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PORTO RICO

What It is

Porto Rico is an Island in the Caribbean discovered by Columbus in 1493 and under Spanish rule until 1898 when it became part of the United States. In 1917 American citizenship was extended to her people.

Where It is

Porto Rico is the smallest and most easterly of the Greater Antilles. It is situated some 1,400 miles south and east of New York, and approximately 1,000 miles north and east of the Panama Canal. Havana, Cuba, is almost a thousand miles west of San Juan, the capital and chief city, while New Orleans is 1,500 miles west and north. Liverpool, La Havre and Cadiz are more than 3,300 miles and north and east.

Size and Population

Territorially Porto Rico is small, approximately 3,600 square miles in extent. The length of the island from east to west is approximately 100 miles and its breadth north and south is slightly less than 40 miles. Much of what the island lacks in size, however, is made up by its relatively large population, which was 1,300,000 according to the 1920 United States Census, and its agricultural and economic importance. Eighty per cent of the population is rural.

In area Porto Rico is larger than either Delaware or Rhode Island while it has more population, according to the 1920 census.

7 babies born every hour.

than any of the following eighteen states: Arizona, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Idaho, Maine, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Dakota, Utah, Vermont and Wyoming.

The island has sixteen towns of more than 5,000 population each, as follows:

Aguadilla 8,035 Arecibo 10,039 Bayamon 10,411; Caguas 12,149; Cataño 6,602; Cayey 5,243; Fajardo 6,571; Guayama 8,924; Humacao 6,183; Manati 6,147; Mayaguez 19,124; Ponce 41,912; Rio Piedras 5,820; San German 5,019; San Juan 71,443 Yauco 7,053.

Significance of the Name "Porto Rico"

Originally the name Puerto Rico was applied only to what is now the City of San Juan, while the island as a whole was called San Juan. But as the capital city gradually assumed importance the names were exchanged and Porto Rico became the name of the whole island. Literally the name means "excellent harbor." The new spelling came with the change of government although in Spanish it is still written Puerto Rico.

Ponce de Leon First Governor

Porto Rico is the only soil under the American flag on which Columbus set foot. On his second journey westward to the New World he landed at Aguada, and touched at Aguadilla for water. Ponce de Leon, the romantic adventurer and seeker for the Fountain of Youth, became the island's first governor in 1508. From then on the island may well boast of 400 years development.

Recent Progress

For more than twenty-five years Porto Rico has made rapid strides. With a productive soil, ideal climate, a thickly settled country and an established civilization ante-dating the Thirteen American Colonies almost two centuries, new and greater opportunities which came following the association with the United States have been taken advantage of and on every hand there is evidence of almost unparalleled progress.

Chief Products

Porto Rico's chief products are sugar, coffee, tobacco and citrus fruits. Comparatively speaking Porto Rico produces or manufactures very little for her own consumption but through her valuable exports becomes a large purchaser of almost all staple products.

Sugar

There are more than forty sugar centrals, or factories, in operation in the island, manufacturing from 500,000 to 600,000 tons of raw sugar annually. With the exception of that retained for local consumption this raw sugar is sent to the United States for refining. In recent years processes of manufacturing white sugar direct from the cane juices have been introduced and many tons of pure white sugar are made for consumption both in the Island and export to the United States. In 1926 the first refinery in the Tropics was erected at Mercedita.

More than 225,000 acres along the low lying coasts are given over to sugar production and during a large part of the year

many thousands of people are engaged in the planting, cultivation, harvesting and manufacture of sugar cane. The harvesting season extends from early January to June.

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Tobacco and Cigars

Porto Rican tobacco and Porto Rican cigars have come into their own since the American occupation. Prior to that and under the Spanish scheme of things which attempted to foster specific industries in different colonies, tobacco growing was not extensive and all exports were to Cuba where Porto Rican tobacco blended with Cuban helped establish the Havana cigar in its position of supremacy.

Porto Rican tobacco has distinctive qualities which appeal to the smoker. Now more than a hundred million cigars manufactured in the island are exported to the United States annually while hundreds of thousands of pounds of tobacco are sent there for manufacture, going into some of the most popular brands of cigars. Approximately 20,000 acres are planted to tobacco each year, in the hills away from the coast.

As an employer of labor the tobacco industry in all its branches probably is the most important factor in the economic life of the island, its payrolls running into millions of dollars, while as a source of revenue to the Insular Government it is an important factor, the United States diverting to the Insular treasury the internal revenue taxes ordinarily going to the Federal government.

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Coffee

Coffee was by far the most important product during the days of Spain, due partly to the fact that Porto Rican coffee for generations had been largely consumed in Spain for reciprocal favors on importations of Spanish products. Porto Rican coffee is practically the only island product that has not found a ready market in the United States. In the coffee trade it is known as an after dinner type. Spain, France, Italy and Cuba are large consumers of the island's coffee which under normal conditions commands a considerably higher price than the average consumer in the United States pays.

Coffee is scattered through the hills of the island, and back from the coast, where the forests form a mass of green that is pleasing and restful to the eye. Much of the 160,000 acres planted to coffee is divided into small tracts or holdings and it is from this that coffee is known as a "poor man's" crop.

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Fruit

Fruit growing on a commercial scale has been developed in the past twenty years. The sweetness and unusual juiciness of the wild orange found in Porto Rico led to experiments in grapefruit growing and cultivated varieties of oranges, as well as pineapples. In the past few years processes have been perfected for the satisfactory canning of grapefruit, and the fresh fruit as well as the canned finds excellent markets in the United States, Canada and Europe.

About twenty million coconuts are exported annually.

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What Porto Rico Buys

It is from the export of her agricultural products that Porto Rico becomes a large purchaser of all products entering into the daily life of more than a million and a quarter people. Aside from foodstuffs and clothing the island is a large importer of agricultural machinery, fertilizer, building materials such as steel, cement and lumber.

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Roads and Motors

Porto Rico is highly motorized. More than 1,400 miles of excellent roads reach each of the seventy cities and towns and the automobile is primarily an essential means of transportation rather than a pleasure vehicle. Hundreds of thousands of tons of freight are carried inland from the ports by motor trucks for distribution throughout the island and the trucks returning bring sugar, tobacco, coffee and fruits to the ports for marketing and export. Trucks have almost driven oxen from the highways and motors have displaced carriages. There are more than 12,000 motors in the island. Many visitors bring their own cars with them.

A million dollars a year is being spent on new roads in addition to several hundred thousand dollars annually for maintenance.

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New Industries

A recent industry that has been developed to large proportions is the making of drawn work, shirtwaists, blouses, dresses and the filmy underthings every woman craves. In the making of laces and all needle work Porto Rican women are most adept. In thousands of homes in the towns and in

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the hills the most exquisite and dainty garments are made.

Other new industries include hat and basket making, and other hand-crafts have developed partly as a result of initial training in the public schools.

A diamond-cutting establishment has been in successful operation for some years. A shoe factory recently was started and a button factory is now being operated. The making of men's clothing, shirts and pajamas has followed the extensive making of women's garments. Several moving pictures have been produced in the island.

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Labor and Power

Not only does Porto Rico offer a large supply of labor at wages lower than on the Continent but there is an abundance of power available for manufacturing purposes. Several large manufacturing concerns are now sending raw materials to the island to be made up and returned to the United States for distribution at a considerable saving on labor costs.

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A Distributing Center

Not only is Porto Rico developing in manufacturing lines, but as a distributing center for the Caribbean, the West Indies and Central and South America, San Juan is attracting American manufacturers because of its greater nearness to these markets and also because with this as a center the market needs of Latin countries are better understood and can be better cared for.

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Meeting Place for Latin and Saxon

Unconsciously, perhaps, Porto Rico is

proving to be a meeting place for Latin and Saxon where each has an opportunity to become acquainted with the other, his ideals, methods and point of view. It is a half-way station between the Americas and both in business and education it is increasing each year the service it performs in bringing representatives of the two civilizations together.

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Shipping

Not only is Porto Rico easy to get about but increasing shipping facilities make it most accessible. Three lines of steamers operate between New York and Porto Rico. There are direct and frequent sailings to Gulf and east coast ports. Another line operates between Baltimore and Porto Rico. There is weekly service to The Virgin Islands, Santo Domingo, Venezuela and South America, and frequent sailings to Cuba. There are direct lines to Spain and France and other European countries.

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Means of Communication

There are three commercial cables connecting Porto Rico with the rest of the world in addition to a government wireless station and a commercial station. Modern telephone and telegraph service reach every town in the island and within the past five years the number of telephone subscribers has doubled and now exceeds 10,000.

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Radio

Radio, and the radio telephone, is also playing an important part in linking Porto Rico with distant places. Nightly hundreds of radio enthusiasts listen to the concerts

broadcasted from Newark, Pittsburgh, Schenectady, Philadelphia, Atlanta, St. Louis and many other cities farther away. The broadcasting station at San Juan has been heard in Havana, New England, Nova Scotia and many cities throughout the United States.

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Always Summer

In Porto Rico it is always Summer, though in the Tropics there is never the extreme heat of more northern climates. Trade winds are always refreshing and a temperature above 85 degrees in the Summer is the exception rather than the rule. During the Winter months the average temperature is several degrees less than in Summer. Tourists, unacquainted with the climate, usually select the months from December to May for visiting the island while during the Summer and Fall months it is much cooler in Porto Rico than in most of the popular summer resorts.

The mean daily average temperature for July is 78.8 degrees, with an average daily range of 18 degrees. For January the mean daily average temperature is 73.2, with an average daily range of 20 degrees.

The average annual rainfall for the island is 77 inches, varying greatly in different sections of the island. February is the driest month with an average rainfall of approximately 2½ inches. Rains gradually increase until October, which has an average rainfall of approximately 9 inches. There is no "rainy season."

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An American Switzerland

"An American Switzerland" Theodore

Roosevelt called Porto Rico after motoring through its hills and valleys. The scenery is all that this description suggests, yet it has a character all its own. The beauty of the island should be seen, not inadequately pictured in words.

Porto Rico is best seen by motor, and to enjoy its beauties one should not drive fast. Every town in the island may be reached by motor from San Juan. There are innumerable drives out of the city into the island and each road leads to new delights. One may drive for two hours or two weeks and at each turn in the road see new beauties.

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Of European Origin

Porto Rico was among the first countries in the New World to be settled from Europe. Spain sent out colonists immediately following the discoveries of Columbus. For 400 years the island was under Spanish domination and the Spanish influence is everywhere in buildings, bridges, the roadways, the plaza about which each town is built, the churches and the people themselves.

Spanish is the native tongue of the people, the traditions are Spanish as are the customs.

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The Modernizing Influence

Against this established scheme of centuries a Northern modernizing influence has projected itself, and possibly the best external evidence of it is the public school. Within twenty-five years more than 500 public school buildings have been erected in the island where before there were none. Some of these buildings are as magnificent,

modern and well equipped as can be found in any state or city. English as well as Spanish is taught and the use of English is growing rapidly. There are 250,000 children in the schools and the annual school budget is now \$4,000,000.

In addition to the graded schools there are high schools in the larger towns and the University of Porto Rico embraces colleges of liberal arts, law, pharmacy, agriculture and mechanic arts. The normal school of the University trains most of the more than 3,000 teachers in the island.

In conjunction with the University and the Institute of Tropical Diseases and Columbia University there has been established a school of tropical medicine.

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Early History

To the desire for new territory which led Columbus and his followers on was shortly added the quest for gold and silver. Treasure laden ships, returning to Spain, made of Porto Rico for years the center of the pirate's hunting ground. Here Drake (1595) and Kidd and others of their kind were familiar figures. At different times the English (1595 and 1598) French (1528, 1543, 1576) and Dutch (1625) attempted to seize the control of the island from Spain, and to protect against such attacks the elaborate fortifications at El Morro (1584) San Cristobal (1631) and San Geronimo (1700) were erected. They are remarkably well preserved today and as government reservations may be visited with proper permission. Until recent years the whole city of San Juan was surrounded by a great wall, much of which still remains. The old sea gate stands

today almost as when built in 1746. Little damage to these century-old fortifications was done by Sampson's fleet in 1898 and damaged portions were shortly afterward restored.

The present Governor's palace was commenced in 1533 while the foundations of the present cathedral were laid before that, while Porto Rico comprised the first Catholic Diocese in the New World.

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Government

Porto Rico is a self-governing island of American citizens. The Governor, members of the Supreme Court and a few other officials are appointed by the President of the United States. Others are either elected or appointed by the Governor. There is an elective legislature composed of senate and house of delegates that meets every two years. Each municipality has its own elective government.

In addition to the municipal and Insular governments the United States maintains the postal, customs, immigration and lighthouse services, and the Island of Porto Rico forms a judicial district which is provided with a United States court. Customs revenues are turned into the Insular treasury. The island pays no tax or revenue to the United States government.

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Commerce

Porto Rico's commerce for 1925 amounted to \$185,000,000, 90 per cent of which was with the United States. The banner trade year for the island was 1920 when exports

and imports reached a total of over \$247,000,000. With the exception of one year the balance of trade has been in favor of the island constantly since 1903. Total imports and exports in 1898 were \$7,000,000.

The balance of trade in favor of Porto Rico for the past 15 years is more than \$225,000,000.

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Money and Postage

United States money and United States postage are used in Porto Rico. Letter postage between the island and the mainland is 2 cents. Parcel post service between the mainland and the island is extensive. From New York the island is in Zone 7; from New Orleans, Zone 8.

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Trade Facilities

For handling the large volume of exports and imports Porto Rico has not only modern and adequate banking facilities, but well-established exporting, importing and distributing houses.

San Juan bank clearings for 1925 exceeded \$223,000,000.

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Property Values and Taxes

The assessed value of property in the island exceeds \$315,000,000 and values have increased for a period of ten years at more than \$10,000,000 per year. In 1913 the total assessed value of property was \$179,000,000; in 1918 it was \$224,000,000. The increase in the past five years has been approximately \$60,000,000. As compared with most continental communities taxes are low.

Hotels

For tourists or those who come for extended visits modern hotels with excellent service will be found in both San Juan and Ponce, Coamo Springs and Villalba.

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Clubs and Organizations

Porto Rico has an active Chamber of Commerce—an Insular organization with local chambers in five of the larger cities—and is a member of the United States Chamber of Commerce. There are two Rotary Clubs, in San Juan and Ponce; the Knights of Columbus and Masonic orders are well established, as are the American Legion and civic, fraternal and patriotic organizations. Each of the larger cities has various clubs and casinos. In San Juan there are the Puerto Rico Casino, the Spanish Casino, Elks Club, Union Club, Country Club and similar organizations. In Ponce there are the Casino de Ponce, Club Deportivo, Centro Español and others.

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Golf and Other Sports

There are two golf courses, one laid out in the grounds at El Morro, and another in Sabana Llana, on the Carolina road, about thirty minutes by motor from San Juan.

In addition to golf there are a dozen tennis courts in and around San Juan. Sailing, sea-bathing, fishing and motoring are year-round attractions. There are race courses in San Juan and Ponce where races are scheduled for Sundays and holidays.

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What to See in San Juan

The Governor's Palace is not only the home of the Chief Executive but also con-

tains the Governor's officers and other government offices. Visitors may visit all of the public rooms.

There is a small but very interesting garden at the Governor's Palace and from the rear of the garden one obtains a good view of the entrance to the harbor, the high sea wall and the near-by fortifications.

Underground passageways connect the Governor's Palace with El Morro and from there to other fortifications. The tunnels have not been used since the days of Spain.

On the grounds at El Morro is a monument erected to commemorate the valor of the defenders of San Juan from the Dutch in 1625. The monument marks the spot from which the Dutch were driven back from their attack on El Morro.

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In the Cathedral

In the Cathedral repose the remains of Ponce de Leon, as well as the bodies of some of the early Bishops of the island, buried there hundreds of years ago. Recently a beautiful shrine was placed in the Cathedral to mark the resting place of Ponce de Leon. Access may be had to the Cathedral at most hours through the priests in charge or from the Bishop's Palace.

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Old Fortifications

The fortifications of El Morro, overlooking the entrance to the harbor, and San Cristobal, may be visited. Application for passes should be made to the Officer of the Day stationed in the barracks at the entrance to the military reservation.

Near El Morro is Casa Blanca, one of the first buildings erected for the early Span-

Island divided into districts

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ish officials, and now occupied by the commanding officer of the Military District of Porto Rico. Casa Blanca was commenced in 1527 by García Troche, the tutor of Luis Ponce de Leon, son of the conqueror.

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San Juan gate, the last gate erected, was built in 1746. This is the only gate that once gave entrance to the walled city that still stands.

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Churches and Monuments

San José church at the head of Cristo street and on San José plaza is one of the oldest churches in the island and was built next after the Cathedral.

district

In the center of San José plaza is a bronze statue of Ponce de Leon made from guns captured from the British.

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In the plaza Colon facing the Municipal Theatre is a very fine Columbus monument erected to commemorate the discovery of the island by Columbus in 1493.

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cities

On the main carretera or street leading out of San Juan from the Plaza Colon there are in the order named the Porto Rico Casino, the Y. M. C. A. building and the Carnegie Library, all of which are open to visitors.

Government buildings, churches, clubs, public schools and other public buildings will be found scattered throughout the city.

Politics - political prayer
young people of churches are
organized -
no morning preaching -
all Sunday School