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ARTHUR EDWARD POWELL
Editor and Proprietor

Our Correspondent Describes Visit to Panaman Interior

Pedro Miguel, Canal Zone
March 16, 1950

Dear Mr. Powell:

Thought you might enjoy an account of our trip to El Valle, 80 miles up in the interior. So will do my best to describe it, although it is impossible to picture on paper the beautiful scenery.

The Y.M.C.A. of Balboa had arranged the trip and there was about 30 W.A.C.'s and a few others that had signed up for the trip. Mr. Piper, who is manager of the "Y" and his secretary, had planned and managed the trip, had chartered a special bus and then he took his station wagon to care for the extras after the bus was filled. Miss Betty Young, the secretary, rode in the bus and we and a few others rode in the station wagon.

We arose at 6 a.m., packed our lunch, and after a hearty breakfast, drove to Fort Clayton where we parked our car and walked to entrance gate No. 1 where all met the cars, leaving for our trip at 8:30 a.m. We crossed the Canal bridge and drove through Coccolli which is a Pan Canal town and also Military. Next was Brucco, a Navy base and housing quarters, also ammunition headquarters.

On way to interior we saw the Ant hills that are built in crotches of trees and bushes, they are huge things and are built above the ground to protect them from drowning out in wet season, for from what I hear it really rains here then. Our next stop was Arrijan, the end of Canal Zone and police checking station.

As we drove along our driver would explain the different trees and flowers as best he could. Of course there was large orchards of grape fruit, oranges and tangerines. Plenty of banana plantations, and cocoanut groves loaded with huge cocoanuts, the culpeco trees that are very tall and no limbs until nearly to the top. Another interesting tree was the Kapok filled with pods

from which we get our kapok that is used for filling pillows, etc. but not a leaf on the trees, just filled with these pods. Then the huge guayacan trees filled with brilliant yellow flowers and not a leaf, they are most beautiful, and the mountainside is dotted with them among the green palms and other foliage is a striking picture. Hibiscus, Poinsettias, Bougainville, Begonias and many other growing along the way, made a lovely flower bed.

The next city, the third largest on the Isthmus was Cherrorwa. Of course, we pass many native huts of various kinds and small villages, with plenty of men, women and children everywhere. Many children up to about six years of age were minus clothing. There were also many fruit stands along the highway much the same as the states except these were made of grass and palm branches. Then too there are many men and children scattered all along the way standing by side of the road holding out flowers of all kinds, orchids, and others, also fruit and many with home made bird cages made from the leaves of the palm trees or I should say cocoanut trees very beautiful and containing two birds of various kinds. Some would be parrots, some blue-birds, and some banana birds or others. They would sell a lovely sort of two story cage with two birds for \$2.00 and the ordinary size for one dollar with the birds.

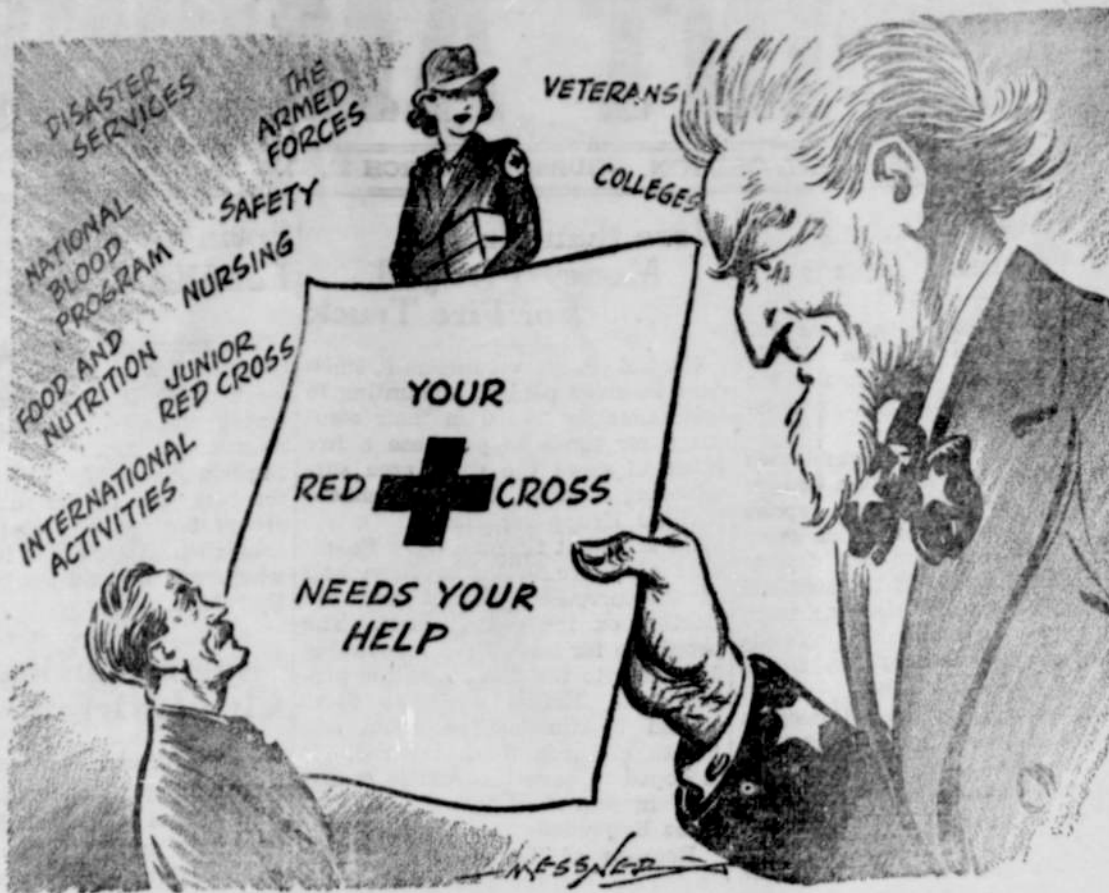
Also remember this is all paved highway done by U.S.

We, in the station wagon, arrived at El Valle at 11:00 a.m. but waited

a while for the bus to show up and soon there came two army trucks and then a car and in the car was two of the girls from the bus. It had broken down with some kind of trouble or just too hot with his load and climbing those Mts. Anyway the boys from the air field here in the trucks went back and brought the load in (about 20 miles back) but they were only about a mile from Rio Mar beach where we had planned to stop on our way back and swim.

On arrival at El Valle-hotel, a very beautiful one, we found the owner, a very dignified but stern man who came out and said he did not allow picnic's there unless they were stopping at the hotel. But Mr. Piper explained it was from the Y.M.C.A. and who he was so he gave us permission to go in a large one room house all decorated inside and filled with tables to eat our lunch. The hotel is called The Pan American and owner is known by the name of Jungle Jim. It really was a very beautiful hotel and certain elaborate, swimming pool, swings and all sorts of amusement for the guests or for us, a

lovely mountain stream rushing found the famous Golden frogs. This I had to see to believe, but they are just the color of gold and some are all one color while others have gold with black dots or other markings in black. They are beautiful. There was a large jar of them on hotel desk and then we saw them in the creek. Here also grow the square trees about a half mile up the mountain, but I did not have energy to go. However many did. So while they were up there we went to a store near and viewed the many baskets and things made by the Indians. Then came back to grounds and down by the creek was a native shelter from the sun and wind, with a native fence around back, all made of grass and palm branches. There were easy chairs



through the trees and there were and hammocks, where we rested. The wind was too strong to enjoy sitting on porch of hotel. We laughed about the native shelter with one electric light in peak. Mr. Jungle Jim had his own Delco plant to light the places.

Took a picture of an Indian carrying a load of wood on his back and in his hand was his large machette. Also one of another Indian carrying a pole over his shoulder and on either end of it was tied a bunch of live chickens for sale. They will pose their pictures but always expect a tip.

At four o'clock we all left for Rio Mar, the air force boys taking the bus bunch in their trucks and there we found our driver of the bus already to go with it all fixed up. So left there all ready to go home. On the way we were talking of various things and Mr. Piper had been in the Y.M.C.A. work in the states 28 years before coming down here two years ago, and he mentioned so many places in different states, and finally San Francisco. I said you wouldn't happen to know a man there by the name of Lester Day, would you? He said

DO I, I have known him for years and worked with him, he is head of the "Y" there. I said he is my husband's own nephew. Then he went ahead and told all about their family and what they were doing as well or better than I could. He said when they came down here, he and his wife spent the last visit in their home and that Lester and Emma Lo utook them to the ship to leave. So you see what a small world it is after all.

We arrived home about 7:30 tired but having had a wonderful day. Regards to all.
Mrs. E. E. Scott

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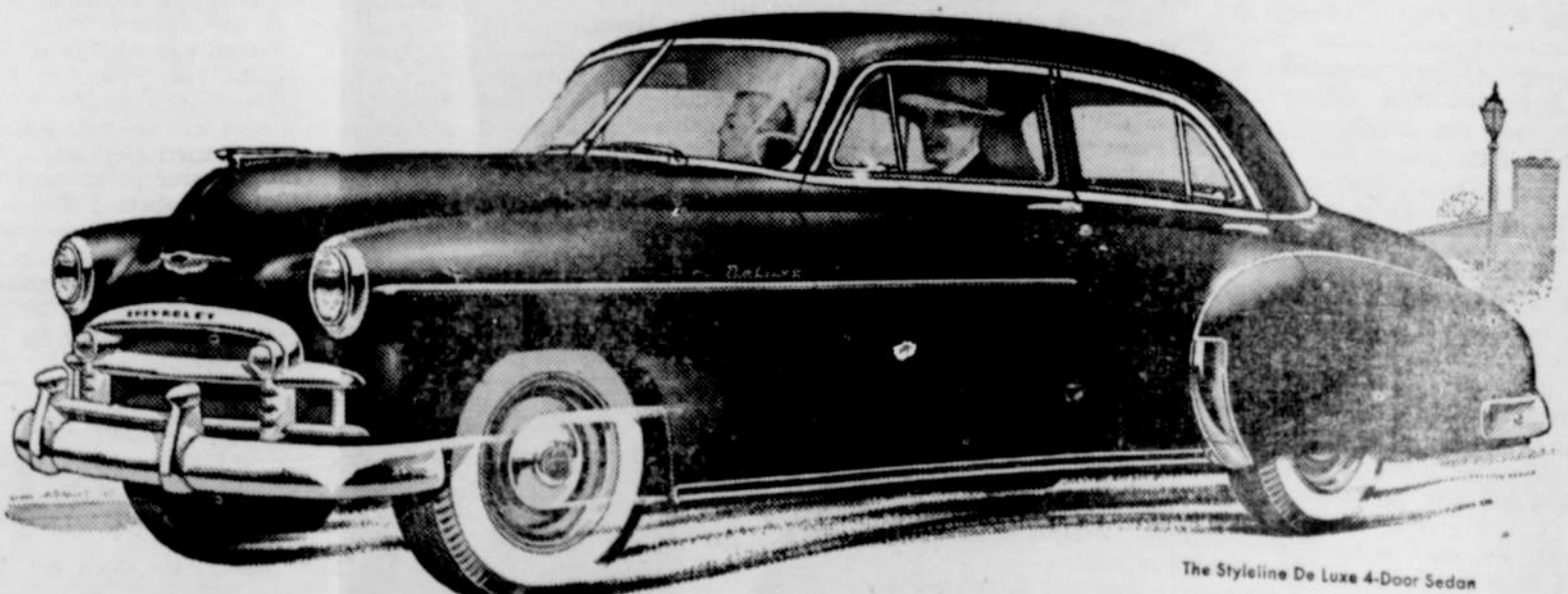
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