

THE ISLAND OF ARUBA

Information of Interest  
to Prospective Employees & Visitors

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Williamstown

Vermont

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## I N D E X

### The Island Itself

Its Location . . . . .	1
Its History . . . . .	1
Its Villages and Capital . . . . .	1
Its Topography . . . . .	2
Its Vegetation . . . . .	3
Its Climate . . . . .	3
Its Inhabitants . . . . .	4
Its Government . . . . .	4

### The Refinery

Why a Refinery at Aruba? . . . . .	5
Early Refinery Pioneers . . . . .	6

### Social Life

Amusements . . . . .	7
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### Some Friendly but Serious Advice

What the Well-Informed Man Should Know . . . . .	9
Life on a Tanker . . . . .	10
Arrival at Aruba . . . . .	11
"When in Rome, Do as the Romans Do" . . . . .	11

### Introduction to the Colony

The Club . . . . .	12
The Dining Hall . . . . .	12
The Bachelor Quarters . . . . .	13
Personal and Confidential . . . . .	13

### The Married Man With a Family

Houses . . . . .	14
Things Which You Must Supply . . . . .	15
School Facilities . . . . .	16
Commissary . . . . .	16
In Closing . . . . .	17

## THE ISLAND OF ARUBA

Information of Interest  
to Prospective Employees and Visitors

(Prepared by Mr. Harold Attwood, Personnel Manager, Aruba Refinery)

### The Island Itself

Its Location. Aruba is an island about eighteen miles long and from three to five miles wide lying about thirty miles north of the peninsula of Paraguana - part of Venezuela. It is about 2000 miles due south of Providence, R. I., and 840 miles north of the equator - in about the same latitude as Manila. Paraguana is the Eastern boundary of Gulf of Maracaibo, that huge shallow inland sea which narrows to a bottle neck at Maracaibo and then broadens out into Lake Maracaibo - famous for being one of the most productive oil fields in the world. Famous, also for the fact that about half of the oil field is actually in the lake.

Its History. Aruba has had a more or less adventurous history; that is, it has gone through the period, common to most of the islands in the Caribbean, during which it was tossed about between various European powers. But Aruba itself was never a rich enough prize to be the center of attraction. It changed hands mainly because so did its larger and more important neighbor, Curacao. Changing hands was one of the best things that Caribbean islands did in those days. However, in 1816 Aruba was finally transferred from the British to Holland, under which flag it has remained. Curacao has an eventful history of siege, blockade, insurrection, politics. Aruba - less fertile than Curacao - smaller and never an important trading port, has gone through vicissitudes that were only a faint echo of those experienced by its larger neighbor, 60 miles to the east. In fact, it has always been a matter of surprise that anyone would want Aruba - at least before the Americans came and put their millions of dollars worth of machinery on its coral strand, since Aruba has no really fresh water. There are wells scattered all over the Island, but even from the best of them the water is slightly brackish. Some of them are worse than others. But all the water absorbed by Americans has to be brought from the States, which is, of course, tremendously expensive.

Its Villages and Capital. There are two considerable villages on Aruba - Oranjestad and San Nicolaas - about 12 miles apart. Roughly speaking, each town is three miles from opposite ends of the island and they are connected by a modern asphalt road, which is our main automobile highway. In addition to this road both Oranjestad and San Nicolaas have paved streets and there are many miles of unpaved but passable country roads criss-crossing the island in all directions. These lanes are very interesting and picturesque, and are well worth exploring.

Oranjestad is the capitol of Aruba, the seat of the Lieutenant Governor, the Governmental offices and the better stores. It is a picturesque place and possesses some buildings upwards of 300 years old, in a style that is probably Dutch, modified to suit a tropical country. It has an "urban" population of about 3000.

San Nicolaas, at the other end of the island, is really an adjunct to the great refinery which is our main interest in Aruba. Probably there always were a few houses there, but when a dock was built and ships started to come in regularly, there were, of course, sailors. And where there are sailors there will be "cantinas" - saloons with "artistes". The saloon keepers and artistes, of course, have to eat. They buy clothes, go to church, employ servants, use transportation, need a police force; especially the latter. Thus, San Nicolaas grew. (The reader shouldn't get the impression that San Nicolaas contains nothing but saloons. It is not a favored residence district, however.)

There are several other settlements in Aruba, but they are hardly large enough to call villages, consisting usually of a church, a church school, and a small group of houses. Sabaneta and Nord are fishing villages, and Santa Cruz is in what the Arubans presumably call the "farming district", which bring up the very important point of the "surface" of Aruba; the nature of the ground.

Its Topography. There is a "backbone" of low hills, 500'-600' high, running from end to end of the island, which lies approximately southeast. This ridge or backbone is composed of ancient rock of various sorts apparently overlaid with a volcanic conglomerate, which in some places on the north side runs all the way down to the sea. On some of the hills, however, the ancient rock is exposed to the top. For anyone with a taste for wandering around in less populated portions of the earth this part of Aruba is very interesting. There is a road that winds in and out of the hills, usually in fair enough condition for automobiles. The scenery along the road has a character all its own. The road starts at a small bay, (Fontein), on the northern shore and climbs almost to the top of the ridge. It passes several palm groves and arroyos where the vegetation is usually thick and green. There are a number of very well-defined ancient water-lines, showing that at one time the island was at least 30 or 40 feet lower (or the sea that much higher) than at present.

Early in the last century gold was discovered in the hills and was mined from about 1850 until 1914. There are a number of workings and the remains of two smelters, The hill road passes close to them also. Yamanota, the highest point on the island, is just off the road and can be climbed without much effort. The view from the top is well worth the climb.

On the southern side of the island, the lee side, coral has formed a plain in some places 3 miles wide. It is on this plain that practically all the habitations and human activities are situated, and only where the coral is overlaid with sufficient earth is it possible to grow fruits and vegetables. Possibly one twelfth of the island's 69 square miles is under cultivation.

The main reason for the scarcity of soil on Aruba is the fact that the island is exposed to the northeast trade wind which is active almost all of the time. Apparently, as soon as the action of sun, wind and rain induces the rock to crumble to something like soil, the wind immediately blows it out to sea. Thus the island, particularly in the more exposed parts, is kept bare and rocky, and must be gradually getting smaller. However, there is one consolation there. The more wind and the less vegetation the fewer insects; and vice versa. Aruba might conceivably be more beautiful, but the gay and feastive mosquito would flourish in direct proportion to the tropical flora.

Its Vegetation. There are many small trees on Aruba, but except in the few spots where they are more or less sheltered from the wind, they have a unique lopsided appearance with all the branches growing on the "lee side". The wind makes them "get that way".

Cactus grows in great profusion, and of many different varieties. There are a number of groves of coconut palms. Some enterprising Chinamen have flourishing truck gardens. Aloes, a small species of cactus which produces the drug, tincture of aloes, is cultivated commercially. At one time, it is said, Aruba produced 75% of the world's aloes. And a large proportion of the arable land is given over to the cultivation of "kaffir corn" which provides the main food of the un-Americanized Aruban in his natural state. When the Aruban soil is given a chance, it is marvellously fertile. The climate is such that there is nothing for seeds to do but grow. The fruits and vegetables which the Chinamen produce are excellent - but unfortunately there aren't yet enough to go "round".

Its Climate. Aruba is what it is and looks like it does mainly because of the climate, and a great many misapprehensions exist in regard to that feature. It used to be said that Aruba was a "dry island" and that it rained scarcely or never. Perhaps at one time that was the case. It may be that, as some of the oldest inhabitants say, the wet and dry years run in cycles of about seven years. But beginning with 1931, at least, there has been from twenty to thirty inches of rain during the last four months of each year. Which is not "dry" by any means.

Beginning with January, in which month there is usually more or less rain, the weather is simply ideal until, say, the end of July. By "ideal" I mean a daytime temperature of 85° in the shade with a strong breeze. In the evening, anything down to 69°, with the same breeze. During these months there is very little rain, just an occasional shower, and the vegetation becomes pretty well burnt up. But the hours from sunrise until 8 A.M. in Aruba, during the first eight or nine months of the year, with a fresh breeze blowing, the sea sparkling and the birds singing, are hard to beat. In fact, in the "hard to beat" category evening and night can be included. The sunsets are in the best tropical tradition. The sun never fails to provide a good show when it disappears for the night.

Moonlight is like nothing we ever see in northern latitudes - there is no blanket of smoke and dust to dilute it. The stars are as numerous as they should be and exceptionally bright. But don't indulge in great expectations about the Southern Cross. In Aruba, at least, it is a dismal failure.

Its Inhabitants. The inhabitants of Aruba, excepting the imported one, are Arubans. And thereby hangs a tale. The Aruban is "different". He isn't exactly like any other native in the world. He is part Carib Indian, part Spanish, part Dutch with a sprinkling of Irish. English and French; with the Indian strain, however, predominating. He even has a language of his own, Papiamento, composed of about the same ingredients as he is himself.

The Aruban is gradually being industrialized. In fact he has made great steps in that direction in the last five years. Before the refineries started operations, he was a fisherman and farmer in a small way. The probability is that he didn't even understand what made a wheel turn round. He might have seen a few automobiles, but very few; he certainly didn't aim at the possession of one himself. He knew nothing of valves or pipe lines or lathes or boilers or bubble towers or motors or centrifugal pumps or monkey wrenches. He knew how to raise aloes and how to collect and boil down the aloes-juice. Given a fair amount of rain, he could raise a crop of kaffir corn and could grind the kernels to meal. He could build good dry masonry walls and adobe huts. And when the sugar business was good in the surrounding islands, he was much in demand as a laborer during the sugar harvest. But plain day by day work as a unit of a gang in an industrial mechanized plant was a closed book to him. When the refinery started operations and Arubans were hired as laborers, they were as ignorant of what is demanded of a refinery laborer, as they were of integral calculus. If it rained and looked like a good day to plant corn, they didn't show up. Or it might be a saint's day. Or the corn harvest. Almost any excuse was sufficient to keep them away from work. They knew, however, that the land would go on being there and that they could, somehow or other, eke out a living from it. They knew nothing about the refinery and had no confidence in its permanence. It might vanish one day as quickly as it had come. Quien Sabe? Therefore, it behooved a man to keep his ground in good shape, and to safeguard his only definite, proven means of making a living. But that was five years ago. Nowadays, the Aruban is a fairly good and for the most part a dependable workman. He is much more robust than he used to be because he literally eats more food, and more different kinds of food. He wears better clothes and one of his ambitions is to own a truck or a small car. In other words, the Aruban is going through a concentrated course of industrialization; a course that was gradually applied to us and our kind over a period of a hundred years.

Its Government. Aruba is governed as part of the practically antonomous Dutch Colony of Curacao, by a Lieutenant-Governor, under the Governor at Curacao. There is a resident judge in Aruba and the usual tax, census, immigration and police departments. Naturally, the work of all of these bureaus has been tremendously increased since the refineries located in Aruba; especially the tax department. The police are all Dutchmen, and don't ever try to bribe them. It simply doesn't work.

## The Refinery

Since Aruba is what it is and is important to us only because there is a big refinery there, let us sketch briefly the reasons for the refinery, when and why it was located in Aruba, what its products are, where they go, etc., etc.

Why a refinery at Aruba? Lake Maracaibo, about 130 miles away, is a tremendous producing field. However, only ships drawing twelve feet of water, or less, can navigate the Gulf of Maracaibo. Since the average loaded ocean-going tanker is twenty-eight feet deep in the water, it could not possibly get anywhere near the producing field. Therefore, the possibility of a large refinery at or near the city of Maracaibo was definitely out.

The matter of shallow water at Maracaibo, by the way, is not a matter of a sandbar that could be dredged or blasted. There is a torturous, shifting channel over 30 miles long, little over 12 feet deep at any place, over some parts of which even a ship only twelve feet in the water can only go at high tide. Even then it is literally sliding over the bottom a large part of the time.

About 18 years ago the Shell Oil Company, owning huge deposits of crude in the Maracaibo basin, decided to build their refinery on the island of Curacao and transport the crude from Maracaibo in small, shallow draft tankers, which could navigate the shallow twisted passage between Maracaibo and the open sea. When the Dutch didn't pick on Aruba, which is 60 miles nearer Maracaibo, was probably because Curacao was a busy, well known port of call, with fair resources in the matter of food and water, and with a large native population to draw from. Also, it was and is an important bunkering station. Aruba was merely an arid rock in the ocean, with very little water or food and a small entirely unindustrialized population. In other words, a refinery on Aruba meant importing everything, including workers, food and water.

At all events, the Shell proceeded to build a big refinery on Curacao and a fleet of small shallow-draft tankers to transport the crude oil from Maracaibo. When the Pan-American Petroleum Company (owner of Lago Oil & Transport Co., Ltd. previous to acquisition by Standard Oil Co. (N.J.)) acquired its tremendous producing field in Maracaibo and a nearby refinery was wanted. It followed the Shell's example, but instead of choosing Curacao as the refinery site, Aruba was picked.

People frequently express surprise that an under-sea pipe line has not been considered. After all, we are only about 150 miles as the crow flies from Maracaibo, and a pipe line of that length in the States is considered just a baby. But it actually cost more per barrel to transport oil through a pipe line of that length than it costs to carry it that far in tankers. Besides all of which the sea is more than half a mile deep between Aruba and the entrance to the Gulf of Maracaibo.

Before the Aruba refinery was built or thought of, an ocean going tanker, the IVERGARRY, was anchored off Aruba. Crude was transported to it from Maracaibo, and then transferred to other tankers which carried it to the United States and elsewhere. This arrangement went on for about three years and of course the people in charge of the operation came to know Aruba pretty well. When the project of putting a refinery there was broached, there was plenty of first hand information about the island and its characteristics.

Early Refinery Pioneers. A volume could be written about the pioneers who landed here and their early struggles. While the element of actual danger from wild beasts or savage tribes was absent, nevertheless, they were pioneers in every sense of the word. They came to a barren arid island and left as their monument a modern industrial plant. The men who exploited the phosphate mines at the eastern tip of the island also had an industrial plant, but it was a plant that employed mostly hand labor. Their problem was merely to dig out a large quantity of reddish rock and load it on ships. They were not a group of experts, highly trained in a modern industry, which approaches an exact science. The men who came to build the refinery were engineers, chemists, accountants, boilermakers, carpenters, machinists, electricians, concrete experts, welders, and so on.

The part of the island on which these men were to work was given over to cactus and coral and nothing else. The northwestern end of the island had at least some arable land and some water of sorts. It also had the village of Oranjestad. But the southeastern end was a desert, pure and simple. There were no houses to live in, no baths, no clubhouse, no sanitary arrangements. There was no dining hall, - an old stone building was used temporarily, - no hospital; nothing. All these adjuncts to civilized life were gradually added until the place began at least to bear a resemblance to a camp.

The Refinery of Today. Let us lower the curtain to denote the passage of time and raise it again six years later. In that time conditions have changed, indeed, in Aruba. Even the ownership of the refinery has changed, having been purchased by the Standard Oil Co. (N.J.) in 1932. The original equipment of topping stills is still in use, but only as a re-run plant. Aruba now has pressure still equipment capable of handling 150,000 barrels, - 6,300,000 gallons of crude oil per day of twenty-four hours. Its products are gasoline, fuel oil, diesel oil, asphalt and kerosene, with the emphasis on the first two. They are what Aruba is really in business for and Aruba gasoline and fuel go, literally, to all parts of the world. There are now about 550 employees on contract from the United States, about 200 from Europe and approximately 1800 laborers and mechanics from Aruba and the surrounding islands.

About 300 of the American employees and a number of the Europeans have their families in Aruba, living in houses provided rent free, by the company. There is a school with 150 pupils, and a Commissary or company store doing a \$360,000.00 business yearly. There are 400 American women and children in Aruba, regular talkies, baseball and basketball leagues, and a nine-hole golf course. There are 12 miles of automobile highway connecting the Lago colony with Oranjestad and there are about 700 pleasure cars on the island.



Even the Arubans eat ice cream and attend baseball games. The donkeys and goats have disappeared from Seroe, Colorado and the very lizards have developed a taste for the contents of American garbage cans. Up in the hills the wary iguana still stalks the humble ant and the cactus reigns supreme, but the Lago Colony has become a symphony in American industrial life with Aruban variations.

### Social Life

Amusements. One of the main points about any foreign service is, "How can one be amused?" During the working hours, a refinery in the West Indies is much like any other refinery. Work in one part of the world is much like work in any other part. It is when the evening whistle blows and the time from then until seven next morning is your own, that the fact that you are in a foreign country comes home to you. What are you going to do this evening? What are you going to do next Sunday, when you have the day off?

This evening, we'll say, is Wednesday. Well, if you leave the plant at 4 P.M. you have plenty of time for a round of golf before dinner, even if you are a bachelor and dine in the Dining Hall where dinner is served from five to seven. Of course, if you're a married man such arrangements will have to be made with the head of the family. We're not advising you to go and play golf until 6:30 and hang around the clubhouse until 7:00 and get home at 7:30 full of beer and conversation about the approaches you made or missed. But it can be done. However, a much better plan is to take the head of the family with you, then she can help you complain about the state the greens are in, which has such a bad effect on your putting. And, of course, if the dinner is spoiled, you can blame it all on her, which is so handy.

If you're not a golfer; not even a would-be golfer, you can go swimming, which, of course, in this warm climate doesn't need to be all hard muscle work. It isn't necessary to exert yourself to keep warm. In fact, some of the very best swimming in Aruba is done on the beach. But if you must go in the water, you will find it warm, salty, clean and plentiful. If you insist on surf you will have to go to the other side of the island, a mile and a half away. The two beaches actually inside the colony are protected by a coral reef, which keeps waves and barracuda out. This protected portion, or harbor, which is about one and one half miles long and a quarter of a mile wide, encloses the company's docks and is the place where the sailboats are operated.

If you don't like golf nor swimming, you can play tennis if you're one of those athletic people. There are two well-kept courts, one sand and one asphalt. In fact, tennis is considered of considerable importance at both ends of Aruba, and there are plenty of matches and tournaments, some of them international in scope.

If you happen to be a baseball player or fan, you will probably find either a game or a hot practice session from 4:00 to 6:00, in season. Baseball is really one of Aruba's leading industries. You can imagine that with 500 Americans here, most of them less than thirty, no need for rain checks, a good playing field, it would be strange if baseball were not a hot subject. As a matter of fact, some times, it is a little too hot; the interest, not the weather.

There are usually two leagues, a "closed" league and an "open one". The "closed" league is the class AA ball of Aruba, and the teams represent various departments. And just as much partisanship can be generated by the backers of the "Pressure Stills" or the "Light Oils" as by the followers of the Yankees or the White Sox. Perhaps more; after all, our men are amateurs and play because they like it. None of them hold out for \$85,000.00 a year. All they demand is a fair day and the baseball players' inalienable right to express his opinion of the umpiring.

Well, we are still trying to decide how we will spend the two hours between 4:00 and 6:00. If none of the amusements mentioned cause an answering thrill, there is still sailing, provided you own a boat or have a friend who owns one. There are handball courts for your use, and pool and billiards at the Club. Or perhaps you are one of those convivial souls who likes to sip some long icy drink before engaging in the serious business of dining. You will always find a partner for that sport.

Dinner is over. Now, what can we do? Movies? At the Club three nights a week and in San Nicolaas or Oranjestad the other nights. Bridge? Practically any evening you want it, provided you can play a fair hand. Just plain conversation, anywhere and in great quantities. Lighted tennis courts, horseshoe pitching and indoor baseball in season. And, also, in season, one of the most ardent basket ball leagues in existence.

However, let us sit on this bench for a few minutes and grow philosophical about amusing oneself in Aruba. In the matter of passing leisure time, Aruba, with one salient exception, is not notably different from other places, be they New York City or an Ozark settlement. Where a few Americans are gathered together, they will find or make or institute some sport to watch or engage in. The one thing that makes Aruba different from most places we are familiar with, and at which we might conceivably make a living, is the fact that you can't get away from it! At first glance that might not seem such a serious matter. After all, many of us don't make any long or extended trips away from the home town. When you consider, however, that it is hardly possible to imagine an American without his automobile or separate him from it when he has one, you begin to realize that the fact that you can get only fifteen miles away from the front door is a serious matter. Not a terrible or a devastating matter, but one to be considered. We can't pile into the family sedan on Saturday afternoon or Sunday morning and bid farewell to the scenes of our daily life for 12 or 18 hours as the case may be, traveling perhaps 400 or 500 miles in the meantime. In Aruba, it takes only forty-five minutes to make the longest one way automobile trip that could possibly be taken. We can see baseball on Sunday, we can play tennis or golf, we can go swimming, we can picnic, we can drive our car or we can just loaf; but it must be in Aruba. If this fact raises a big question-mark to you, the best answer is - have or grow or acquire or collect a hobby. Get one of any sort in any way you can - but have one.

The man with a hobby is superior to all considerations of locality, time, roads, accommodation, mail service or climate. This man, who doesn't need much outside assistance to agreeably pass his leisure, is much better fitted for a comfortable life in Aruba than one who must be entertained from outside. Reading, canned music, study, if he's a

family man, gardening, botany, bridge, geology are certain to make life more agreeable than a burning interest in night clubs, theatre, week-ending or political rallies.

The man who goes to Aruba with the intention of staying for some time and neither wearing himself nor his neighbors out with fruitless complaints, should also make up his mind to get along with people, because he'll come in contact with them morning, noon and night. And the same people. By virtue of the fact that the company has leased a portion of the island, both the refinery and the colony are in that area. Everyone is connected with the refinery. It is impossible to lose oneself in the crowd as, for example, on 42nd Street in the rush hours. There are about 1100 men, women and children in the colony and after their faces have ceased to be strange there are none to replace them. They get better and better known every day. The same groups mix at work, at the movies, at bridge, and on the beach.

#### Some Friendly but Serious Advise

What the Well Informed Man Should Know. The following paragraphs are addressed to the same man, who expects to go to Aruba, to work and enjoy life as much as possible. He probably expects to stay for several years, and hopes to leave a good taste in his own mouth and in other people's when he does leave for good. He doesn't want to spend his waking hours complaining about conditions that can't be changed; he therefore wants to know what to expect before he comes here. So the best thing to do is to give him as clear a picture as possible of what he will encounter.

We will presume that he is a bachelor, or, if he is not that, he is coming by himself, as that is what happens to practically all men who go to Aruba for the first time.

First, what should he bring with him?

A couple of white suits - linen if he wants to spend that much money, but cotton or duck suits are worn by practically everyone and are good enough for any occasion. Don't bring more than two suits because they can be bought locally. Don't bring any extra white or linen trousers either; they can be bought here just as cheaply as in the States.

Bring enough dress shoes to last a couple of years. The Commissary handles heavy working shoes but it won't hurt to bring them, too. However, dress shoes aren't stocked in the Commissary and there are very few on the island.

Shirts, underwear and socks can always be bought in the Commissary, but bring a few neckties. Bring whatever hats you have available, but derbies aren't being worn this year by the young man of Aruba. A German officer got off one of the tankers wearing one, and a black suit, the other day, and there was a near-riot.

Don't bother about razor blades, shaving cream, tooth paste, etc., etc. They are kept in stock. Don't bring any more Woolen clothes than you have to. The Aruba climate destroys them.

Bring your camera, your books, your radio if it's

a short wave set, tennis rackets, golf clubs, microscope, victrola, field glasses and your automobile if you are willing to pay one tenth of its actual value as import duty and a yearly license fee of \$50-\$60. Bring the car, though; if you don't, you'll regret it. And also bring an appraisal of its actual value with a notary's seal. It doesn't always do any good, but it can't do any harm.

In other words, bring all the gadgets that help you to pass time away comfortably - except pets. Unless you are going to live in a house immediately, there is nowhere to keep them. But never bring long haired dogs under any circumstances - they're miserable and they will help to make you miserable.

In addition to the things already mentioned, bring a raincoat, one that will shed a drenching rain. The myth about Aruba's continued dryness has been pretty well exploded in the last three or four years, and if you bring two raincoats you can easily dispose of the other one.

In the good old days when the dollar was worth two and a half Dutch guilders, a number of things could be bought to advantage - for example, German binoculars, perfume, cameras, and various Dutch products such as Edam cheese, Delft ware and gin. But not now. Since the dollar has tumbled from its high estate, about the only things paid for in guilders bought "on the outside" are hard liquor and taxes! ("On the outside" means outside the colony or Company concession.)

Bring some pictures- if you like pictures- to brighten up your room in the bachelor quarters. Remember, you are going to live there; you aren't just camping. Most of the things you bring can be carried in a small stout trunk - with a good lock. And the trunk will come in handy in a good many ways. Leather luggage, except for one suitcase, is not advisable - especially if it is good luggage. The humid climate of Aruba seems to have an especial affinity for leather goods, and they don't last long.

We'll say, then, that you have packed your goods in a trunk - which is carried as personal baggage - and have a change of clothes, shirts, underwear, shaving materials, etc., in a suitcase. Thus equipped, you board one of the best tankers, all ready for your sally into the tropics.

Life on a Tanker. Practically everyone who goes to Aruba travels on an oil tanker, which is simply a steamship equipped to carry a large amount of oil or gasoline. In place of cargo hatches, it has tanks, in fact, the hull of the ship, except for the compartments housing the engine boilers and pumps, is just one tank after another. The accommodations for the officers and any passengers who may be traveling are in a small superstructure about one third of the ship's length from the bow- the front end. And usually it is small, because tankers weren't intended to accommodate passengers anyhow, and, outside of one tanker especially built for Aruba run, passengers are accommodated more or less by the grace of God. However, to most people who have any feeling at all for ships and the sea, traveling on a tanker is an interesting experience. No changing clothes two or three times a day - no fashion parade on the promenade deck, because there isn't any promenade deck. No Paris shops, no restaurant, no smoking room, and no conventions. You're on a working ship. Passengers are merely incidental, but for that very reason the officers are usually glad to see a few passengers. They provide a new interest - someone to talk to - someone from the "Outside."

It is very interesting to note that while some times the accommodations aren't so "hot", and occasionally, especially in foreign ships, the food doesn't entirely suit Americans, we have yet to get a complaint indicating unpleasant or inconsiderate treatment by officers. Most people seem to think that the officers on "their" particular tanker are the best and most considerate officers that ever set foot on a ship.

There are two tankers - the PAN BOLIVAR and the PAUL H. HARWOOD - built especially for the Aruba run, which are equipped to carry passengers, and very comfortably equipped. The staterooms are better than those on the average coastal steamer, and every effort is made to assure comfort and convenience for the travellers. The officers do an extraordinarily good job of competently operating a freight ship and expertly handling a group of passengers.

There are a few things, however, that can make travel on a tanker more agreeable for everyone. Remember that it is, after all, a freight ship, and that you are living right in amongst the officers. They must get their sleep or they can't do their work. A little more than ordinary precaution in the matter of noise-making will make everyone happier.

Be sure that you don't smoke in areas where it is prohibited. Wear a coat at mealtimes. Make as little noise as you can. Take some magazines. And remember that the captain is just as truly and completely monarch of all he surveys - including the passengers - as the king of a feudal state. Treat him with the respect due his position and you'll be met more than half way.

Arrival at Aruba. Well, the six or seven or eight days' voyage is over, and the ship is docking in San Nicholaas Harbor. You have looked the island over and it looks pretty flat. The port doctor comes aboard to see that you look healthy and have been vaccinated. Then the immigration officer and one of the men from the Personnel Department examine your baggage, and you go ashore. In regard to these latter details, it is best not to have any original ideas. Just follow the instructions given you at the time and you'll get along all right. If the customs men want to make a more detailed search than you can see the use of, let them do it. It's their job and the way they make their living.

Don't treat them with scorn because they happen to be a little dark in color - they are natives of Surinam and are just as much Dutch subjects as the whitest Dutch man you ever saw and just as proud of it. And remember, you're in their country now. You're the alien! That is one feature of life in Aruba about which a few timely words should be said.

"When in Rome, do as the Romans do" - with discretion. Many Americans have gone to Aruba, have done their work well, have been fairly agreeable citizens in the Colony, but have found it difficult, if not impossible, to accommodate themselves to living under a foreign flag. They may not treat the police force with sufficient respect. They may infringe automobile regulations and become much incensed because they are fined. They some times argue with custom officials, especially if the latter happen to be a little dark in color. A few men have thought, apparently, that paying income tax in the Colony of Curacao is an imposition on the rights of American citizens, and then they are frightfully annoyed because the Government sends a bailiff to collect the tax, by attaching their wages.

In other words, people have been known to behave exactly as though they were doing the Colony of Curacao a great favor by living in Aruba. Perhaps they are, but the officials of the Colony of Curacao don't like to be reminded of it.

From the standpoint of people who have lived here from three to five years, it can be said that if Aruban Government officials, policemen, tax collectors, etc., are treated with as much respect as the same officials in the United States, they will be reasonably co-operative and easy to get along with. Some of the laws and regulations may seem unreasonable and old fashioned, but until the laws are changed the officials have to enforce them, good, bad or indifferent. If a policeman stops you for driving your automobile too fast, treat him with the same amount of respect that you would a policeman in the States, under the same circumstances. He can arrest you and fine you. If the Government tells you you have to pay an income tax, pay it when and where you are told to. You do it in the States - why not in Aruba? By arguing with officials and Government employees, you only give yourself a name for being a hard person to get along with and do no good whatsoever.

#### Introduction to the Colony

To return to our newly arrived adventurer, he has just stepped off the tanker and is ready for whatever happens. He is taken to his room in the Bachelor Quarters, and assigned a seat in the Dining Hall, is introduced to his foreman or immediate superior, has his picture taken for his identification badge, has his credit established at the Commissary and Club House, arranges an allotment of his wages to be sent to the States and is then ready to go to work. These things are only mentioned because they are part of the routine. It is not necessary for the prospective employee to remember them, because someone will be at his elbow to explain what to do next.

The Club. The first night he is here, he will probably go to the Club House. Everyone gravitates in that direction sooner or later and a few words should be said about it beforehand. The Club House is a large frame building, approximately in the center of the Colony. It is the center of all recreational activities. There is a well-stocked bar, at which anything can be bought except hard liquor. The idea of a well-stocked bar without liquor may seem quite anomalous to the reader. Well, the bar is as well stocked as a bar can be without hard liquor. There is a large pool and billiard room in the Club, a comfortable lounge which is open to the eligible of both sexes and a moving picture theatre which is also used for a dance floor and a basket-ball floor. There is a library. In other words, the Club is a complete entertainment unit in itself.

Money is not handled in the Club at all. All payments are made in Club coupons, purchased at the desk, and charged to the employee's account.

The Dining Hall. Our newly arrived immigrant will eat his meals in the Dining Hall; like everyone else he will sooner or later make some very pointed - probably profane - remarks about the service, the cooking, the waiters, the location, the steward, the supplies, etc., etc. It will simply mean that he is beginning to feel the monotony attendant to

taking meals anywhere over a long period of time. What does one do in the States when a particular restaurant or boarding-house becomes tiresome? One moves to another - probably as bad, but at least bad in a different way. In Aruba one can't change boarding houses because there is only one, and the annoyance at not being able to change makes itself known by sundry ill suppressed squawks which at least serve the purpose of letting off steam. The food is well cooked - is served boarding house style - and is plentiful. It is better than the average served in medium priced restaurants in the States, is much more cleanly prepared, and there is a lot more of it. And it is far better than anything obtainable in public eating places in this part of the world. Just a word here. Be very careful about eating in places outside the Colony. Their ideas of cleanliness and yours may not coincide at all. And remember there are such things as dysentery and ptomaine poisoning.

The Bachelor Quarters. The "Bachelor Quarters" where the new man will live, are two-story buildings with 32 rooms each. Two men are accommodated in each room. And the beds are probably the most comfortable in the world. That may seem a minor point, but just wait a minute. You have to get your proper sleep in the tropics. Of course you do anywhere but it is a pretty general opinion that sufficient "Hay" is of more importance in hot countries than temperate ones. In most places where a lot of men are gathered together the powers that be supply a "donkey's breakfast on a board" to sleep on. Not so Aruba. The beds and springs are the highest quality it is possible to get and are guaranteed to have one hundred per cent drawing power. Sleeping, in Aruba, during ten months of the year, fanned by cooling breezes, at a temperature low enough to make a blanket welcome, is a luxury of the first order. During the other two months the breeze may be absent part of the time, but even so there is not one tenth as much discomfort as in most sections of the States during July and August.

Personal and Confidential. It would appear that our bachelor or temporary bachelor has now a fairly good start. He has brought certain goods with him and has purchased others here. He has been introduced to his boss and his work, has found out when and where he eats and sleeps, and has been given plenty of pointers in regard to spending his leisure time. These are things he requires of Aruba. What does Aruba require of him in order that he may live with the maximum of comfort?.

Forbearance or patience or good nature or whatever you like to call it. Don't fly off the handle the moment some annoying thing happens. Remember, Aruba is a barren island and everything that makes living possible is brought from the United States. Perfect comfort and convenience are hard to obtain anywhere. Under the conditions in Aruba, a tremendous job is being done every day by the people concerned to keep the place going in food, water and the conveniences of life.

Don't believe everything you hear. In a place like this, one of the leading indoor sports is the manufacture of tall tales. Some of them are amusing but very few are true. They are only intended to pass away the time, and impress the newcomer and the gullible.

Don't get it into your head that someone is "gunning" for you. That is a sad state of affairs anywhere and will lead a man into more difficulties than almost any other weakness. But to have a "persecution complex" in Aruba, where you are in contact with the same group morning, noon and night, is unbearable. Under ordinary conditions in the States you can

get away from people part of the time, anyhow. But in Aruba, if you allow yourself to believe that you have an enemy, you will see him at work, at meals, at baseball games, at the movies -- you may sleep in the same room with him!

### THE MARRIED MAN WITH A FAMILY

When we come to talk about bringing a family to Aruba, there are many points that need to be discussed which affect our bachelor very little if at all.

Houses. First the matter of getting a house to live in.

The housing situation has been such a live subject to Aruba during the past four years that it seems hardly possible that it hasn't been discussed in all sections of the U. S. and Canada. However, there are probably still a few people who haven't heard of it so far. For their benefit a few details will be hashed over.

There aren't enough houses to go around, which means that there is at all times a waiting list for housing, varying from 15 to 50. This means that there is always a group of men living in the bachelor quarters who have families in the States, and whom they are very anxious to bring to Aruba. On the average, an employee will have to wait for one year before he can bring his family to a permanent house. After a man has been here four months it is possible for him to sublet a house from someone going on vacation, although this is a deplorable way to live. To move into someone else's house for five or six weeks and then have to move out and maybe move into another vacationist's house -- and maybe have nowhere to go at all, is certainly not satisfactory. Some people try it for a while but if they aren't very lucky their families finally have to go back to the States, anyhow.

Living outside the Colony is entirely out of the question for people who have been accustomed to a normal American way of living. The Houses are merely native huts -- full of insects -- a prey to the sneaking centipede and the skulking scorpion -- no bathrooms -- no water -- merely a roof and four walls tastefully surrounded by cactus in a community of dark skins. No; living "outside" can't be recommended.

The only sensible thing for the married "bachelor" to do, then, is to wait until he gets a company house -- rent free, free water, free ice, free oil for cooking, free garbage disposal, electric light and furniture. Living in an Aruban company house is the simplest kind of living imaginable. No monthly bills, no arguments with the electric company or the gas company, no getting in coal for the winter. If the electric lights burn out, new ones are supplied, pronto. If the waste pipes gurgle and gasp, call the plumber. The houses are painted regularly and the furniture is repaired or renewed whenever it is necessary. It is the simplest kind of housekeeping in the world. Negro maids work for \$1.00 a day plus their food. Some of them are fairly good; some are fair; and some are simply terrible. But they can get the rough work done and some of them are good cooks. Most of them are capable laundresses. But don't think that by paying extra money you get extra service. All you gain is the dirty looks of the rest of the housewives who are trying to keep living costs down.



Electric Fans aren't supplied, and for a couple of months every year they are very useful.

Deck Chairs are useful for the porch, and cannot be purchased in Aruba.

If you have them handy, bring a few throw rugs in neutral shades. Wall tapestries and flower vases are very useful.

And the rest can well be left until you have had a chance to look around and decide what you want. There will be other things, of course, that can only be determined by individual taste. But the inclusion of some of the articles mentioned above will make your house more livable. There are a lot of things that can be bought in the stores in San Nicolaas, but they are not as suitable as items which can be bought more cheaply in the States.

School Facilities. The school in Lago Colony will now accommodate children through the full High School program, with a standard American curriculum. This is undoubtedly the largest and best American school in a foreign country and graduates will be recognized for entrance into colleges in the U. S. A small fee is charged which only partly meets the school expenses. Modern buildings and equipment are furnished by the Company.

The Commissary. The Company operates a general store -- the Commissary -- where all the necessities and many of the luxuries of life are for sale. Food prices are reasonable but not low. The average commissary bill for a family of three is about \$80.00 per month. Of course, this is entirely dependent on the assortment of food and the amount, too. If you go strong for caviar and pate de foie gras -- both of which the Commissary carries -- your bills will mount. But so they would in the States on a similar diet. The Commissary carries fresh fruit and vegetables and unfortunately these things are expensive, too. Remember, they are collected in New York from all parts of the United States, are kept there in cold storage, are loaded on a tanker and again put in cold storage for the trip to Aruba. Then they are once more put in cold storage after they arrive. No wonder they are expensive.

People often ask why we can't get fruits and vegetables from the nearby countries, where they are cheap enough in all conscience and grow like weeds. Distribution is the answer. In Paramaribo (Venezuela) you can buy oranges for a Dutch cent; a stalk of bananas for about ten cents U. S. In Haiti, alligator pears cost 25¢ a bushel. Limes in Venezuela are three cents per dozen. But you can't get a regular supply. Fruits and vegetables are seasonal -- in South America they aren't kept all year around in cold storage -- there isn't any, the coastal ships don't have cold storage. Imagine a deck-load of melons, lettuce, and oranges after a six day voyage in the hot sun!

No, Aruba has to get its lettuce and celery regularly and in large quantities. The only feasible method to date is from New York via tanker. Even so the demand is greater than the supply. It takes plenty of ingenuity to prevent the "green goods" from walking over to Oranjestad -- other people on the island like American vegetables, too.