

*The Pocket Guide to Ciudad Trujillo.* By Erwin Walter Palm. (Ciudad Trujillo: Impresora Dominicana, C. por A., 1951. Pp. 56.)

Of all the cities in the West Indies Ciudad Trujillo, the capital of the Dominican Republic, is one of the most important from an historical point of view. The present city, founded in 1502 by Nicolás de Ovando, its first governor, boasts a wealth of historic monuments that date back to the very first years of its growth. Here the son of Christopher Columbus, Diego Colón, ruled as viceroy; and from this port many of the pioneer conquistadors sailed forth to discover and conquer new lands. Even the earthquake of 1930, which destroyed large sections of the city, spared most of the old monuments. Today with its spacious avenues and modern new buildings it stands as one of the most interesting cities of the Caribbean, where the atmosphere of the Old World blends harmoniously with the quick tempo of a present-day busy metropolis. Its name was changed in 1936 from Santo Domingo to Ciudad Trujillo, as a tribute to the president under whose direction the new city was rebuilt.

Erwin Walter Palm in this pocket guide gives a brief but adequate description of the city, especially in its historical aspects. This guide will be particularly useful to the visitor who has only a few days at his disposal for sightseeing. In the introduction the author gives a brief history of the city and describes its art and plant life. The itineraries, which form the bulk of the brochure, endeavor to cover most of the historic monuments, but give only passing mention to modern structures. The guide also contains a number of illustrations and a map of the city. The author is well qualified for this work since he is professor of history and art at the University of Santo Domingo and has made a special study of the historic monuments of the island. To help the reader understand the detailed information he gives, the guide contains a glossary explaining the architectural and archaeological terms used. Because of this technical phraseology, the casual reader may find his style stilted and too academic. His illustrations are quite apt, especially the two nineteenth-century engravings.

Of particular interest is his description of the cathedral, considered the oldest in the Americas. It contains the tomb of Christopher Columbus, which according to the author was "discovered by accident in 1877." The remains of the great discoverer will eventually rest in the Columbus Memorial Lighthouse to be erected near the site of the old city, called Nueva Isabela, founded in 1498 by Bartolomé Colón, the brother of Columbus. This monument, made in the form of an immense horizontal cross, was

started a few years ago, but its completion is problematical because of a lack of funds. Other places described in detail are the historic church and monastery of the Dominican friars and the palace of Diego Colón. There is also a description of the museum near the palace, which contains an excellent collection of archaeological objects belonging to the Taino Indians, who inhabited the island before its discovery by the white man. The ruins of the old church and monastery of San Francisco are also briefly described, although one would have liked to find more details of this ancient structure, for the Franciscans came to the island with the second voyage of Columbus, and the present extensive ruins stand as a mute testimony to their many and varied activities. Many other places of historic interest are aptly described, among them the National Treasury building, which was formerly a Jesuit church.

The pocket guide to Ciudad Trujillo is a serious effort on the part of the author to offer visitors worthwhile information about one of the oldest cities in the Western Hemisphere. It is therefore a small but worthy contribution to Spanish American history, which found its origins in this vicinity. It is hoped that this is but the beginning of a more ample guide, for among all the centers of the New World with a great historic past, there is none more deserving of the honor than this old city of Santo Domingo, recently changed with its present-day new look to the Ciudad Trujillo.

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