

28-467

Hotel Tivoli

Under the Management
of the
Subsistence Department

Ancon, Canal Zone,
Monday, April 22nd 1912

Dearest Mama -

I find a six day boat leaves tomorrow, so I will send off a few lines to tell of the progress of the Trip - Steamer will have left for New Orleans before this reaches you - I sent an outward crawl on our arrival in Colon Saturday; please forgive the script, but I had stuck my right thumb into an electric fan just before reaching Kingston - It is now heated & I do not expect to lose the nail -

The day in Kingston last Thursday was as usual there very hot & dusty, but we took a motor on arrival at eight, ran out to Spanish Town, saw the fascinating old church, with

The old register containing our names
under date of Feb. 25th - 1904! We
also went over the old Governor's
house which you & I did not do - It
was well worth it, showing the pomp
& circumstance in which the old Royal
Governors lived - Thence we motored
on to Rio Cobre & Bag Walk & I
must confess that I had quite forgotten
how very wonderful that drive is -
You & I turned back at Bag Walk
Station, but having a motor enabled
us to go on six or seven miles thro'
the plantation country to the
Natural Bridge, a very wonderful
formation of rocks - As before we
sent a darky up a tree for fresh
coconuts to quench our thirst -
We got back to the Myrtle Bank
Hotel (new of course, as the old one
went down in the earthquake & lost
several times) just in time make
several purchases of hats, clothes etc

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and to greet a crowd of Americans
off the "Victoria Luise" (old "Deutschland")
including the Hon. Laubs, R. A. C. Smith's
etc. By the way the wrecks of the
poor old "Prinzessin V. L." & of another
Hamburg boat still lie on the ocean
side of the long reef guarding the
harbor - We sailed at four &
hence had no time to get up to
New Castle where the troops are
garrisoned -

The trip to Colon was better &
uneventful, except for a travelling
American circus on board bound for
the Zone & the West Coast of South
America -

Apr 20 Colon came in sight at noon
Saturday, Two hours ahead of
time & we had time to drive

Around the Town of Colon proper
(under Panamanian control) & the adjoining
Cristobal (under our control & the true
northern Terminal of the Canal) The
American quarters were a revelation,
spotless & comfortable, yet with
an air of absolute efficiency. Here
are located the Commissionary Headquarters,
cold storage plant for the whole Zone
etc. The ice-cream factory alone
is the largest in the world!

The observation parlor car on the
rear of the train gave us splendid
glimpses of the canal as we came
across, reaching Panama at 6:50
just at dark, but still light enough
to see the waters of the Pacific.
This hotel is just above the town
& our rooms overlook the Bay of
Panama - We are most comfortable
& of course under management of
The I. C. C. (Inter-Oceanic Canal Commission)

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On our way over we met a Mr. Wait, who is on the harbor work at Colon & had run across for a spree here - We promptly dined together, & later he took us all over the City - so that by 2 a.m. we had been introduced to all the tricks of the trade - It is a most interesting place - every ~~thing~~^{thing} & nationality, but clean & fairly orderly - a very different Panama than under the French - Like Colon & altho' surrounded by the Zone it is under Panama control & is only subject to us in the matter of sanitation, orderliness etc.

Sun
April 21

Yesterday morning we drove out to Balboa, the Pacific terminus of the Canal & site of the future docks & harbor - tremendous operations

now in progress - Thence through
the wonderful hospital grounds on
the hill back of the Hotel -

At last we took the train
back to Lulea - the location of
the great hut & home of the Ad-
ministration - Commissioner Ranssman
was waiting to meet us & we called
on Goethals & had a nice long talk.
We all dined with Mr & Mrs Ranssman
had a delightful evening & took the
train back at nine - Mrs. Ranssman
was the daughter of Herbert Squires -
our first minister here & a very
intimate friend of Wainwrights - In
fact the latter is the executor of
Mr. Squires & Trustee for his children,
so we were all received with open
arms -

Mon April 22 This morning we left at 6.30
by train back to Lulea ($\frac{1}{2}$ hour)
Ranssman met us with an observation

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Ancon, Canal Zone,

engine + took us for two hours through the length of the great cut - nearly nine miles - We ran over tracks + switches among the blasts + drills + ^{steam} shovels + dump trains, ~~the~~ ^{the whole trip} personally conducted by Commissioner Rousseau, who I take it is probably more the right hand man of Gaethals than anybody else - At Ten we attended a lecture on the Canal given for tourists on the Light-Seeing train in the Model Room + afterwards we three lunched with the Rousseaus, meeting Mr. Carlos Crossen (the Secretary of P. & C. Works of the Republic of Panama + nephew of the President) as well ~~as~~ as his brother + two sisters -

Most of the afternoon we spent

inspecting the great locks of Pedro Miguel (called here Peter McEill) & Miraflores, the latter a double flight of locks - These locks raise the vessels 85 feet to the level of the cut -

I can't begin to describe it & have become so enthusiastic that if I didn't stop I would write all night. The two things that impress the most are the ^{Culebra} cut, because of the colossal hole made in the ground, & the locks because of the engineering problems & size - Imagine an intricate concrete structure nearly a mile long and three or four hundred feet wide, with ^{double} gates of steel weighing 700 tons apiece!

Toethals said in his quiet way last night: "We like to have Americans come down, because they all say it makes them better Americans."

Tonight, after visiting a Tailor, we

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are having a quiet evening & going to
bed early - for it is pretty tiring to
go all day in the heat, tho' the
early mornings & evenings are delightfully
cool ^{Tue Apr 23} Tomorrow we leave at 6.30
again for Gatun, the great dam
at the Atlantic end forty miles from
here which will impound a lake of
160 square miles! - We return at
Two & drive out to see the ruins
of Old Panama six miles from
here - It was sacked & destroyed by
Sir Henry Morgan the Buccaneer
in 1671! ^{Apr 24} Wednesday we inspect
the Pacific end harbor works in
the Commission launch & sail Thursday
^{Apr 25} afternoon from Colon -

Your very welcome cable
dated Friday was delivered this
(Monday) evening & I promptly answered

I was beginning to get anxious -

The Titanic Tragedy is too horrible.
We know practically no detail - only
scraps here & there. I am counting
on you saving all the papers for
every day. I am away up to depot
30th when we reach N. Orleans.

I am so glad Elmer was able
to move the chicks down today - It
will give her time to get well settled.
Give them all a great many kisses
& hugs from Father - I will send
a line by Thursday's direct boat
to N. Y. but you will hardly get
it before another line from N. Orleans.

I only wish you could see this
wonder of the world - greater than the
Tower of Babel or the Pyramids -

Ever your affectionate son
Franklin D. Roosevelt.

By the way we sail on the
"Abraham" - not the "Parismina"

Parismina Apr 22 1912

ANCON,
CANAL ZONE
APRIL 22, 1912

MONDAY

Dearest Mama

I find a six-day boat leaves tomorrow, so I will send off a few lines to tell of the progress of the trip. Eleanor will have left for New Orleans before this reaches you. I sent an awkward scrawl on our arrival in Colon Saturday; please forgive the script, but I had stuck my right thumb into an electric fan just before reaching Kingston. It is now healed and I do not expect to lose the nail. The day in Kingston last Thursday was, as usual there, very hot and dusty, but we took a motor on arrival at eight, ran out to Spanish Town, saw the fascinating old church, with the old register containing our names under date of Feb. 25th, 1904! We also went over the old Governor's House which you and I did not do. It was well worth it, showing the pomp and circumstance in which the old Royal Governors lived. Thence we motored on to Rio Cobre and Bog Walk and I must confess that I had quite forgotten how very wonderful that drive is. You and I turned back at Bog Walk Station, but having a motor enabled us to go on six or seven miles thro' the plantation country to the Natural Bridge, a very wonderful formation of rocks. As before we sent a colored boy up a tree for fresh cocoanuts to quench our thirst.

We got back to the Myrtle Bank Hotel (new of course, as the old one went down in the earthquake and cost several lives) just in time [to] make several purchases of hats, clothes, etc., and to greet a crowd of Americans off the "Victoria Luise" (old "Deutschland") including the Wm. Loeb, R. A. C. Smiths, etc. By the way the wrecks of the poor old "Prinzessin V. L." and of another Hamburg boat- still lie on the ocean side of the long reef guarding the harbor. We sailed at four and hence had no time to get up to New Castle where the troops are garrisoned.

The trip to Colon was hotter and uneventful, except for a travelling American circus on board bound for the Zone and the West Coast of South America. Colon came in sight at noon Saturday, two hours ahead of time and we had time to drive around the town of Colon proper (under Panama control) and the adjoining Cristobal (under our control and the true northern terminal of the Canal). The American quarters were a revelation, spotless and comfortable, yet with an air of absolute efficiency. Here are located the Commissary headquarters, cold storage plant for the whole Zone etc. The ice cream factory alone is the largest in the world!

The observation parlor car on the rear of the train gave us splendid glimpses of the Canal as we came across, reaching Panama at 6:50 just at dark, but still light enough to see the waters of the Pacific. This hotel is just above the town and our rooms overlook the Bay of Panama. We are most comfortable and of course under management of the I.C.C. (Isthmian Canal Commission). On our way over we met a Mr. Wait, who is on the harbor work at Colon and had run across for a spree here. We promptly dined together, and later he took us all over the city, so that by 2 a.m. we had been introduced to all the tricks

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Yesterday morning we drove out to Balboa, the Pacific terminus of the Canal and site of the future docks and harbor. Tremendous operations now in progress, thence through the wonderful hospital grounds on the hill back of the hotel. At four we took the train back to Culebra, the location of the Great Cut and home of the Administration. Commissioner Rousseau was waiting to meet us and we called on Goethals and had a nice long talk. We all dined with Mr. & Mrs. Rousseau, had a delightful evening and took the train back at nine. Mrs. Rousseau was the daughter of Herbert Squires, our first minister here and a very intimate friend of Wainwright's. In fact the latter is the executor of Mr. Squires and Trustee for his children, so we were all received with open arms.

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