

THE BLUE BONNET

★ U.S.S. HOUSTON ★

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Off Galapagos Islands

26 July, 1938



NEPTUNE WELCOMES POLLYWOGS ? ? ? ?

Monday morning at exactly 0840 as the Houston crossed the broad white

equatorial line, a group of denizens covered with barnacles, sea weed, and the slime of the bottom, emerged from the green, watery depths. King Neptune and his court climbed aboard

through the hawse pipe to look over the tender, juicy pollywog recruits which the ship offered.

A gun boomed--Neptune Rex's flag
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--: THE BLUE BONNET :--

A weekly publication of the ship's company of the U. S. S. Houston, Captain G. N. Barker, U.S.N., Commanding and Commander C. A. Bailey, U.S.N., Executive Officer.

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- Editorial -

Watch standing, gun drills, and divisional work have scarce left us a breathing spell. The time passes quickly this way--perhaps even too quickly for us to assimilate all the new things we hear and see concerning the stops made.

The other evening, Dr. Schmitt gave an excellent talk on the Galapagos Islands illustrated by lantern slides. It was too bad there was a high wind at the time which took some of the words right out of the loud speakers and blew them once or twice around the stack before finally coming to our ears.

For those who were unfortunate enough not to be present then, and for those having difficulty in hearing the lecture we are running highlights of the Galapagos (Extracts from one of Dr. Schmitt's articles) in this issue---also a plain, unvarnished tale of the Baroness and her two lovers.

The Galapagos, under the jurisdiction of the Government of Ecuador are the most interesting bits of land on the face of the globe today. To know them thoroughly provides you with a topic of engaging interest which should make anyone sit up and take notice.

Shortly we shall visit Cocos Island. The tales of buried bucaneer's treasure and loot have made people search there by the scores.

It is a very good thing to seek out all the facts. To know your lands visited well is to broaden your character to a corresponding degree.

FISHING FACTS ABOUT GALAPAGOS ISLANDS

For those who intend dropping a line in the waters of these parts the following may be of great interest to you when upon pulling in your line you may find an unusual fish. It may be any of these we are about to describe. The most prevalent (and tiresome) fish is the common "Grouper" a brownish bass-like beggar of from two to twelve pounds in weight. For the sportsman they provide little sport, but for the table, few dishes are better.

The "Golden Grouper" is less common by far, and rather more difficult to catch. Groupers have a trick of doubling back upon the line and severing it just above the leader.

The "Skipjack" is a common catch, and, per pound of weight, is as gamy as any, fighting until pulled into the boat. The largest Skipjack in these waters appear to be about twenty-five inches, weighing not more than six pounds. With its deep blue back and rainbow shades blending into silver stripes, few fishes of the mackerel family could be called more beautiful.

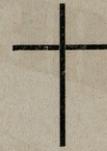
The "Cosmopolitan Dolphin" - not the Porpoise, but the fish of the High Seas, is one of the rare catches among the Islands, and is prone to measure only three of four feet in length. The coloration is vivid and extraordinary, being shot with electric blues and yellow capable of rapid change. The "Dolphin" is a welcome catch in the Galapagos, not only for the sport, but for the table.

Equally prized for the table is the "Cerro", a game little chap, somewhat resembling the "Spanish Mackerel", but with yellow spots on the sides, weighing up to eight pounds.

The "Tuna" is another fighter in these waters, but one must be fast to bring in the whole Tuna due to the Shark menace.

The "Wahoo", Barracuda-like in form, here reaches a length of about five feet or more. Barracuda-like again, the nose is sharp, but the teeth comparatively small. When hooked

DIVINE SERVICE



DIVINE SERVICE

All hands are cordially invited to attend on Sunday. The ship's orchestra will furnish splendid music as usual. The Chaplain will discuss problems of importance to everyday living.

"I was glad when they said to me
 Let us go unto the House of the Lord."

the Wahoo is generally off with many yards of the line before the angler has had time to gather his wits, and the fight is continuous thence onward to the gaff.

The "Rooster fish", with his buffalo hump and highstanding rooster-feathers, though apparently less common in the Galapagos than either the Tuna or Wahoo, is surely no less of a fighter per pound of weight. He is more difficult to land, darting swiftly toward the angler, then suddenly away, he is often able to free himself, and always able to provoke some excitement. Streamlined like the Dolphin, heavy by the head and long tapering, he may be expected to weigh about fifty to seventy-five pounds. No game fishes of the Galapagos are more capable of putting up a lasting battle. From the standpoint of pleasure, the Galapagos angler may expect more of it from Tuna, Rooster-Fish, and Wahoo than from any other game of these waters.

Last but not least, is the many types of Sharks which may be seen and caught. The Ground Sharks are the greatest in numbers.

One fishes for nothing in particular in the Galapagos, and tackle should be selected accordingly.

- Card of Thanks -

The message of condolence and accompanying token at the time of the death of my brother, Norbert Kallaus, are deeply appreciated. Heartfelt thanks to my shipmates.

Joe Kallaus, S2c

The Galapagos Islands

By
WALDO L. SCHMITT

The Galapagos Islands might well have been called Nature's laboratory of experimental evolution; a visual demonstration of the facts and the principles of evolution. They are, to this day, a living epitome of the ORIGIN OF SPECIES.

THE STORY OF THE BARONESS AND HER LOVERS

Here is a story written by every newspaper in the land, yet there was never a tale with less facts, more misinformation and conflicting theories.

The setting lies on a small Galapagos Island known as Floreana, Charles, or Santa Maria (the second is the most commonly used). With its spotty patches of fertility it is anything but an Utopia or Eden. In fact a grim struggle to eke out a bare living in even the choicest portions is the lot of the settler there.

Before the advent of the three major characters, who were to tear the normal tranquil life asunder with hate, passion, and greed, two families and a Norwegian lived on the island. Urholt, the Norwegian, the 1st permanent inhabitant, was joined by a Dr. Friederick Ritter and a companion, Frau Dore Koerwin. The latter couple fled from Germany after leaving their more civilization loving spouses. Shortly afterward a second couple, the Wittmers, came to live on the Island.

To blast this rather doubtful harmonic life into shreds, and to focus the eyes of the world on this little portion of volcanic matter the three characters made their sweeping entrance.

Baroness Eloise Bosquet de Wagner Wehrborn of Vienna and Paris conceived the idea, in company with her lover, Alfred Rudolph Lorenz, of establishing a summer resort on the island and having it a regular calling place for Grace Line ships. Together with Robert Phillipson they arrived on the island.

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I have made three visits to the islands and on them have traveled trails unchanged since the early days of man's sojourn there. Among those trails is one up to the Salt Crater Lake on James Island. Salt workers have come and gone over this trail. Their shelters lay fallen and forgotten over others that were constructed at even earlier periods.

Upon the crest of the crater wall stand an old rusty engine for operating an abandoned cable-way, idle and dilapidated. Goats, descendants of the original flock that escaped Admiral Porter's men back in 1813, still are plentiful.

Tagus Cove, indenting the western shore of northern Albemarle, has changed little in the last hundred years, except for the disappearance of the tortoises from the vicinity. The precipitous rock walls of this breached crater-harbor today carry no end of large painted calling cards of yachts from all parts of the world, and of tuna fisherman and various expeditions from the states.

At anchor far back in the most sheltered place in the cove at the time of my last visit was the small yawl of the circumnavigator, Robinson, who was saved from an untimely end by an emergency appendicitis operation by U. S. Navy doctors who flew over from Panama on a wireless hurry call.

There is no mistaking the wholly volcanic nature of the Galapagos. On every hand are craters of primary, secondary, and lesser degree, fumaroles, cones, and vents, a graphic example of vulcanism to the nth degree. The valley of Ten Thousand Smokes would suffer, I believe, by comparison. Indeed much of the Galapagos scenery and especially that about Christopher Point, the most westerly projection of southern Albemarle, prompts one instinctively to exclaim, "The Valley of the Moon!" No more typi-

cally lunar landscape is to be seen anywhere else on earth.

On Albemarle, steam jets are not uncommon sights, and on adjacent Narborough as well. Various expeditions have reported volcanic activity, including brilliant eruptions, on a number of the islands.

Chatham supports a larger population than any other of the islands. Between two and three hundred persons cultivate its extensive, fertile plantations, work in the sugar mill when this is in operation, and engage in cattle raising for export to the mainland.

Many years ago Charles Island supported about as large a population as exists on Chatham today. These people were described, at that time as "nearly all people of color who had been banished for political crimes". They lived in an agricultural community consisting of some fifty of more crude little homes distributed about as many little chacras, or farms. Traces of the original settlement and a later attempt of colonization remain - occasional bits of stone wall or foundation, wild cattle and pigs, burros, dogs and cats, even chickens, a few plants that may have escaped cultivation, and a host of orange and lemon trees.

These trees, though running wild, are still flourishing in great profusion, so that in season the fruit falls to the ground for want of hands to pick it. Magnificent trees bear as delicious oranges as any you ever tasted. These trees must well be a hundred years old or more, some have boles a foot thick.

When the ripe fruit falls, the wild pigs and the wild cattle swarm to the feast, so that the place is no longer safe for man. The wild boars and the powerful, fierce, Black Spanish bulls are not to be trifled with.

The climate of the Galapagos has been described as ideal. Despite the fact that the archipelago lies directly under the Equator, the average temperature is quite low, ranging between 70 and 80 degrees. This uniformly low and even temperature is due to the Humbolt current, a cold stream that sweeps up along the

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"THE GALAPAGOS ISLANDS"

by

Waldo L. Schmitt

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coast of South America from the Antarctic regions and turns westward off northern Peru to swing through the islands.

Probably the most remarkable feature of the islands and the one which drew visits from the whaling vessels is the abundance of tortoises on the islands. By making use of definite and specific records of tortoises taken as compiled by Dr. C. H. Townsend, Director of the New York Aquarium, it was observed that 13,013 tortoises were taken by seventy nine American vessels between the years 1831 and 1868. At one time there were more than seven hundred vessels in the American Whaling fleet alone. There can be no questioning of the fact that the catch of the few ships whose records he was able to check represented but "a mere fraction of the numbers of tortoises actually carried away".

GOOD SHOT

Roast suckling pig formed part of the President's meal the other night. The trusty rifle of Lt.-Comdr. Kelley brought two wild porkers to their early finish when he unloosed two shots in their direction while ashore at Clipperton Island. The larger boar being too heavy to bring back to the ship was left on the island to serve as a silent warning to the rest of the pig population there.

REVENGE

"When I was a little child", the sergeant sweetly addressed his men at the end of an exhaustive hour of drill, "I had a set of wooden soldiers. There was a poor little boy in the neighborhood and after I had been to Sunday School one day listening to a stirring talk on the beauties of charity, I was soft enough to give them to him. Then I wanted them back and cried, but my mother said:

"Don't cry, Bertie, some day you'll get your wooden soldiers back".

"And believe me, you lopsided, muton-headed, goofus-brained set of certified rolling pins, that day has come".

NEPTUNE'S WELCOME

(From Page 1.)

went up to flutter at the fore. On the second gun the Jolly Roger went up to the starboard main yardarm. Amid the call of the bugle, piping as he passed through a rank of 8 officer-pollywog sideboys, the ruffles and flourishes, the tune of "The Old Gray Mare", the "present-arms" from the marine guard of the day, the King was received with the pomp and glory befitting to his most royal and most regal personage. He was welcomed aboard by the Captain.

There was a humorous glint in the King's eye as he surveyed the lubberly crew of pollywogs. He rubbed his hands together and called for his torturers. Then the fun started. The "works" was given to the souls who had never before visited his realm.

The gauntlet, the stocks, the coffin, the blessing, the charge--royal baby's milk, pills, operating table, electric chair, barber chair, water tank---Neptune's instruments of torture. When it was all over the pollywogs were accepted as fitting subjects of King Neptune--Long may he rule.

MULLET'S AWAY

He adjusted his reel
And tuned up his gear
And sat himself down
On his well known rear

Pa caught fish
On the end of a rod.
In spite of the visor
And called unto God.

"A swordfish" my hearties,
Pa gave him the line
He sweated and fretted
"This baby is mine".

Pa patted his stomach
And laughed with elation,
"Five hundred pounds
Without dehydration".

The fish gave a last gasp,
Pa swallowed his gullet
He looked at his prize,
He'd captured a mullet.

So far, Proimos, traitor of the shellbacks, holds the honors of catching the biggest fish. A 120 lb. sea bass fell victim to his hook.

THE STORY OF THE BARONESS AND HER LOVERS

(From Page 3.)

The baroness at once proclaimed herself ruler of the Galapagos. "The mad empress of the Islands and her court, living their tropic idyl of love in beautiful retirement", was the way the press put it. The two men fought each other to gain the amours of the Baroness. She egged them on. The fights finally ended with Phillipson the victor. Lorenz, beaten and bruised by both the larger man and the Baroness, was forced to wait on them like a serf.

But the discord did not end here. The self styled ruler, clad in brassiere and silk shorts with a pistol swung from her doughty hips, drove away all newcomers. She shot at some, threatened others, and tolerated with some show of hospitality only the large parties which were stronger than her own.

Finally, it all came to a tragic, inevitable end. The Wittmers rushed over one day to find only Lorenz, distracted and wild-eyed. He explained that the Baroness and Phillipson had just left "on an American Yacht."

Nearly eight months later (1934), the Santa Amaro, a Tuna Clipper out of San Diego, hove-to off Marchena. The skipper and part of the crew went ashore to investigate some rags which fluttered from atop a pole. They found an overturned boat, two corpses of men, and a half consumed iguana. Marchena, 160 miles north of Charles Island, has no fresh water. Lorenz and Nuggerud, Norwegian owner of the wrecked boat, had perished in a vain attempt to attract a passing ship.

To this day nothing has been heard of or has anyone seen either the Baroness or Phillipson. Whether Lorenz slew both in their sleep, disposed of the bodies, then fled to a final reckoning is a matter of conjecture. Only the sun, moon, stars of these tragic islands, and destiny know the answer.

REMEMBER:

A grapefruit is only a lemon that saw a chance and took it.