

## **F.A.H.P. News, August 6, 2012**

**A Trip through the West Indies, 1950:** About a year after I became a travel agent, my partner, Alex Burton, suggested I should make a flying trip to some of the main West Indies destinations which had great potential for an agent's winter business. Most airlines would give agents free trips in the off-season, and resorts would also compliment short stays with the prospect of developing much-needed business. In late October I flew to Miami on National Airlines which had a fleet of DC-4s. After visiting a dozen or so hotels in Miami Beach the next day, I took another National flight in the evening to Havana, where I stayed at the first-class Nacional de Cuba Hotel.

The Batista regime, corrupt but long-backed by the United States, was in full control and it understood the value of American tourism. I did Havana sightseeing by day, and a night club tour at night, and it seemed that no one went to sleep in the noisy Cuban capital. I really didn't like the place, and I moved on 9 years before Batista was forced out by Fidel Castro. On either a DC-3 or a 2-engine Convair I flew to Camaguey, Cuba, where I changed to a Pan American flight to Montego Bay, Jamaica.

Jamaica, still a British island in 1950, was beautiful, and I was furnished a car and driver who met me at Montego Bay and stayed with me all the way to Kingston about 4 days later. The car was a '38 Packard Six, and the driver was extremely proud of his 12-year-old car, but found it very difficult to get parts. Tower Isle was a brand new ocean-front hotel on the north shore at Ocho Rios and I stayed there one night while sightseeing in the area. I think this hotel was later called "Couples" and catered almost entirely to newly-weds. We then went to the east end of the north shore to the old town of Port Antonio, where the Hollywood actor Errol Flynn owned the only good hotel in town (it was old but had a certain charm). Finally we crossed the mountains to Kingston, Jamaica's capital, where I stayed at an old hotel named the Myrtle Bank, and said good bye to my driver, to whom I sent some small Packard parts and a manual upon my return home. I walked about eight blocks through back streets of Kingston to attend a movie at an open air theatre. The movie was not very good, but I felt completely safe among the natives who attended, even though they were of a different race.

Leaving Kingston, I flew to Port-au-Prince, capital of Haiti. In 1950, the natives in the city were not living much better than animals. One night I attended a Voo-Doo ceremony with some other American agents, which was a weird experience. A small American colony existed about 4 miles up the mountain with a beautiful view of the city and the harbor, and there was an American-type resort lodge run by one of the residents. These Americans liked Haiti because they could live and have servants for practically nothing in U.S. currency, but I did not share their enthusiasm for this kind of life. The next stop in the Dominican Republic on the same island was quite different. Ruled by the dictator Trujillo, it was spotlessly clean everywhere but the only native conversation resulted in praise for the dictator. Santo Domingo was then called Ciudad Trujillo.

Finally, I stayed two nights at San Juan in Puerto Rico, where Conrad Hilton had just built a new resort hotel called the Caribe Hilton. On a Sunday, I flew to St. Thomas for the day, where a young Danish couple who operated an old hotel in Charlotte Amalie took me around; it was a most scenic island. I have never seen any of the other Virgin Islands. I flew to New York the next day on either Eastern Air Lines or Pan American. It was my only trip to the West Indies.

**Work Report:** On both Tuesday and Thursday, 18 volunteers showed up for our work nights. Work continued on the Model 607 as re-assembly progresses under the leadership of Bob Jordan. The king pins on the Model 87 were adjusted again, and the broken wires were replaced on the 12 v. generator. The feed water heater on the Model 76 has been rebuilt using the original brass pipes and steel canister. Fabrication of a new front end for the flue continues, and both flue and heater have been thoroughly cleaned. Again, the derailment problems on our Locomotive 402 have been addressed, and Thursday night the locomotive was fired and run around the loop of the Auburn Valley several times. Limited progress was made in shop improvement, and this will continue. Rose Ann Hoover, chair for our August 5 “Steamin’ Sunday”, was on hand both nights to ascertain that all jobs are covered. The Model 76 was moved to the Museum and the popcorn machine brought to the Carriage House where it will be put to good use making Roxy’s delicious steam-made popcorn.

Richard Bernard and Peter Parlett, teachers of the 4-week Osher Course on steam automobiles, completed the session this week with the final classroom period at the Arsht Center of the University of Delaware on Wednesday, and a visit by most members of the class to Auburn Heights on Friday, at which time they toured the mansion and the museum and witnessed the Mountain Wagon being fired up, after which all had a ride around the grounds.

Both Tuesday and Thursday evenings after dark, the grounds of Auburn Heights had tiny areas of light scattered around as about eight local painters under the tutorship of a professional painter of nocturnal scenes practiced their skills on trees, buildings, landscapes and a Model EX Stanley. We thank artist Jacalyn Beam and Steve Bryce for making this possible.

On Tuesday, the following were on hand: Jerry Lucas (in charge), Paul Fratunis, Robert Hopkins, Dave Leon, Mark Russell, Dennis Dragon, Steve Bryce, Tim Nolan, Tim Ward, Bob Jordan, Ted Kamen, Richard Bernard, Rose Ann Hoover, Emil Christofano, Jeff Pollock, Art Wallace, Jerry Novak, and Tom Marshall. On Thursday it was Dave Leon (in charge), Richard Bernard, Butch Cannard, Art Wallace, Anne Cleary, Rose Ann Hoover, Steve Bryce, Bob Jordan, Ted Kamen, Mark Russell, Tim Nolan, Jim Personti, Geoff Fallows, Eugene Maute, Gerhard Maute, Chuck Erikson, Paul Fratunis, and Tom Marshall.

Our “Steamin’ Sunday” on August 5 had 316 paid visitors, of whom 56 visited the mansion. Despite a hot and humid day, everything operated like clockwork and all had a good time. We are indebted to Rose Ann Hoover and our nearly 50 volunteers who worked the many jobs to show our visitors a rewarding time.