and unpeeled fresh fruits and vegetables. An effective drug is available for control of dysentery. If a prescription is not obtained from your family physician before leaving home this medicine is available at Sanborn's in Mexico City.

The book New World Guides to the Latin American Republics in the chapters entitled "Practical Information", under the sub-topic "Health" mentions hospitals in the various Central American countries staffed by American doctors.

WATER "Halazone" water purifying tablets, similar to those issued by the Army may now be purchased. These tablets are easy to use and are recommended.

ATABRINE Considered generally, the route of the highway is through areas where malaria infection is not serious, however those wishing to fully minimize the risk of infection should obtain medical advice on the use of atabrine.

CLIMATE The climate of much of Central America is pleasant, especially so

in such highland cities as Guatemala City and San Salvador. Even Managua, lying as it does between two large lakes is more comfortable than many of our own mid-western cities during summer. Managua is seldom without a cool breeze after sunset.

While it would probably be possible to make the trip from Laredo to Managua during the season of rains the experience would with little doubt be an ordeal rather than an interesting adventure.

There is considerable variation in amount of rainfall according to area within the respective countries, however the following may be taken as a general summary of the seasons most favorable for auto travel. The dry seasons of the countries on the route are: Mexico, October - May; Guatemala, November - May; El Salvador, December - April; Honduras, December - May; Nicaragua, December - May.

EXPORT LICENSE Those considering selling their auto in a Central American country and returning to the United States by ship or airline should consult the Office of Foreign Trade, U. S. Department of Commerce in reference to existing regulations which may require an export license.

MONEY American Express travelers cheques remain the most convenient method of carrying funds and are readily accepted at all but the smallest establishments.

ALTIMETER An interesting but non-essential accessory to carry is an auto type altimeter. There are few altitude markers along the route and many times, especially in Guatemala, you'll be curious to know just how many thousand feet you've ascended to reach a present highpoint.

CHAPTER II

LAREDO, TEXAS TO MEXICO, D. F.

FINAL PREPARATIONS AT LAREDO Though the Pan American Highway of the planning engineers officially begins in Fairbanks, Alaska, the auto tourist to Mexico will as surely maintain that the highway starts in Laredo, as holding to the adoption of "Thomas 'n' Charlie" for Tamazunchale. But whichever starting point is preferred, Laredo is a good place to take one last look for missing equipment and stock up on canned foods. Most of the leading brands of canned goods may be bought all through Central America, but prices seem to increase by the mile. Finally at Managua, Nicaragua the price of a 14 oz. bottle of Heinz catsup has reached \$1.00 (U.S.) with the prices of other canned goods in proportion. The trailerite with room to spare can make a worthwhile saving by taking a good stock of canned food. The customs officials at all borders are liberal in passing as duty-free, foods carried for personal use. Those traveling by auto will also be glad to have some canned goods to be used for the noon meal when off-the-route side trips are made. Acceptable restaurants are seldom found outside the larger cities. Too, when traveling with the auto during the shipment by flat car through southern Mexico a supply of food is almost a necessity for the two to five day trip.

Sears, Roebuck Company and Montgomery Ward have large stores in Laredo and they will be found to be the best places to locate the auto and traveling equipment still needed.

MOTOR OIL Though the supply and distribution of gasoline in Mexico has been uncertain, lubricating oil always seems in adequate supply. For those who prefer not to carry a supply of oil and still use the same brand all through the trip, Mobiloil is suggested. It is available in the smallest towns and the most out of the way places.

INSURANCE Automobile insurance is best arranged for with your local agent before arrival at Laredo. An attempt should be made to obtain insurance coverage for the trip through Mexico and Guatemala. There is however little likelihood of obtaining any kind of coverage for the trip beyond Guatemala. If insurance is not obtained from your agent before you leave on your trip it will probably be necessary to become reconciled to driving without insurance after leaving Mexico. In countries further south, automobile insurance companies are almost non-existent.

Members of the AAA and non-members as well will find the American Automobile Association branch office in Laredo about the best and most reasonable place to obtain auto policies.

AAA OFFICE Charles Mumm is in charge of the Laredo office of the AAA. He is pleasant to all, but beyond being able to provide an excellent AAA map,



GETTING LATEST ROAD INFORMATION FROM CHARLES MUMM OF THE AAA, BEFORE
LEAVING THE UNITED STATES AT LAREDO, TEXAS

entitled "Mexico" (one of the rarely found maps also showing highways in Guatemala) his office has not been provided with much information on travel beyond Mexico.

CUSTOMS FORMS For members and those buying insurance Mr. Mumm will also make out the several forms required when passing through the U. S. exit inspection station and Mexican Customs. There is usually a crowd and a rush at the latter place and though the distance to Monterrey is only 146 miles, arrival at the Mexican Customs station by about 9 AM is recommended.

OTHER ROAD INFORMATION SOURCES Humble Oil Co. has a good tourist information office in Laredo, Texas and there is an office of Pemex Oil Co. (of Mexico) in the Plaza Hotel. These offices are of some assistance where travel in Mexico is concerned, but no information can be expected on travel in the countries further south.

PESOS Before leaving Laredo, Texas one last chore should be obtaining enough pesos for the trip to Mexico, D. F. Travelers checks can of course be enroute, but at less advantageous rates.

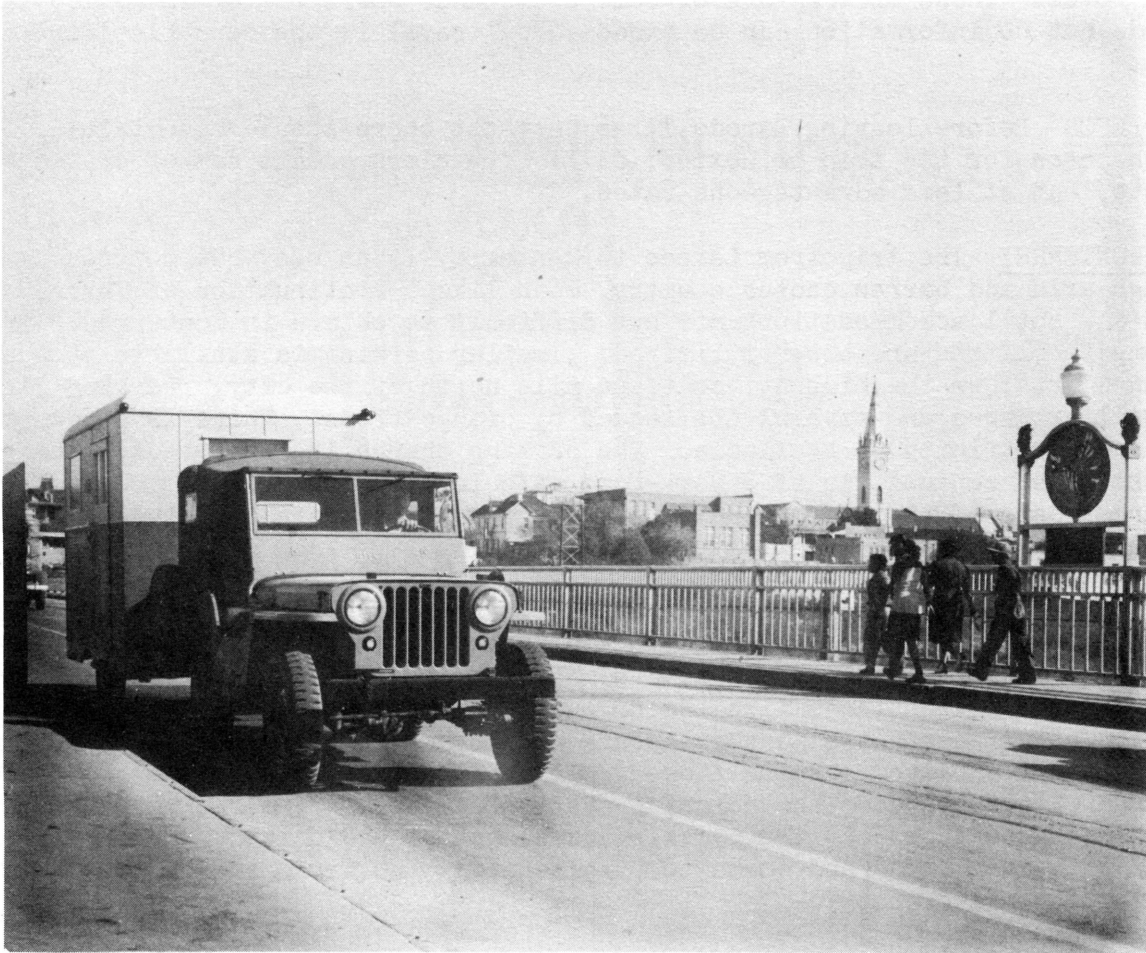
MONTERREY The trip from Laredo to Monterrey is an easy but monotonous drive through arid and barren cactus country, much like a continuation of Texas. Tourist court and hotel accommodations are not difficult to obtain in Monterrey. Trailer parking facilities are however limited. Trailer parking is available at the Regina Courts, on the highway about one mile north of the city. Parking stalls are well arranged and several are shaded by orange trees. There is a new wash room and electricity is available. The parking charge is five pesos. The court has the added convenience of a very good cafe located just across the highway. Los Arcos Cafe offers exceptional steak and seafood dinners for five pesos, and is also open for early breakfast.

MONTEMORELOS South of Monterrey the highway passes through a fertile well tilled valley of many orange groves. A pleasant break in the drive to Victoria and further points is the small town of Montemorelos, noted for its tropical fruit. Many of the stands line the highway. Oranges and orange juice may be bought, but in season the tangerines are not to be missed. Many are the size of oranges and for flavor surpass those grown in Florida. Here the ways of modern commerce cannot overcome the colorful customs of the Mexican fruit vendors. The tangerines aren't sold by the prosaic dozen, but by the "stick". The fruit is picked with long stems and bound to sticks having the first appearance of strings of painted gourd ornaments.

VICTORIA For the trailerite, Victoria is the natural day's travel from Monterrey. There are no camps advertising trailer parking, but Campo Courts about one mile north of the city provides facilities and the charge is four pesos.

VALLES From Victoria to Tamazunchale the distance is 211 miles and again a moderate day's trip for trailer travelers. A convenient lunch-stop is the Casa Grande Hotel (on the highway) at Valles. A well prepared dinner is served for 4.50 pesos.

PAPAYA For those who like fresh papaya, the little village of Matlapa about 11 miles north of Tamazunchale is the place to stop. The fruit is sold at stands along the highway near the center of town. Some of the papayas sold there are the size of cantaloupes. Two papayas and several limes can be bought for a peso.



PASSING THE INTERNATIONAL MARKER ON THE LAREDO BRIDGE

TAMAZUNCHALE At Tamazunchale the tourist courts do not advertise trailer parking, but as in most courts in Mexico they are glad to accommodate a trailer. Trailer parking may be arranged at El Sol Camp. The first trailer in has a good parking place under the canopy of the unused service building of the gasoline station. There is a cement floor, but no walls to cut off the breeze. All considered its a clean and satisfactory overnight parking space. The charge is two pesos. There are several other tourist courts nearer town and parking for trailers is probably available there. The best restaurant is in the Cadillac Hotel (on the highway) at the bridge into the town.

Tamazunchale is near sea level elevation and is the most tropical spot along the route to Mexico City. From this low point the highway begins a steep climb over several mountain ridges. Finally at a point about 60 miles from Mexico City the maximum altitude of about 8000 feet is reached and then the route levels off before beginning the gradual descent to the capital. The distance from Tamazunchale to Mexico City is 227 miles.



STOPPING OFF TO VIEW A LANDMARK FAMED IN GEOGRAPHY AND SONG, MEXICO'S
BEAUTIFUL POPOCATEPETL WHICH TOWERS 17520 FEET, IN THE BACKGROUND

CHAPTER III

MEXICO, D.F. AND PREPARATIONS FOR THE TRIP FURTHER SOUTH

ENTERING MEXICO, D.F. Approaching the limits of Mexico City tourists are halted by police at a small station on the highway. This inspection seldom includes more than a request to see tourist card or passport and auto ownership certificate.

GUIDES At this stopping point travelers will find guides available to ride in car or drive to the hotel or tourist court selected. It is quite proper to request that a prospective guide show his credentials from the Federal Tourist Department. It also should be determined that the guide has a driver's license, if he is to drive your car. A guide is helpful, but not necessary if a detailed city map is carried. Though for those not initiated to the fast pace of something like New York City driving, the tricky odd angle intersections and fiercely combative driving of Mexico City is best avoided at first and the services of a guide-driver are helpful.

PRICE IT FIRST At this point too, its well to get in the habit of making an agreement in advance for any services or articles accepted. Prices for a guide's services or about anything can assume almost fantastic proportions when not held within bounds by a well understood advance agreement on terms.

POLICE The police will be found to be most courteous in giving street directions if they understand what is wanted--policemen wearing a small American flag made as a metal badge speak English. The police in brown uniforms are traffic police and those in blue uniforms are the usual patrolmen.

AZTECA COURTS AND TRAILER PARK At first contact, driving in Mexico City offers enough chills and horn tooting without the added complication of towing a house trailer. For safety a trailer should be parked at a camp in the outer section of the city. Even for those who may wish to shop around later for another location, Azteca Courts and Trailer Park is a convenient first stop for trailer travelers. This camp is located at Tenochtitlan No. 1201. The street address isn't important since one merely follows the same boulevard parkway on which the city is entered. On this parkway continue for about three miles after leaving the police inspection station, then watch for a large modernistic movie theatre on the left. Azteca Tourist Courts and Trailer Park is about a mile and a half beyond the theatre, on the left. Its set back from the parkway and easily passed. If the traffic circle with the large pyramid like stone monument in the center is reached the camp has been passed--turn back and try again.

The minimum daily charge at the camp for small trailers is four pesos, for large types the charge is five pesos. Facilities include tile washrooms and

showers, usual 110-volt current, water connections and sewer. Cottages are also available. The camp is managed by Americans, Mrs. Spaulding and her son, Seth, a student at the university. He also arranges the sightseeing tours from camp, sells serapes at high prices and provides the bottled water you'll need for drinking. The guided tours go "caravan" style with the guide in the first car and the guests following in their own cars.

"THIS WEEK" A particularly handy and easily obtainable source of current tourist information is the 60-odd page directory called "This Week", published in Mexico City. It is authorized by the Federal Tourist Bureau and is given out free of charge at leading hotels and shops. There are short articles about places of interest, however the principal value of this booklet is in the advertisements. The current hotel listings and descriptions are complete, especially those for out of the city resorts such as Fortin, Acapulco and Graci Crespo. Other sections list services from beauty shops to opticians. There are also articles and advertisements describing hotels and services in Guatemala and El Salvador. Altogether this guide has the helpfulness of the yellow pages of a U. S. telephone directory, and comes in pocket size.

CONSUL OF GUATEMALA If a tourist permit or visa for Guatemala was not obtained in the U. S. either may be secured in Mexico City from the Consul General De Guatemala, Edif Miguel Abed, Desp 809 - 810, I la Catolica y V Carranza. Three hours time is required by the consul for issuance of the visa or tourist permit. Five passport size photos are required for the tourist permit and three are needed if a visa is used instead. The necessary car permit is obtained at the border.

MAIL ADDRESS Probably the most convenient mail address in Mexico City for those without advance hotel reservations is Wells Fargo & Co (an affiliate of American Express), Av. Francisco Madero #14, Mexico, D.F. This office is on the same street and near Sanborn's Restaurant.

ROAD INFORMATION Beyond Mexico City the most outstanding thing about the Pan-American Highway is the lack of information about it. If you are a careful planner you'll probably consider spending a day or two trying to track down clues and scraps of information on what to expect a couple of countries further south. Most of these efforts are a total waste of time.

IMPASSABLE HIGHWAY The Pemex Travel Bureau, the Asociacion De Turismo, the Mexican Automobile Association, the Incretoria de Comminococines, Div. de Camions, in total yielded one bit of specific information -- a Pemex Travel Club Bulletin, containing an article about the two Americans who were the first to drive a stock car over the section of the highway from Tehuantepec to the border of Mexico and Guatemala. They proved that the trip could be made and also that for long sections of the projected route, the road is little more than a line of surveyor's stakes or less.

These two drivers ended their trip at the border of Guatemala and for those who wish to have a car in condition to make the rigorous enough remainder of the trip to the Costa Rican border or further, the better part of wisdom is to ship auto from Ixtepec (about 150 miles south of Oaxaca) or from Veracruz to Tapachula, a few miles from the Guatemalan border.



TAKEN AT THE MONUMENT TO THE SPANISH CONQUEROR, CORTEZ. ACCORDING TO LEGEND IT WAS NEAR THIS POINT THAT ONE OF HIS MEN WAS LET DOWN INTO A VOLCANO TO BRING UP A SUPPLY OF SULPHUR SO THAT THE SPANISH CONQUERORS MIGHT REPLENISH THEIR SUPPLY OF GUNPOWDER.

For the present, even during the dry season, getting a house trailer over the section of highway from Oaxaca to Ixtepec would be no less than a miracle. There are accounts of attempts to get through with house trailers and not yet of one being successful.

For the slightly less adventurous motorist and for every trailerite this gap of unimproved highway in southern Mexico can be crossed by shipping auto, or auto and trailer by railroad freight car from Veracruz to Tapachula.

During the dry season, it is however possible for most autos to make the trip as far south as Ixtepec, then ship by railroad from there to Tapachula. Driving as far as Ixtepec has the advantage of then requiring only a two day railroad trip to Tapachula, but several wide rivers must be forded on the route to Ixtepec. The railroad shipment from Veracruz requires from four to five days.

FREIGHT CAR RESERVATION Some advance arrangements will help in the matter of the railroad shipment. A flat car can be secured at Veracruz or Ixtepec without obtaining a reservation at Mexico City, but a delay of several days to a week can result.

SATURDAY, SUNDAY & MEXICAN HOLIDAYS When making reservations for the railroad car, a departure from Ixtepec or Veracruz early in the week is recommended, thus making possible arrival at Tapachula on days other than late Friday afternoon, Saturday, Sunday or a Mexican Holiday. Railroad workers quit work down there on the slightest excuse and having your auto on a flat car in the yards over a week-end or holiday poses a bothersome problem. A watchman is necessary until the unloading, and from those who know Tapachula the advice is to be indoors at night. Spending the night with your car in the yards should be avoided.

CLOSED FREIGHT CAR There is some possibility of obtaining a closed automobile car when making the reservation at Mexico City. There is however a particular shortage of this type of car and to obtain a reservation for one it may be necessary to wait longer at Mexico City before a verification is obtained-- this wait is well justified though if a closed freight car can be reserved instead of a flat car. Having a closed car will make it possible to load the auto in a sealed car at Veracruz, take a Pullman to Tapachula and avoid the roughest of traveling on a freight train or the bothersome and expensive operation of obtaining a guard for your auto during shipment on an open flat car. There is of course some possibility of the closed car being broken into enroute. It seems however that in Mexico thefts are mainly from objects easily accessible and it could be reasonably expected that a closed freight car with contents unknown would not be broken into. Even if you are fortunate enough to obtain a closed type freight car you should supervise the loading and securing of your auto and only leave after it is on its way to Tapachula.

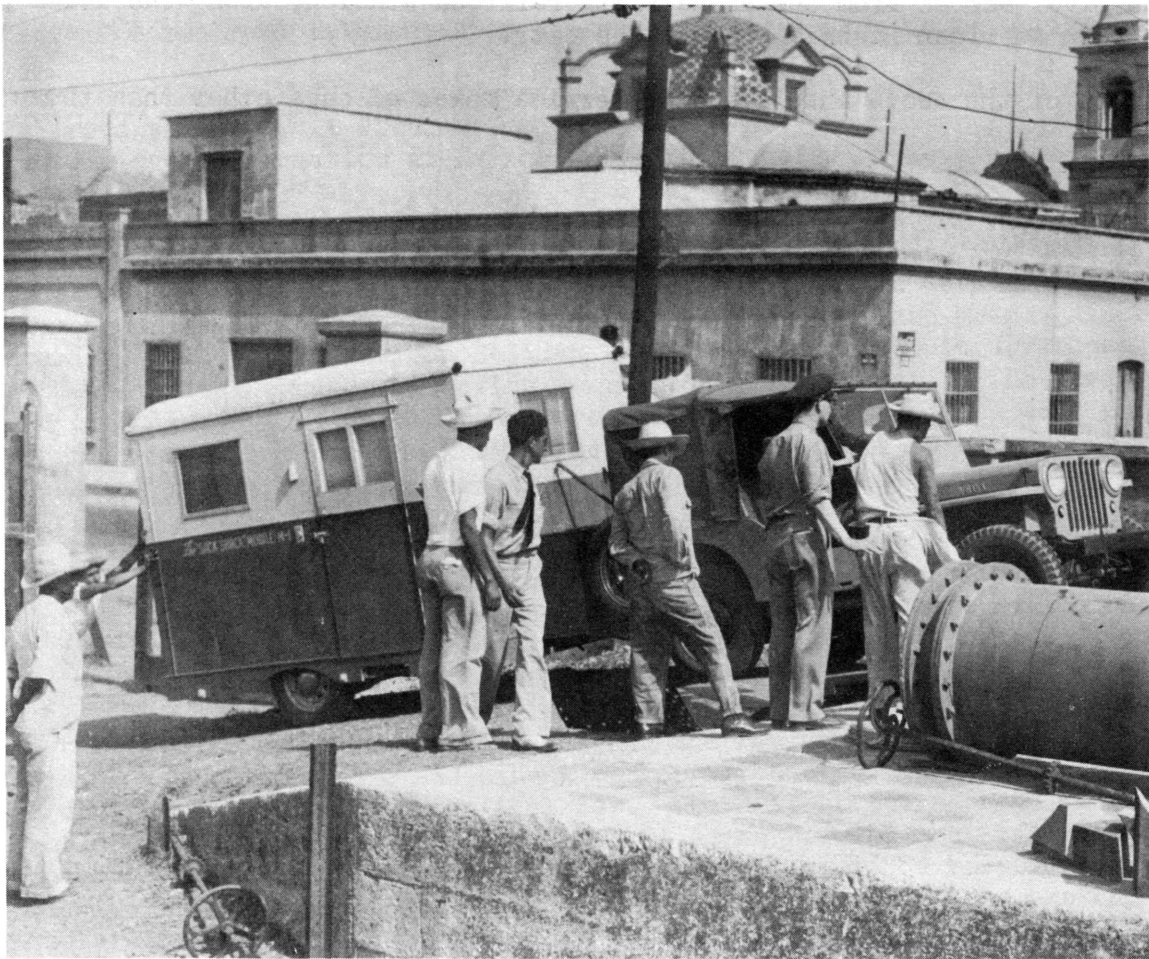
SUPERINTENDENT OF CAR SERVICE The easiest way to obtain the freight reservations is to call at the office of the Superintendent of Car Service, Balderas #31, Mexico, D. F. The building in which this office is located is on a cross street a few doors off Paseo Juarez, and almost directly across from the main entrance to the Regis Hotel. The assistant in this office is Senor Dominguez, who speaks English and is able to make the reservation. After the reservation of the freight car has been accepted by this office its a good plan to ask to return the next day for a copy of the telegram sent to the Freight Superintendent at Veracruz or Ixtepec. In the event you do not speak Spanish the copy of the telegram will be of consider-

able aid in locating the correct freight office and getting attention on your arrival at the shipping point.

AUTO REPAIRS IN MEXICO, D.F. An excellent agency for auto repairs in Mexico City is Gran Motor S.A., Paseo de La Reforma #253. The manager of the service department, a former U.S. Army officer and the chief mechanic, a Mexican, are most competent and helpful. This auto company appears to be the largest Chevrolet dealer in the capital, and also has one of the best equipped shops, which includes ignition testing equipment and wheel alignment equipment.

There is also an excellent "Super" Ford dealer and shop located on Ramon Guzman Blvd. across from the Buena Vista railroad station, along the usual route of the Pan American Highway through the city.

Both of the above auto agencies service makes of cars other than those sold.



LOADING JEEP AND TRAILER ON A FLAT CAR FOR THE TRIP TO TAPACHULA BY RAIL

CHAPTER IV

MEXICO, D. F. TO VERACRUZ, MEXICO

DEPARTURE FROM MEXICO, D. F. The route out of Mexico City for Veracruz is a winding one through the narrowest streets and the busiest. There are no markers indicating the route out of the city and having a city map will help.

MOUNTAINS AHEAD Soon after leaving the capital the snow capped mountains loom up ahead. Approximately twenty miles beyond at Zoquiapan the really steep climb begins, continuing to a high point of over ten thousand feet. The highway is however well paved and has fewer sharp turns than the main highway near "Thomas 'n' Charlie". This mountain drive is a severe test for the cooling system of any car, especially since there are no wide places in the highway for temporary stops to cool the motor.

GASOLINE AT RIO FRIO The first gasoline station out of Mexico City is at Rio Frio. There is also a cafe of sorts and a number of stands selling food. Though with their open-air food displays they hardly seem intended to appeal to tourists.

SERAPES At Texmelucan, seventeen and one half miles beyond Rio Frio, there are a number of shops directly along the highway where serapes and decorated woolen coats are sold. The prices seem only slightly lower than in Mexico City and other cities, but these patterns show real artistry and are without the blaze of color and rainbow-like designs seen at so many earlier places.

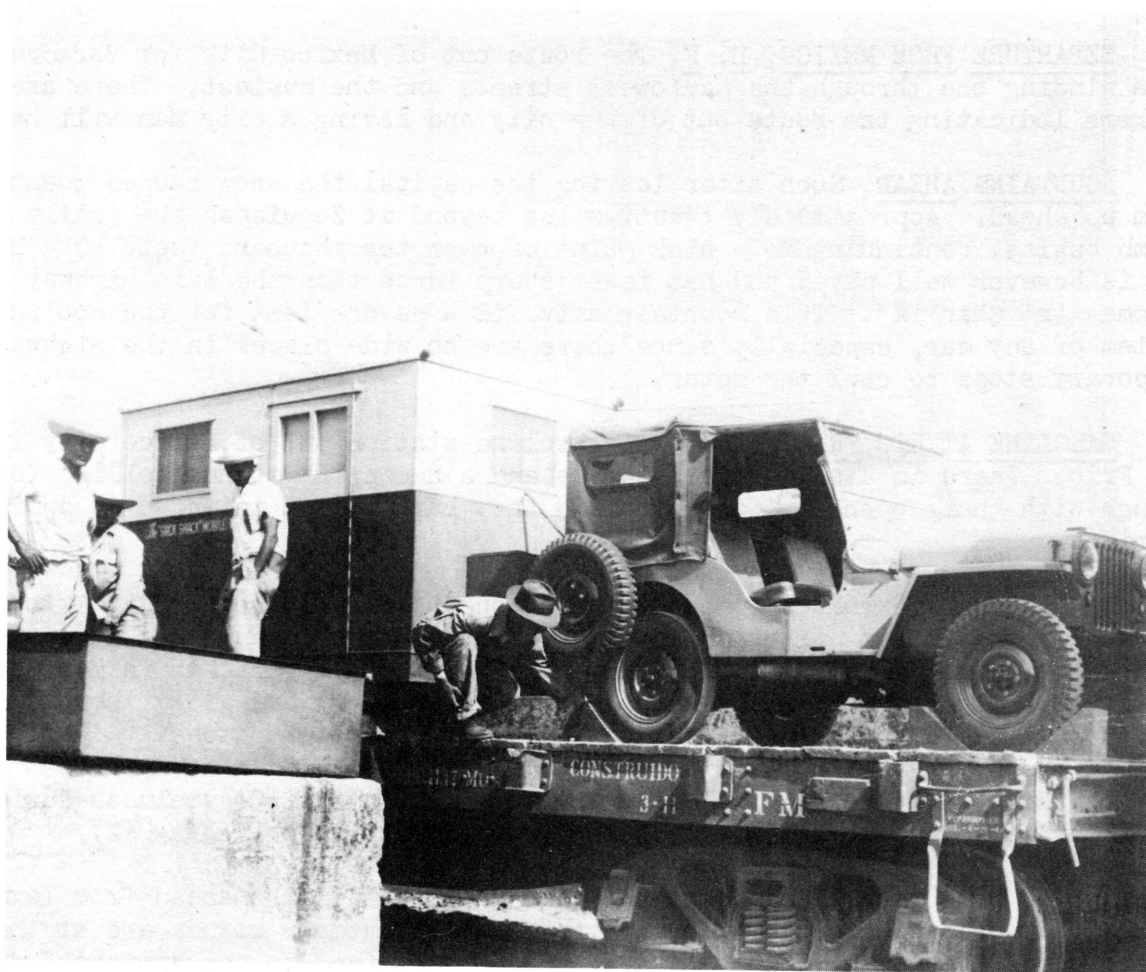
The shop with the best selection of woven articles is Texmelucan-Curios, Av. Libertad #31, San Martin Texmelucan (shop directly on Highway #2).

At the next town, Huejotzingo, nine and one-half miles ahead from Texmelucan, there is an even wider selection of serapes. The outdoor stands are at the town square along the highway. Here again the patterns tend to the "rainbow" designs, but the selection is large and well worth a stop for those still souvenir hunting.

UNMARKED HIGHWAY JUNCTION The next town is Cholula, ten miles on. The highway forks just ahead of the town, the fork isn't marked and each highway branch looks well traveled. Take the left fork, its Highway #2.

PUEBLA The highway markers through Puebla are sporadic and a close watch for the signs, plus inquiries will be needed to stay on No. 2.

There are no tourist courts or trailer parking facilities on the highway to Veracruz. For those getting a late start from Mexico City or planning to make the trip in two days, the best midway stopover point is Puebla, where there are excellent hotel accommodations.



LOADED AND READY TO ATTACH THE TIE-DOWN WIRES

ACATZINGO For the trailerite to obtain a place to park it will be necessary to look for the most likely spot along a side street at Puebla or one of the towns further along. At Acatzingo, 110 miles from Mexico City it is possible to park a trailer on the town square, there are enough lights for one to feel reasonably secure.

For trailer travelers not able to make Veracruz well before dark it is most advisable to stop for the night no further along than Acatzingo. Some of the towns nearer Veracruz are larger, however the highway becomes mountainous about fifty miles beyond Acatzingo. There are no places in the later towns where a trailer can be parked easily.

VERZCRUZ Auto service facilities are meager along the entire route to Veracruz. One can expect to see few if any cars from the States, and meet few persons able to speak English. Veracruz is well off the traveled course of most auto tourists and being a seaport city is not the place to arrive after dark and have to locate a place to park a trailer.

TRAILER PARKING Since there are no regular trailer parking facilities in the city the only course is to find the most brightly lighted street where unlimited parking is permitted. A good location is the square across from the Oriente Hotel and the Customs House. This square is only one block from the main square of the city. The location is well lighted all night and policed. At this location there is no chance to obtain electricity or water and it will probably be necessary to obtain a room at one of the nearby hotels until freight matters can be arranged.

U. S. CONSUL If unusual difficulties arise while in Veracruz, there is an American consul in the city. The office is located in the wharf area (Matecon de Samianad) near the Victoria Apartment Hotel. Highway information is not available.

HOTELS There is one deluxe hotel in the city, The Mocambo. It is located on the beach, about a mile and a half from the center of Veracruz. It compares well with the leading hotels of Mexico City and reportedly is owned by President Aleman. The Conoco "Touraide" recommends the Dillgencias Hotel, Independencia #31, and the Imperial Hotel, Miguel Lerdo #56. The Hotel Rex, across from the post-office has one of the airline offices in the lobby and is probably satisfactory. The hotel dining room is fair and about equal to any others in the city, with the exception of The Mocambo.

SIGHTSEEING There are few places of interest to tourists in Veracruz, though a trip to the Castillo de San Juan de Ulua (built in 1565) may be of interest. It is a mile from the mainland and is reached by launch from the pier at the Customs House.

THE BEACH If one has leisure time at Veracruz it may be most enjoyably spent at the beach. The beach just below the Mocambo Hotel has a clean bath house with fresh water showers. It is not necessary to be a guest at the hotel to use these facilities.

SODA FOUNTAIN For the nearest thing to a clean modern American style soda

fountain go to Neveria y Reposteria, Av. Independencia #179, the bakery goods and pastries are also excellent.

PHOTO SHOP There is a good photo finishing and camera supply store located at Av. Independencia #167.

GROCERY STORE The grocery store at Av. Independencia #166 is the best in the city. Leading brands of U. S. and domestic foods are sold. This is an ideal place to buy the necessary supply of food to be used during the ride with your auto on the flat car.

This grocery store sells hand made goat skin wine bags. They are too expensive at twenty-five pesos, but for once one is happily overcharged for a really unique article not seen for sale anywhere else on the entire trip. With a cord the bag is made to hang under the arm about like a bagpipe. By the removal of the turned bone cap and application of pressure with good aim a stream of wine is supposed to reach the intended spot with none of the usual indecency of tipping.

PURE WATER From Veracruz on, real care ought to be taken in the use of drinking water. Water from a faucet isn't necessarily pure. An easy way to solve the drinking water problem during the train trip is to buy a 20 liter glass jug of purified water. A dependable shop selling purified water is located at Aguiles Serdan #84. The price of the glass jug and water is 6.50 pesos.

WATCHMAN On going out to the Veracruz freight yards and seeing the flat car on which your auto will be shipped and on which you will probably ride as watchman, you will soon know whether you are a deluxe hotel traveler or have a touch of the travel urge of Halliburton or the ancient Marco Polo. The railroad office will cancel the flat car reservations without complaint if you decide you are really out for a vacation not an adventure. The trip is a patience trying five days of inconvenience, and molestation during the freight train ride isn't to be entirely ruled out. Though the chance seems slight considering the number of autos shipped.

OFFICIAL GUIDE Those who do not speak Spanish fluently should obtain the services of an official guide in Veracruz. Arranging the details connected with the shipment of the auto is somewhat involved and even the experienced traveler will find it all but impossible to get along in this situation by using the sign language and a book of Spanish words and phrases.

The local tourist bureau is known as the Oficina Turisima and it is located in the Municipal Palace. This office will recommend government licensed guides. Senor Richard Bueno, whose home is at Bravo #215 is most competent. He speaks English well and recently worked in the United States. His charge is twenty-five pesos per day. He is familiar with the requirements to be met in an automobile shipment.

RAILROAD SHIPMENT Though arriving in Veracruz ahead of railroad reservation date a call should be made at the freight office at the earliest possible time. This office is known as the Edificio de Documentacion de Los Ferrocarriles Nacionales and it is located next to the passenger station. Senor Bousant is the official to contact.

The copy of the telegram requesting the reservation (received from the Supt. of Car Service in Mexico City) is most important at this point. Without the telegram it may be necessary to make some kind of payoff to obtain the

freight car without delay.

Whether auto only, or auto and trailer is shipped the freight charge is 650. pesos. There is a possibility of paying an additional charge and having the freight car attached to a passenger-freight or passenger-express train. This arrangement makes possible the saving of one or two days enroute. The time required by ordinary freight train for the trip to Tapachula is four to five days. Even though you are paying for the exclusive use of the freight car and will ride on it as watchman it will also be necessary to buy a second class ticket for the trip to Tapachula. The second class ticket costs twenty-four pesos.

Before leaving the office of Senor Bousant a memo granting permission to load the car should be obtained for presentation to the superintendent in the freight yard.

After payment of the freight charges and issuance of the loading memorandum your auto may be put on the freight car, however it will be found the interest of the Naccional de Mexico in further action has now abruptly ended.

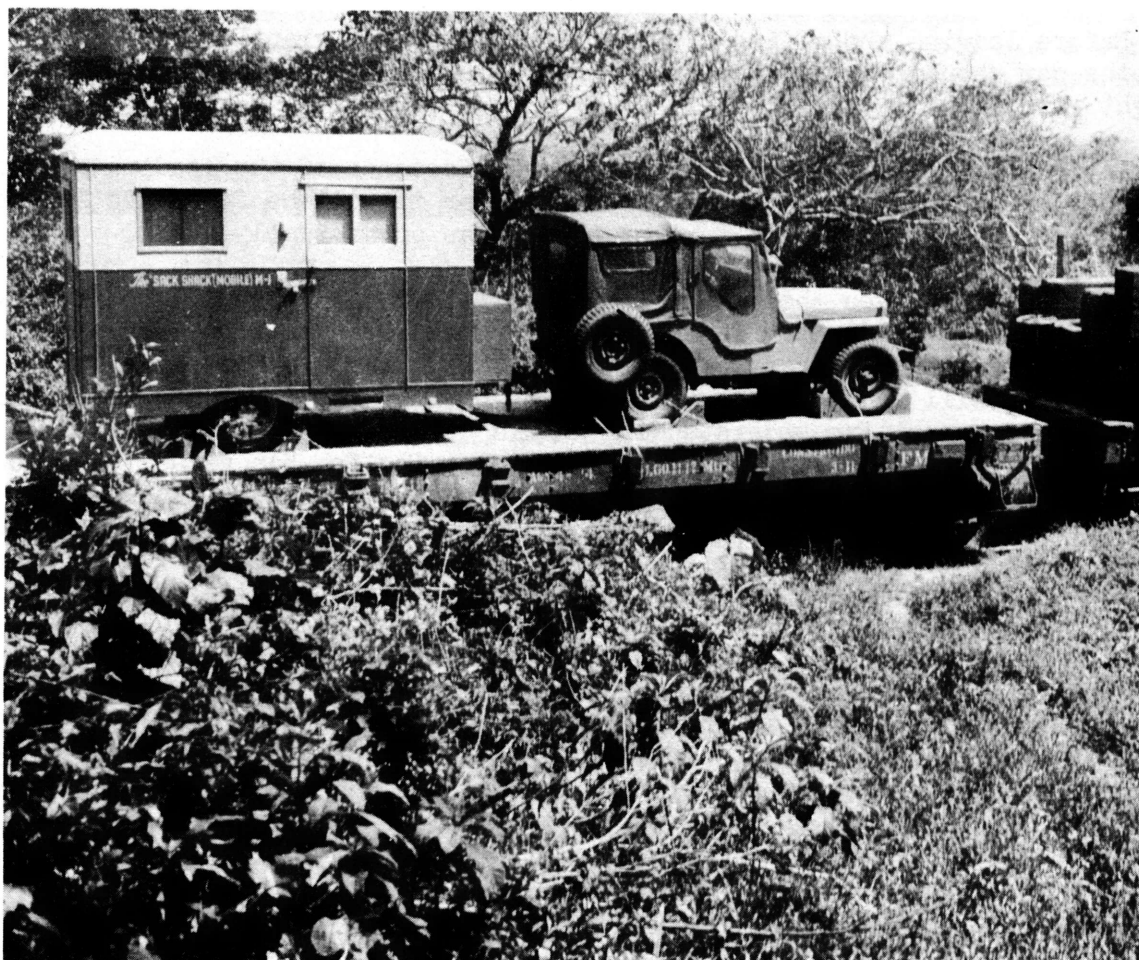
STEVEDORES As you then drive into the freight yard you will be "besieged" by the numerous stevedores offering their services for the loading operation. The stevedores who will load your auto on the flat car are not employees of the railroad. It will be necessary to hire some whether you think you need them or not, and a very positive understanding should be had as to the total charge for this service. One man usually makes the total price for his group. The low price for loading and tying down one auto is ten pesos and the usual charge for non-Spanish speaking persons is fifteen pesos. These loading stevedores are as likely looking a band of potential pirates any seen the world over, but they do a better than expected job of securing your auto to the "platform".

LOADING ON FREIGHT CAR Loading and fastening of an auto on a freight car is not difficult and can be accomplished in several hours. When a trailer is included it all becomes an engineering problem of sorts. Motorists planning to take a trailer on the trip should seek the advice of a railroad freight expert before leaving home and for safety know the methods and equipment to be used. Depending on size and type of trailer it may be necessary to have tie-down hooks and corner jacks installed in advance.

It will be necessary to obtain heavy wire, nails and wooden blocks. The stevedores can give you a sample of the wire and nails to indicate size. You can then make the purchases at one of the local hardware stores. Sufficient wire will cost about fifteen pesos and nails about four pesos. The wheel blocks can be obtained at the Maderas "Negrete" S. A. (lumber yard), Calle de Doblado #13. The charge for eight blocks is eight pesos. The blocks are made from 6" X 6" timbers and are sawed to the correct angle to fit under the tires.

There is a loading ramp at the freight yard. It is steep, but no unusual difficulty is encountered driving onto the flat car.

The stevedores put wires only from the wheels of the automobile to fittings on the side of the freight car. Additional wires from front and rear bumpers are almost a necessity, to take up the severe jolts of starts and stops.



JEEP AND TRAILER BEING HAULED THROUGH THE JUNGLES OF SOUTHERN
MEXICO

CHAPTER V

VERACRUZ, MEXICO TO TAPACHULA, MEXICO BY RAILROAD

JOLTS AND STOPS If you are accompanying your auto on the flat car be ready for the roughest traveling you have done. Be resigned to a stop every few kilometers and severe jolts from frequent switching and remaking of the train.

LAYOVERS Stops in freight yards are frequent and may last from one to thirty hours. Tierra Blanca is the first major switching point, where a stop of about six hours can be expected. Jesus Carranza is another major switching point, a stop of about twenty-four hours is usual there, with about thirty hours at Ixtepec and eighteen hours at Tonalá.

With the exception of the first evening one can expect a layover in some freight yard for most of every night. This arrangement does have something in its favor, it makes possible some degree of rest and sleep never possible while the train is moving. Traveling with automobile only on the freight car is uncomfortable enough, but with a trailer also, it sometimes seems that the terrific jolts of starting and stopping will tear both vehicles loose from their moorings.

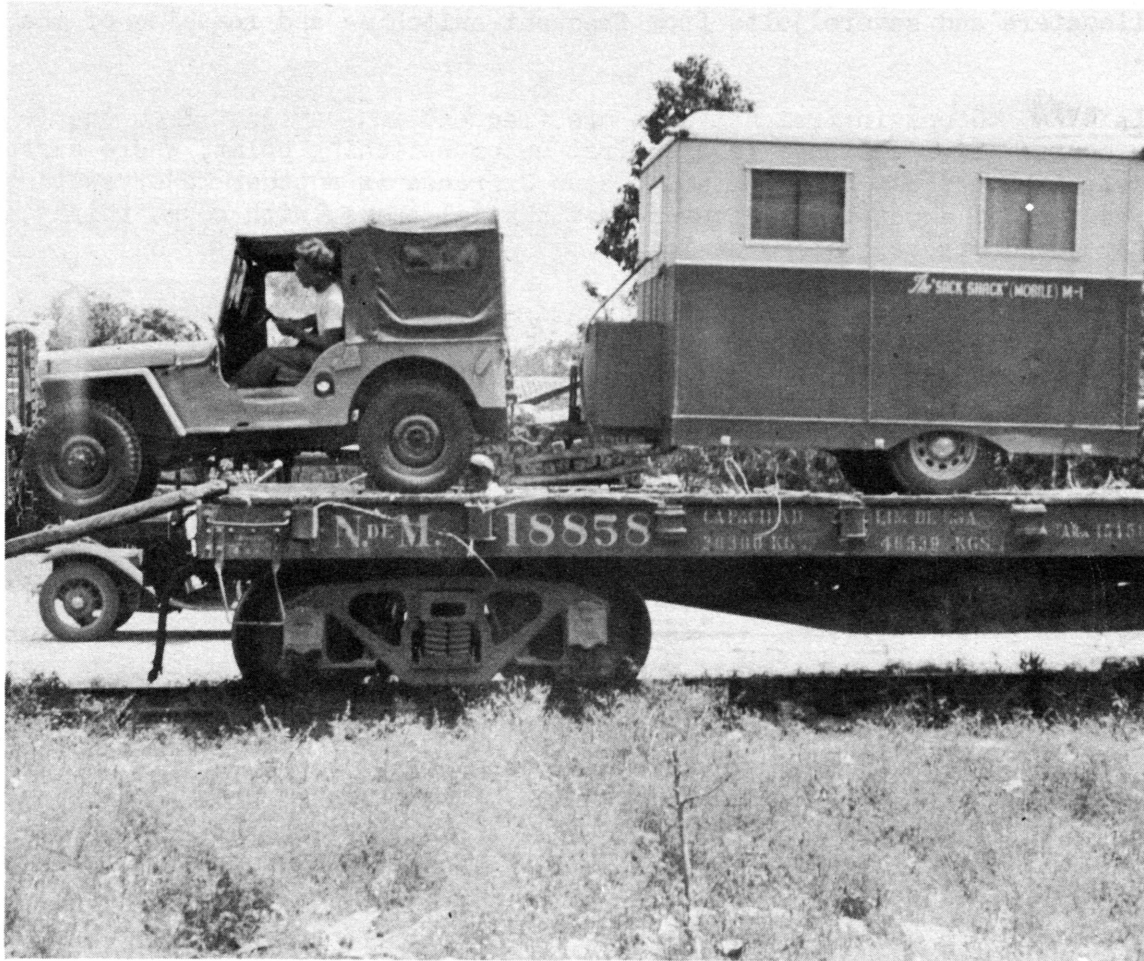
FOOD AND WATER ENROUTE Before leaving Veracruz enough supplies should be put in for a six day trip. With the exception of water for washing which is available at several stations, and the chance to buy some mangos after Juchitán, there are no other facilities of any sort available to the traveler. At some of the stations native food is sold, but it would only be bought as a last resort.

ROUGH RIDE The railroad road-bed is rough to the extreme and one wonders why the locomotive and cars stay on the track. From Veracruz to Ixtepec the ride is reasonably dustless, since grass generally grows up to the height of the rails.

TAPACHULA On arrival at Tapachula the International Hotel will seem a pleasant haven for the auto-freight train traveler, until unloading is completed and the start is made for the Guatemalan border.

The hotel is a block from the railroad station. Rooms with bath are available, English is spoken, the food is good and purified water is served. In event it is necessary to leave the auto on the flat car in the yards over night the hotel proprietor can suggest a guard to stay with the car. The usual charge for an overnight guard is five to seven pesos. The hotel proprietor can also suggest stevedores with whom you can make arrangements to have your auto unloaded. There is little work to be done besides providing the planks, but there's no chance of avoiding the "syndicate" and attempting to do the work yourself.

UNLOADING Its all but impossible to get a car which has arrived on the



UNLOADING JEEP AND TRAILER AT TAPACHULA NEAR THE BORDER OF GUATEMALA

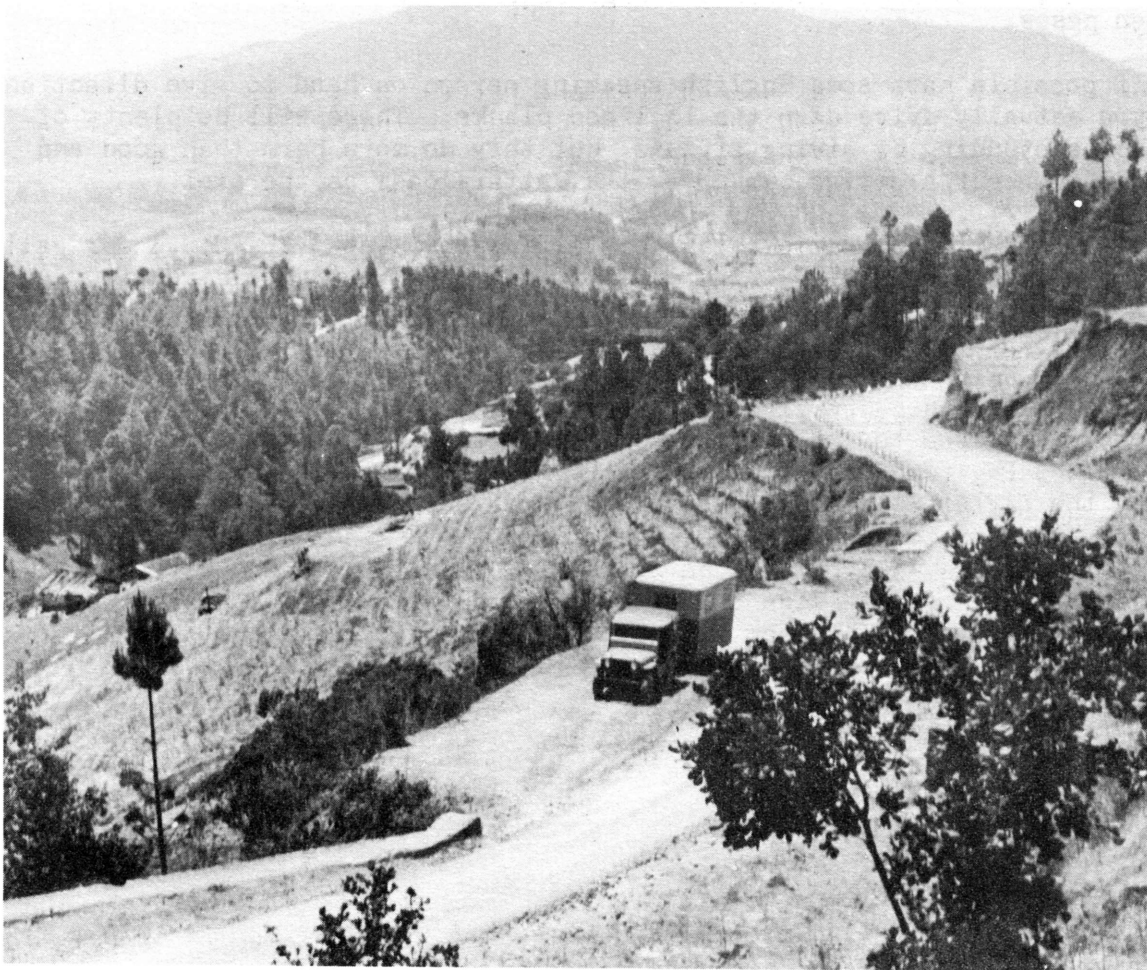
early evening train unloaded before noon the next day. Its best to just be content to wait. Being over anxious usually suggests to the freight men and unloaders that they may be able to extract an extra charge for "faster" service. In event you should arrive on Saturday, Sunday or a holiday and don't want to wait until the next business day, the standard price of the "syndicate" for immediate unloading is seventy-five pesos.

The unloading facilities at Tapachula aren't so good and you'll look in vain for a loading ramp like the one at Veracruz. Heavy planks are used to provide the track, down which you will drive your auto when unloading from the freight car. The usual unloading charge required by the stevedores is ten to fifteen pesos.

If possible have some English speaking person on hand to give directions when you actually drive down the inclined planks. There will be plenty of stevedores standing by giving signals, but they do more harm than good and would as soon put a prying bar under the battery case as the axel.

"GASOLINA" Gasoline is obtainable at Tapachula at \$.25 (U.S.) per gallon, though no pumps are in view. The clerk at the hotel can give directions on how to find the garages where gas is sold from drums. Gasoline is more expensive in Guatemala.

MEXICAN BORDER INSPECTION Its advisable to leave Tapachula no later than mid-morning for the ten mile drive to the border. The border is closed from 12 noon to 2 PM, remaining open from 2 PM to 4 PM. At the Mexican Customs Station the officials seem to require about as much palaver for one to get out of the country as to get in. If all car papers and credentials issued on entry are retained there will however be no real difficulty. Once the formalities are completed on the Mexican side the motorist is entitled to a long sigh of relief on driving across the Talisman Bridge into friendly Guatemala.



NEAR THE HIGH POINT ON THE HIGHWAY IN GUATEMALA, MAXIMUM ALTITUDE
REACHED IS ABOUT 12000 FEET

CHAPTER VI

TAPACHULA, MEXICO TO GUATEMALA CITY

GUATEMALAN BORDER INSPECTION The preliminary Guatemalan border inspection station is at the opposite end of the Talisman Bridge. Here the passport or tourist permit and auto ownership papers are inspected. There is no license charge for the car and no driver's license requirement. This inspection takes only a few minutes and from this station the motorist drives up a steep hill, making a sharp right turn at the top. The Customs House is just ahead. Here an inspection is made of baggage and auto ownership papers must again be shown. None of the officials speak English, but all are most courteous.

EXCHANGE OF PESOS After leaving Tapachula, Mexico no border money exchange stations will be found. Even the large banks in Quetzaltenango will not exchange Mexican for Guatemalan currency. The most convenient plan is to hold remaining Mexican paper money for exchange in Guatemala City (see Chapter VII). Mexican coins are not accepted for exchange in Guatemala City.

CUSTOMS HOUSE INSPECTION The full customs inspection at the hill-top station requires only about twenty minutes and is completed in an easy going way, quite different from the entry into Mexico. Few persons enter Guatemala at this point and the number of customs officials is more than ample. Some guide books mention a requirement that a deposit must be made on the car to insure that it will later be taken out of Guatemala or duty paid. Apparently the rule is not being enforced since no such requirement is indicated at the Customs House.

THE ROAD AHEAD After leaving the Customs House the first sight of the "highway" may cause fears for the worst--the road seems no more than a country lane with grass growing in the center. The route at some points is rougher and steeper, but at least is wider and there is no grass growing in the center.

"ALL WEATHER HIGHWAY" On many of the steeper climbing turns, small cobble stones have been laid. Rough gravel is however the more usual and dust is frequently more than an inch deep. The dust is only moderately bothersome and mentioned to indicate what conditions can be assumed during the rainy season. The Guatemalan section of the Pan-American Highway is designated by many U. S. and Central American authorities as being "all weather". However if the inches deep dust and broken rock above the many steep excavations are considered, the highway in Guatemala cannot properly be described as "all weather". The route could probably be driven during the rainy season, but many delays and extra hazards would be assumed.

HIGH ALTITUDE Mountain driving lies ahead for the entire trip to Guatemala City. Altitudes of 8500-feet are usual with the maximum of about 12000-feet.



THE ARCH OF MANY COLORED TILES AT THE ENTRANCE TO CHICHICASTENANGO,
GUATEMALA

YOU'RE SAFE In Guatemala there seems little of the petty thievery so common in Mexico and one can feel reasonably free to leave an auto unguarded. Even the Indians trudging along the mountain roads with their heavy loads of produce will frequently smile and wave.

POLICE The police are quite courteous, but after the first few tries it may seem best to avoid them when requesting road information in the smaller towns and along the highway. Stopping to make a simple request for road information will also bring a request from the Guatemalan cop. He will take out a notebook and ask you to write down your name then he will take a few more minutes walking around the car writing down the license number or anything else that strikes his interest.

SECOND CITY Quetzaltenango, the second largest city of Guatemala is the next main stopping point. The hotels are the Recreo and Europeo.

The office of the British Consul is immediately to the right as one enters the main square. Information about hotels and travel matters is courteously given.

SHOPS The street along the side of the British Consulate, extending out at a right angle from the square, is one of the main cross streets of the city and the location of several shops of interest to the motorist.

In the first block out from the square there is a well stocked auto supply store, there are grocery stores several blocks beyond, the post office (Communications Office) is in the fifth block and the Weissenberg Garage is located in the eighth block.

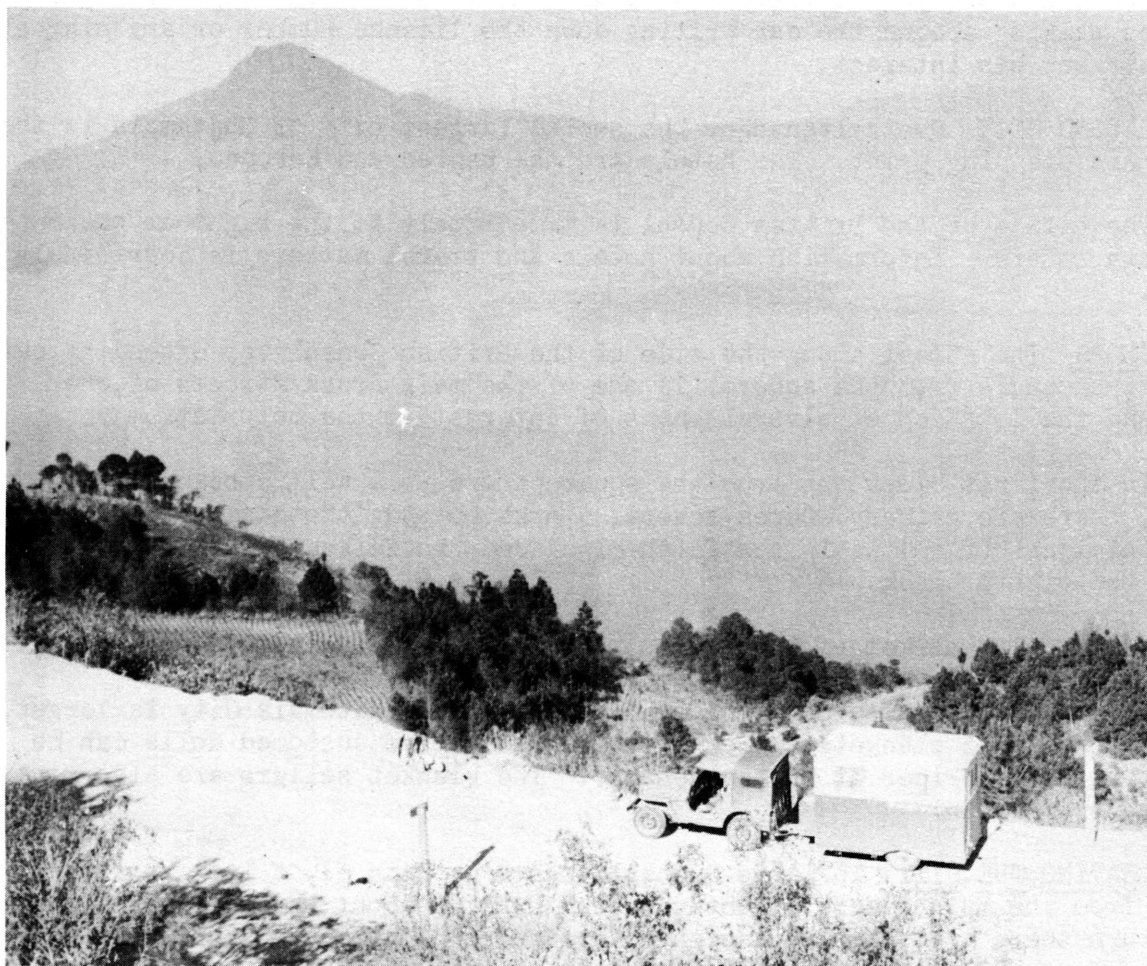
MARKET The market of Quetzaltenango is just off the main square and well worth a visit. Thursday is the principal market day. The market at Chichicastenango is more colorful and the market at Guatemala City is larger, but it seems that blankets, woven articles and native customed dolls can be bought at lower prices at Quetzaltenango. The blanket sellers are also more willing to bargain.

LEAVING THE CITY To leave Quetzaltenango on Ruta #1, a left turn is made from the main square. Continuing on Ruta #1 about three blocks beyond this turn there are several gasoline stations. The price is \$.45(U.S.) per gallon as compared to \$.52 per gallon further ahead at Solola and at Panajachel.

CHICHICASTENANGO If only one trip is made from the main highway in Guatemala, the first choice should be Chichicastenango.

A turn from Ruta #1 may be made at Totonicapan thence to "Chichi". The return trip to Ruta #1 can be made over another route through Los Encuentros. This trip off the main highway is not difficult, however it is Guatemalan mountain driving at its extreme.

The more dusty, more mountainous drive to visit Chichicastenango is especially well repaid if made on the market days of Sunday or Thursday.



OVERLOOKING GUATEMALA'S LAKE ATITLAN. THE LAKE IS 5000 FEET ABOVE SEA LEVEL AND 1500 FEET DEEP. IT IS SAID TO HAVE BEEN FORMED IN AN ANCIENT VALLEY DAMMED BY A HUGE DEPOSIT OF VOLCANIC ASH.

INDIAN MARKET To see the native market in all its color and activity the visit should be made by noon of the market day. By early afternoon the Indians have begun to pack their wares for the trek back to their homes.

Market is held in the open in the main square. The array of Indians selling farm produce is in the center. Many spend as long as three days walking to town carrying heavy loads.

The indoor shops selling blankets, dolls, carved wood masks and other articles of interest to tourists border the square. These tourist shops are open all day every day.

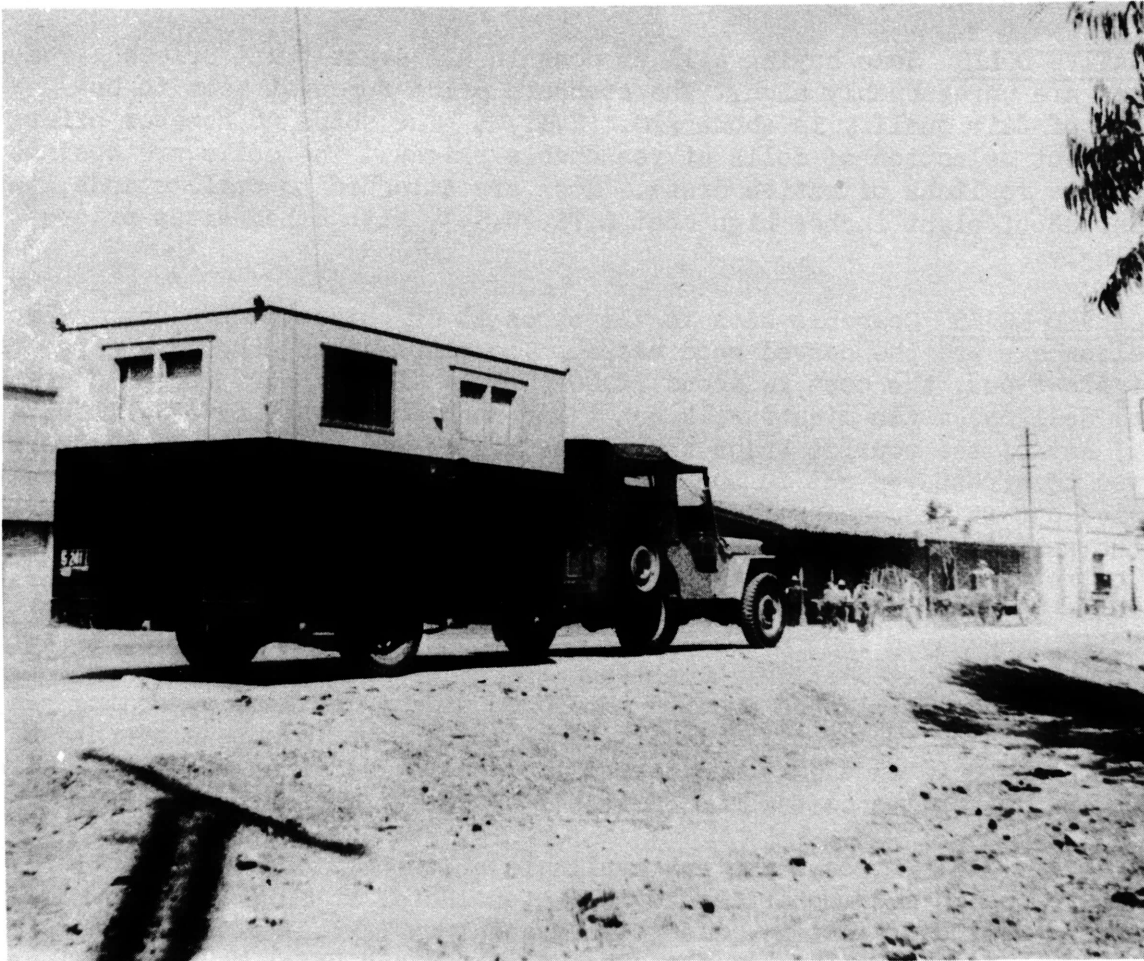
NATIVE DOLLS Some buying will be done in all events, but prices for most articles are unreasonably high. The standard price for what seem to be blankets of fair quality is about \$10. (U.S.). The shops do however offer an excellent selection of dolls at reasonable prices. The dolls are costumed in accurate replicas of native dress. Most are attached to small stands, those standing about eight inches high cost \$.75 (U.S.), with other sizes priced accordingly.

CARVED MASKS Commonly seen in the shops at Chichicastenango, but seldom sold elsewhere are the carved wood masks. The shops around the square have a few of the types, the cost is about \$2.00 (U.S.). For those interested in the unusual designs, a ten minute walk out to the shop of a woodcarver will be worthwhile. Any of the tourist shops around the square will send a little youngster with you to direct you out to the shop of a woodcarver. In spite of the walk the price out at the shop remains the same as at the market. The designs range from the religious to the grotesque, but any one of them worn at a masquerade party on return home ought to make the wearer the center of attraction.

HOTEL The Mayan Inn, probably the best appointed and most colorful hotel of Guatemala is located at Chichicastenango. Accommodations are the best. If an overnight stay is planned inquiry should be made in advance regarding reservations. Dining room service is available though one is not an overnight guest. The food is excellent and seeing the decorative dining room and Indian waiters in full native costume is in itself almost worth the price of the meal.

LAKE ATITLAN If rooms are not available at the Mayan Inn it should be possible to obtain accommodations at the Letona Hotel at Solola. From Solola a steep seven mile descent is made to Panajachel on Lake Atitlan. There are two fine hotels at this lake resort, Casa Contenta and Hotel Tzanjuju. There is also a smaller hotel The Monterrey. Hotel Tzanjuju and Hotel Monterrey are on the lake shore. Casa Contenta while not on the lake has a private beach several blocks distant. This hotel is well named and pleases the most discriminating. A marimba band plays in the dining room during the evening dinner hour.

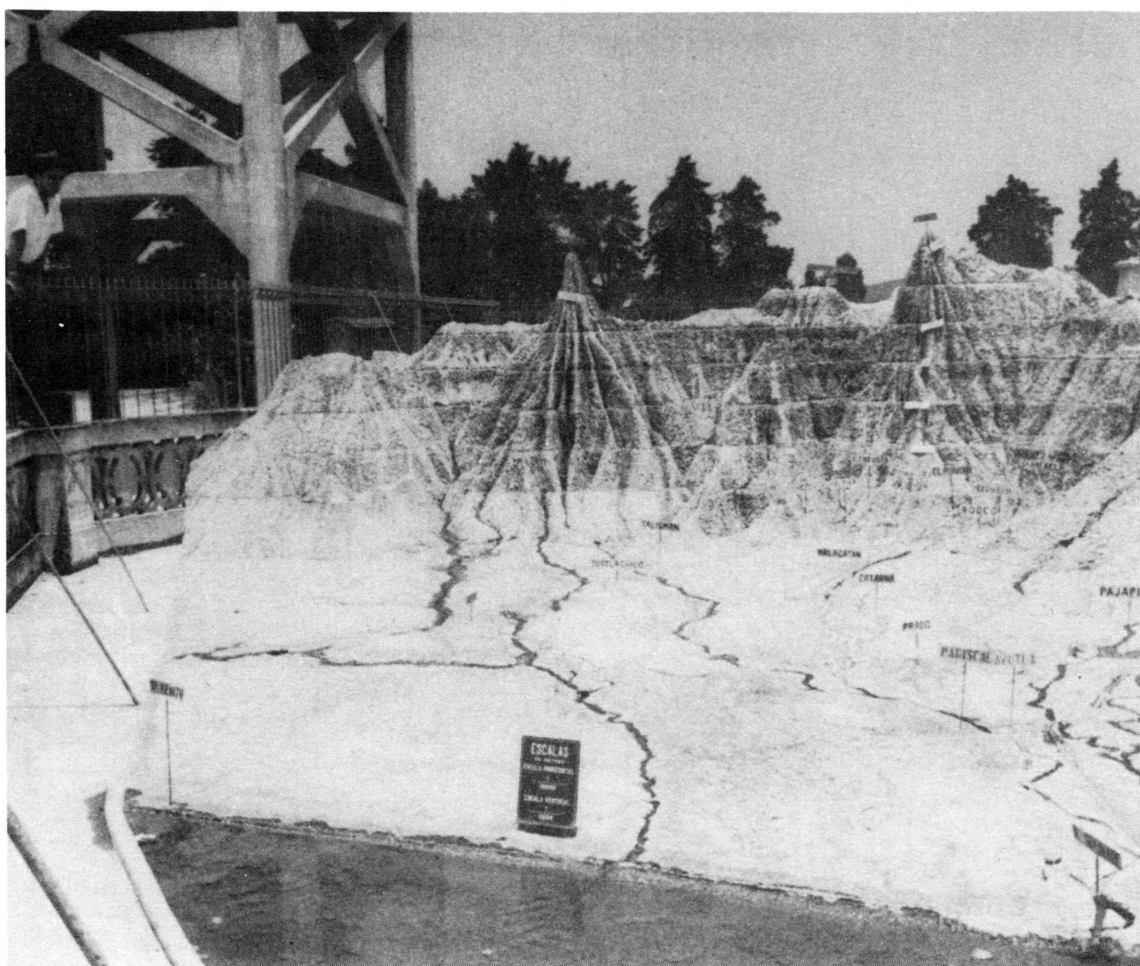
This lake resort town of Panajachel offers a pleasant overnight stopping point after a trip to the market at Chichicastenango. An interesting day may be spent there and a boat trip taken to visit the villages around Lake Atitlan. Boat trips can be arranged at Hotel Tzanjuju. For parties the charge is \$1.50 (U.S.) per person. There are sometimes sudden strong winds on the lake in the afternoon, morning trips are considered more advisable.



ENTERING GUATEMALA CITY, THE CAPITAL IS MODERN BUT OXCARTS MAY STILL BE
SEEN MOVING ALONG WITH THE AUTOMOBILE TRAFFIC

GUATEMALA CITY AHEAD The 109 kilometers from Panajachel to Guatemala City will be remembered because at about the midpoint there are several kilometers of almost level highway. Otherwise from Panajachel on, the route is as usual extremely mountainous.

Approximately twenty kilometers from the capital the highway begins the long descent and at one point there is an excellent view of Guatemala City, miles ahead on the plain below.



THE RELIEF MAP OF GUATEMALA IN MINERVA PARK AT GUATEMALA CITY

CHAPTER VII

GUATEMALA CITY AND THE ROUTE TO THE BORDER OF EL SALVADOR

ENTERING THE CITY The entrance of Ruta #1 into the city gives a disappointing first impression of the capital of Guatemala, but one not borne out by later experience.

ORIENTATION POINT As an orientation aid for later local trips take note of the first two traffic policemen seen on entering the city proper. They direct traffic at two intersections about 150 feet apart.

At this point of converging streets the highways to Antigua, San Jose and Lake Amatitlan leave the city.

NARROW STREETS The streets seem narrow compared to those of Mexico City and the traffic policemen who do about-face under their umbrellas at the intersections are somewhat bewildering at first. The usual reaction though is one of relief after the first day and the signals gain meaning--at least there are only three "blind" corners from which another car can approach and not at any point of the compass as on the many plaza-traffic circles of Mexico City.

TRAFFIC REGULATIONS The key to driving in Guatemala City is bearing in mind that at intersections the directions given by traffic policemen usually apply to an individual auto. Traffic is not heavy and it does not move in a stream. A single hand signal from a "cop" does not apply to a line of vehicles, as in the United States.

The customary hand signals used by American motorists--with left arm up raised for a right turn and left arm lowered for a left turn, are always required for turns made at an intersection where a policeman is directing traffic.

Traffic moves ahead across an intersection when the policeman is directly facing the driver or is faced directly away from the driver. While it is permissible to cross an intersection when the policeman has his back to the motorist, the safest procedure for the week-in-Guatemala-tourist-driver is to approach the intersection slowly, tip the horn lightly, wait until the policeman does an about-face, then continue ahead. The policeman will usually signal with his whistle to indicate all is clear.

THE "VIA" When a left turn is to be made, approach the intersection with the signal of your left arm lowered, wait until the policeman faces you, sounds his whistle and raises his arm pointing to the left. This is known as getting the "via".

If you approach an intersection, want to make a right or left turn, no traffic is passing and the policeman does not look your way sound the horn

lightly. Its not an insult to use the horn to get the "cop's" attention so that he will give the "via" for a turn.

Right turns are not made without getting the "via". Approach the intersection with usual up-raised arm signal and make the turn when the policeman gives the "via" by pointing to the right.

Many of the streets of the capital are one-way, but unmarked. The marker "Una Via" means one way street. "Dos Via" means two-way street.

LIGHTS OUT Casualties must be heavy, but the rule is enforced and only parking lights may be used for night driving in the city. This means that even the "lower beam" headlights may not be used. The uninitiated tourist driver out for the first time in the city at night and approaching a traffic policeman with headlights on will be treated to a stream of Spanish invective.

It must be an "old Spanish custom", but even on the highway after dusk cars will speed past without lights. Though not withstanding this custom the best course still seems to be to take a chance on a ~~bawling~~ out and use headlights on the highway--dusk or dark.

TOURIST BUREAU On entering Guatemala City a wise first stop is at the National Tourist Bureau, Av. 6, Sur 17. This bureau is an agency of the government and will courteously provide full information on about any subject connected with your stay in Guatemala. The staff is adequate and any member will be quite willing to take whatever time is needed to advise you and help solve your problems. The director in charge is Senor Francisco Valdez, who is most cordial.

HOTELS If first class hotel reservations are desired its almost necessary to make the reservations well in advance. The large hotels are crowded during most months and prices are higher for comparable rooms than in the U. S. Seemingly there are no hotels similar to the smaller and more moderate price type found in American cities.

"PENSIONS" For those desiring more economical rooms, many of the numerous pensions will be found quite satisfactory. Many are clean and serve well prepared meals, however the tourist need not expect hotel type service in these establishments. In pensions the rates for room and meals range from about \$1.50 (U.S.) and up.

TRAILER PARKING Few tourists have made the trip to Guatemala with house trailers and there are no regular trailer parks. There are however several garages having enclosed patios, where trailer parking may be arranged. A satisfactory parking place for one or two trailers is the Garage Almacenes, Av. 5, Sur 30. The garage is located only one block from the Lux Theatre and is in the center of the city. Parking space is in a patio, there is a watchman on duty at night, electricity is available, there is water but with no connection for a trailer. There is no washroom. The parking charge is \$.25 (U.S.) per day. The watchman-attendant does not speak English, however a cabinet maker with a shop in the patio does speak English and will help in making arrangements for parking.

TELEGRAPH OFFICE Radio messages to the United States may be sent in

English from the Tropical Radio Telegraph Company, 12 Calle Oriente, No. 1-B.

LAUNDRY AND DRY CLEANING Though not reasonable in price there is good 3-day laundry and dry cleaning service in Guatemala City. The charge for shirts is \$.20 (U.S.), and other prices are in proportion.

The San Antonio Laundry is probably the best. Its agency in the downtown district is in the gift and souvenir shop at 12 Calle Poniente, entre 5 a y 6a Aves. The number of pieces in the laundry bundle will be carefully counted in the store and a duplicate of the laundry list issued as claim check. You can expect to have returned the number of pieces sent.

TIME AND NEWSWEEK In the same section of the city as the laundry agency there is a book shop stocking most of the leading U.S. magazines including the Latin-American airmail editions of Time and Newsweek. The shop is The General Agency of Foreign Publications, 12 Calle Poniente, No. 1-E, Apartado 84.

SOUVENIRS Souvenir shops second only to those of Mexico City, in number and variety are found on the main avenues. Silver work and hand woven textiles predominate, but again articles of handicraft are relatively expensive. If all souvenirs are considered of slight utility and only the unusual is sought, the most novel articles are the colorful and artistically made Guatemalan dolls. They are made in all sizes and the variety of the costumes in which they are decorated seems only limited by the variation in the costumes worn by the Indians themselves.

These dolls are sold in many shops throughout the city. A small shop near the new market place has one of the best selections. This shop is the Tiziguan Tinamit, Mercado Del Sur #1 - Tienda #7 y 29, de Jacinto Escott C. The larger size, about twelve inches high, costs from \$.60 to \$.75 (U.S.).

RESTAURANTS In the hotels and better restaurants one can expect to pay \$1.50 (U.S.) for the noon or evening meal. Those desiring the best restaurant and one with color will like the El Patio. Its located at Calljon de Luna #6 (near the Palace Hotel). The meals are good and the waitresses are barefooted. The Mayan is also a good restaurant and is located nearby.

MONEY EXCHANGE The Guatemalan monetary unit is the "quetzal". It is exchanged for the U. S. dollar without charge. One dollar is equal to one quetzal. Travelers cheques are readily accepted at all but the smallest shops.

Pesos carried from Mexico can be exchanged for Guatemalan money at the Moneda Fraccionari, Banco Central de Guatemala, Calle 9, #10 (a few doors from the corner of Calle 9 and Avenida 7). Mexican coins are not accepted for exchange.

THE QUETZAL AND THE "QUETZAL" Those coming to the Moneda Fraccionari to exchange pesos or cash travelers cheques can settle money matters and perhaps also answer a question about which they've become curious--"what is a quetzal when the term doesn't apply to money?". The unit of money is named for the bird which is the national emblem of Guatemala. According to legend the quetzal will not survive in captivity and is known as the bird of liberty. The



THE CATHEDRAL ON PARQUE CENTRAL AT GUATEMALA CITY

plumage of the quetzal is brilliant, the upper parts and throat are greenish and the under parts crimson. Seeing this plumage of bright iridescent colors it is easy to understand how the bird came to be regarded as the symbol of deity by the ancient Mayas and Aztecs. There is an interesting stuffed quetzal in the main lobby of the Banco Central de Guatemala, in the same building and just around the corner from the Moneda Fraccionari.

U. S. CONSUL The office of the Consul General of the U. S. A. is at Avenida 5, Sur 14. Its a convenient mail address if advance hotel reservations are uncertain, though little effective assistance of any other kind can be expected.

SIGHTSEEING Guatemala City offers the most convenient center for stay if trips to Antigua and other places off the highway are planned.

Probably the least time consuming way to see the places of interest in the city proper is by Clark's Tours or Guatemala Tours. Though the auto tourist provided with a copy of the New World Guides to the Latin American Republics or the Four Keys to Guatemala, will find "self-conducted" tours to Antigua and other more distant points of interest a quite satisfactory and far more economical method of sightseeing.

Lake Amatitlan is less than an hour's drive from Guatemala City and a pleasant place for a Saturday or Sunday excursion. Amatitlan is the favorite week-end resort for the capital, there is sailing, motor boating and excellent swimming. Many beautiful chalets border the western end of the lake as one approaches just off Ruta #3. A gravel road borders the lake. This drive will be dusty, but an interesting trip considering the view of the lake it affords and the many fine plantations. It is the fortunate visitor to Guatemala who somehow during his stay receives an invitation to visit at one of these picturesque beautiful "fincas". The principal crops are sugar cane and coffee.

PETEN The Peten area of Guatemala provides an opportunity for off-the-beaten track adventuring. Travel to the villages of this jungle-chicle-coffee section is only by planes of Aviateca Airline. Aviateca uses a couple of Douglas DC-2's, C-47's and a lone Ford tri-motor, operating mainly for the trade in chicle. Supplies are brought in to the many remote villages, the tons of burlap covered bales of chicle brought out are marked, "Wrigley Co., Chicago".

Airline tickets are bought and reservations made at the Guatemala City Airport. The first stop is at Flores, about an hour flying time out of Guatemala City. The town is located on a small island and the sod airstrip is on the lake shore. The fare for this air-adventuring is not cheap, with the ticket for this first hop costing \$16.00 (U. S.), but perhaps for the second time on the tour economy is flaunted without later regret.

There is a slight excuse for a hotel at Flores which caters mainly to the chicleros, the rugged fellows who go out into the jungle to gather the chicle. An overnight stay and a tramp around the next day ought to be interesting, but is only for the most adaptable.

At later stops on the route the planes land on the grass strips at villages that amount to little more than a scattering of thatched dome huts.

The seats in the plane are removed at Flores and from there on the traveler while not having to contend with fellow tourists will have some competition from live pigs and chickens and finally have to take the least lumpy block of chicle for a seat.

TIGER HUNTING Except perhaps for the scientific expeditionists going in to this area to collect wild turkeys, birds or study the Mayan ruins, Peten will interest the average moderate adventurer as a place to hunt "El Tigre". The game is more accurately the jaguar, also known as the American tiger, but in any event is a large cat with enough fight to interest any sportsman.

Peten is a readily accessible place for a reasonably economical big game hunt without all the impedimenta of a safari. The government is encouraging settlement at the village of Poptun. Some frame government buildings have been constructed there, and presumably permission might be obtained to stay for a few days of hunting.

The best hunting is however done in the savannas around Santa Tribio. Anyone going there should know in advance that he is really on his own. There are about six dome thatched huts along the grass airstrip where the Aviateca planes land and these huts make up the town. Other than camping out, the only other possibility would be getting advance permission from the airline office in Guatemala City to swing a hammock in the freight shed.

According to reports the best time for this hunting is at the end of the rainy season, in early September. Though judging from the number of skins one sees tied around the baggage of the chiclero passengers on the airplane, the hunting should be alright anytime except during the rainy season.

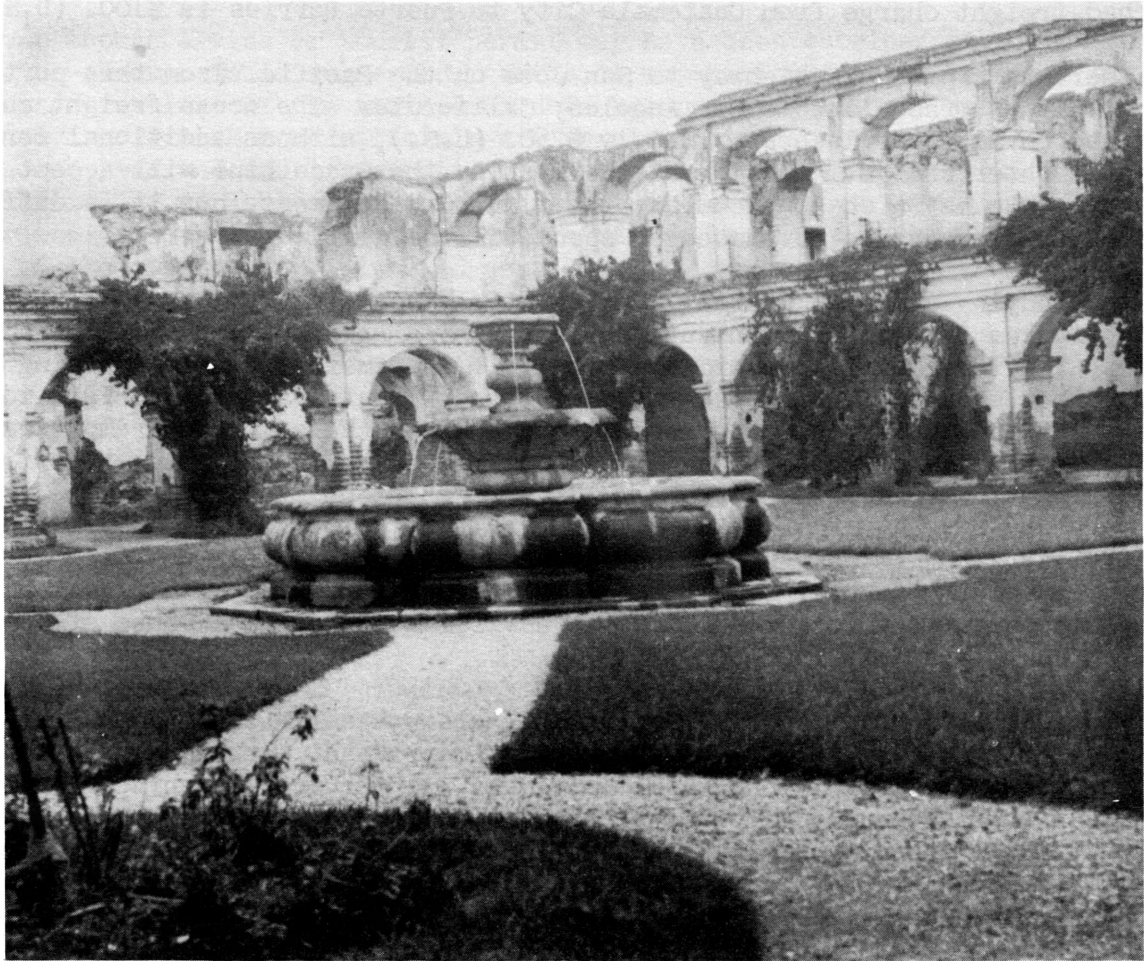
There are no English speaking persons in these small villages of Peten and a knowledge of Spanish or an interpreter would almost be a necessity.

In their big game hunting the Indians use knives, shotguns and .22 rifles, since high powered rifles are seldom made available, though certainly preferable. Most of the hunting is done at night, and about the only equipment needed other than a rifle would be several powerful electric spotlights.

It seems that much horse back riding or walking is not necessary on these hunts. The first-pilots of Aviateca Airline are Americans and they tell the story of one of their members who did some hunting on a day off. The pilot went out on horseback, returning sore in the usual places without seeing any game, only to be told that "El Tigre" had been in the village that night.

For those only traveling through Peten, jaguar skins are for sale for from \$5.00 to \$10.00 (U. S.).

Persons planning to hunt will need to apply to the local Guatemalan Consul in the U. S. for permission to bring firearms into the country. High powered rifles are not available in Guatemala.



RUINS AT THE OLD CAPITAL OF GUATEMALA, NOW KNOWN AS ANTIGUA. THE CITY
WAS ALMOST WHOLLY DESTROYED BY EARTHQUAKE IN 1773.

TURNING BACK Those motorists not planning to drive further south than Guatemala City and also not wishing to drive back to Laredo, have the alternative of selling their auto and returning to the United States by airline.

Due to the high ocean shipping rates, and post-war demand for automobiles in Guatemala, a car can usually be sold locally for somewhat more than it would bring in the U. S. In addition the cost of the return freight would be saved. Automobiles may however be shipped to New Orleans or New York from the Guatemalan east coast port of Puerto Barrios. The ocean freight charge is \$.37 $\frac{1}{2}$ per cubic foot and there are additional miscellaneous costs. There is no passable road to Puerto Barrios and railroad shipment to that point is required. The railroad freight charge from Guatemala City to Puerto Barrios is \$100. (U.S.).

There is a passable highway to San Jose on the Pacific. From this port shipment is by Grace Line to Los Angeles, California. The ocean freight charge for a medium size car is approximately \$250. (U.S.), with an additional ten percent lighter charge. On some of their ships the Grace Line will accept passengers who may wish to accompany their auto in shipment, but it is difficult to determine in advance if passenger space will be available.

In studying a map of Central America it may seem that the easy solution to the problem of returning an auto would be shipping from San Jose to Acapulco, Mexico. The idea being to avoid the difficult Guatemalan mountain driving and the patience exhausting railroad shipment through southern Mexico. This ideal arrangement is not possible at present though since there are no tramp steamers calling regularly at San Jose and the Grace Line ships do not stop at ports in Mexico.

HIGHWAY INFORMATION A long term construction program is in progress for improvement of the highway from the capital to the border of El Salvador and inquiry about current road conditions is advised somewhat in advance of departure from Guatemala City.

The otherwise helpful National Tourist Bureau has limited information about even the Guatemalan section of the Pan-American Highway further south, and none about road conditions in El Salvador. So for those wishing to know about what conditions may be expected ahead it is suggested that a call be made at the office of the two U. S. highway engineers serving the Guatemalan government. This advance road information may be obtained from Mr. Palmer and Mr. Krichesky. The road information they can supply is the only really accurate source of information in Guatemala regarding highway conditions there and in El Salvador.

If road maps are available these engineers will know the source. They may also have spare copies of the maps used by their office.

The secretaries in this office speak English and a phone call in advance will save time, since Mr. Palmer and Mr. Krichesky are frequently out of the office supervising construction. The telephone number is 20-38.

The office of these engineers is in the building marked Edificio #7, and it has a large sign over the entrance, Direccion General de Caminos, and

is on the Exposition Grounds. To locate the building, drive to the orientation point mentioned earlier in the chapter (the two nearby policemen, seen as one enters the city). Avenida Ferrocarril begins at this main intersection (its the avenue paralleling the railroad tracks). Drive down this avenue about two miles and turn right at the entrance to the Exposition Grounds. After this right turn follow the street through the Exposition Grounds for about one and one-half miles, the large building, Direccion General de Caminos, is on the left.

CONSUL OF EL SALVADOR In Guatemala City the Consulate of El Salvador is at 7 Calle, Poniente #7. The consulate is another suggested stop to make prior to beginning the trip to El Salvador.

Even though a visa or tourist permit may have been obtained at a previous place a re-check here is suggested. While it may be found that other matters concerning crossings at the various borders are not strictly enforced, the otherwise inactive customs officials are regular "bird dogs" where the smallest defects in visas and tourist permits are to be found. They give particular attention to the variable expiration dates, therefore a re-examination of passport or tourist permit is always advisable before leaving one capital for the border of the country to be entered next.

Those carrying a U. S. passport will find a "transito" visa the most desirable type to have for travel and possible stay of a few days in El Salvador. A "transito" visa for El Salvador costs \$1.00 (U. S.). It must be used within fifteen days and is valid for eight days after entering the country.

BORDER STATIONS The border of El Salvador is 167 kilometers from Guatemala City. Long sections of this highway have been relocated to eliminate sharp turns. There is still considerable gravel and the usual dust, but the drive is easy compared to the steep inclines and hairpin turns of the route coming into San Marcos.

The Guatemalan border inspection station is open from 8 AM to 12 noon and in the afternoon until 6 PM, on week days. Closing time is 12 noon on Saturdays with reopening on Monday morning.

During the week-end and after regular hours, passage can usually be obtained on payment of an extra charge of \$.50 (U. S.) per person.

The ordinary Guatemalan exit inspection is routine and takes only a few minutes. With few autos and buses on the road no waiting need be expected. All considered the officials are less officious, and less time is required than the inspection required by some of our own western states.



THERE ARE FEW SOURCES OF MAPS AND ROAD INFORMATION ALONG THE PAN-AMERICAN HIGHWAY AND ADVICE RECEIVED AT U. S. PUBLIC ROADS ADMINISTRATION OFFICES IS OF GREAT ASSISTANCE TO MOTORISTS NOW MAKING TRIPS TO CENTRAL AMERICA.

CHAPTER VIII

FROM THE BORDER OF EL SALVADOR TO SAN SALVADOR

PAVED HIGHWAY The view ahead into El Salvador through the elaborate border entrance arch seems a mirage--the road beyond appears to be, but actually is a paved highway. Seldom will a traveler leave colorful Guatemala without regret, but after many a dusty mile of rough driving, regret is somewhat tempered by anticipation of the smooth, though less picturesque traveling in El Salvador.

EL SALVADOR BORDER INSPECTION According to a customs official, the El Salvador border station is open seven days a week, at all hours except noon. There is not supposed to be an extra charge for border passage at odd hours.

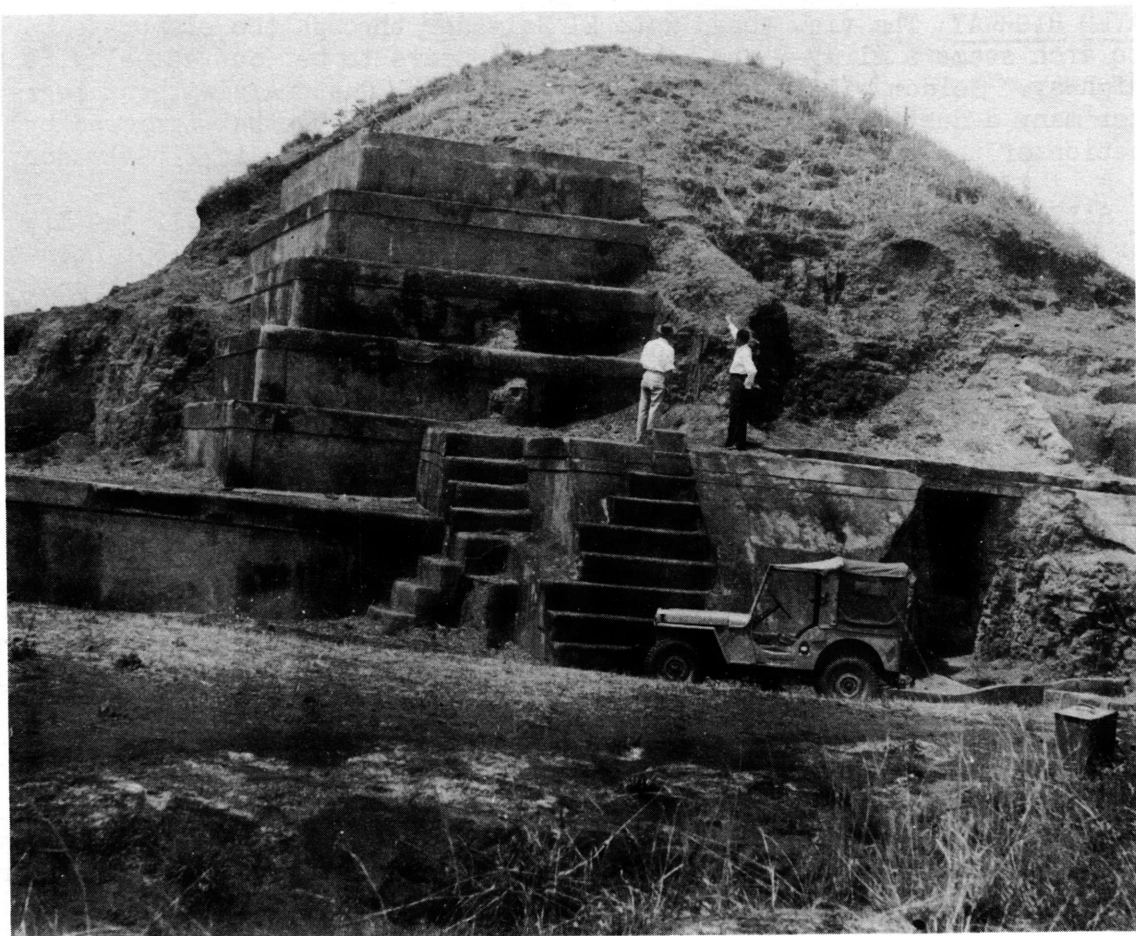
At some inspection stations, though not necessarily at this one, unauthorized charges are made for customs inspections after the hours of the usual business day. To learn if extra charges are actually due, a receipt can be requested. Such a request can be expected to eliminate an undue exaction.

The El Salvador entry is also accomplished without delay. At the entry station, passport and visa are the credentials requested.

POLICE REGISTRATION Police registration is required within forty-eight hours after entering the country. Travelers who will reach the capital within the forty-eight hour limit are expected to register at that place. This registration is carried out at the Central Office of Immigration, 6a Calle Oriente and 8a Avenida Sur, San Salvador. At the border inspection station a notice printed in English and directing registration at the above address is given.

On entering El Salvador and later in Nicaragua it will be noticed that the police procedures in addition to regular passport requirements have become more stringent and bothersome. The first reaction is to be critical of the countries that invite the tourist trade and then make travel difficult. Much can be said for this view, however these governments are not trying to bother ordinary non-troublesome tourists, but with problems of internal stability existing, tourists just become victims of circumstance. It won't make the various delays easier to accept, but it will be seen that tourists are not discriminated against when it is noticed that police regulations are more severely applied by the countries to their own nationals.

SECOND INSPECTION Leaving the border station an official will give instructions in Spanish, in which the word "Candelaria" will be emphasized. This all means that the town of Candelaria is ten kilometers beyond and at that point a stop is also required. This stop is for baggage inspection and recording of extra equipment and spare tires. The station is supposed to be open at all hours, as at the border.



MAKING A TOUR OF THE MAYAN RUINS AT SAN ANDREAS, ON THE HIGHWAY NEAR SAN SALVADOR, WITH THE DISCOVERER, DR. TOMAS JIMENEZ, DIRECTOR OF THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF EL SALVADOR.

A stop of about thirty minutes can be expected while the description of the car, tire serial numbers, and list of extra equipment is taken. The autoist is given a copy of the typed form and will be required to present it at the exit inspection station at the El Salvador-Honduras border.

The drive from the border to San Salvador is easy, the inclines are moderate and the maximum altitude reached is somewhat over one thousand feet.

SECOND CITY Santa Ana, the second city of El Salvador is twenty kilometers from the border. The leading hotel is The Florida. It is satisfactory, but somewhat less than what would be expected in a city of this size.

The most likely overnight parking for a trailer is directly in front of the Municipal Palace. Parking is permitted there, though an explanation to the nearest policeman is advisable.

AUTO PARTS STORE There is an exceptionally well stocked auto parts store in the city, the Royal McEntee Motor Company, there is a service department in connection. The address is, Avenida Independencia and 5a Calle Poniente.

LAKE RESORT Lake Coatepeque, one of the favorite resorts of El Salvador and one principally visited on week-ends, is located about ten miles from Santa Ana. The lake is easily reached from the Pan American Highway. Driving from Santa Ana to San Salvador a right turn is made on to a branch road at the white stone 51 kilometer marker. The lake is five miles from the point of making this right turn.

Hotel del Lago, directly on the lake is very satisfactory, though not in the manner of Casa Contenta on Lake Atitlan. There is swimming from the hotel pier. Advance reservation is suggested if a visit is to be made on Saturday or Sunday.

ENTERING THE CAPITAL The entry to San Salvador is pleasant as one approaches the city along Avenida Roosevelt, a well landscaped parkway lined with many of the capital's finest homes.

U. S. CONSUL Along Avenida Roosevelt, nearer the center of the city, and on the left is the Hospital Benjamin Bloom. Those wishing to stop at the U.S. Embassy and Consulate should turn left two blocks beyond the hospital. The embassy is one block ahead, on the corner, after the left turn is made. The address is Calle Arce and 19a Avenida Sur.

The U. S. Embassy and Consulate is a suggested first stop. The offices are closed on Sunday, on Saturday there is only one official on duty. The attitude there is one of cordial assistance, without any of the stuffiness found at the U. S. Consulate in Guatemala City. Time will be saved if information about police registration is obtained from the consulate. House trailers are a rarity in El Salvador and it may be necessary for non-Spanish speaking tourists to have one of the consular officials call the Central Police Office about the matter. In addition to registration of the trailer a special police permit must be secured if the trailer is to be parked overnight on a public street.

MAIL ADDRESS For an advance mail address the U. S. consulate is again suggested for this city (see address in previous paragraph). When having mail sent to one of the U. S. Consulates its helpful to have the envelopes additionally

marked, "Please Hold for U. S. Tourist".

TRAFFIC REGULATIONS The system of traffic signals varies only slightly from Guatemala City. The difference being that traffic moves ahead when the traffic policeman is standing in a position so that his right or left side is facing the approaching motorist. Drivers are required to use hand signals as in Guatemala and the policeman must give you a hand signal before a right or left turn is made. The horn may be used to get a signal to turn.

LIGHTS ON Headlights are used for night driving in San Salvador so it isn't necessary to depend only on parking lights as in Mexico City and Guatemala City.

ROAD INFORMATION There is an auto club in San Salvador, the Centro Cultural Motoristas de El Salvador, at 6a Calle Oriente, #18. Some assistance may be obtained by Spanish speaking tourists.

The real source of road information is the Public Roads Administration, of the Federal Works Agency, with an office in the Nuevo Mundo Hotel. This office is similar to the one in Guatemala City and is completely staffed by engineers from the U. S. They have the latest information about the highway as far south as Costa Rica. No spare maps are available.

Hotels and even gasoline stations are almost non-existent along the route of the Pan-American Highway between San Salvador and Managua. Driving from San Salvador to Managua in one day is a difficult trip, and at least one overnight stop enroute will probably be necessary. Through the kindness of the men of the Public Roads Administration, tourists have been permitted to make an overnight stop and buy gasoline at Comali Camp, in Honduras. While at the P. R. A. office in San Salvador, inquiry should be made to determine whether tourists may still be accommodated at the camp.

CONSUL OF HONDURAS In San Salvador the office of the Consul of Honduras is at 8a Avenida Norte #17. The usual flag and large enamel seal won't be seen over the door, but this address is correct. A visa can be obtained in a few minutes. There is no charge and photographs are not required.

CONSUL OF NICARAGUA The route of the Pan-American Highway does not pass through Tegucigalpa, the capital of Honduras, so those who have not previously obtained a Nicaraguan visa, will also need to secure this visa in San Salvador. The Embassy and Consulate of Nicaragua is at 7a Avenida Norte #45. No photographs are required and a visa is made out in a few minutes, tourists are invited to wait in the pleasant patio.

TRAILER PARKING There are many garages in San Salvador though for some unexplained reason they will not readily accept a trailer for temporary parking. There is a bus repair garage, Taller-Union, C. A. Martinez, 2a Calle Poniente #114, at which a trailer may be parked. Parking is under a canopy in the shade, there is electricity, and water is available. A watchman is on duty at night and the front gate is locked at eleven PM. The charge is 1.50 colones per day. Trailer-ites accustomed to clean trailer parks and some conveniences won't like this location, but no better public parking place is likely to be found.

HOTEL The Nuevo Mundo Hotel at Plaza Morazan is probably the city's best. The

meals are good and the dining room service has a promptness not often seen in hotels at home or abroad. There is a clean modern barber shop in the hotel.

MARKET The public market at San Salvador is so-so, even in this more tropical climate the fresh fruit and vegetables do not compare well with those of Guatemala. Handiwork articles of interest to tourists are not generally to be found. Probably the best selection of craftwork will be found at Almacen de Las Cajas de Credito Rural (Poral La Dalia) 2 Calle Oriente #17. The purses of woven straw are artistically made and seem well worth the price of 2.50 colones.

BANKS A branch of the Bank of London & South America is located on the Morazan Plaza (across the square from the Nuevo Mundo Hotel).

The route of the highway through Honduras is less than a hundred miles and ordinary expenditures are so unlikely that obtaining Honduran currency while in San Salvador is not suggested. Surplus Honduran currency is difficult to exchange outside the country. Though should Honduran money be desired it may be obtained at the Banco Salvadoreno, also on the Plaza Morazan, across from the Nuevo Mundo Hotel.

"CASA CLARK" A stay in San Salvador isn't complete without a visit to "Casa Clark", or correctly The Blue Door. Its on 4a Avenida Norte, no house number shows--but its just over a block from the Nuevo Mundo Hotel. The Blue Door is an endeavor of the ladies of the U. S. colony and is operated for the benefit of local charities. The ice cream is the best as are the servings of "American baked" cake, pie, up-side-down cake, waffles and sandwiches.

"GASOLINA" Gasoline is readily obtainable for 1.23 colones per gallon (about \$.50 U. S.). On leaving San Salvador there isn't anything to do but fill the tank at this price since there are few dependable gasoline sources before reaching Managua.



CROSSING THE LEMPA RIVER BRIDGE IN EL SALVADOR, NEAR THE BORDER OF HONDURAS. THIS SUSPENSION BRIDGE OF 1305 FEET IS THE LONGEST OF ITS TYPE IN CENTRAL AMERICA.

CHAPTER IX

SAN SALVADOR TO THE HONDURAN - NICARAGUAN BORDER

EARLY START The distance to Comali Camp, Honduras from San Salvador is only 225 miles but a start as near daylight as possible is recommended. Beyond San Miguel the highway is rough gravel and the surrounding country barren and desolate.

LEAVING SAN SALVADOR The route out of San Salvador to the border of Honduras is unmarked. For easiest orientation, return to the street on which the city was originally entered, Avenida Roosevelt. Follow this street east as it changes name to 2a Calle Poniente then changes to 2a Calle Oriente and at 2a Calle Oriente and 14a Avenida Norte turn left. Continue on this avenue until passing a large church on the right, turn right at this corner and continue out this main thoroughfare for 1.1 miles. At this point there is a "Y" with a prominently marked "Calso" filling station in the triangle. At the "Y" keep right. If the correct turns have been made, the Pan American Airport will be passed on the left at about the 9 kilometer marker. At the 10 kilometer marker a highway branches to the right (toward the airport), continue straight, do not make the right turn.

SAN MIGUEL The highway as far as San Miguel is paved asphalt and the inclines are moderate. There are no towns of consequence until San Miguel is reached. No gasoline is sold enroute and there are no auto repair facilities.

San Miguel is at the 138 kilometer marker. As the city is approached a prominent "Y" will be seen ahead. There is a gasoline station in the triangle. The right arm of the "Y" is the highway leading into San Miguel.

Gasoline is sold at San Miguel and it is advisable to fill-up there since no sources of motor fuel will be seen before reaching Comali Camp. There is supposed to be an Esso dealer at San Lorenzo and at Choluteca but the supply at these points is uncertain.

Buying gas at San Miguel also offers a convenient means of using any remaining Salvadorean currency. There are no stores between this city and the border and there are no charges at the border which would require Salvadorean money.

If the station at the "Y" is not operating it will be necessary to drive some distance into the city proper to buy gasoline. To enter the city, follow the right arm of the "Y", along the cemetery, then making a left turn near the main gate.

Return over the same route to the "Y" at the approach to the city, the left arm of the "Y" is the present route of the Pan American Highway to the border of Honduras. This section of the route is locally known as the Carreteria Militar and beyond San Miguel the road is rough gravel.

BORDER STATIONS The El Salvador-Honduras border is at the 200 kilometer marker. Just before reaching the Gascaron River bridge a sharp right turn is made to the El Salvador border station where an exit inspection is made. Passports are inspected at the immigration office. At the office of police, the driver is required to present the auto and equipment description form received at the time of the entry inspection at Candelaria. The description of the car and presence of listed extra equipment is verified. This border station is supposed to be open at all hours with passage given at any hour without extra charge. None of the officials speak English.

This exit inspection is completed in a few minutes then out to the highway again and across the bridge into Honduras.

The Honduras border station is at the opposite end of the Gascaron Bridge, and there too the inspection is accomplished without delay. The official is pleasantly unofficious and in about five minutes has completed the necessary inspecting and rubber stamping.

The Honduran border office is supposed to be open from 8 AM to 12 noon, and 2 PM to 5 PM, with an extra charge for passage at other hours. There is only one official on duty and arriving during the above hours is advised, however the official seems to live at the station and presumably could be routed out after hours for a fee.

There is no license charge for usual transit through Honduras, there are no other fees and no health certificate requested.

ROAD INFORMATION At the border the highway begins as a wide, smooth hard surfaced road, but unfortunately this is not representative of what may be expected some distance ahead.

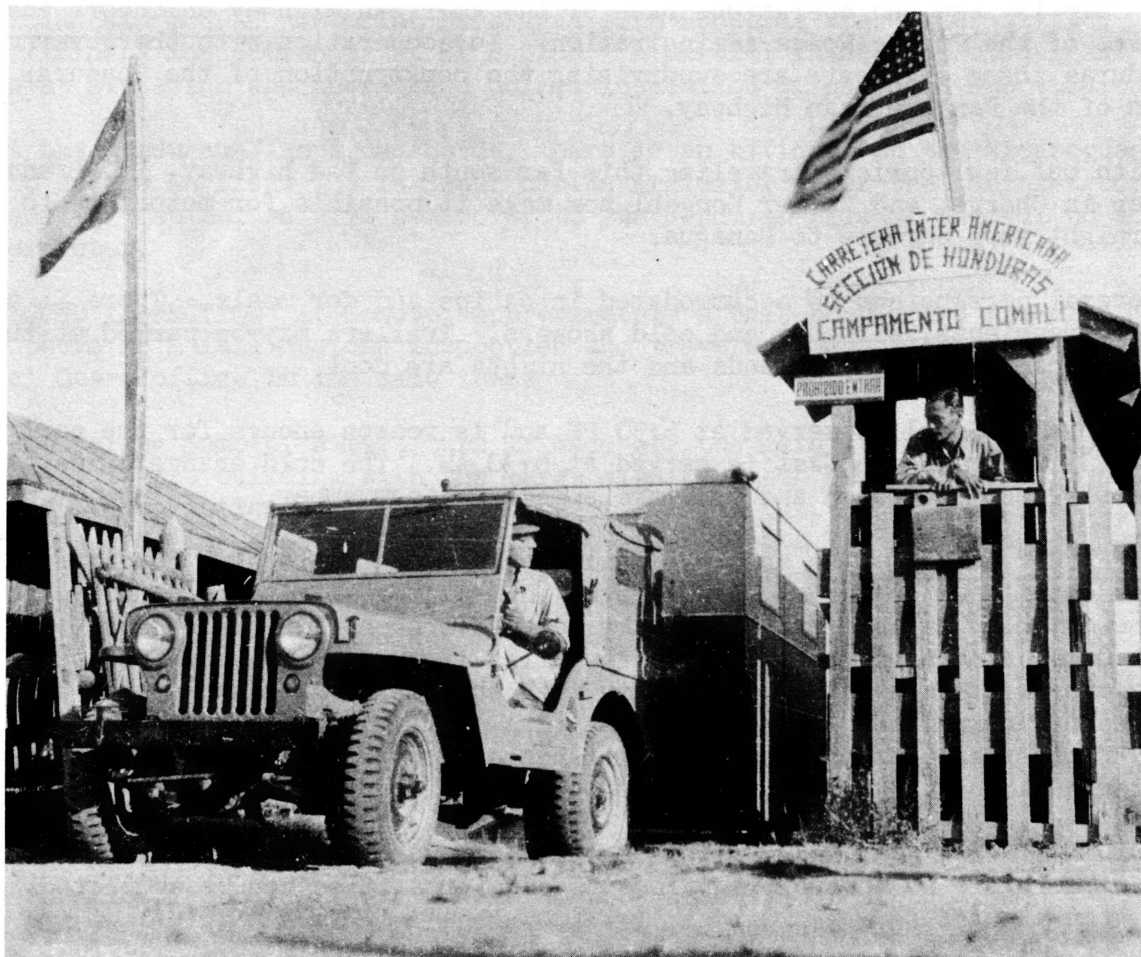
From the border and through most of Honduras the area through which the highway passes is the most barren and most sparsely populated of the entire route from Laredo to Managua. There are no reports of holdups or molestation of autoists, but during this travel a fire arm with a short barrel wouldn't seem excess baggage.

There is a moderate amount of mountain driving in Honduras, but the inclines are not sharp and will not rate as more than "gently rolling" compared to the highway in Guatemala.

HIGHWAY JUNCTION Approximately twenty-six miles from the El Salvador-Honduras border a right turn is made at a "T" junction. This turning place is marked with a large yellow and black sign lettered Jicaro Galan. Highway distances to points ahead are given. To verify making this turn correctly, about fifty yards after making the right turn there is a cantina with a sign in large letters "Pan American Bar"

SAN LORENZO The highway passes through San Lorenzo, in the town the route turns sharply left. This turn is unmarked and inquiry is suggested regarding the route, on first entering the town.

CHOLUTECA The next large town is Choluteca. In the approach a long bridge is crossed. The pension at the far end of the bridge seems satisfactory for an



LEAVING COMALI CAMP, HONDURAS, THE HEADQUARTERS AND HOUSING CENTER SET UP BY THE U. S. GOVERNMENT FOR ENGINEERS WORKING ON THAT SECTION OF THE PAN- AMERICAN HIGHWAY.

overnight stay. The small store in connection sells U. S. brands of soft drinks.

COMALI CAMP Comali Camp, somewhat past the mid-point between San Salvador and Managua is an hour's drive beyond Choluteca.

The camp is several hundred yards off the highway on the left, at the village of Comali. Camp and buildings are reminiscent of a small army post, and soon after turning off the main highway the American flag can be seen flying over the camp entrance and guard station. After the day's drive just completed the sure haven of the camp and the flag at the entrance are as welcome a sight to the adventuring motorist as is the statue in New York harbor to the ocean traveler. Comali Camp is home and operations base of the American highway engineers and their families, of the Public Roads Administration. In cooperation with the government of Honduras these engineers are supervising the construction of the Honduras section of the Pan American Highway.

With but few tourists traveling this far south on the highway, Mr. Bradshaw, Engineer in Charge, and Walter Kongehl now make it possible for motorists to make an overnight stop enroute to Managua.

Several persons can be accommodated in cabins and for meals. There is a wash room for transients, with hot and cold showers. Trailers may be parked at the camp. The camp is in the uplands and the nights are cool.

The evening meal is served at 5:30 PM and is reason enough for the early start from San Salvador. Breakfast is served at 6:30 AM. The cold orange juice, safe-milk, Post-Toasties, bacon and eggs are something to remember.

DIFFICULT DRIVING The most difficult section of the road in Honduras lies between Comali and the border of Nicaragua, but with a start from camp by about 7 AM the drive to Managua can be made by late afternoon of the same day. At Ducuali Camp, Nicaragua, about forty-five miles from Comali it would be possible to stay overnight in event of difficulty with the car. The camp is used by employees of an American company building this section of the highway. There are usually no Americans at the camp, however the enclosure is fenced and guarded and a trailer could be parked for the night.

BORDER STATION The Honduras border inspection station is 17 kilometers from Comali. There are no unusual requirements and formalities can be completed in five to ten minutes.

CHAPTER X

FROM THE BORDER OF HONDURAS TO MANAGUA, NICARAGUA

NICARAGUAN BORDER Entering Nicaragua from Honduras the border station for preliminary inspection is at El Espino. A partial inspection of baggage is made at El Espino and there is a police inspection of passport and visa.

At the Honduran-Nicaraguan border there is an official on the Nicaraguan side who speaks English. He is Senor Carlos Argiello, B, of the Administracion de Aduana, El Espino, he will come over to the Honduran side if needed, to act as interpreter.

SECOND INSPECTION At Somoto, approximately a half hour drive from the border there is a full customs inspection and travelers must also report to the National Guard office in the same town.

On entering Somoto, a left turn is made off the main street and around the town square to the building with the large sign Aduana. Here baggage is inspected again and a description of car and equipment is made out. The form describing the auto is made in several copies, one copy is given to the motorist for personal record. The original copy of the form is placed in a sealed envelope marked, Administracion de Aduanas and given to the car owner for delivery to that office in Managua. The office is a block from the U. S. Embassy and Consulate and easily located from that point.

There are no unusual requirements to meet at the inspection station at Somoto. No additional auto license or health certificate is required. There is only a stamp tax to pay, and it amounts to about \$.25 (U.S.) . After the inspection and customs forms have been completed at the Aduana office another form is given to travelers, this is to be delivered to the National Guard office across the square. This office is directly on the route of the highway leading out of town.

Counting the town square as one block, turn left at the end of the second block, this is the main road and the route to Managua. The highway ahead is moderately rough gravel, however at the 102 kilometer marker, excellent asphalt pavement begins and continues to Managua.

MANAGUA TRAFFIC REGULATIONS There are few traffic policemen in Managua. Their signals are however similar to those used in San Salvador--traffic halts when a policeman is facing the driver or faced directly away from the driver. Traffic moves ahead when the policeman is at right angles to this position. Drivers are required to make the usual arm signals for right or left turns.

There are numerous one-way streets, frequently not marked as such. About

the only solution to this problem is to note which way traffic is moving on any street before making a turn. Enforcement of the one-way traffic rules does not seem strict however and there is no need for sudden alarm on discovering that one is driving the wrong way on a one-way street.

Many streets are without name markers and most houses are without numbers. Directions to places in the city are usually given in relation to principal landmarks. Place directions given later in the chapter follow that custom.

HOTEL The Gran Hotel is probably the best in the city. The building is modern, the dining room service is good and facilities even include the use of a good swimming pool in the patio of the hotel. There is an excellent barber shop in the hotel. A cable and wireless office is across the street.

TRAILER PARKING House trailers are almost unknown in Nicaragua and there are no regular trailer parking locations, even parking in garages is limited. Though not a location likely to appeal to the trailer traveler, parking may be arranged at the J. M. Costa Garage, opposite the Gran Hotel. Parking is on a fenced lot just across the street from the garage. There is a watchman on duty at the garage all night.

On the lot there is space for several trailers under a tiled canopy. There is a shower shed and water closet of sorts in the parking yard. Water for washing is available by the bucket. No electricity is available. The charge per day is 2.50 cordobas (approximately \$.50 U. S.) . Senor Costa, the garage proprietor, speaks English.

MALARIA Malaria though it does not often occur during the dry season, is a possibility. Most non-Latins in Managua prefer to take their chances on malaria rather than use atabrine, but tourists wishing to take all precautions will need to consider taking atabrine several days in advance of entering Nicaragua.

TIME AND NEWSWEEK Libreria Universal, on the corner of 2a Calle Sur Este and 2a Avenida Sur Este sells the air-mail editions of Time, Newsweek, also other American publications. Time and Newsweek air-mail editions are also sold at the Gran Hotel.

PHOTO SHOP Foto David, a dependable photo shop, is located next to Libreria Universal.

POSTAL SERVICE Mail boxes at street intersections are a convenience not found in Managua and the drug stores don't sell postage stamps. To mail letters it will be necessary in most cases to go to the main post-office. Its located by following Avenida Roosevelt (in the direction of the monument) to the Banco Nacional de Nicaragua, make a left turn at this corner. The post-office is near the end of the first block, on the right. Air-mail stamps may only be bought and air-mail letters mailed at the separate office marked over the door, Correo Aero.

ICE CREAM SHOP There is an appealing little ice-cream shop, Salon Bonbonniere, in the same block as the Pan-American Airways ticket office. The proprietors of the shop are a French couple. Breakfast and light lunches are served. The banana splits are the best. The proprietors say all drinking water is boiled.



IN MANAGUA, NICARAGUA AT THE ROOSEVELT MONUMENT OVERLOOKING THE CITY

SOUVENIRS The craftwork of Nicaragua seems without the influence of an Indian culture, and in the shops there are few native made articles of interest to tourists. Probably the only articles of local craftsmanship likely to interest travelers are leather goods made of alligator hide. The purses of alligator leather are especially popular and reasonably priced.

One of the largest and probably one of the most dependable shops selling these alligator leather articles is Victor M. Delgadillo & Co., #508 Primera Avenida S. E., Managua. Senor Delgadillo speaks English.

EXCHANGE RATES There is a shortage of dollar exchange in Nicaragua. The official rate declared by the Government, is five cordobas for one dollar, plus a service charge. Exchange at other rates is supposedly prohibited. However seemingly known to all, money exchangers offering higher rates operate at several street corners. Travelers cheques or U. S. currency can be readily exchanged at the rate of five and a half cordobas for one dollar. Persons speaking Spanish may get six for one. The most active location for these exchange men is in front of the Augustin Chamorro store at the corner of la Calle Nor Este and Avenida Roosevelt.

TOURIST BUREAU The government of Nicaragua maintains a tourist bureau known as the Junta de Turismo de Nicaragua with an office in the Gran Hotel. No one at the office speaks English, but it would seem that little assistance could even be expected by Spanish speaking visitors. The office does however give out free postcards and it may be worth a trip there for these since postcards are otherwise difficult to obtain in Managua.

HUNTING There are few places of usual tourist interest to visit in Nicaragua. Probably the best potential tourist attraction of the country is hunting which is reported as excellent. On this subject the tourist bureau has no information. Information on hunting trips can only be obtained by inquiry through private individuals.

TAXI ? A feature of Managua are the many horse drawn taxi-surreys. They are without wheel brakes and are something of a hazard to motorists as they trot across intersections with only a faint tinkle of their chime. These "coachas" are numerous, available at all hours, and inexpensive if the rate is determined before the ride. After the first ride one may prefer walking rather than participate in cruelty to animals, by riding behind two poor little continuously whipped up pony size horses.

ROAD INFORMATION The United States Government is cooperating with Nicaragua in the construction of the Nicaraguan section of the Pan-American Highway, under an arrangement similar to that carried out by the Public Roads Administration, of the Federal Works Agency in El Salvador and Guatemala. Though in Managua the American engineers work directly with the Nicaraguan highway department. This office is officially known as the Republica de Nicaragua Departamento de Carreteras, and is located a block off Avenida Roosevelt across from Edificio Pelles.

Mr. P. E. P. Marshall is the chief engineer. He has no maps to give out, but has the latest information about conditions on the highway to San Jose for those expeditionists who plan to attempt that difficult trip.

From Managua to the Nicaragua-Costa Rica border the highway is in good condition. Beyond the Nicaraguan border, the route of the Pan American Highway is little more than ox cart trails and impassable to the ordinary stock car. There is a particularly difficult section of about twelve miles just beyond the border where even road building machinery is unable to operate.

For the rainy season and the subsequent drying period, from about April 15 to September 1 a large part of the route to San Jose is considered absolutely impassable to all motor vehicles.

ROAD TO SAN JOSE, COSTA RICA Traveling during the dry season of 1946, and accompanied by highway engineers, a party of U. S. Congressmen on an inspection tour did make the trip from San Jose to Managua. The party was equipped with four-wheel-drive vehicles and with all vehicles operating together the trip was made with great difficulty. There seems little likelihood that worthwhile improvements will be made on the route in Costa Rica during 1947.

This difficult section of highway in Costa Rica extends from the Nicaraguan border to a point near Las Canas, Costa Rica. From this point the improved highway begins, continuing to San Jose and south to San Isidro del General, about 150 miles.

COSTA RICA TO PANAMA Between San Isidro del General and El Volcan, Panama the future route of the Pan-American Highway is only trail-less jungle.

For the ordinary automobile tourist Nicaragua marks the turning point and the most distant point of travel into Central America. The problems of return home are next to be considered.

RETURNING HOME BY AIR Probably the ideal plan and certainly the most economical is selling the auto in Managua, then returning to New Orleans via Pan American Airways. Though as with most ideal plans there are some limitations, about which comments need be made.

SELLING AN AUTO There is a large unfilled demand for automobiles in Managua, but with the highly restrictive exchange regulations in force it is almost impossible to legally withdraw from the country the funds received from the sale of an automobile.

There are many U. S. employees of our various government agencies in Managua and should one of these Americans be interested in a car purchase, a sale can be carried out with a minimum of difficulty since they are permitted to pay in U. S. currency or give a personal check drawn on a bank in the United States.

SELLING A JEEP Somewhat different regulations apply in event the vehicle to be sold in Nicaragua is a Willys Jeep, either civilian model or personally owned former military type. By direction of the President of Nicaragua privately owned Jeeps may be declared "military equipment" and impounded by the government. This action is not taken against tourist owned Jeeps unless a sale is attempted to a Nicaraguan citizen without government permission. For tourists owning Jeeps and wishing to sell them in Managua this regulation can be an aid rather than an obstacle since in requesting permission to sell to a local citizen the car must

first be offered to the government. The offer to sell to the government may be accepted. The government will then if requested pay the tourist in dollar travelers cheques, thus the exchange restrictions are avoided.

AIRLINE RESERVATIONS Reservations about five days in advance are needed for return via Pan-American Airways to New Orleans or by TACA to Miami. The fare is in either case about \$115. payable only in U. S. currency or dollar travelers cheques. The baggage allowance is forty pounds. The flight by Pan-American Airways to New Orleans requires nine hours. The only stops made enroute are at Guatemala City and Merida, Mexico.

CONSUL OF EL SALVADOR Should return by highway be planned it will be necessary to secure visas while in Managua. The office of the Consul of El Salvador is at Calle de Colon #206 (about one block from the Roosevelt Monument). The office hours indicated are 9 AM to 12 noon. The charge for the visa is \$1.00, only U.S. currency is accepted. The visa is granted without delay and a wait of only a few minutes is necessary.

CONSUL OF HONDURAS The office of the Consul of Honduras is nearby and it is suggested that the visa for Honduras also be obtained while in Managua. The office of this consul is without house number or usual enamel seal over the door, but is also on Calle de Colon about one block from the El Salvador Consul. Office hours indicated are 9 AM to 12 noon. There is no charge for the visa and it is immediately granted.

CUSTOMS RELEASE As soon as the date for leaving Nicaragua is determined all autoists should call at the office of Adminstracion de Aduanas (the same office where the sealed envelope received at Somoto was required to be delivered). Few officials at the office speak English and Colonel Downey, an American and a high ranking official at this customs office is most helpful in aiding auto owners to comply with exit regulations. When given the proposed date of departure from Nicaragua, Colonel Downey will direct that a telegram be sent to the Nicaraguan-Honduran border station or the station at the Nicaraguan-Costa Rican border. This telegram indicates that full clearance has been obtained at Managua. The autoist may return to Colonel Downey's office later in the day to pick up a copy of the telegram thus being sure of receiving clearance at the border even if the original telegram was not delivered through usual channels.