

Struggling Paraguay



Paraguayan "cowboy," and the Government Palace at Asuncion.

Prepared by the National Geographic Society, Washington, D. C.)

While other South American countries have been living in peace, little Paraguay, second smallest of the republics of the continent, has been preserving the traditions of the Latin-American penchant for revolutions. Incidentally, it has been living up to its own warlike reputation; for this little country has had a far more tragic military history than any of its fellow nations of the Western Hemisphere—a history that for unhappy details can be compared, perhaps, only to ill-fated Armenia. As a result of five years of war during the latter half of the past century between three-fourths and five-sixths of the population was wiped out of existence. Of a population that may have topped the million mark, little more than 200,000 women and children and less than 30,000 men—mostly old men—remained in 1870.

But the survivors of this little country bravely faced the future, adopted a constitution that discouraged the existence of the dictators who had dragged it into such difficulties, and has achieved a considerable degree of prosperity. In reaching this latter condition Paraguay has blazed the trail for some other countries which are now suffering from after-war complications. Most of the credit for lifting Paraguay from its discouraging position is due to the industry of its women. Men, for a generation or so, have been so scarce that they have been pampered.

In shape and physical surroundings, and roughly in size, the main, developed portion of Paraguay may be compared to Illinois. It is about as far from the north of the great Plata as Illinois is from the mouth of the Mississippi; and its southern portion is enclosed between the Paraguay and the Parana rivers as Illinois is between the Mississippi and the Ohio. So, too, Paraguay forms a part of South America's "Middle West."

But to be as close to the equator as Paraguay, Illinois would have to be shifted to northern Mexico. Despite the fact, however, that the northern portion of the little republic is crossed by the tropic of Capricorn, it has in the main a delightful climate, and is looked upon by the people of neighboring countries as the sanitarium of South America. Perpetual spring holds sway for nine months, and only during December, January and February (the summer of the southern hemisphere) is the temperature uncomfortably warm.

By River to Asuncion.

Though one may now go by rail to Asuncion, capital of this mid-continent republic, the river steamers from Buenos Aires still furnish much the most used method of travel. The first sight of Paraguay, which lies to the right as one ascends the Paraguay river, reveals flooded islets and vast grassy prairies. Humaita, the first Paraguayan town which the river traveler reaches, gives something of the keynote of the country. The streets of the town debouch on a velvety green parade ground, and they, too, are like green lawns—wide, quiet, old-worldly, with cows placidly grazing and an occasional small brown boy sauntering leisurely across. In the gardens are banana trees.

On and on one steams for more than a hundred miles past banks nearly as level as a table. Then the country begins to rise slowly, and soon the old, old city of Asuncion appears. Sloping gently up from the busy docks and canal, a house, or aduana, the white, tan, and pink tinted walls of the houses, the old red tile roofs, and the green of parks and plazas present an attractive picture.

During the hot months, work hours start very early. Even at five o'clock in the morning the town is wide awake; peons in white, with large straw hats, slouch leisurely along; black-clad women, with black mantillas over their heads, hurry home from mass, and native carts begin to rumble along the rough streets. Soon after mid-forenoon all industry stops and for several hours the city seems deserted.

Men Are Scarce and Lazy.

All the common people are barefooted, the men smoking cigarettes and most of the women puffing on short

black cigars, which are so strong that even a veteran foreign smoker usually acknowledges himself vanquished when he first tries them. Oddly enough, the native cigarettes are unusually mild.

As a result of the bloody war with Argentina and Brazil, it is said that as late as a generation ago there were twelve Paraguayan women for every man, and even now the ratio is three to one. Men in Paraguay are precious and, as a consequence, are not, as a rule, fond of exertion. American meat-canning factories in the country report that almost all their employees are women. The only work in the factories which is done by men is cutting up the carcasses.

One significant feature about Paraguay is the comparatively small percentage of Spanish blood in its inhabitants, and the fact that the old language of the Guarani Indians has held its own through the centuries and still is spoken by the lower classes quite as generally as Spanish.

It is a primitive dialect, with a vocabulary of less than eight hundred words and only rudimentary grammar. Four is as high as one can count, after which one says "full hand," "full hand and one," etc. Most of the geographical names of Paraguay are Guarani and a majority of the common names of trees, plants, wild animals, and birds are in that language.

It is up the river from Asuncion that one encounters, in all his glory, the Paraguayan counterpart of the cowboy of our Western plains. His shirt is bright-colored and about his neck is loosely knotted a gorgeous silk handkerchief. Tight-fitting white cotton trousers, often with draw-strings at the ankles, extend almost to his armpits. About his waist he girds a six-inch-broad leather belt, to which are sewed little leather pockets, useful for carrying money, cigarettes and other small personal belongings. Always the belt supports the sheath of a long knife.

Though barefooted, he wears spurs and sometimes loose leather leggings. A fringed apron of soft-tanned brown leather hangs to his knees, its purpose being to protect him when on horseback from thorns and from the pressure of his lasso. Usually he carries a silver-handled, flat-thonged native riding whip, or reventa.

Cattle Raising in the Chaco.

As the Chaco, the untamed region west of the Paraguay river, is being opened up, the cattle raising industry is becoming more and more of a factor in Paraguayan life. Now the herds of this little republic are second only to those of the vast Argentine pampas. On the Chaco plains are held each season roundups at which cowpunchers of Oklahoma or Texas or New Mexico feel fully at home. The gauchos use 72-foot lassos of braided rawhide and are as expert in singling out and noosing calves from the shifting mass of cattle as are their northern brothers-in-saddle.

Paraguay has had many unusual chapters in its history. First it harbored a feudalism under the control of half-breed land owners and Spanish governors. Then Jesuit missionaries gained control and maintained a church state for more than a century. Later Spanish governors, who cruelly oppressed the people, came back into power.

After independence from Spain was gained in 1810 Paraguay entered upon a period of dictatorships and became the hermit nation of the West. Trade with outside countries and the presence of foreigners was strictly prohibited and the country came to be entirely a self-sufficient unit. A sort of communism was established for many years, a portion of the land being worked for the state, the proceeds being used for the benefit of the people. De Franchia, the first and most benevolent of the dictators, was absolute despot of the country for 25 years. When he died there was a short period of fighting and turbulence from which Carlos Lopez emerged as dictator. After him came his son, Francisco, under whom the population suffered its greatest losses.

Since 1870 the government has been carried on under a constitution framed to prevent the rise of dictators. But still has its revolutions. The present one is the seventh since 1870.

BANK OF WINTON-TREASURER In Account With Hartford County

1922. ALL FUNDS

Nov. 1. Balance forwarded	\$17,668.65
From T. T. Parker, Tax Collector	11.76
Error in October account	1.90
From T. T. Parker, (W. E. Jenkins), 1920	59.27
From T. T. Parker, special Road Tax Net	162.32
From N. W. Britton, Superintendent	51.98
From T. T. Parker, Tax Collector	1,073.30
From M. E. Worrell	50.00
From F. G. Tayloe	39.00
From S. E. Vaughan, Tax Collector	339.62
Proceeds from bonds	10,000.00
From L. K. Walker	88.04
From W. L. Matthews, Tax Collector	162.72
From J. W. Boone, J. P.	7.00
From W. J. Hill, Tax Collector	1,146.00
From B. N. Sykes	50.00
From N. W. Britton, loan	2,954.40
From N. W. Britton	12.24
From J. A. Northcott, anti-toxin	24.25
From J. A. Northcott, anti-toxin	260.30
From J. A. Northcott, anti-toxin	336.30
From interest daily balances	98.05
From B. Scull, Corporation Tax, 1922	52.28
From draft for coupons returned	9,022.50
TOTAL	\$43,671.88

CREDITS

Nov. 30. County checks paid	\$ 1,453.58
Jury tickets paid	66.20
School vouchers paid	4,133.39
Road checks paid	10,538.38
Interest coupons paid November 1	7,969.87
Interest coupons paid	133.34
Balance due County, all funds	19,377.12
TOTAL	\$43,671.88

HERTFORD COUNTY IN ACCOUNT WITH SCHOOL FUNDS

Nov. 1. Balance due all schools	\$ 2,298.99
T. T. Parker, Tax Collector	15.43
N. W. Britton	51.98
T. T. Parker, Tax Collector	552.47
T. T. Parker, 8 per cent penalty	43.25
Balance Tax list, 1921, net	495.91
J. W. Boone, J. P.	7.00
N. W. Britton, (Loan)	2,954.40
N. W. Britton	12.24
Interest daily balances	30.30
B. Scull, Corporation tax	24.12
Transferred from Special Tax	12,409.11
TOTAL	\$18,895.20

HERTFORD COUNTY IN ACCOUNT WITH ROAD FUND (INTEREST AND SINKING FUND)

Nov. 30. From T. T. Parker, T. C.	15.43
From T. T. Parker, T. C.	162.32
From T. T. Parker, T. C.	245.67
From T. T. Parker, 8 per cent penalty	19.65
From S. E. Vaughan, balance Special Road Tax	50.27
Interest daily balances October	37.25
B. Scull Corporation Tax 1922, net	11.60
Draft for coupons returned	9,022.50
Amount overdrawn	240.65
TOTAL	\$ 9,805.34

HERTFORD COUNTY IN ACCOUNT WITH ROAD BOND ACCOUNT

Nov. 1. Balance forwarded	\$ 4,226.60
Nov. 13. From M. E. Worrell	50.00
From proceeds from bonds	10,000.00
From L. K. Walker	88.04
From B. N. Sykes	50.00
TOTAL	\$14,414.64

GENERAL COUNTY FUND

Nov. 1. Balance forwarded	\$ 1,157.79
From T. T. Parker	11.76
Error in bank statement	1.90
From T. T. Parker, T. C.	8.65
From T. T. Parker, T. C.	137.58
From penalty 8 per cent	11.00
From F. G. Tayloe	39.00
Commissions paid to Tax Collector's Special Road Tax	122.80
S. E. Vaughan	339.62
W. L. Matthews, Tax Collector	162.72
Commissions paid Tax Collector on penalty other funds	47.47
Over credit to sinking fund 1921 taxes	47.17
W. J. Hill, Tax Collector	1,146.00
J. A. Northcott, anti-toxin	24.25
J. A. Northcott, anti-toxin	596.60
Interest daily balances, October	30.50
B. Scull, Corporation Tax, 1922	14.26
Sheriff's salary 1922 advanced by County fund	1,800.00
TOTAL	\$ 5,699.07

SUMMARY OF ALL ACCOUNTS TO NOVEMBER 30th, 1922

Amount due all funds by Treasurer	\$19,377.12
	240.65
TOTAL	\$19,617.77

Amount due schools	\$14,233.71
Amount due bond account	2,774.30
Amount due Special School Districts	2.30
Amount due State	8.03
Amount due County Fund	2,599.43
TOTAL	\$19,617.77

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