

Ruins of Oldest Spanish-American City

(Copyright, 1912, by Frank G. Carpenter.)

ANTIGUA, Guatemala, Dec. 28.—You have probably never heard of Antigua. Nevertheless it was one of the great cities of the North American continent. It was famous 100 years before any settlement in the United States began to be. It had its tens of thousands when our Dutch ancestors landed on Manhattan Island, and its colleges and its cathedral when the boys of the Pilgrims were first trading the cowpains which formed the streets of old Boston. It had palaces and public buildings when we had only log cabins, and its ruins show that it far surpassed any other city of North America for 200 or more years after the continent was discovered.

Old Capital of Spanish America. I have seen all the ruined cities of the world, but I know none more interesting than those of this old capital of Spanish America. I have tramped through the streets of Pompeii, and have explored the remains of Zimbabwe in northern Rhodesia. I have explored Timaga, the once buried capital which is now being excavated on the edge of the Sahara, and have wandered about over the site of old Carthage. A few years ago I was in Haabek, that old city in the mountains of Lebanon, and it is only a few weeks since I wrote to you about Quiligua, the city of the Mayans in the Metzuga valley, not far from here.

The ruins of Antigua lie at the foot of two mighty volcanoes. They represent a metropolis which was destroyed again and again by earthquakes and eruptions, until the people of Guatemala gave up in despair and moved their capital to where it is now.

The site of the city is thirty miles from the railroad, and it took me ten hours of hard riding on the back of a mule to reach it. It was situated here in the mountains on the slopes of the Volcano de Agua and of the Volcano de Fuego, which, translated into English, mean the mountains of fire and of water.

These mountains are symmetrical volcanoes. Each is as beautiful as Fujiyama in Japan, or the Mount Vesuvius of southern Luzon. Fuego now and then rumbles and it is said that it may at any time break out in eruption. The Volcano de Agua is now quiet, but fourteen years after the old city was started it burst forth a deluge of water and reduced it to ruins. Some think the water came from a lake in the volcano, which the eruption threw out like a mighty cloudburst, and others say that it came from torrential rains, which had been pouring for seven days and which rolled down the mountains, bearing forests, rocks and earth in their floods.

The first city was founded by Pedro Alvarado only thirty-two years after Columbus first crossed the Atlantic. Alvarado was sent with an army of 250 Spaniards to conquer the countries of Central America. He enlisted great hordes of Indians, subduing the natives. He reduced tribe after tribe to slavery, branding them and selling them in the public markets. He chose this place as his capital, and architects came over from Spain to lay out the city. It was just about the time of his death that the town was destroyed and the Indians believe that it was largely done as a judgment upon his wife, who complained to the Lord because she had lost her husband.

Seat of Culture and Learning. In rebuilding the city the Spaniards chose a site about two miles away and there erected their capital. This remained in existence for 250 years, when it was again destroyed by the same volcano which had brought on the flood. The new capital was laid out with the idea that it would be the metropolis of North America and for generations it was the center of culture and learning of southern North America. It was destroyed in 1773 by earthquakes and at that time it had 120,000 people. In 1800 Boston had only 24,000, and it was a city of wood.

This old capital of Guatemala was a city of stone and stucco. Its streets were paved with stones and it had buildings which covered acres. It had forty-nine churches, four of which were parish churches, whose priests were under the government, and the others had been established by the Spaniards, who built them in gratitude for the property given by the Lord. There were also eight great monasteries, five convents, two big hospitals and three massive jails. There were palaces galore, and outside the city were seventy Indian villages surrounding it like the setting of a diamond.

In the center of the city was a great plaza, upon which faced the cathedral 500 feet long and 130 feet deep. This was lighted by fifty windows, and over its grand altar was a dome seventy feet high, supported by twelve columns of stone faced with tortoise shell and adorned by bronze medallions of wonderful beauty.

The monastery of San Francisco had more than 2,000 people within its walls, and the College of Jesuits was even more beautiful. Further on I describe the ruins of these and other buildings, which give the idea of the magnificence of the capital. It was a wealthy city. Its white inhabitants had thousands of slaves and gold and silver were brought in from the mountains and sent from here by the shipload to Spain. The land about was cultivated, and everything was prosperous under the dreams of avarice.

Destroyed by Earthquakes. Then came the earthquakes and eruptions. In 1562 there was a plague, and in 1585 there was a great earthquake, which destroyed a large part of the city. In 1601 there was another plague and fifty years later the earth trembled again, and masses of rock rolled down the mountain slopes into the city.

About a generation later the plague came for a third time and then after a respite of thirty years the volcano had another eruption, during which the earth shook and the thick walls of the churches cracked like egg shells. The last earthquake were those of 1773. At that time the mountains seemed to be on a continuous shake, the tiles flew from the roofs of the houses like straw blown about in a gale of wind and the bells rung as the earth trembled. The domes of the churches were split, the roofs of the monasteries fell in and many monks at prayer were buried in the debris. At last the final earthquake was on the 13th of December, 1773. This destroyed so much of the city that the people decided to move.

The king of Spain took it up and sent out his orders that the site of the capital be changed. He was obeyed and the Guatemalan City of today lies on a little plateau thirty miles away. It is so surrounded by ravines and gorges that the earthquakes do not trouble it. It was laid out on the plans of the old city, but it is never reached its magnificence, and the population now is at least 20,000 less than was that of the old capital at the time



A Street in Antigua

of the removal, now more than 130 years ago.

Antigua of Today.

I wish I could show you the Antigua of today as it lies about me. Some of the old buildings have been repaired and new ones erected, so that we have now here a population of perhaps 5,000, made up of Indians and whites. The most of these people live in low one-story buildings of brick, covered with stucco and roofed with red tiles. Much of the material has come from the old city and the windows have antiquated balconies which catch out over the street and which are barred with wrought iron, torn from the ruins. Some of the carved wood or Moorish design has been kept and not a few of the doors are quaint and antique. Many of them have door knockers of iron, silver and brass and some have a lattice work over the windows which reminds one of the Moors. There is still a plaza in the center of the city, upon which stand the government buildings and the ruined cathedral. The houses are painted all the colors of the rainbow. They stand close to the streets and are entered by great doors, which are sometimes heavily barred.

You see Indians everywhere, and Indian babies swarm. Nearly every woman has a baby at her breast or on her back, and the boys and girls go along with babies hung to their backs as they do in Japan. The children are put to work early. I see Indian boys of 6 years carrying burdens and girls of the same age trotting along with loads on their heads.

From the Top of the Cathedral.

But come with me and let us take a look at the ruins. I have met here Father Rosbach, a delightful priest, who has charge of the old church of La Merced. He is an American who is doing missionary work among the people of his faith in Central America, and he has provided a guide for us in the person of a Grand Rapids boy who has come here for his health. The boy's name is Lawrence Henner. He speaks Spanish and he can show us about.

We go to the plaza, and entering the cathedral wind our way around and around up the narrow, dark steps of the tower until we come out on the mighty roof of the structure. It is formed by fourteen great domes, which make one think of the building of Egypt. Back of these is the court, now in ruins, and walls and roof having been torn away and only the great columns with their capitals still intact. This building covers over an acre and it was full of worshippers when we had only 100 churches.

The view from the roof is magnificent. We can see how the city lies in a circular nest in the mountains. Outside the basin is covered with coffee plantations and within the buildings have patios whose gardens and orchards make the setting beautifully green. It is a town built in a forest and garden with these mighty ruins rising out of the green.

Just next the cathedral is the old university. We enter the court, which is surrounded by arcades where walked the students of 200 years ago. A part of the building is now used as a college and in the court the school boys were drilling. The teacher, with two whips in his hands, is directing the marching and I photographed the boys as they tramped.

Convent of San Francisco.

We take a carriage and drive to the convent of San Francisco. Here are the ruins of a mighty church and monastery which in their prime must have been of great beauty. The entrance gates had statues of marble and above them are the coats-of-arms of the king of Spain. We pass in through great pillars beautifully carved, enter a court yard and thence go on to the body of the church. This is one mass of ruins, but the Indians have made homes in the walls and they shops where monks once muttered their prayers. Right over the arched door is a beautiful statue of the Madonna, and in the niches on the church front are fourteen statues of saints. The decoration within is wonderfully beautiful, but there are trees now growing in the main hall and moss and bushes cover the walls. Right in the main body of the building the Indians have erected an oven, where they cook, on the site of the ancient confessional.

There is only one part of the old church which is still intact. This is a little sacristy at the left of the main entrance, where mass is regularly said. This sacristy has what I suppose are many of the ornaments of the old church. Its walls are covered with carvings, oil paintings and statues painted with gold. A statue of Christ, with a cross on his back, stands in front of the altar. It is robed in purple, embroidered with gold and bands of gold lace. At the right, protected by bars of iron, is a recess in the wall which is said to contain the body of a famous priest, who was so noted for his friendship for the poor that if he found a sick man on the street he would put him on his back and carry him to the hospital. There are numerous wax images hung to the walls of this grating. Some are of the Madonna and others are of legs and arms sent in by the sick, who hope to be cured. There are candles burning in front of this recess. Some of the old paintings from the old church are beautiful, as are also two benches of mosaic wood inlaid with ivory.



In the Old College of the Recollection

and if it were in Europe it would be one of the sights of its locality.

This is a beautiful country. The soil is fertile and that about Antigua is covered with coffee and sugar plantations. The coffee trees grow from fifteen to eighteen feet high and they are loaded with berries. Many of the plantations are in large estates beautifully laid out, with wide avenues through them. The avenues are shaded by cryptomerias, and the vegetation is that of the tropics. There are many beautiful flowers and great trees in blossom. There are numerous birds and this whole valley seems a Garden of Eden. It is no wonder it was chosen as the site of the ancient capital, and especially so from its beauty in contrast to the desert mountains above it.

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Monastery Owned by Americans.

My next visit was to a Michigan Institute. This was the College and Monastery of Recollection, the estate of which has been bought by Grand Rapids people and turned into coffee plantation. I am told that they have also about 3,000 acres on the sides of the Volcano de Agua, and they expect to plant this to corn.

The ruins of Recollection are about 300 years old. They are among the largest of the ancient capital, covering several acres. The walls are from two to four feet in thickness, but notwithstanding that the earthquakes reduced them to ruins.

The buildings were erected as a monastery and college, but the monastery is now carrying a cattle corral and Berkshire pigs are rooting among the docters. The estate which belonged to these buildings is now growing coffee and fruits. I went over with the manager, Mr. Albert P. Platte, and among other things he showed me a great concrete and stone swimming bath built by its former owner. This bath was in the patio. It is 100 feet long and ten feet in depth. It is formed of material from the ruins.

Pretext an American.

During my stay here I have visited the Church of Merced, over which Father Rosbach, the American of whom I have spoken, has charge. It is a beautiful building with a front wonderfully carved. It is only 100 or 200 years old and was partially destroyed by the earthquake. It has been rebuilt and now stands on the ruins of the past. The reason for its reconstruction is told as follows:

One day when the mayor and some of the town officials were going by the ruins they heard a concord of sweet sounds. It was at the time of vespers and they wondered where the music came from. They thought they must be mistaken and got others to come and listen with them. The vespers continued and the people were so impressed that they decided to rebuild the church.

This is the tradition. The fact is that the church stands and that it is one of the most beautiful in Central America. During my visit to it has been decorated by the Indians in honor of a saint day. They had drawn a design of a beautiful rug in the center of the hall and made the figures of this in sand of different colors. Around this sweet-smelling grass was strewn, while palm leaves lay at the foot of the altar. As we looked Indian women came in and knelt before the madonna, crossing their hands and praying. During the holy week the Indians take the statues of Christ and the Madonna and carry them through the city from night until morning, playing the while.

This church has flat arches equal to the one at Panama. Its roof is upheld with mighty pillars and the contrast of the white of the walls and the red brick is refreshing. It is a beautiful church,

and if it were in Europe it would be one of the sights of its locality.

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Keifer Says Too Few Live on Farms and Keep Living Cost Up

"No, the democrats will not accomplish much toward reducing the cost of living in this country unless they also bring about a general financial disturbance," said J. Warren Keifer of Springfield, O., an ex-congressman of six terms experience and ex-speaker of the house, when in Omaha yesterday. Those things are not easily regulated by legislation. The fact is, for all that may be said to the contrary, there are too few of us on the farms and too many of us in cities. In 1866 when I left the farm in Ohio, the census showed the 85 per cent of our people were on the farms and were farming in one way or the other. The thirteen census taken in 1910 showed a little less than 25 per cent were on the farms engaged in agriculture. Now those figures speak for themselves. The other 75 per cent of us are consumers.

"Then again, when we are prosperous as we have been for some years now, we consume more than we do when times are a little harder. We are a greedy people. Figures will show that we consume in quantity twice as much as the Germans per capita, three times as much as the Italians, nearly twice as much as the French, nearly twice as much as the English, Irish, Scotch and Welsh. Now take the item of sugar for example. Germany consumes fifteen pounds per capita per annum; Italy seven pounds per capita; France twenty-five pounds per capita; England twenty-five pounds and the United States consumes eighty-one pounds per capita per annum. Now then we don't need all that. When I was a small boy we used to get a little sugar once a week or so. When we were little boys we used to buy a little stick of sugar for a nickel when we got to town. Now people carry home great quantities of it in market baskets every time they go to market."

Mr. Keifer was in Omaha yesterday to take deposition before a notary on matters pertaining to a suit which he is carrying on in Springfield, O. I think I am out of politics for good now. I am practicing law for a living. If I should run for office again, some people would say I was too old. I'll be 77 next January.

The old speaker of the house is still very hardy, and gets around in a spry manner. "I was shot four times while in the army during the Civil War," he said, "and have still managed to enjoy myself pretty well in life."

OSTROM MAY SECURE A STATE APPOINTMENT

Henry E. Ostrom, clerk of the Board of County Commissioners, will be appointed chief deputy commissioner of lands and buildings by Commissioner-elect Fred Beckman, the first of the year, according to Lincoln men who visited in Omaha. Mr. Ostrom said he had not been notified of the coming appointment and he had nothing to say about it. Mr. Ostrom's reticence probably is due to a feeling that the announcement should be withheld until Mr. Beckman officially makes it. Mr. Ostrom has served several years as clerk of the commissioners.

Only Two Days More

And our great Pre-Inventory Sale will be an event of the past. It will, however, be an event long remembered by the people of Omaha and Nebraska. Everyone who has attended this sale say it is the greatest ever and are truly surprised at the wonderful bargains we are offering. This is an annual event with our store, and the reason is—we want to reduce size of stock before January 1st. Will you help us? If so, we will make it profitable to you. Come Monday. Don't wait, as the best bargains are always taken first.

High Grade Standard Instruments at Cost

Come and look them over. YOU ARE NOT FORCED TO BUY, except by the realization that never before has such a BARGAIN been offered to the public. We cannot describe these bargains, so you had better come and see what we are offering. While assortments during this short sale are small, still the styles are varied and the qualities are the best. Come, procure for yourself and family a

REAL PIANO BARGAIN

To receive a real piano bargain, besides getting a low price, you must receive a better quality at the price you pay than is usually offered. That is what we are doing.

Better Pianos for Less Money

During this sale you are privileged to pay all cash or, if more convenient for you, we will gladly make such TERMS as will be easy and satisfactory to you. COME—SEE—HEAR—and let us show you what we have to offer.

HAYDEN BROS.

TIMELY REAL ESTATE GOSSIP

Committee at Work on Suggestions for New City Charter.

WEATHER FINE FOR BUILDING

Unusual Amount of Construction Work Going on in Omaha, with Brick Yards Producing More Than Ever.

If building operations can be figured to indicate activity in real estate sales, then the market is greater this winter than it has ever been in Omaha before. Not for years has there been so much building in progress at this season of the year as at the present time, principally because such weather has not been had at this season in years. That there is greater building activity this winter than ever before may be determined by the fact that the Omaha brick kilns are continuing and increasing their output. It is rather unusual that kilns should be producing pressed brick at all at this late date, but not only are they producing, but they are producing greater numbers of bricks than for any season.

One brick kiln in Omaha has been pressing and baking 20,000 bricks a day, while four or five others are running close to that figure. This company requires the use of fourteen teams and wages to distribute the material to the places of building.

A glance over the city will show an unusual amount of winter building. One of the most imposing instances is the Baird building, being erected by the McCague Investment company for the Boston Ground Rent company at Seventeenth and Douglas streets. Work has been going on there regularly since the excavation was made a few weeks ago. The contractors will complete it before they expected.

The Empress theater, Douglas and Sixteenth streets, is another scene of fast construction work because of the mild weather. The carpenters, bricklayers and other artisans at work there have not been interrupted a day since the work was begun. Usually such a work is delayed considerably when attempted in November and December. It is about completed now, though, and soon Omahans will have another place to go to for their amusement.

Exchange on New Charter.

The Real Estate exchange is taking great interest in Omaha's new charter and in proposed bills to place before the incoming Nebraska legislature. At a long-drawn-out meeting of a special committee at the Commercial club Thursday night the problems confronting the real estate man were thoroughly discussed. The committee is an efficient one, well versed in the needs of Omaha as to a charter and legislative enactments. If other organizations will appoint like committees similarly interested and enthused, and if the people in framing and adopting a new charter take it as seriously, a good working plan of government for this city is assured.

Wide Advertising Reach.

An instance of the wide field of influence of advertising in The Bee is given by Charles E. Williamson. For several Sundays he has been advertising maps of Omaha and street guides which may be had from him on application. As a result of that advertising he has received requests for them from New York, towns in Alaska, Panama and many other widely separated points. He says there is no question but that

The Bee reaches those who are able to buy.

Auditorium Written Up.

A history of the Omaha Auditorium was given in a two-column article in the Indianapolis News December 17, in which were described the pitfalls that have beset the city in building and maintaining the building. The article was written as advice to Indianapolis, which is contemplating the erection of a large public coliseum. According to the writer of the story, the Auditorium, though it has been somewhat of a financial burden to the city, has repaid in advertising.

Another Hotel Name.

Fred Creigh, another young real estate dealer, don't like the suggestion of a hotel name offered in this column last week by his brother dealer, Lina Campbell. Creigh says that inasmuch as the big hotel will be near the High school chimney, he would give it a neighborly name, while still following along the line of Campbell's thought. He says, call it "The Murad," or "The Fatima." Campbell still sticks to his suggestion, "The Whiskey."

UPPER BERTH RUMOR FRIGHTENS RAILROADERS

For a few minutes yesterday some of the local railroad men were excited over a report that during next year when they rode in Pullman cars, they would have to occupy upper berths. They have discovered that the report was without foundation and that they were unduly alarmed.

The Pullman passes for railroad men have begun to arrive, and like those of former years, there is nothing said with reference to lowers, or uppers. They simply state that the holders are entitled to the usual courtesies.

The number of passes, both railroad and Pullman, being sent out this year is about the same as last. In fact, some of the roads are increasing the number of the annuals, extending the courtesies to employes a little farther down the line.

Pullmans are all issued on request of the official designated by each road, and this year, as during former years, they are good over the rails of the road on which the holder is employed. For instance, on a road running to Denver, the Pullman pass would be good on its trains, but not good on a sleeper on a road between Omaha and Kansas City. In the event a railroad employe who holds a Pullman annual rides on some road other than the one by which he is employed, he pays his sleeping car fare the same as the regular passenger.

TYPEWRITER HOUSE GIVES DINNER TO TRAVELING MEN

In celebration of the closing of the largest month's business in the history of the Omaha branch office, W. J. Pickering, manager of the Remington Typewriter company for this territory, called the twelve traveling men into the city and they dined together Saturday at the Commercial club.

At the close of business Christmas each said there has been more orders taken in Nebraska, western Iowa and South Dakota than in any other month since the business has been established. Each man at the dinner Saturday was presented with a small jewelry box containing a gold coin.

The Persistent and Judicious Use of Newspaper Advertising is the Road to Business Success.

Speed!

We are willing to "speed up" this plant as it has never been "sped" before and no matter HOW large or difficult the job, we will bind ourselves to get it out in time for

"New Year's Day"

Dresher Brothers Cleaners

PHONE TYLER 3-4-5
PLANT AT 2311-2313
FARNAM STREET.

"77"

GRIP & COLDS

Tell about "Seventy-seven," tell your friends, tell your neighbors, tell everybody you meet, that if it is taken at the beginning of a Cold, at the first chill or shiver, it will break up a Cold.

You know if you wait till you begin to cough and sneeze it may take longer, why not share your good fortune with others.

A small vial of pleasant pellets, fits the vest pocket. At your Druggist 25c, or mailed.

Hufphreys' Homeo. Medicine Co., 154 William St., New York.—Advertisement.

AUTO PAINTING



Repairing Trimming

The Bee's Phones: TYLER 1000 For All Departments

South Omaha Office, 2818 N Street, Phone South 37.
Council Bluffs Office, 15 Scott Street, Phone 43.