

This is the piece that Mom entered in the contest. We do not know if she won or not.

Friday, March 1

Oh Diary - wonderful dairy! Wonderful world! I love everything and everybody tonight. I have such good news. Daddy came home and said the company was sending him on a business trip to Venezuela, South America, and that he would take mother and me along. It is a good thing I have only so much room on this paper or I would go on and on. I know I shan't sleep a wink but tomorrow maybe I will be calmed down enough to make sense.

Saturday, March 2

Daddy spent the day working on plans for our trip and everything is settled! We fly down and take a boat back! I have never before been on a ship so I don't know how I will get along but you know how I like to fly so I think I will enjoy the boat all right.

Sunday, March 3

We went to church and all the while the preacher talked I thought a silent little prayer, "Please God, don't let anything happen to prevent our trip and watch over us and bring us back home safely." I spent the afternoon in spreading the good news to the gang. Are they all envious?

Monday, March 4

After school Mother and I spent the rest of the day shopping. After all a trip like that does call for some new clothes. Of course I am thrilled about all my new things but the green sunsuit is just too-too! It does things to my red hair.

Sunday, March 10

Dear Diary, forgive me for neglecting you this week but I have been trying to get ahead on my lessons. I will have to miss a month of school and I have arranged with Superintendent Lander to make it up. Tomorrow is the big day!

Tuesday, March 12

We landed in LaGuaira, Venezuela, today. the mountains are so steep it looks like the houses would slide right into the ocean.

It is such a busy place with so many tourists coming in on planes and boats that it doesn't seem as yet very "foreign". This the "dry" season so tourists like it best. The climate is not so comfortable nor healthy in the "wet" season from May to November.

Wednesday, March 13

We drove from LaGuaira to Caracas today. A mountain separates the two cities and such mountains I have never seen. The roads were so steep with such sharp curves in that it took my breath.

On the summit there was a wrecked car placed on a pedestal as a reminder of what could happen if one were careless. Caracas is beautiful! Old-fashioned houses with patio's and iron grilled windows. No high buildings. So pleasant - not cold like Chicago was when we left. Fleecy clouds like bridal veils keep changing the appearance of the mountains.

Friday, March 15

The last two days we just rested and roamed around. Daddy says it's a good thing we aren't going to stay long or he would go broke. Everything is so terribly expensive. Our own U. S. apples were nearly a dollar a piece. Our dinner at the hotel cost \$3.00 a plate. The same would have cost about \$1.50 at home. One thing is inexpensive though, Orchids! When I think of the eight dollars Daddy paid for the one single bloom he gave to Mom on her last birthday! Here they are 25¢ a dozen. Mom says she and I are both going to wear them until we go home even though they aren't considered much down here. They grow on a tree in the back yard of our hotel. We went to an exposition and saw 255 different species of orchids.

Saturday, March 16

We spent the entire day at the Plaza Bolivar. It is the center of the city and where the historic things are. We saw the "Yellow House," which would be the Presidential Mansion, the Palace of Justice where the Declaration of Independence was signed, the Federal Palace, the Capitol Building, the National Library, the National Museum and the Bolivar Museum. In the latter we saw a sword, given to Bolivar by Peru in the War of Independence.

It's hilt of pure gold is set with 800 diamonds and has a total of 1,380 jewels. Really something. We also saw a lock of George Washington's hair in a locket and a statue of him and one of Henry Clay. Some of the things Daddy enjoyed bored me but I did enjoy the day and am I tired. Good night.

Sunday, March 17

We watched the people go to and from the cathedrals and attended

a band concert at the Plaza Bolivar.

Monday, March 18

Today we flew to Ciudad Bolivar, the capitol city of Bolivar, the largest state in Venezuela. It is the birthplace of Venezuela's constitution and it has no highways to it from the outside world. It can be reached from the air or by boat on the Orinoco River.

Friday, March 22

Speaking of the Orinoco River, that is a sight I shall never forget. I thought the Mississippi was large but it is just a small stream to the side of Orinoco. During the past week we traveled down the river quite deep into the jungle, almost as far as it is safe for people to go. Further down they say there are completely uncivilized Indians, who kill every white person they see. We saw so many huge cayman (alligators to you North Americans - ha, ha). We also saw women along the banks washing their clothes in the river. Their children ran around naked.

The captain said the alligators sometimes snapped off a leg or arm of a washer woman - ugh! We saw a turtle so large I could hardly believe it. We have to have all the water we drink boiled so we will not get tropical dysentery.

Saturday, March 23

Dear Diary. I am thankful my mother taught me to love flowers. She and I have certainly enjoyed them here. Never have I seen such a variety of sizes, shapes and colors, kinds we never heard of at home. There is a shade tree here I wish we could grow at home. It has dark red flowers on it. Sure super!

Sunday, March 24

We visited a catholic church today. It seems to be the main religion. About the only one they have. Tomorrow we go back to Caracas and I am ready because some men killed a poisonous snake in the street today - this is no place for me! In Caracas the streets have such funny names as: Misery, The Dead One, The Spooks, The Wind, The Widow, and the ones that ticked Daddy so were Remove Pants and Keep Your Eye Peeled.

Monday, March 25

Diary, diary, if I had not promised Daddy I would try and act like a dignified grown up lady on the trip, I would turn

cartwheels, shriek and say all the new worlds my gang uses. I am so excited and thrilled all my dreams of romance came true today. I was serenaded! I was sitting in my window looking through the iron grills, thinking about all the things I had to tell the gang back home. Suddenly I felt like someone was staring at me. I looked around and saw a handsome Venezuelan watching me when our eyes met he smiled at me so friendly I couldn't help but smile back and when I did he came closer to the window and began to sing so softly, yet clearly and all in Spanish! I couldn't understand a word (I would be studying French in school) but that just added to the thrill of it. When the song was finished he spoke, in perfect English, and told me the name of the song was "My Beautiful One" and compared a girl with a flower. When I told Daddy he laughed and said it was probably someone hired by the hotel to give the tourists a thrill, but I don't care, I still think he was singing to me and I wish we were going to stay longer to give me a chance to see him again but Daddy's business is finished here and we move on. I can just see the girls at home turn with envy when I tell them about it. Me, only 16 - well almost 17 - and to be serenaded so romantically. Never, never will I forget it!

Wednesday, March 27

From Caracas we came by train to Valencia. It is an important industrial city. There are only 563 miles of railroad in the entire country. Sounds awful but people get by. A lot still ride mules. Sure look funny. I can't begin to tell you all we see but I am taking a lot of pictures.

Thursday, March 28

Lake Valencia is 22 leagues around, has 22 islands in it and receives the water from 22 rivers. But the water is infected and they would not let us swim in it.

Friday, March 29

Today we flew to Puerto Cabello and while Daddy tended to business Mom and I took a tour to a beach on the Caribbean Sea and it was beautiful. The water was just body temperature and palm and coconut trees shaded the beach and the sand was fine and white.

Saturday, March 30

Today we came on to Maracaibo. Maracaibo! The word is magic to me. All through History in school I always remembered that name and the easy was it rolled off our tongue. If there had

been 17 years planning behind it there could not have been a more perfect way invented for me to spend my 17th birthday than to be in Maracaibo! I am disappointed in the place itself. Too much smelly oil. Oil wells are thick here -- some of them even under the water in Lake Maracaibo.

Sunday, March 31

Well, old pal, you may wish me Happy Birthday now. Today is that all important day. I am 17 years old now. Daddy and Mother gave me (besides fresh orchids) a complete Venezuelan costume. Bright colored straw sandals with large brimmed hat to match. White peasant blouse and ankle length full gathered skirt hiked up in front to show the exquisite handmade lace and embroidery work on the under skirt, and two pairs colored wooden beads, all so beautiful. Daddy has an appointment at nine o'clock in the morning with an oil man then his business is all finished up and we leave for home. How sad I shall be to leave beautiful Venezuela.

Tuesday, April 2

Although we flew down via Cuba we are on a boat now headed for the Golden Gate. We went through the Panama Canal.

Friday, April 5

Home again and I know I shall go on bragging about Venezuela for years to come but as much as I enjoyed it, as much as I like the people and the country I am glad and contented to be back in my own beloved America "Sweet Land of Liberty."