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Today's Geography



SANTO DOMINGO: FIRST LOVE AND LAST RESTING PLACE OF COLUMBUS

Christopher Columbus, in placing the great western hemisphere on the map of the world, left his impress more deeply on what is now the Dominican republic than on any other bit of land in the New World.

The very name of the capital of the republic, Santo Domingo, whose worship under the United States has been under public discussion recently, is a family affair with the Columbuses. The great discoverer named for his father this first permanent city established by Europeans in the Americas. The same name is applied to the island of which the republic is a part almost as commonly as its aboriginal name, Haiti; and finally the paternal name is further perpetuated in that of the republic itself.

The remains of Columbus are believed by investigators who have examined the evidence in the case to lie in the cathedral in Santo Domingo City. The body of the discoverer was brought to the island of his early triumphs from Spain, where he died and was placed beside that of his son Diego. It was thought that the Spaniards removed the remains of Christopher Columbus when they transferred sovereignty of the island to the French in 1795. It appears from later examinations of the burial vaults of the cathedral, however, that the casket which was borne in such great state from Santo Domingo to Havana at the end of the eighteenth century and from Havana to Spain a hundred years later, contained instead the ashes of Diego, the son.

The city of Santo Domingo grew to be a wonderful place during the early days of Spanish dominion, but Columbus did not live to see much of the development. His son, Diego Columbus, however, engraved the family name deeper on the city and the country of which it was the capital, setting up there a court of such regal splendor that it aroused the envy of the Spanish king.

Santo Domingo seemed destined to become the bustling metropolis of a Western empire. But it became the victim of exploitation. After a turbulent history, during which the native Indians were exterminated and thousands of African slaves were imported, the latter, assisted by mulatto freemen, rose, in the last years of the eighteenth century, abolished slavery and drove their oppressors from the island. Though the land of the Dominican republic reverted for a while to Spanish control, and later was conquered by the republic of Haiti, with which it shares the island, it established its independence in 1844 and has retained its individuality since.

WOMEN THE FINANCIERS OF A FORGOTTEN KINGDOM

Along busy highways of ocean travel, land links between Japan and Formosa, not far from China's coastwise routes, yet visited by only two or three white persons a year—such are the Loo Choo (Luchu or Ryuku) islands. "Loo Choo is a land full of the indescribable charm and mystery of the Orient, but replete with the pathos of a vanishing race," writes Roy Chapman Andrews to the National Geographic society.

"But, although it has been 40 years since there sounded the death knell of this little hidden kingdom, Loo Choo is not yet Japan. The traveler realizes this even before he lands. The pine-clothed, tomb-dotted hills which form the background of the strange little cities of Naha and Shuri have an unfamiliar look and the pretty tiled roofs of the diminutive houses, just visible over the surrounding gray stone walls, give fascinating hints of what may be found beyond their lacquered gateways. On their entire 900 square miles of land only one white man, an American missionary, is resident.

"With our money changed, we began to look about to spend it. For Loo Choo is the home of the red lacquer ware famous throughout the world. Much of it is exported, and the finest of the boxes, bowls, trays, tables, etc., which are in daily use in Japan and China and sold to tourists throughout the Orient, come from the little city of Naha, or Shuri, its neighbor across the hills. The lacquer ware, when first made, is a dull brown, but really first-class pieces improve with age and soon change to a beautiful vermillion, becoming brighter and clearer the longer they are used.

"When we came to buy lacquer we were greatly surprised to find that bargaining had no place in Loo Choo. Without exception, the first price asked for an article was the one for which it was sold. Never in the Orient had we met with a similar condition.

"It was interesting to find, also, that the women of Loo Choo conduct all business and have charge of everything pertaining to money—with the single slight exception of spending it. The market, where in the morning

"It passes through successive ages or stages, as they are called, each one of which is separated from the other by a moult or casting of its outer shell.

"These moults take place at fixed periods, and as the insect finds itself restrained by its firm inelastic skeleton, a longitudinal rent occurs along the back, and the insect, soft and dangerously helpless, struggles out of the old skin inclosed in a new but delicate cuticle, which takes some time to harden and color up.

"Whether this creature has a personality or not may be forever, extremely difficult for humans to decide. Its eyes, that look like cows' eyes, really cast a thousand images on a special kind of brain, so different from our own that we cannot understand it, and then besides these great big eyes it has three others. Its short, ringed horns are not horns at all, but sense organs of so complicated a nature that we do not yet know certainly whether they are organs of smell or not, and it is supposed that they may be the seat of sense organs that we humans do not have.

"In front of the great thighs imbedded on each side of the body are the so-called ears, tuned no doubt to catch vibrations of the air far too delicate or too frequent for our ears.

"The jumping legs of the creature are filled with powerful muscles, which, when they expand, can hurl it through the air and enable it to escape from its enemies. On the inner side, along the lower rib, of the wing, is the musical instrument. It is a row of hard, bead-like projections, which are very highly developed in the males, but not at all in the females. When the edge of the wing is scraped over these projections a musical sound is made."

ALONG OUR TURBULENT BORDER

"No region in all North America is more frequently mentioned or more widely misunderstood, perhaps, than the Mexican border," writes Frederick Simpich, formerly American consul at Nogales, Mex., to the National Geographic society.

"From the Gulf of Mexico up to El Paso, along the Texas frontier, the Rio Grande forms the boundary between the United States and Mexico; thence to the Pacific coast the line is marked by stone or iron monuments (save a short break at the Colorado), so set that one is supposed to be visible from another. By this plan a soldier, miner or cowman (yes, and a smuggler, too) can always tell which side of the line he is on; or, if wholly lost and he comes suddenly on a monument, he soon can get oriented.

"Adventurous, colorful and full of contrasts as it is, the 1,800-mile trip along this crooked, historic line is rough and difficult and has been made by a few people.

"The Rio Grande part of this border has caused both Uncle Sam and Mexico much work and mental anguish. During bad floods the line as formed by the river squirms around in so astonishing and lively a manner that what is Mexican soil one day may be in Texas the next, and vice versa.

"Railroads cut this long border line at Brownsville, Laredo, Eagle Pass and El Paso, Tex.; at Douglas, Naco and Nogales, in Arizona, and at Calexico and Tia Juana, in California. Only four of these railroads, however, are main lines of through traffic that penetrate the interior of Mexico; these start at Laredo, Eagle Pass, El Paso and Nogales.

"No section of the border has seen so much of adventure, tragedy and turbulent activity as Texas. The flags of France, Spain and Mexico have waved over it; for a time it flew its own Lone Star and also the Confederate flag.

"As you follow the border west, oaks, pines and underbrush decrease, aridity increases and cacti lift their thorny heads. Border counties like Brewster, Presidio and El Paso are of amazing area—larger than some of our small Eastern states. Windmills are everywhere—big electric fans to keep the cattle cool, a waggish cowboy once explained to a London tenderfoot.

"El Paso is the only large city from 'San Antonio' to Los Angeles, a ride of 1,500 dry, dusty miles.

"The largest irrigation reservoir anywhere is the great Elephant Butte dam, which stores more water than the world-famous Assuan dam on the Nile.

"From the point at Monument No. 1, where the boundary line crawls out of the Rio Grande (at the southeast corner of New Mexico), it strikes west into a wilderness of singularly dry and empty aspect. For 40 miles along this march the traveler must carry his own water.

"To the west lie the rough, hostile foothills of the Dog mountains; near here, in the San Luis range, the line reaches a point of 6,000 feet above the sea, marking the continental divide.

"In the San Bernardino valley the line strikes the first running water after quitting the Rio Grande—192 miles to the east. Here rises the famous Yaqui river, that long, crooked stream that meanders through the vast Mexican state of Sonora and through the turbulent Yaqui Indian zone, finally emptying into the Gulf of California below Guaymas.

"In the whole 700-mile stretch from the Rio Grande to the Pacific this line crosses only five permanent running streams, and the average rainfall throughout its length is only eight inches.

trading for vegetables and fruit is carried on, resembles a suffrage meeting place, for among the crowded mass of humanity not a man is to be seen.

"The straight backs and erect carriage of the Loo Choo women are due to the custom of carrying everything upon their heads. No matter what the object, be it large or small, it is perched upon their thick, black hair, and off they walk in the most nonchalant manner.

"The most striking thing about Naha and Shuri are the high stone walls which surround the houses. These walls are generally covered by a small banyan tree, called the goja maru, growing like a great vine and sending out numberless roots which sometimes reach a hundred feet from the original stem.

"These also serve as a hiding place for a snake, a kind of adder, six or seven feet long, which is the curse of the islands. Their bite is generally fatal in a few hours, and many people are killed by them each year."

MODERN TATOI AND ANCIENT ATHENS

Constantine, whose return to the throne of Greece was discussed after the death of Alexander, had a famous summer palace at Tatoi, before his abdication. There he spent much time during the final uneasy months of his reign.

Tatoi is 16 miles north of Athens by way of Kophisla. In strong contrast to the harsh and stormy political situation which encompassed the members of the royal family following the outbreak of the World war, their physical environment was wholly delightful, for Tatoi is one of the most beautiful spots of Attica, nestling almost at the foot of the Farnes mountains. In the distance towers the famous Pentelikon, from whose summit one may obtain the finest view to be had from any of the Attic hills.

Historically, Tatoi is noteworthy for being freighted with unhappy associations. In its vicinity stand the ruins of an old fort, known as the Kastro, which marks the center of the deme (township) of Decelea.

It was at Decelea, 12 miles in an air-line north of Athens, that the traitor Alcibiades, he of whom Aristophanes wrote that "they (the Athenian soldiers) love, they hate, but cannot live without him," counseled the Spartans to construct strong fortifications in order to intercept the caravans of grain from Euboea, which supplied the capital with food. Alcibiades, by his betrayal of the Athenian navy which had invested Syracuse in Sicily, had already fulfilled the prophecy of the misanthrope Timon who had said upon one of the many occasions when the young Athenian's rash proposals had been endorsed by the populace, "Go on, my brave boy, and prosper; for your prosperity will bring on the ruin of all this crowd." His advice to seize and fortify Decelea in 413 B. C. brought irretrievable ruin on his native city and resulted in an inestimable loss to the human race, for it crushed Athens.

By one of the strange whims of "the crowd," the Athenian army in its darkest hour sent a message to Alcibiades inviting him to desert the Spartans into whose power he had betrayed his own people. And by an equally strange whim Alcibiades accepted the invitation, rushing to Samos to assume command of his old associates. But it was too late. Athens was doomed. Lysander, commanding the Spartan navy, administered a crushing defeat to Athenian sea power at Aegospotami, on the Hellespont. Three thousand of the defeated Athenians were massacred, and Xenophon, the historian, with tragic simplicity relates that when the news reached the capital, "That night no man slept."

Tatoi is reached today by a railway journey of eight and a half miles to Kephisla, and a carriage drive of seven and a half miles from that point. The new summer palace was built for the king and the old palace was designed as the residence of the crown prince. A beautiful park and a venerable oak grove surround the royal homes. A short distance to the north is the barracks of the rural police, known as the Chorophylakes.

THE GRASSHOPPER: MUSLIM, MONSTER AND AVIATOR

Once more the ravenous grasshopper wrought devastation upon Western fields this fall, and the plague became especially destructive in Texas.

Writing to the National Geographic society, David Fairchild describes this fascinating, if ruthless, creature as follows:

"The young king grasshopper is probably twenty days old and its wings have not developed, but it can jump a hundred times its length, whereas man can scarcely cover three times his length at a leap. When its wings grow and its internal air sacs fill with air it can sail away for miles. One representative of this great family can sail for a thousand miles before the wind, and they go in such numbers that they make a cloud 2,000 square miles in extent.

"Its great front lip hides a pair of jaws as effective as a hay-chopper, and it has an appetite as voracious as that of a hippopotamus. This voraciousness and these jaws are what have made several of its relatives the plague of mankind. They multiply in such numbers as to baffle all calculation, and every living green thing for thousands of square miles disappears down their throats, leaving the country they infest desolate.

"When the young grasshopper emerges from the egg it is very small indeed—a wingless, helpless little creature, all legs and mouth.

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SHIPPING BOARD NEWS Hog Island cost the United States government \$60,000,000, but the highest offer that has been received for it is a trifle over \$4,000,000. The Shipping Board announces large reductions in the cost of operating. In the controller's division a saving of more than \$1,000,000 has been effected and on the Pacific coast reductions in personnel have reduced expenses about \$600,000 annually. The sale of the Government shipyard in Seattle is under consideration. Admiral Benson says that the wooden ships built at a cost of \$180 a ton during the war are not regarded by buyers as worth more than \$15 a ton. 192 of these vessels are tied up in the James river. Possibly the machinery will be taken out of them so that they may be converted into barges. The Chairman of the Shipping Board says that our merchant marine is doing somewhat better than paying expenses.

LABOR The New England Letter issued by the First National bank of Boston, says "there are several instances in curtailment cases where labor, dismissed at 55 cents per hour, has reentered at 35 cents when shops resumed fuller operations." The "Letter" comments: "When the constant shifting of wage-earners from one industry and one locality to another is appreciated, the far-reaching effects of lower minimum rates of pay are apparent." Anthracite coal miners, in conference with their employers in the Pennsylvania fields demand that they be given wage increases of 27 per cent with a minimum day rate of \$6 and a universal 8 hour day. Negotiations are in process. People cannot capture affection and honor by lying in wait for them. The only manners that really impress are those that indicate, real men back of them. Our opinion of the world usually is a confession of our character; we see what we are.