

Flying Down to Rio

Clipper Makes It a Small World



PAUL MILLER (fourth from left, in front) before he took off for South America. (Acme Telephoto)

Times-Union Editor Describes 7-Day Trip in 'Letter' Home

By PAUL MILLER

At 1:30 p. m. on Thursday, June 29, a party of United States editors, publishers, radio executives and government officials left the International Airport at Idlewild, L. I. They flew in the double-decker Clipper Friendship, a Boeing Stratocruiser, as guests of Juan Trippe, president of Pan American World Airways.

Eight hours later they were dining to native orchestra music in the colorfully decorated former barracks which now is the Pan American Hotel near the airfield at Trinidad, B. W. I.

By 1 p. m. next day, less than 24 hours after the takeoff in New York, in bright sunshine and with visibility unlimited, the towering crags and glistening beaches, the blue harbor and apartment-lined shores of Rio de Janeiro stretched below.

It is indeed a small world—increasingly so, thanks to Trippe and men like him—and before the travelers next touched U. S. soil, at Washington on July 6, they were to:

Enjoy royal entertainment in Rio,

Sample an overnight taste of the hospitality of Montevideo,

Parry thrusts with the fabulous Perons of Argentina, and

Marvel again on the fast flight home at the green, forbidding reaches of Northern Brazil—eyes straining for any sight of human life or movement from the Clipper, three miles up in the blue.

SCARCELY A CLOUD

Scarcely a cloud was seen. Weather was neither hot nor cold. Such bumps as came to the Stratocruiser were comparable to those absorbed by the family auto while taking wrinkles in East Ave. at 25 miles an hour.

It was, in short, the perfect trip. As one of those privileged to go, I am going to try to write about it. Not as an expert on flying, on South American affairs, or even on the fine hotels and good food, but just as a man might write a letter home. For such this is—a letter in your hometown newspaper about what one hometowner saw and did with friends in the lands once far away, yet now so near south of the border.

In 1934, Trippe conceived the idea of inviting newspapermen and officials to be his guests on the flight over a then new South American route.

He wanted to acquaint them with conditions in the countries his line was beginning to serve, and with advances in commercial aviation. Also, I suspect, he wanted to sell them on his great airline and its contribution to world progress and understanding. Frank Gannett was on that first flight and on others.

The latest and eighth flight in the Pan American guest series inaugurated a new luxury service between New York and Buenos Aires. The schedule, termed "El Presidente," lopped 11½ hours off the previous routed flying time of 37 hours and 40 minutes. It also introduced the double-decker Stratocruiser to the run. The upper deck offers conventional (although uncommonly comfortable) seating accommodations and the lower a mirrored lounge like the rear of a railroad observation car, complete with bar.

3 WOMEN ABOARD

Three women were among the guests — Mrs. Trippe, wife of our host; Mrs. Helen Reid, president of the New York Herald Tribune, and Fleur (Mrs. Gardner) Cowles, editor of the magazine Flair. Mrs. Cowles, by the way, won the sackful of dollar bills put into the pot for a wager on the landing time of the first leg of the flight. The Clipper Friendship touched ground at Trinidad at 9:26 p. m., the exact time drawn by Mrs. Cowles.

Also aboard, beside publishing and radio men, were Senator Edwin C. Johnson of Colorado; Rep. Carl Hinshaw of California and Willard L. Thorp, assistant secretary of state for economic affairs.

The other travelers, many old acquaintances and close friends of mine from professional associations, rounded out a congenial passenger list. All were to have eye-opening experiences together in the days and nights planned with such care and attention to the last small details by their hosts of Pan American.

Tomorrow: "The U. S. is like a Newfoundland dog."