

(Please return
Dead)

TRIP TO THE HOT WELLS, OSTRICH FARM AND SAN JOSE MISSION.
April 29, 1916.

(When Gordon was a little boy & Elizabeth was a baby
Dead)

Five of our party consisting of Bertha and I, and our family of course including Miss Elizabeth (two months old), Miss Allie and her beau, and one of her friends a Miss Maude, (You will notice I have used the method of designation common here in the South of prefixing Miss or Mr. to the given name of a young man or young lady.) left about four P.M. loaded with bundles, lunches, etc. Boarded the street car at our corner, got transfers for the Hot Wells line and about an hour or possibly more was consumed in the journey. The weather was quite warm so that we were dressed for summer though we had wraps along so that we would not be cold when returning at night.

Upon arrival at the grounds we walked up the broad driveway to the bath house, in front of which is a fountain playing and in the receptacle at the bottom of the fountain are gold fish sporting. On the large porch are numerous tables and chairs and on one of the tables we deposit our bundles and wraps. We went in to take a look at those in bathing and were greeted by a smell as though some rotten eggs had been broken near there. The well or wells as the case may be are sulphur, the water being quite warm. A number of people were in bathing and it did not look good to me and I about concluded that I would not go in. Those in seemed to enjoy it and not to mind the sightseers. We soon went out and paid our ten cents each and went into the Ostrich Farm. In there we saw about twenty five or six birds - a dozen pairs. Their legs raise their bodies about four feet from the ground and their heads are carried about seven feet high. They walk very gracefully and look as though they would make good mounts. The black birds are the male and the grey are the female. There are only three natural colors of ostrich plumes - white, black and grey. We also saw an alligator which they told us was 350 years old. Also that he ate but once in about six months and then ate about a bushel of livers and kidneys. He was very sluggish and when we went around him he exhaled his breath thru his nostrils with such force as to make a whistling noise. He was about 15 feet long over all and looked very repulsive. We were told the difference between an alligator and a crocodile was that the former moves the lower part of his jaw while the latter moves but the upper part of his jaw. On the 'farm' we saw a Texas wild hog, which are quite numerous as well as vicious in some parts of Texas. Is almost just like a hog but seems to have a sort of a mane on his shoulders and his body is thicker from top to bottom than it is from side to side, in other words its body is not round like our hogs. We saw the the Gila monster, the largest of lizard family and very poisonous. They did not look like monsters to us as they were but a foot or so long - yellow with black strips running around its body. They also had some alligators about 8 inches long which we were told were two years old. They also had in captivity the Texas leopard cat which looked like a big overgrown tom cat. They also have an American eagle, 'sometimes seen on an American dollar', a common Texas hawk, guinea pigs, rabbits, etc. We were told that the ostrich egg contains about 6 1/2 pounds of meat and fertile eggs sell for \$25 each.

Four Three of us, Miss Allie having to remain to work on her school register, started off across the San Antonio river which is in this park as well as the other at the other end of the city, and were told that there was a mission near there. We went until we came to it and as it was about dark we did not see much. A sign over the gate bore the following legend - San Jose Mission, Built 1701, Admission 10c. No one was

at the gate to either admit or keep us from entering so we went in. I was carrying the baby so did not go in with the rest. Finally I went in and looked around inside the structure. It is built of native stone and adobe - mud. Some window arches seem to be brick but I could not verify that fact on account of the darkness. There were several rooms with the original roofs over them. These roofs were domes, rather low and not much arched and looked as though the arch was so little that it would force the side walls out. But it is still standing apparently as ever. The front of the church or mission is carved and on either side of the door way are statues. Miss Maude who is a 'native' told us that they formerly had silver heads on them. Only parts of the figures are still there. Inside the main part the roof has fallen in and there is a ladder leading up into the tower located on the corner of the building. The ladder takes you up to about 25 feet above the ground. Inside the tower are steps hewn out of a large tree. The tree seems to be about two feet in diameter and the steps are about 6 inches wide, with about ten inches raise. A sort of a winding staircase is thus constructed which will take up up to the very top of the tower which is still in a good state of preservation. On top of the tower there is even an iron ornament still standing. Protruding from various points along the upper wall, or near the top of the wall are what we were told were cannon but I am inclined to think they are stone eyes troughs, but it is possible that some of them are cannon. It was impossible to verify this on account of the gathering darkness.

We got back to the bath house at 8:15 and found the rest of our party which then numbered 13 with our baby. We then got bathing suits, all except Bertha who remained out to tend the baby and Gordon. I went in and stayed in about an hour. All enjoyed it fine. The water in the ladies' pool being the warmer we all went in there and though I got chilly at first in the middle pool, I got along all right in the ladies' pool which was also shallower. After a while Bertha got interested and I came out and took the baby and she went in. She was in about 30 minutes when the whole party came out. There were six couples of young people and though I at first was adverse to going in, all was done properly and nothing out of the way was seen. I tasted the sulphur water as I flowed into the pool and two swallows was enough. There are three pools but only two were filled when we were there. The shallowest is the ladies' pool and the deepest part is about 6 feet, the shallowest three feet. The middle pool goes from about 4 to 8 and the one that was empty was 6 to 12 feet.

After coming out we had a lunch and hiked for home. We had the pool more or less to ourselves because of the 'Fiesta' that was going on in the city. ~~When~~ We got back to town and was waiting for our car we saw what is usually seen at the conclusion of a carnival.

We also saw an exhibit of the Canal Zone and the Canal and heard a short and instructive lecture on the subject. We saw the locks work, the vessels raised, the Panama railroad train run, etc. It is authorized by the U.S. government and the man in charge is a retired officer of the Navy. It is built to scale - 18 inches to a mile in length and 6 inches to a mile in width, with the exception of the locks which are ten times the size of the rest of the model. Water was flowing in the canal and boats plying back and forth. It was very interesting and each step necessary in taking a vessel thru the canal was explained by the lecturer. This was one thing of the Fiesta that I thought was worth while.

We saw the so-called battle of flowers in front of the Alamo but that was a merely a battle of display, floats trying to outdo the others with the amount and beauty of the flowers they carried. I was a little disappointed in it.