

Well, here I am in Mexico. Registered into the Continental-Hilton. It is now 4 AM. Ted Garvin and I just now got in. We went to the Airport in Dallas early so as to get his visa lined up. Got there at 6 o'clock in fact for the 8 o'clock flight. The first thing we noticed was that the plane was delayed until 9 o'clock, so we went and had a very leisurely dinner. Went back and now the plane was even later, being 10:15 schedule, so in due time the plane did come in, unload, and we climbed aboard about 10 o'clock for 10:15 flight. A little after 10:15 they started the engines, towed the plane out away from the loading dock, the pilot swung the plane out headed for the field, and then came back apologetically and said he had troubles. So back to the loading dock we went. We had hydraulic pump failure and he explained that he did not know how long it would take to fix it up but there was another flight coming in that we might be able to use. In a few minutes he explained that the mechanics had just told him it would take him an hour and a half at least to change the pump. The other plane was due in thirty minutes, so we were scheduled to go out on the other plane - this time at 11:45. As Ted and I sat waiting for an opportunity to get on the plane first again, and thereby get the combination of window seat for him and aisle seat for him and nobody in between, we saw a 2" long cockroach going across the floor. Ted pointed out that was a Texan size.

Well, the plane was in good shape, took off, brought us to Mexico City and things broke right - we were in the first few getting through the Immigration ^{Docket} Desk, but they stopped Ted with his doctor's certificate and insisted that he get a vaccination right then, so we ended up at the very end of all passengers going through the Immigration Docket.

We came to checking out the baggage and did manage to maneuver around and get out ahead of quite a few others.

We went to get the cab and found a new arrangement. The cab starter asked where we were going, then gave us a slip to indicate how much it should cost us, then we had to pay at a gate as we left the airport this total amount. The very shifty looking character driving the car seemed to be perfectly capable - got us to the hotel and didn't come around with his hand out for a tip at all - in fact, he stayed so far away it was quite impossible to give him one.

We checked in and got \$11.+ rooms. As I started to unpack, before going to bed, who should I see on the floor but the big brother of the cockroach I saw in Dallas. This one must have been 2-1/2" long anyhow. The stain on the rug won't prove that though.

On going through Customs, it was being handled by two men not in uniform. Their major activity was to take a whole stack of stickers, dampen them on a sponge and stick them on the baggage. They did paw through some bags. They did ask most people to open their bags up. But there seemed to be a very helter-skelter sort of thing - sometimes you'd find both of them working in one booth and a whole group of people waiting at the other, sometimes they'd split up into the two booths and handle it more efficiently.

Before we got to the Customs and while we were going through Immigration, first we went to the medical fellow who stopped Ted, then we went by another fellow who stamped our visas and explained that we should go to the next booth where we would get the official stamp. I'm not quite sure what this middle man was doing but he seemed very official about it. He just looked at the visa paper very quickly

and I guess maybe his job was to be sure that people had the visa out, and prepared to show it.

Wednesday evening (16 October) - back in the Continental-Hilton after a full day of work, considering the fact that we didn't get to bed until 4:00 AM. We didn't get to work until 9:00 this morning, but we took a short, that is slightly less than 1 hour, lunch hour and worked through until 5:30 or 6:00. Went to dinner then with Renato at a Chinese restaurant. It gives a guy sort of a funny feeling to be eating Chinese food, that is Cantonese food, with chop sticks, listening to Japanese folk song as background, and hearing the Chinese waiters and waitresses talk very fluent Spanish.

This is Thursday morning - pretty cloudy outside. Back home I would say it is going to rain. This is the end of their rainy season, so they expect to have some anytime.

Friday Morning (18 October) - Sun is just barely turning the clouds a little pink.

Wednesday noon, Renato took us to a sort of villa made into motel. Most of the people living there are Americans and Renato thought maybe the food would be a little more to our liking. They have a smorgasbord type of thing, so I had the opportunity of trying quite a few Mexican versions of the sort of thing the Lord Fox puts out. One of the things I have enjoyed several times is the pineapple they have available in Mexico City. It's good fresh pineapple. Yesterday noon, that's Thursday noon, Renato and Alberto took Ted and me to a Mexican barbecue place. This lunch was extremely nice. It was top notch example ^{according to Renato} of the type Mexican food in which it is delivered

directly to the table from being cooked and all of the spices are in dishes on the table, thus it is possible to have relatively unspiced meal.

Mexican barbecue is a long ways from American barbecue. In fact, you could almost say it was a lamb clambake. Barbecue always means lamb and the method of preparing goes as follows: Into a fairly large hole in the ground place quite a number of red hot stones. A large earthen bowl is placed on the stones and the slotted, and I think cleaned, lamb is wrapped with leaves and suspended above this bowl. A covering is placed over it and some dirt on top of that. This is allowed to stew away for 4 or 5 hours, with the juices that drop into the bowl being first evaporated and condensing on the lamb and running back down. Finally, when it is uncovered there is a very thick, almost black, gravy in the bowl and the lamb is thoroughly cooked with a very dark outer surface. The lamb is served almost in chunks because it is so thoroughly cooked it is almost impossible to slice it, and this gravy placed on it. The leaf that is used on the wrapping of the lamb is a universally used leaf, also being the basis for tequila (Agave tequilana - a Mexican century plant). Part of the meal also consisted of some small black beans that were very tasty, and in place of bread they served this paper-thin whatever you call it. Chunks of the meat and spice sauce, if any, and maybe some beans are rolled up in this bread as an additional way of eating the meal. For dessert, again I don't remember the name, it was a slab of cheese and a couple of slabs of a very stiff gel made fruit was eaten with a piece of each simultaneously. This fruit concoction is something I have had before. The Mexicans apparently ship a great deal of it canned to the States.

Last night, Renato begged off taking us off on a spree because he is so far behind in his work. He left us off at about 7:00 with a vague sort of determination to go back and do some more work. Ted and I wandered around the streets for an hour or so and finally came back to the hotel and ate dinner here. We both ordered Mexican food, although American food was also available, of course. I had something called Turkey with Moles. It was certainly tasty but the turkey sure lost out. I knew from the texture that that was probably what it was but I certainly couldn't taste the turkey.

Renato told a story at lunch today which I would like to pass on. Apparently in Mexico when one makes derogatory comments about another man's mother, it is the absolute tops in insults, much more so than in America. Apparently there are several phrases which are not fit for repeating which are a guaranteed way to start a fight. The story tells about two men who were fairly good friends eating dinner together. They were quite hungry and when the soup was brought in one of them grabbed a spoonful of soup and hurriedly put it in his mouth. It was impossibly hot but he managed to swallow it, but it hurt so much it brought tears to his eyes, but he was not about to say anything. His friend saw the tears and said, "What's the matter my friend?" To which was replied, "I just thought of my dear old mother and the memories brought tears to my eyes." This satisfied his friend, who then also picked up a larger spoon of soup and tossed it into his mouth. Very shortly there were tears coming down his face. The first man in great innocence said, "Friend, I see you are weeping. Is there something wrong?" The friend said, "Oh no, I was just thinking of your mother also." End of a long friendship.

(Friday morning again -- Just looking out my window - it is an overcast morning again. Yesterday it started out this way and ended up being a nice sunny day.

Across the lot in front of me here I see a street sweeper working. I noticed yesterday they use exactly the same brooms as in Holland and Japan - that is a bunch of twigs tied on the end of a stick. I will try to get a stereo picture of this lot - probably have to be a couple of them. It's an empty lot that has obviously been empty for a long time. It has a six to eight foot brick wall all around it - over against the brick wall on the other side is a brick shanty sort of thing - maybe 30 feet long and 15 feet wide. Outdoor plumbing entirely - off over to the right is the outhouse and on the other side of it is the outdoor washroom. They have a little canvas cover supported above the washroom, but the outhouse is a little more substantial although it is not made of brick, it is made of wood. I would guess that from six to eight people live in this house, which incidentally has bottled gas, I would guess for cooking. They also have a couple of caged birds which they brought out the first morning we were here because it was nice and sunny. Over against another wall of this same lot is a very little shelter made of some corrugated sheetiron laid across between a pile of bricks and the wall. General observation is that there is one fellow who is living there. Up above this shelter and looking over the lot is a balcony of what was obviously a very nice home. The balcony is set back in, behind the wall which apparently surrounds a patio. The railing around the balcony is lined with potted plants. Incidentally, that outdoor washroom is also the outdoor kitchen sink where all the dishes and pots and pans are washed.

Across the lot is a place called the Fonda El Pato. It undoubtedly

is an eating place. Very interesting, however - the whole roof is covered with chickens. I wonder what they specialize in - eggs or chickens.

On a building back behind that one I just saw a little boy, maybe four or five years old, heave a rock back behind the other building. I couldn't see what he was throwing at, but he sure ducked and ran fast when he saw where the rock landed. He disappeared from the roof quickly.

Well - that was an organ grinder in the street outside the hotel. It is about 5:15 Friday afternoon.

I must certainly change my attitude towards Mexicans as a whole. I had the impression they were somewhat lazy and generally unambitious. But this Mexico City sure isn't that way. It is standard to have 1-1/2 hours for lunch but it is not unheard of to have 1 hour. The panel company, for instance has one hour. Working hours at the panel place are 8:30 to 1:30 and 2:30 to 6:00. Watching the people here in the city it is very common to see people running, a great percentage of them walk rapidly and almost never do you see anyone standing or sitting without some definite objective. ---- Across the street I just saw some high school students going home - all of them walking rapidly, some of them running. --- One interesting observation - two girls walking together, talking back and forth to each other, one was very light complected, probably Spanish, the other very dark complected, undoubtedly considerable Indian blood. The light complected girl had her arm around the other one in a very friendly sort of attitude.

Since we had pretty well covered all the items that were listed on the agenda, Renato and Roberto took Ted and me up to the Castle of Chapultepec. This is now the National Historical Museum.

The situation at this castle is quite a bit different from Japan in that cameras are forbidden unless you have a special pass which costs an extra pesos. Normally, there is a fee for going into this museum but on Friday it is a free day - today was Friday. I got several pictures from the castle out across Mexico City. It was kind of hazy but I hope I got some pictures of interest. I also picked up for 15 pesos an official guide in English. I could have gotten the same thing in Spanish for 8 pesos - my Spanish isn't that good though. After going through most of the museum and eaves dropping on a guide talking to some Americans once in a while, Ted and I climbed down across a rock's face to get below - I'm sure this is not the approved way but obviously many people had been before us from the way the path was worn. We then walked down the mile or so to the hotel, going slowly and looking around, looking very much like tourists but right then there weren't many tourists "Traps". One place we saw four American girls who were obviously having quite a lot of fun. One of them, however, seemed quite irate as they went by us and I overheard her say, "If they don't leave me alone I'll call the American Embassy, that's what I'll do." I've seen much more attractive American girls but Ted and I concluded the Mexican boys must have been bothering her. I'm sure she was getting more attention than she would back home.

One of the rooms in what used to be the residential part of the Castle and probably was occupied by Maximilian had very interesting

paintings on the wall. They showed men bowling with the ancient Elizabethan type of dress, and there were bowling pins very clearly in the picture; also showed badminton, top spinning, and even the toss game in which a ball with a hole in it is swung on a string attached to the man's wrist - it is tossed in the air by this string and caught by a skilled person on a peg held in the same hand. I tried to get a photograph of this but I am not sure.

MUSIC

It is now about 11:10 Friday night. I ~~am~~ ^{was} just finishing packing when I heard a very peculiar noise outside. It sounded as though somebody was wrecking a building or something. I turned off all the lights and looked out. Sure enough - there across the street were 18 to 20 men with possibly six large sledge hammers. These men took turns ~~whaling~~ ⁱⁿ away at the sidewalk, which looked/fairly good shape to me before they started. These fellows really swung the sledge hammer just as fast as they could. Some of them could follow through with it so it kept going around in a circle. About the time I realized what they were doing, someone struck an enormous arc up on top of this building, throwing sparks all over down the street - must have been sparks of molten metal because they stayed and glowed when they hit the ground. This light lit up the whole neighborhood almost like daylight but shortly it burned out. Then a couple of fellows down with the crew managed to tap on somehow with a power line and get a something like 500 watt light going. All of this with the street well lit with mercury street lights. They are still going at it over there with their sledge hammers. Maybe I'll see in the morning what happened. It reminds me a

little of the work we saw going on as we came down Reforma Avenue toward the Hotel this afternoon. There were great gangs of men digging up the dirt path down between the two sidewalks in the park along the side of the Reforma. Behind them were another gang of men putting more dirt in and rolling it down. Maybe this dirt gets so hard that a steam roller can't roll it down, but somehow that doesn't sound right. Also, it sounds as though they could break it up with a harrow or something rather than dig it all up, put it in trucks, carry it away, come in with new truckloads of dirt.

-----End (except for more music)