

Flying Down to Rio

*South Americans Want Understanding,
Appreciation; We've Lots to Learn*

This is the last of six articles by Paul Miller, editor and publisher of The Times-Union, on an air trip to South America with a group of U. S. publishers, radio executives and government officials, as guests of Pan American World Airways.

By PAUL MILLER

The South Americans may not have any great liking for us Americans of the North — I don't know and I wouldn't blame them either way — but it's clear they certainly want us to like them.

Everything we saw in our all-too-brief trip, visiting Rio de Janeiro, Montevideo and Buenos Aires, indicated warm-hearted hospitality and a genuine welcome—at least for our group of Americanos shepherded by Pan American World Airways.

We hear a lot of talk, particularly from Washington, of the need for giving this and lending that to our neighbors of the South “to cement hemispheric relations.”

My opinion, based not only on this quick look but upon contacts with many fine South Americans in Washington in the '40s, is that they want understanding and intelligent appreciation of their achievements much, much more than they want loans or gifts.

Increased trade with the USA?

Certainly.

Government loans? Many South American countries will be glad to try to get them as long as they're being handed out. And who can blame them?

• • •

Particularly, it seemed to me, in Brazil, there is a feeling that considering Brazil's consistent support of the United States in its overall foreign policy, that Brazil could and should have been counted in on some sort of Marshall Plan.

Certainly there is a wonderment on the part of many a Brazilian at the recent loan to Argentina, its government, often at odds with the United States, even though that loan went largely to enable Argentinians to pay off debts owed United States business concerns.

But by and large the feeling of your admittedly amateur observer is that United States tourists can and will do much more to “cement hemispheric relations” than any loans or gifts that Washington could send down there. This is of course heresy. Our present Washington leaders still think they can buy anything with money.

But, as one Brazilian friend who also has lived in the USA, explained to me:

The South Americans are fed up with being “big-brothered” by Uncle Sam. They want to be recognized for their tremendous accomplishments and advances; they want to know that we up here can note and appreciate what they have done.

It burns them up that they too often get the impression, on visits to the United States, that we in our ignorance regard their countries as largely undeveloped areas ripe for the application of President Truman's Point 4.

Although, and again, if we are going to scatter the money around, whether under Point 4 or whatever, most would want to be cut in. (And also again, who can blame them?)

• • •

They'd like us to know, for example, that the great International Airport at Idlewild, L. I., is not as big as the airport out of Buenos Aires. (President Juan Trippe of Pan American calls the Buenos Aires airport the world's greatest.)

This is just one example. There are many.

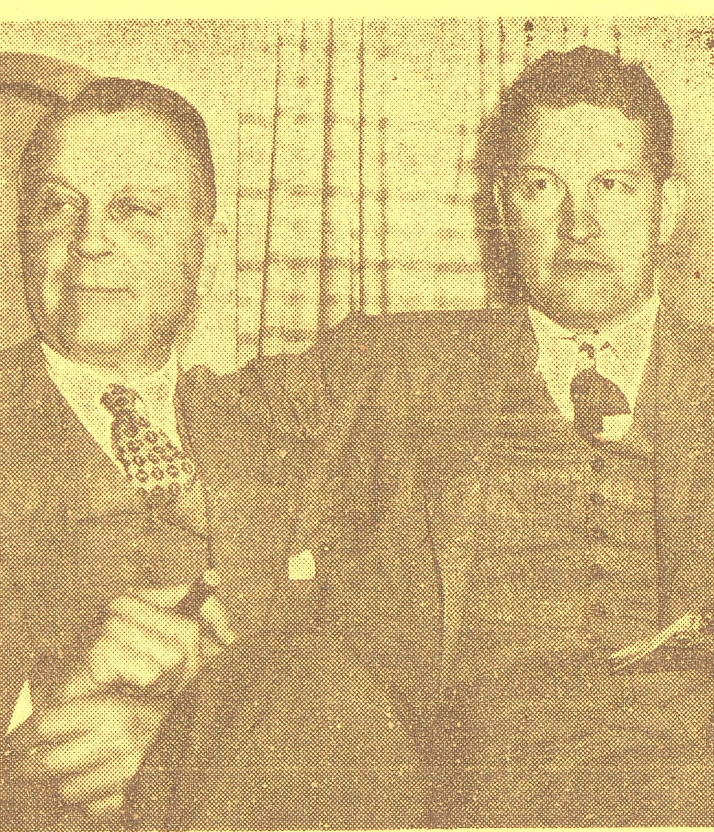
A visitor to Rio, to Montevideo, to Buenos Aires—especially to Buenos Aires—is bombarded with beautifully printed brochures colorfully picturing the cities and natural beauty spots. I brought home a stack as thick as a mattress.

In Buenos Aires the visitor is subjected to a different kind of propaganda barrage as well.

The Peron government goes all out to present the glories and achievements of its program.

The opposition, the victims, strive in their own ways to get over “their side”; to convince North Americans that there are iron hands and ruthless measures back of what may appear all sweetness and light under the brush of the propagandists of Peron.

Here are two tales, neither con-



JUAN TRIPPE, (left), president of Pan American World Airways and host on a flying trip to South America, pictured here with Paul Miller in the lounge of the double-decker Clipper Friendship. The lounge is on the lower deck. Above it are conventional seating accommodations.

armed and both probably subject to question, but nevertheless told and retold widely:

—The nephew of an officer in an American-financed enterprise in Argentina married an Argentine girl. They had no home of their own, so continued to live apart with their parents. They began building a house and when it was nearing completion drove out one Sunday afternoon to have a look. To their astonishment and dismay, a family had moved in. Nothing the young bridegroom could do would get the squatters out and finally, in despair, he called on Eva Peron, wife of the president. Mrs. Peron heard his story, but said that, after all, he and his wife had homes to live in and the squatter family had none. So he should go to the rent board, and put the family's occupancy on a regular basis. The young man blew his top at this, about the Peron government in general and Evita in particular.

Several days later he disap-

appeared. Friends assume that he is in custody somewhere.

2—A buyer may pay well above the list price for an American auto in South America, because of extra charges here and there, regular and irregular. One man succeeded in buying an American car at pretty near list price. Shortly, he received a call from an agent of Mrs. Peron's Social Aid Fund. His fine deal had been brought to attention, the agent explained, so shouldn't the man contribute to the fund the amount above list which he normally would have had to pay for a car? The man made the contribution.

A couple of weeks later his car was expropriated with the official explanation that others needed it more than he. He was paid the sum for which he bought the automobile, but how to get back the contribution to Evita's Social Aid Fund?

It is emphasized that there was no opportunity whatever to check these stories. They are repeated not as known fact but only to indicate the

nature of anti-Peron stories a visitor may hear—in whispers.

But political problems of Argentina, of Brazil and indeed of any other country can in no way obscure the unlimited promise and potential of these productive areas; nor the beauty and charm which ought to lure increasing hundreds and thousands of North Americans.

What too many of us do not realize is the extent of commercial development already accomplished and under way.

• • •

No tourist from the United States who has not boned up lately on his travel books can possibly be prepared for his first air view of Buenos Aires—a great, sprawling metropolis of 4 million persons glittering along the horizon with a network of broad highways roundabout.

The first impression, of bigness and action is quickly supported and enlarged as the plane drones nearer and individual projects and developments take form—the government buildings, the great railroad terminal, the football (soccer) stadiums as big as any of ours, the picture-perfect race tracks, the blocks on blocks of broad streets and fine homes.

Nor is anything taken away from first impressions as the plane lands at the airport, already called the world's greatest, yet the scene of building activity still with enlargement and improvement continuing.

Then comes the treat, despite the 30-mile distance from the airport to central Buenos Aires, of rolling in on a two-lane highway that is a match for the Autobahn in Germany; two concrete highways really, straightaway and uninterrupted B. A.-bound, separated by a center parking strip.

And the width of principal downtown thoroughfares! Some of them half a block and more wide. With, by the way, not a traffic light in sight. Seems they tried traffic lights once, but nobody would pay any attention.

• • •

It's a great world and South America is too great a part of it to receive as little attention from travelers as it does.

Juan Trippe, president of Pan American World Airways, has been preaching this for years. He has been making converts to his point of view with every trip south that his great planes fly. He made more converts on his latest—the inaugural flight of the Clipper Friendship.

Not one aboard but hopes some day to return. Including yours truly.

(End of Series)