Jesuit Travel to New Spain (1678-1756) [1]
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Mid-America: An Historical Review

April, 1937; XIX

The initial impetus to missionary activity in the Spanish overseas dominions was given by Pope Alexander VI in the Bull of May 4, 1493, addressed to Their Catholic Majesties, King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella of Spain. That portion of the Bull which expresses the Pope's order to spread the Catholic faith reads: "And moreover we command you, in virtue of holy obedience, that as you promise and we doubt not will perform by reason of your very great devotion and royal magnanimity, you shall despatch to the aforesaid mainlands and islands upright and God-fearing men, learned, skillful and experienced, to instruct the aforesaid natives and inhabitants in the Catholic faith, and to imbue them with good morals, using all due diligence in the premises. [2]

Impelled by their own strong Catholic zeal and in response to the command of Pope Alexander VI, Ferdinand and Isabella gave their support and permission to the sending of missionaries to the new colonies, hereby initiating a policy which was pursued by subsequent Spanish rulers. Thus was well begun the great work of converting to Christianity the natives of Spain's colonies even before the founding in 1534 of the Society of Jesus, a religious organization which was to take a major part in this heroic labor. [3]

Ignatius Loyola founded the Society of Jesus as a missionary society, [4] and as a missionary society it contributed spiritual |105| "conquistadores" who boarded ships to sail with colonists and soldiers to the overseas possessions of the Catholic colonizing countries. The Jesuits began their work in the American colonies of Spain in the second half of the sixteenth century, and by 1756, eleven years before the suppression of the Society in Spain and in Spain's dominions, there were in the American provinces of Perú, Paraguay, and Mexico alone a total of fourteen hundred and one members. [5]

Hundreds of Jesuit missionaries traveled the long way from their European provinces to New Spain. The body of letters and travel diaries which they wrote to the superiors of the Society and to their relatives and friends is one of the best sources for the study of one phase of colonial western hemisphere history, travel to New Spain.

The travel diaries vary in length depending upon the bent which the particular missionary had for chronicling the events of the journey, and apparently upon the actual eventfulness of the journey itself. Most of the letters give more space to the extraordinary than to the commonplace, but many contain detailed travel descriptions. The letter, slow form of communication though it was, became a slender thread which tied the missionary to home, friends, and to the life which he had renounced. Father Ernest Steigmiller leaves us a record of how slow the exchange of correspondence could be when he writes in a communication of 1727 addressed to the Reverend Father Sigismund Pusch at the Jesuit College in Graz: "The letter of Your Reverence of July 3, 1726, was handed to me in my Indian village [Patute, South America] on September 23, 1727; that is, five weeks and two days ago, after having been on the way only one year, two months, and twenty days. [6] |106|

Many letters were sent to superiors and to fellow members of the Society of Jesus so that the travel descriptions might be disseminated among the Jesuits who had remained in Europe. Almost always there was included in these accounts information calculated to arouse yet greater interest in and zeal for the missionary work. Father Francis Favier, for instance, tells in his letter from the Jesuit estate of San Borja near Mexico City in 1723 of the great need for missionaries in Mexico. A member of the Society in Mexico had said that if an entire Jesuit province of Europe should come to the Mexican missions all of its members would find enough work to do. And Favier adds that his only purpose in mentioning this is "so that I shall increase the desire to enter missionary work in some in whose hearts it already slumbers." [7]

Letters from overseas were circulated in the Jesuit colleges in Europe and the writer generally requested that the recipient of the letter as well as the members of the entire province remember him and his companions of the journey in their prayers. Hand-to-hand circulation of letters was but one way of spreading news from the travelers, however. Travel accounts were printed for wider distribution in "Der neüe welt-bott", [8] a German counterpart of the French "Leitres èdifiantes et curieuses" [9] and first edited by Father Joseph Stöcklein, S. J. The combined volumes of the "Welt-Bott" form one of the greatest sources extant for the study of seventeenth and eighteenth century travel and missionary activity. A short and hurriedly written letter from the pen of Father Francis Gutman addressed to the editor of the Welt-Bott describes briefly the voyage from Genoa to Cádiz. The letter was mailed in 1730 at the port of the Spanish city. In the first paragraph Father Gutman writes: "I hope that this letter will reach Gratz in time to be included in the "Welt-Bott." [10] And Father Xavier Wagner boasts and admonishes in a letter of 1736 from Mexico when commenting upon the ignorance of the Italians and the Sardinians "to whom all is strange, for neither in Italy nor in Sardinia have they the reports which we read in |107| Father Stöcklein. So that when anything new occurs and they are surprised by it, the Germans laugh, saying 'we knew that long before.' It is advisable for anyone who has the desire to come here to read the Welt-Bott well and often; it will be helpful to him." [11]

The "Welt-Bott" was studied by would-be missionaries, as attested by Father Wagner's letter. Indeed, the first edition of the work, 1727, had been read at table by the Jesuits. [12] Thus, as a source of information concerning the missions and as reports which stimulated men to become evangelists in foreign lands, the individual communications received from missionaries and those incorporated in the "Welt-Bott" had a considerable influence in causing still others to travel the long road from western Europe to the far-flung mission areas, among which the one of New Spain was conspicuous.

Eighteenth-century Jesuit missionaries who were going to New Spain from their German and Austrian Provinces traveled the well-established routes in coaches and wagons, aboard ships, on horse or mule-back, and on foot. [13] Journeying usually in groups they endured the weary toil of travel itself with food and water often scarce or lacking, and suffered the dangers of hostile populations, of pirates and privateers, of sea-sickness, storms, shipwrecks, earthquakes, drownings, and of yellow fever.

The route followed led first from the German or the Austrian Province to the city of Genoa where coaches were abandoned for ships sailing to Cádiz. From Cádiz the travelers sailed past the Canary Islands and then in the path of the northeast trade wind, somewhere near the twenty-first parallel, to the West Indies islands. Here a stop was made at Puerto Rico or Aguada on the Island of Puerto Rico, or at Ocoa on the Island of Santo Domingo. Then the voyage was continued directly to Vera Cruz, although on occasion a stop was made at Havana, Cuba. At Vera Cruz the missionaries mounted mules or horses and proceeded to Maltratta or to Jalapa, thence to Puebla de los Angeles, and |108| finally along a well-traveled "camino real" to Mexico City, the immediate goal of their journey.

If Vienna is considered a starting place, then the Jesuits can be pictured seated in the post-coach on its way to Graz. From there the route went through Trieste, Venice, Padua, Milan, and Pavia to Genoa. If they departed from a German Province the chances are they traveled singly or in pairs to some convenient starting place like Augsburg or Munich, riding in the post-coaches that far, and once in a group, bargaining with the driver of a "coach-and-four" to take them all the way to Genoa. Leaving Augsburg they would spend the first night in Landsberg, and from there continue through Innsbruck, via the Brenner Pass to Trento, through the Chiusa Pass to Roverto, to the Venetian border, and along the southern end of Lake Garda, through Brescia, Milan, and Pavia to Genoa.

The German Jesuits did not always choose Genoa as a place of embarkation for Spain. Occasionally they went to Amsterdam and there boarded a vessel whose destination was Seville or Cádiz. But with this exception Genoa was almost always the rendezvous of Jesuits going to Spain from the Bohemian, Austrian, German, and Italian Provinces of the Society. [14]

At Genoa the missionaries, as many as forty in a group, boarded either an English or a Genoese ship and sailed to Cádiz. On this voyage many a missionary had his first experience with the sea and found to his discomfiture that one is not necessarily born a sailor. Sea-sickness was understood to be a malady caused by the "sea-air" to which one later became accustomed. It was believed also that should one escape sea-sickness he would be the more violently land-sick when the voyage was terminated.

The voyage from Genoa to Cádiz was not devoid of incidents thought worth recording by the missionaries. Father Gerstl described in 1678 the celebration of the "summer solstice festival" by the hanging of twenty lighted lanterns on the ship and the placing of a tub containing ignited pitch upon the water. [15] Storms and the danger from enemy ships added zest to the voyage, but of particular interest were the ports of call such as |109| Toulon, Alicante, at times Cartagena, where there was a small Jesuit college, and Malaga. Alicante, famous for its wine, was also the residence in 1754 of the one-time Governor of Buenos Aires, Don Pasqual, whose hospitality to the missionaries was gratefully recorded in Father Och's account of his journey. [16] At Cartagena were the royal shipyards and warehouses which contained hemp, flax, mast, nails, iron fittings, anchors, sails, ropes, beams and timbers, pitch, resin, tallow, and other ship materials. Och and his companions had the good fortune to have arrived in Cartagena on the day of the feast of Santa Barbara, December 4th, 1754, and at night they were rowed about the harbor in a royal barge while the war vessels engaged in a sham battle that was accompanied by a colorful rocket display. [17] Under especially favorable conditions the voyage from Genoa to Cádiz might be made in about two weeks but more frequently the time required was nearly twice that.

Upon arrival at Cádiz, ships were quarantined before passengers were permitted to disembark. The length of this quarantine varied from five to ten days; if, however, an entering vessel had been exposed to infection, as long as a forty-day quarantine might be imposed. This being the case, captains of vessels sailing to Spain took precautionary measures to avoid inconvenient delay. Father Och notes in his diary the method then used to prevent infection. [18] He recounts that shortly out of Alicante on the voyage to Cádiz (1 December, 1754) they sighted an English ship which signaled that it wished to speak with them. As the two ships neared one another

"both captains spoke through megaphones. The ship had a packet of letters for our captain. They lowered a boat and came toward us but our captain did not allow any of them to come aboard. Instead, the letters were received in a wire-covered dish half filled with vinegar. This precaution had be exercised by the captain to avoid being kept for forty days in quarantine in Cádiz, since the said English ship had come from the Barbary [states] of Africa, from which land are continually brought contagious diseases or the plague."

Once in Spain the missionaries had to expect a long delay before they could secure passage to the New World. During |110| their stay in Spain the travelers were cared for in Jesuit establishments located in Puerto de Santa María and in Seville. Until the beginning of the fourth decade of the eighteenth century the mission-hospice in Puerto de Santa María was quite small and most of the missionaries awaiting passage had to remain in Seville. In Santa María there was later constructed at the general expense of the American Provinces of the Society a large and beautiful mission-hospice and church where the retired missionaries and those who were going overseas were lodged. This establishment was not managed by the Spanish Provincial but by a procurator-general who was in 1744 one Father Castaneda, a native of Perú. [19]

The hospice was pleasantly situated near the Guadalete River and from it toward the west could be seen the entire Bay of Cádiz as well as the city on its farther side. The building was of three stories and contained over a hundred rooms. It was built around a courtyard paved in checkerboard pattern with black and white marble blocks which had come from Genoa. Towers and marble pillars added to the beauty of the structure. [20]

The sojourn in Spain was very important to the new missionary. During the time spent there, which varied from some months to as long as five years, he had the opportunity of adding to his native tongue and Latin a knowledge of the Spanish language, thus becoming tri-lingual. He was in close contact with old, "retired" missionaries who had lived for years among the natives of the Americas or the Philippines, sometimes in the very areas to which he was going, and he received invaluable advice from them about missionary labors. He was on the threshold of a new land and a new experience and his desire to carry his message to the unenlightened was increased. He was told, for example, of the work of "our holy one," Father Hermann Glandorff, [21] missionary in Tarahumara, Mexico, who was reputed to be a worker of miracles and who was revered as a saint. And the incident was related of the visit of five heathen to the viceroy of Mexico with a request for teachers of Christianity for their people provided that these teachers should be "those who wear black robes on their bodies and four horns on their heads." [22] |111|
The new missionary had the opportunity of which he made good use to learn arts, crafts, and techniques, later to be taught to the natives. Also with his own hands he made trinkets of many kinds, and fashioned rosaries which were added to his stock of rings, mirrors, scissors, jew's harps, needles, and rosaries, previously purchased. [23] Too, he painted miniatures of saints to enrich his future church in the wilderness. Father Ratkay, born a Hungarian nobleman, states in speaking of the two years spent in Seville awaiting departure for the New World:

"We studied not only astronomy, mathematics, and other interesting fields of knowledge, but we ourselves made all sorts of trinkets and worked at practical things. Some of us made compasses or sun-dials and others cases for them; this one sewed cloths and furs, that one learned how to make bottles, another how to solder tin; one busied himself with distilling, a second with the lathe, a third with the art of sculpturing; so that with those goods and skills we might gain the good will of the wild heathen and the more easily give them the truths of the Christian faith." [24]

The missionaries were able to spend a part of their sojourn in Spain in seeing the country itself. Seville was a common goal for Jesuits who had landed in Cádiz and who were making their headquarters there. Perhaps one reason for their interest in Seville was the Spanish proverb, "Quien no ha visto Sevilla, no ha visto maravilla." The observant missionaries comment upon the beautiful buildings and churches of Seville but those who visited the city in the middle eighteenth century noticed also its decline in commerce and trade, the result of its unsuccessful competition with Cádiz.

The stay in Spain may have been planned by the Society because of its value to the new missionary in preparing him for his future travels and labors. In any event, there were various circumstances and conditions outside the control of the Society which prevented an immediate departure to the mission areas. Sometimes the number of German Jesuits ready to depart from Spain exceeded the quota allowed; [25] crowded conditions on the ships kept others from securing passage. Shipwrecks on the |112| rocks in the port of Cádiz itself, the fear of pirates, and also the possibility of capture by privateers during the periods when Spain was at war with France or with England further delayed or prevented the departure of the missionaries. Then during the last years before the general suppression of the Society of Jesus, the opposition of relentless foes increased the difficulties of sending Jesuits to Spain's colonial possessions.

Before the Jesuits were allowed to leave Spain for the Indies it was necessary that they be given official permission to do so from the Spanish authorities at Madrid who approved the names of all who were leaving and sent them to the governor and consignor at Cádiz. Then the missionaries were brought before a board of inspectors at Cádiz, and of this formality Father Och gives the following description:

"At a table were seated several men who looked each of us over from head to foot. Each had to give his name, the country of his birth, his status - whether priest or lay brother - how far advanced he was in his studies, and so on. All this was recorded by the secretary. Then we were again scrutinized for a time by all of them in order that our lineaments and stature could be carefully described, so that none else, no imposter, should embark and slip into the Indies.

"I could hardly contain my laughter because of the grave manner in which these men regarded us and dictated a description of our entire physiognomies to the scribe; for example, average or great height, large or small head, black or brown hair, blue or black eyes, pushed-in, bent-in or crooked nose, little or large mouth, pointed or blunt chin, smooth or pock-marked face, short or long neck. All this and more, along with our ages, was incorporated in the report. Such reports are either sent ahead under royal seal to the Indies or must be delivered by the captain of the ship [carrying those so described] to the authorities at the place of arrival to see that there is exact correspondence. No butcher eyes a calf as these men eyed us." [26]

Despite such precautions there were those who did manage to sail for the Indies without authorization. Father Och describes the "polizones" [27] who boarded his vessel as it was setting sail.

". . . we saw many small boats hurriedly row toward us. The ship was surrounded . . .; about fifty ill clad people and beggar boys clambered up the sides, jumped aboard, and crept into corners, wherever they could. The captain, who did not wish to take aboard these uninvited guests, ran |113| first to this side and then to that with a stout cudgel, hitting where he could to drive them off. The fellows endured blows on their heads, shoulders, arms, and legs without letting go of whatever they had caught hold. Some of them tumbled into the ocean but swam back immediately and swung aboard the ship, for when they were driven off one side by the blows a swarm of them came over the other side of the ship. Such noise, tumult, and comedy I had never witnessed in all my life, and have perhaps never laughed so much as then.

"The captain and one who helped him were by no means adequate to withstand this rabble. The sailors did not stir themselves but on the contrary threw ropes and tools to the intruders. In an instant all these fellows had disappeared, . . . They had crept like mice into the hold of the ship and were hidden by the sailors who gave them shelter. Truly, what mice are in a house these wretches are on a vessel. A captain must sustain this rabble during the entire voyage. They make it difficult for the passengers by using the provisions and good water. Nothing is given them to eat or to drink but they maintain themselves anyway, tapping the water casks secretly and drinking as they wish with straws or pipes, while others who belong on the ship must content themselves with a small portion of rationed water. They are given sufficient food and hard-tack by the crew who take it from their own meals, for these fellows are often bottle-companions and acquaintances. The first days all remain hidden, afterwards one after another they creep out and help with the work in order to get left-over food from the sailors. . . .

"The captain is authorized to throw them into the ocean or to put them into irons and to set them ashore wherever he lands, even on a desert island. Upon the return to Spain they are condemned to ten years in the fortress of Ceuta in Africa as laborers. Despite this prescribed punishment many sluggards who do not work in Spain take the chance to try their luck in the Indies. . . ." [28]

Cádiz, where were situated the commercial establishments of merchants who "commuted" there from their palatial residences in Santa María, was the exclusive port of departure for ships on which the Jesuits sailed to America between the years 1680 and 1755. [29] It was not an easy harbor for a sailing vessel to clear because of reefs in the roadstead where more than one ship was wrecked before it had fairly got under way. In 1724 a fleet of |114| twenty-four vessels had just cleared port when a change in the wind forced them to put about and return. Father Bonani says they would have been wrecked had not the Bishop of Cádiz led a solemn procession through the streets of the city as a plea for their rescue. [30]

An earlier group of missionaries leaving Cádiz in 1680 had not been so fortunate for their ship struck on a reef. On this occasion cannons were fired as signals of distress and the Jesuits were taken ashore in small boats. This calamity meant that they were faced with the prospect of another interminable delay. The father procurator immediately appealed to the president of the merchants, to the admiral of the fleet whom he reached in a skiff, and again to the president, in an effort to get passage for the missionaries - but all to no avail. In desperation he awakened the fatigued missionaries in the dead of night and suggested that they row to the fleet and plead in person to be accommodated.

Accordingly, led by their superior and praising Christ, the Lord, for giving them the opportunity of going forth to preach the Gospel in His example and in the examples of the Apostles Mark and Luke, without bag or baggage, without bread or money, and without double coats, the Jesuits rowed out to the becalmed fleet and asked the captains of the various ships for passage. One captain refused their appeal, another took two aboard. So they made the rounds, going from one ship to the next, but when all had been hailed there were still twelve missionaries who could not find passage and who were forced to return sorrowfully to shore.

There was another one of the original group, however, who was destined to sail although he was not of those who made the rounds of the fleet that night. Simon Poruhradiski from the Bohemian Province had been left under orders to guard the belongings of the missionaries on the disabled vessel. Determined to sail with the other missionaries who he believed had all succeeded in gaining passage, deserting his charge in his eagerness to accompany them, he rented a skiff early in the morning, rowed to the fleet and was taken aboard though others had been turned away. [31]

The departure of a fleet was regulated by strict rules. Once |115| the passengers were aboard and the order had been given for weighing anchor, the port had to be cleared. Laggards were heavily fined by the officials of the Spanish admiralty. In case of a calm, therefore, ships unable to sail were sometimes kedged out of the harbor regardless of the fact that they might find themselves becalmed outside for an indefinite time. Such a delayed sailing worked hardships on the passengers because of the ruling which made the captain of a vessel responsible for the welfare of his passengers only when the ship was under full sail. Often the travelers went hungry for a day or more until a fair breeze arose.

Travel diaries of the Jesuits indicate that ships sailing to Vera Cruz in the summer months invariably made better time than did those leaving Cádiz in the winter. [32] Reasons for this are found in the meteorological conditions which are more favorable during the summer months than at any other time of the year for an Atlantic crossing under sail in the north-east trade wind belt, and also for navigation in the Caribbean Sea and in the Gulf of Mexico. [33] Winter or summer, however, almost every crossing was made perilous by storms. Valuable cargo was jettisoned to lighten vessels; sails were slit and masts cut off to prevent capsizing.

Besides the danger from storms, the depredations of corsairs and privateers were the greatest hazard to a safe arrival in ports of the Americas. This menace was present only between Spain and the Canaries and in the Caribbean Sea where, generally, marauders confined their activities. As a protection against them two war vessels sailed with the fleets. One, the "capitana," the flagship and the largest vessel in the fleet commanded by the fleet's general, sailed in the van; the other, the "almiranta," aboard which was the admiral, brought up the rear and protected laggards. Sometimes the convoy accompanied vessels from Cádiz only until they were believed to be out of danger from pirates having north African bases. Then, presumably, navigation was safe from marauders on the "Golfo del las Damas [34] until the fleet |116| reached the Caribbean area where the armadas maintained by Spain were supposed to provide a safeguard. Pirates infested the Caribbean and Gulf waters, however, despite the efforts of Spain to drive them out, and the royal fleets and merchantmen had to be constantly on guard when in West Indies waters.

Under sail on the Atlantic a definite ship's schedule was followed. Some members of the crew fed and cared for the fowl and live-stock carried aboard the ships; [35] the baker baked fresh bread several times daily in the galley; the navigators plotted the course; lookouts watched for strange sails and later for the sight of land when the Lesser Antilles were being neared. Constant communication between the various ships of the fleet was maintained by flag-and-cannon-signals, by the exchange of messages carried by small, swift-sailing ships, and by "councils-of­ war" when the ""capitana" " gave the signal. For a council-of-war all the vessels drew near and hove-to while the officers and helmsmen compared notes and agreed upon their position or decided how to repair a disabled ship. The captains of the fleet possessed duplicate records which contained texts and passwords for each day. Passwords were exchanged by megaphone and were used in challenging unknown ships to determine whether they be friend or foe. [36]

On important religious feasts such as St. James' Day, St. Ignatius' Day, or the feast of the Assumption, the fleet displayed banners, fired cannons, and celebrated High Mass on each vessel. In the evening perhaps a play was enacted by members of the crew. Festival or no, before retiring the missionaries partook of a night-cap of brandy or a tasty sugar confection.

Crossing the Tropic of Cancer was an important event. The superstition that in the tropics worms would grow under the fingernails unless these were coated with wax caused great uneasiness for at least one Jesuit; [37] When the crossing was made the command of the ship was assumed by Neptune or by King Tropic in the person of one of the older, more dignified members of the crew. A mock trial was held and everyone was brought to judgment. The monarch had but one verdict - guilty! The guilty one had the choice of being dipped into the ocean at the end of |117|
a rope or of purchasing freedom, a transaction agreeable both to the "court" and to the victim. To insure a prompt and liberal payment, the canny King Tropic usually arranged for the immersal of a scapegoat early in the trial as an object lesson. The Jesuits were represented at the monarch's court by their superiors who purchased the freedom of their entire company with bottles of brandy and casks of wine with which King Tropic and the members of his "court" amused themselves during the days following the trial. [38] Besides the plays performed on special occasions and the "sea-baptism" ceremony, there were informal amusements such as dancing, tumbling, and juggling indulged in by the sailors to gain gratuities for themselves. [39]

Fare and accommodations for the missionaries varied widely, a fact which seems to indicate that a comfortable or an uncomfortable voyage depended as much on chance as on any other factor. Bitter criticisms of conditions on board are noted in some of the Jesuit correspondence, but there is found also abundant praise, especially of material comforts and of the courtesy and consideration manifested them by members of the ships' companies.

"It is of no little wonder that such a costly fare can be offered on the open sea. To say nothing now of the service which is of fine silver, there are three dishes for breakfast and five dishes for each midday meal. Each person had his special portion placed before him on a silver plate. For breakfast there is [served] a wing or drumstick of a hen, a piece of mutton of pork, and some confection or preserved fruit; in the afternoon, cabbage, mutton, an 'olla' or mixed meat dish, rice, a piece of tart, and finally cheese and olives. On fast-days one has the same number of dishes of smoked or salted fish. And we never suffered a shortage of eggs, wine, and sweet water." [40]

Thus wrote Father Ratkay, a shipmate of the new bishop of the Philippine Islands and for that reason, perhaps, exceptionally well treated.

Father Wagner, in 1735, however, states that there was a shortage of water and food because no one had known for certain that the fleet would sail that year. It had been necessary to ration the water even before they reached the Canary Islands and since they did not have permission to stop at the Canaries, |118| replenishment of water and of food, of which there was also a scarcity, was impossible. Wagner says that six or eight people in Germany ate more at an ordinary meal than did the forty-nine members of the mission group, and what they had to eat was bad. [41] There was insufficient water on Father Weiss' vessel in 1744 because the ship's officers had taken aboard a supply before they knew how many passengers would sail. [42] It was accepted as a usual circumstance that there should be a shortage of water and perhaps of food also toward the end of the voyage.

Quarters varied as did the fare. Sometimes the missionaries could pack their belongings in sea chests which were then carefully stowed in the hold. These chests were provided for them (probably by the Society) and were of uniform size, about two by two by three feet, to allow for easy stowing. [43] With the bulk of their goods in the hold the missionaries were less cramped in their cabins. But Father Herre, who made the voyage in 1722, was one of thirteen priests who had to eat, sleep, and pray in a little cabin ten feet long, nine feet wide, and seven feet high, in which in addition to themselves were stowed all their personal belongings. [44]

When the islands were approached, the fleet proceeded carefully, anchoring at night to avoid sailing on a reef, and maintaining a careful watch for pirates. At Puerto Rico, Aguada, or Ocoa the ships remained for a few days provisioning, making repairs, and, in general preparing for the final difficult portion of the voyage to Vera Cruz. Passengers were permitted to go ashore and often the Jesuits bivouacked on beds of palm leaves in preference to returning to their stuffy cabins.

The usual route among the islands followed the north shore of Puerto Rico and then proceeded via the Mona Passage between Puerto Rico and Santo Domingo and along the south coast of that island. The Windward Passage between Santo Domingo and Cuba was less frequently sailed, perhaps from fear of pirates who were known to use the Island of Tortuga as a base. Ships rarely chose the Old Bahama Passage along the north coast of Cuba but followed the south coast instead. Frequently the Cayman Islands were sighted, much to the relief of the pilots apparently, since if they were not sighted there was the danger of |119| running upon them accidentally. Father Mancker writes: "For two days we searched for two little islands, the Caymans or Crocodiles which we were in danger of striking at night because they jut out of the water only two fathoms." [45]

The Caymans were famous for a species of very large turtle found there in "uncountable numbers" and described as being the size of a "large round table." These were hunted and the flesh sold as was beef in Europe, "by the pound. [46] From the Caymans the ships sailed to the Campeche Sound which was celebrated as a paradise for fishermen. Here, according to the sailors, there were "five parts of water and one part of fish." Members of the crew fished with red cloth instead of bait; the fish bit immediately, swallowed the hook, and were pulled in. [47]

After crossing the Campeche Sound all eagerly awaited the first sight of snow-capped Orizaba. Finally the voyagers neared the treacherous port of Vera Cruz. The "capitana" fired two cannons, whereupon the port pilot who was maintained there by the king came to meet the fleet and guided it through the tortuous reef-lined channel to the anchorage before the fortress of San Juan de Ulua. Until three or four anchors were imbedded in the weak bottom and lines fastened to the bastion of the fortress a vessel was in grave danger, for a sudden north wind, a further hazard of the port, might catch the ship directly astern and force it aground. In this manner many who had come the great distance from Europe lost their lives at the goal, while the people of Vera Cruz watched, helpless to send aid in the face of the high waves of their shallow port.

But barring any such unfortunate occurrence the arrival of a fleet was a gala event and the occasion for rejoicing and a religious ceremony. Father Middendorff has left a description of the arrival on Easter Day, 1758, of a fleet of sixteen vessels. [48] When the "capitana," royal flag flying, was sighted all the bells of the city were tolled and the people prayed for a happy landing,
the ships entered the narrow channel one by one, anchored, and tied up before the fortress, whereupon the "capitana" fired a salute which was answered with shouts of "long live the king" from the fortress. The commander of the fortress, the governor of the city, and the king's lieutenant then rowed to the ships in beautiful |120| yawls, tendered their congratulations on the happy arrival of the fleet, and received the royal orders and the mail, which was [usually] delivered to them in green tin boxes, locked and sealed. [49] The following day at nine in the morning a procession carrying white wax tapers left the city for the shore where the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary was delivered from the "capitana" by the captains and persons of rank from the ships in prettily decorated and illuminated jolly-boats. [50] While the clerics carried the image to the Franciscan church amid jubilant singing and music, bells were rung in all the towers and all the guns of the fleet were discharged. Then during the singing of the Te Deum Laudamus in the Franciscan church, the image was placed upon the altar while the cannons of San Juan de Ulua boomed. Following this ceremony in the afternoon the captains of the ships and royal officials of the city visited with each other over cooling beverages. [51]

The missionaries also were as well taken care of as the rather poor accommodations to be found in Vera Cruz permitted. Their resident brother Jesuits and representatives of the Mexican provincial received them eagerly and conducted them to the Vera Cruz college which was so small that on one occasion, at least, the Vera Cruz Jesuits were obliged to sleep in the church choir until guest rooms for the newcomers could be made ready for them. [52] The average length of the stay in Vera Cruz was eight days. This was presumably a rest stop in preparation for the difficult journey to Mexico City, but it had some of the aspects of an enforced delay since the mules and horses which were to carry the missionaries inland had to be brought from the interior, as no grass suitable for the animals grew in the immediate vicinity of Vera Cruz. [53]

The travelers were quite ready to leave Vera Cruz when all preparations for the journey to Mexico City had been made, for added to the discomfort of cramped quarters in the Vera Cruz |121| college there hovered in that port a conspicuous danger from the dreaded illness, the "black vomit." Thus is yellow fever referred to in most of the letters which ascribe its attacks to the "unhealthy air," to the drinking of wine after eating fruit, or to the partaking of cooling beverages. The city is frequently described as "the grave of Europeans." Father Konschak sketches a rather dismal picture of Vera Cruz as he saw it in 1731:

"I do not know why the Spaniards have called this city Vera Cruz, though it bears [the name] with full right, for the uncomfortable situation, the unhealthy air, the always unfriendly sky, stormy wind, sickness, especially the 'black vomit' and the 'cramps,' [54] allow little happiness to the inhabitants. Their number is very small and even this small group would move to the interior did not the very flourishing trade and the hope of profits keep them there. For those who do remain the price is often great, costing many an early death. We see many corpses being carried to the grave and we are told that of the strangers - crews of ships and merchants - who come in numbers from Europe on regular business, hardly half get away with their lives to their home country. So dangerous and harmful is the hot air." [55]

The hardihood of the merchants of Vera Cruz had struck an earlier traveler, Father Adam Gilg, who arrived in Vera Cruz on the way to Mexico in 1687. Their persistence in the face of danger moved him to think to himself:

"See how these worldlings consider neither danger nor hardships in pursuit of a passable and even meager gain. You should suffer the same for yourself and for the great numbers of heathen in order to earn eternal salvation, for the Faith assures that all which we suffer here is as nothing in view of the future glory which shall be revealed to us." [56]

When finally all their arrangements had been made for quitting Vera Cruz the missionaries mounted horses and set out by the northern or the southern route to Puebla de los Angeles. Horseback riding presented difficulties since most of the missionaries were as unfamiliar with this mode of travel as they had been with sailing on the open sea, but they complain less about this aspect of their journey than they do of the extremes of heat and cold, of the swarms of mosquitos and clouds of dust which plagued them en route. A band of forty missionaries had to split itself into groups of about ten men each and travel separately |122| because the accommodations along the way were inadequate to care for a larger number. Father Ratkay states simply about the overland ride that they were "as well taken care of as possible." His letter contains mention of two Jesuit farms between Vera Cruz and Puebla on one of which there were eighty thousand pigs, twenty thousand sheep, and many thousand head of cattle, besides other animals and fowl. [57]

As they neared Puebla the missionaries were extended the courtesy which was customary at Puebla and at Mexico City, that of being met by the rector of the college at some distance from the city with coaches which conveyed them directly to the College of El Espíritu Santo, where the priests of that college awaited them at the portals. During the rest stop of two or three days in Puebla they visited the cathedral church and the various Jesuit establishments, of which ultimately there were five. Here in Puebla, as previously in Spain, the missionaries heard accounts of the work of their predecessors in the missionary field, and found themselves inspired with new eagerness for the apostolic work ahead.

Fathers Favier and Wagner tell of their reception at the cathedral by the Bishop of Puebla. [58] Favier writes: "In Puebla the Most Reverend Bishop received us, especially the Germans, with unusual joy and told us to our comfort of the glorious labors of our predecessors whom he had visited some years before in their missions." [59] Of this same reception Wagner states: "The Father Procurator led the entire mission to the Holy Bishop. As soon as we reached the palace he came to us as far as the steps, and the next thing was [the question], 'Are you bringing Germans with you and how many are there?' When he saw all of us in a group ... he began to praise us [saying] how necessary were the Germans for the missions and how virtuous a people ... "[60]

The bishop named Jesuits whom he had known: Segesser, Stiger, Sedelmayr. [61] "Of Father Glandorff, whose letter he preserves |123| as a holy relic, he told us wonderful things which he had learned from sworn witnesses, clergy and laymen: for example, that he and his Indians often crossed dry-shod the stream which flows not far from his mission; that the bells in the church steeples ring of themselves at his approach; that locked doors open for his entrance without being touched by hands; that he is transported instantly from one place to another; that he travels long distances to visit the sick, arriving, in many cases, before the return of the mounted messenger who has been sent to summon him - once he even returned to his mission before [the messenger] reached the afflicted one to inform him of the imminent arrival of the priest - all this, though he makes all journeys on foot. [62]

The remainder of the journey from Puebla to Mexico City is practically unrecorded in the diaries and letters of the missionaries. Three days were spent in traversing the distance and one of the stops made was at the Jesuit establishment of San Borja, about an hour's ride from the city. Father Bonani, in his eagerness to see Mexico City, borrowed a telescope and viewed the city through it from San Borja. [63] When at last they reached Mexico City some of the missionaries entered the College of San Pedro y San Pablo to continue their theological studies; others made ready at once for the farther journey into the northern mission areas; still others continued later to the Pacific Ocean port of Acapulco to embark for the Philippine Islands.

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Footnotes

[1] Most of the material in this article is derived from "Jesuit travel to America (1678-1756 as recorded in the travel diaries of German Jesuits" (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, University of California, 1934) by the writer, Theodore Edward Treutlein - Editor.
[2] Benjamin Franklin Stevens, ed., "Christopher Columbus: His Own Book of Privileges; 1502" (London, 1893), 182-197. Document XXXVI, Bull of Pope Alexander VI, with notarial certificate, 30 December, 1502, should be 1501, 4 May, 1493.
[3] The founding of the Society of Jesus was sanctioned by Pope Paul III in 1540.
[4] The Society of Jesus became an active force in the "Counter- Reformation" very soon after its founding but this fact is explained more by the circumstance that the founding of the Society occurred in a period of religious turmoil than by the specific intent of its founder. See Anton Huonder, "Der heilige Ignatius von Loyola und der Missionsberuf der Gesellschaft Jesu", Abhandlungen aus Missionskunde und Missionsgeschichte (Aachen, 1922), XXXV. In this monograph Huonder tells of Loyola's preoccupation with the missionary cause and shows also that the sanctioning of the Society of Jesus in 1540 by Pope Paul III was intimately associated

with the naming of Francis Xavier as "nuncius apostolicus" to the East.
[5] Christoph Gottlieb von Murr, ed., "Nachrichten von verschiedenen Ländern des spanischen Amerika" (Halle, 1809), Introduction, xxx, In Perú, 526 missionaries; in Paraguay, 303; in Mexico, 572.
[6] Letter 391 in Joseph Stöcklein, eds., Francis Keller, and others, "Allerhand so lehr - als geist-reiche Brief scrifften und reis-beschreibungen/ welche von denen Missionariis der Gesellschafft Jesu aue beyden Indien/ undandern über meer gelegenen Ländern/ ... in Europa angelangt seynd ... " (Vienna, Gratz, and Augsburg, 1726-1761), 38 Parts. The frontispiece in the Augsburg, Grätz edition of this work, I, 1726, bears the inscription, "Der neue welt-bott mit allerhand nachrichten deren missionarien Soc. Jesu." Beneath this appears the figure of an angel apparently towing the world sphere and bearing a scroll in the right hand and the symbol of the Society in the left. Underneath is the quotation, "I bring you good tidings of great joy," "Luke," ii, 10. The letters contained in the volumes are numbered consecutively and are most conveniently cited by number. Herein after this work will be cited "Welt-Bott", with the number of the letter.
[7] "Welt-Bott", 212.

[8] See above, p. 105, footnote 6. An interesting biographical sketch of Father Stöcklein is contained in Bernhard Duhr, "Deutsohe auslandsehnsuoht im aohtzehnten Jahrhundert" (Stuttgart, 1928), 45-49.

[9] C. le Gobien, J. B. du Halde, N. Maréchal, and L. Patouillet, eds., "Lettres édifiantes et curieuses, ècrites des missions ètrongeès (Paris, 1702 - 76), 14 vols. The letters incorporated in this work were written by Jesuit missionaries.

[10] "Welt-Bott", 392.
[11] "Aus: Jesuitica", 283. Letter of P. Francis Xavier Wagner from the Austrian Province, dated at Mexico, 1 May, 1736. Typed transcript from the fine collection of Jesuitica at the "Staatsarchiv", Munich.
[12] Duhr, op. cit., 47.
[13] A study of many diaries has revealed certain generalizations which apply to the journey from western Europe to New Spain. Since the accounts studied cover a period of seventy-eight years (1678-1756) it is impossible to combine them into one "master" narrative, as was done by Archer B. Hulbert, for example, in "Forty-niners: The Chronicle Of the California Trail" (Boston, 1932).
[14] The Bohemian Province became separated from the Austrian Province in 1623. The term "German Provinces" as used here refers to the Upper German Province, and the Upper and Lower Rhine Provinces (separated in 1626). See Anton Huonder, "Deutsche Jesuitenmissionäre des 17. und 18. Jahrhunderte" (Freiburg i. Breisgau, 1899), p. 11, footnote 5; p. 15, footnote 1.
[15] "Welt-Bott", 31.
[16] Herrn P. Joseph Och "Nachrichten, von seinen Reisen nach dem spanischen Nord-Amerika 1757-1767, und rückkehr nach Europa," Murr, op. cit. Hereinafter cited Och, "Nachrichten".
[17] Ibid.
[18] Och, "Nachrichten".
[19] "Welt-Bott", 777, extract from a letter written in Santa María, 15 July, 1744, by Father Francis Trarbach to the Provincial in Cologne.

[20] Och, "Nachrichten", for the description of the mission-hospice.
[21] The writer is preparing a short biography of this saintly man.

[22] "Welt-Bott", 751.
[23] "Aus dem Tagebuch" des mexicanischen Missionarius Gottfr, Bernh, Middfendorff, 1754-1776", edited diary in scrap-book form in the library of the Ignatiushaus, Bonn, Germany. Hereinafter cited Middendorff, "Tagebuch".

[24] "Welt-Bott" , 28.
[25] See Huonder, "Deutsche Jesuitenmissionäre ..." , 28, for reference to a decree of General Francis Retz, 17 September, 1737, in which Retz states that one-fourth of the number of Jesuits leaving for Paraguay and Buenos Aires may be Germans.

[26] Och, "Nachrichten".
[27] Spaniards who passed secretly to Spanish America without leave or passport from the king and government of Spain.
[28] Och, "Nachrichten".
[29] Huonder, "Deutsche Jesuitenmissionäre ... , 33, "The place of departure for voyagers to the Spanish colonies was and remained . . . Seville from 1503 until 1720, then after the silting up of the Guadalquivir until 1748, practically exclusively Cádiz." This statement is incorrect. All the

"Welt-Bott" letters and others (written between 1680 and 1755) which men on the voyage from Spain to the Western Hemisphere name Cádiz as the port of departure. This substantiates Clarence H. Haring, "Trade and navigation between Spain and the Indies in the time of the Hapsburgs" (Cambridge, 1918), 5-15. In writing of the rivalry between Seville and Cádiz for

the colonial trade Haring says that after 1680 all the fleets were required to make the latter port the beginning and the end of their voyages.
[30] "Welt-Bott", 172, II.
[31] Ibid, 31. P. Adam Gerstl, excerpts from letters to his father written in Spain and the West Indies, 30 June, 1678-14 July, 1681.
[32] Ships sailed also in the spring and autumn, but more often in summer and winter.
[33] Cf. "Pilot chart of the north Atlantic ocean". (Washington, D. C., Hydrographic Office).
[34] Och, "Nachrichten", says that the general region of the Atlantic between the Canary Islands and the Antilles was called the "Golfo de las Damas" because it was calm. The path of the westerlies, however, used by vessels returning to Spain from the West Indies was as turbulent as "spirited mares" and hence that part of the Atlantic Ocean was referred to as the "Golfo de Yeguas."
[35] On the June, 1722, voyage one ship carried coops on the top deck in which were three thousand chickens and the same number of pigeons. "Aus: Jesuitica" , 294, Mexico, 15 February, 1723.

[36] "Welt-Bott", 172.
[37] Ibid., II, 448.
[38] Father Herre, in a letter written in 1722 states that those who passed for the first time in through the Straits of Gibraltar were also forced to indulge in the "sea-baptism" or purchase their freedom. Ibid., 438.
[39] Ibid., 754.
[40] Ibid., 28.
[41] "Aus: Jesuitica" , 283,

[42] "Welt-Bott", 747,

[43] Och, "Nachrichten",

[44] "Welt-Bott", 438 .
[45] Ibid., 30.

[46] Ibid.
[47] Och, "Nachrichten".
[48] Middendorff, "Tagebuch".
[49] Ibid. The sealed boxes were immediately delivered by a detachment of cavalry and officers to the viceroy in Mexico who thereupon granted permission to unload the ships' cargoes. Mules from the interior were brought to Vera Cruz and the goods taken to Jalapa, while a great fair was

proclaimed throughout the land.
[50] Ibid. This image, called "Maria Mineva" or "Maria die Schifferin" (Mary, Navigatress?) was carried with all the fleets. When the fleet returned to Cádiz the image was safeguarded by the Dominican fathers. The ornaments of the image were said to be of inestimable value.
[51] Ibid.
[52] "Welt-Bott", 743.

[53] Och, "Nachrichten".
[54] Malaria?
[55] "Welt-Bott", 743.

[56] Ibid., 33.
[57] Ibid., 28. One of these farms was probably St. Joseph of Ozumba; the other may have been St. Juan de Amulaca, See ibid., 754, extracts from four letters of Father J. Nentwig, 1750-1754.
[58] The bishop was Don Benito Crespo. See J. T. Medina, "La imprenta en la Pueblo de los Angeles 1640-1821" (Santiago de Chile, 1908), p. 256, for biographical notice under item 414.
[59] "Welt-Bott", 744. Letter of R. P. Joseph Favier to his parents. Dated in Mexico, 23 May, 1736.
[60] "Aus: Jesuitica", 283.
[61] Ibid.
[62] "Welt-Bott", 744.

[63] Ibid., II, 172.

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