

Feb. 1957



F A C T S - A B O U T - A R U B A

Aruba is the most western of the Netherlands Leeward islands or ABC islands, (Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao); it is intersected by the 70th. meridian and situated between 12° 24' and 12° 27' North latitude. The total length of the island is 19.6 miles while the widest cross-section is scarcely 6 miles. The total area is 69 square miles. The shortest distance between Aruba and Curacao is 42 seamiles and between Aruba and Cape San Roman, on the peninsula of Paraguaná, Venezuela, 15 seamiles.

HISTORICAL:

Already as early as 1515 a Spanish Commander, acting under approval of Diego Columbus, "took" all the viril Indians from the ABC islands and brought them to Hispaniola, the island which, today, is the territory of Haiti and Santo Domingo. The Spanish let them work in the mines there. Only a dozen or so years later it was Juan Ampués, who succeeded in sending back to Aruba a group of Indians from Hispaniola to tend the island, very likely for his personal benefit. A decree was promulgated, approved by Charles V, which forbade settlement of any foreign colonist in Aruba. This decree stayed valid for over a hundred years. The result was that the Indian population of Aruba stayed as free people, on special orders of Charles V, together with only the Spanish members of the little garrison. Later the Dutch maintained the closed area principle until the early 19th century. The Arubans of today, therefore, are descendants of the Indians and the Spanish and the Dutch settlers.

The island was ruled by "Commandeurs" appointed in the Netherlands by the crown. Later the title was changed into "Gezaghebber" (Lt. Governor). Only in 1825, when an Aruban lad found gold in Rooi Fluit, a gully on the Northern shore, a certain interest was created for capital investments in gold mining. Under different names successive organizations applying different methods won gold on the island, but profits, if any, were meager and rare, except for the period of 1910 - 1913. By 1947 all interest ceased for an indefinite period.

Since the turn of the century the main source of income for Aruba (until the '30) was aloe; produced here and exported under the trade name of Curacao Aloe. The gross value of this export sometimes topped Fl. 2.000.000 a year.

Phosphate was won here too, but profits did not benefit the island. The greatest boost in economic development came by 1926, when the Arend Petroleum Mij., a subsidiary of the Royal Dutch Shell established a refinery on the Western tip of the island. This refinery, known under the name of Eagle Refinery stopped refining in January 1953. By 1927/28 a Canadian Company got a concession on the Eastern tip of the island at San Nicholas. This Company later was taken over by the Standard Oil of New Jersey, and her modest plant grew to be the biggest oil refinery of the world today, as far as output is concerned, operating under the name of: "Lago Oil & Transport Co., Ltd

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GOVERNMENT:

With the promulgation of the new constitution on December 29, 1954, the Netherlands Antilles became an integral part of the Netherlands kingdom. Aruba, then, has an island Government for it's own sake, like the other five islands that form the Netherlands Antilles, to deal with all internal affairs on a basis of autonomy.

There is an Island Council having 21 members, elected every four years in general elections. Suffrage for adults, both sexes over 23 years of age having Netherlands nationality. Authority in local affairs is vested in the Island Council.

The Island Council nominates four members to the five-man Executive Council, the fifth member is the Lt. Governor, who is appointed for six years by the Crown. Each member has one vote. The Lt. Governor is a non-political person. He also is representative in the Island administration of the Government of the Netherlands Antilles. The 6 islands of the Netherlands Antilles form a sort of a federation with a "federal" government; i.e. the "Staten" or the House of Representatives, like the Island Council, also elected in general elections held every four years in all the six islands, and a Cabinet of Ministers appointed by the "Staten". The Governor of the Netherlands Antilles is appointed by the Crown and resides in Willemstad, Curacao.

POPULATION:

Total:	December 31	-	1950	-	53.200	
	"	31	-	1951	-	54.624
	"	31	-	1952	-	56.206
	"	31	-	1953	-	57.303
	"	31	-	1954	-	55.912
	"	31	-	1955	-	55.483
	"	31	-	1956	-	56.050

of those about 43.440 are of Dutch nationalities. About 5.000 British, 2.100 Americans, 1050 Venezuelans, other nationalities about 4.460. There are 41 nationalities on the island.

THE LANGUAGE:

The native language is Papiamentu, a mixture of Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, and a sprinkling of African words. The official language is Dutch, the trade language is mostly English and Spanish.

PROSPERITY:

The main (and practically only) source of income of Aruba comes from the oil industry. Crude oil is shipped in by tankers from lake Maracaibo (which is called "Lago") area. The crude oil is pumped into storage tanks on shore. The refinery processes the crude oil into a wide variety of oil products, from diesel oil to high octane gasoline. Ocean going tankers transport the products to about 50 countries on both sides of the Atlantic and countries on the Pacific coast.

SHIPPING:

Movements of ships in the ports of:

Year -	<u>SAN NICHOLAS</u>		<u>DRUIF BAAI</u> (Eagle Pier)		<u>ORANJESTAD</u>	
	Number	Gross ton.	Number	Gross ton.	Number	Gross ton.
1947	6283	31.140.574	807	3.691.302	227	408.279
1948	6167	29.834.385	915	4.230.227	284	487.792
1949	5069	26.233.077	773	3.639.968	414	973.115
1950	4566	27.678.710	967	4.710.550	407	1.263.167
1951	4744	30.388.306	897	4.298.838	372	1.138.995
1952	5344	30.670.199	814	4.021.802	886	1.069.280
1953	4639	28.681.192	202	1.339.658	787	1.222.340
1954	3771	30.070.427	251	1.934.951	961	1.511.256
1955	3716	36.677.901	265	2.062.131	1069	1.813.962
1956	3594	36.675.621	200	1.547.598	1128	1.708.497 ')

') Of these there were 602 schooners and sailing vessels, 16.917 Gr. Ton and 526 ocean going ships, 1.691.580 Gr. Ton.

SHIPS' PASSENGERS:

	In	Transit	Out
	3206	4010	3476 (1952)
	3378	5385	3621 (1953)
	2816	4559	4574 (1954)
	2799	7241	3683 (1955)
	1782	10581	2987 (1956)

AIR TRAFFIC:

PASSENGERS:

Year	In	Out	Transit
1952	21.789	22.134	19.704
1953	22.728	22.755	20.917
1954	21.942	22.578	18.223
1955	21.396	21.804	12.466
1956	23.973	23.731	13.250

COMMUNICATIONS:

Air traffic with the island is mainly maintained by K.L.M. There are many charterflights, mainly for airfreight of perishables (fresh vegetables, fruit, and meat).

K.L.M. maintains 28 flights a week v.v. Curacao - Aruba;
daily with: Miami, Caracas, Kingston, Bonaire;
4 times a week with: Maracaibo, Montreal, San José, Panama, and
Amsterdam.
3 times a week with: Baranquilla, Havana.
Twice a week with: Port of Spain.

The airport of Aruba is called Beatrix Airport, it applies the hydrant filling system for airplanes. It has an ultramodern terminal, situated on the main traffic artery between Oranjestad and San Nicholas at respectively 5 and 20 minutes drive by car.

Aruba has two modern ports, namely at Paarden Baai (Oranjestad) -at ten minutes walking distance from the center of the city-, for passenger-ships and freighters, with a draft of 34 - 36'; quay length is 2700' total. The biggest ocean liners can moor there. The second port is San Nicholas harbour, specially out-fitted for tankers. Tankers of the super class (40.000 tons) can moor at the new docks. They can be served in 24 - 30 hours. Finally there is a pier at the Eagle bunker-station, where tankers to the biggest sizes can moor and be served.

Shipping companies which regularly call at Aruba (except tankers):
K.N.S.M. (Royal Netherlands S.S. Co.); Grace Line; Alcoa Line;
Peninsula & Occidental S.S. Co.; Hapag (Horn Line); Moore McCormack.

On the island transportation is carried out by:
Buses, stationwagons, taxis, and of course by private cars.
Total of motorcars, trucks included, January 1957: 6028.
Roadlength is relatively long. Asphalted 1st. and 2nd. class roads total about 100 miles, gravel roads about 90 miles (streets in cities excluded).

TOURISM:

Aruba's Tourist industry is still in its early stages, but, in the past half score years legal kinks and bottlenecks impairing healthy development of tourism were removed and so Aruba has gone a long way to coming of age in this field. The island has invested great sums of public moneys in development, of suitable areas, such as the construction of the great Western shore boulevard, connection of the sites along the beautiful Palm Beach on the water main, with automatic telephone trunk line and electricity nets, and thus opening the possibility of capital investment for tourist-plants in that area. Last but not least the island has picked up the tag of the balance of Venezuelan, private and Government capital needed for financing the first luxury 125 rooms resort hotel, which will go up by mid 1957.

Today Aruba has the following hotels of which the physical data are also listed.

HOTELS PENSIONS	R O O M S						S U I T E S				Location
	A. C.		P. B.		W. B.		A. C.		P. B.		
	s	d	s	d	s	d	2p	4p	2p	4p	
Strand	6	2						2	7	1	Halfway between Oranjestad and Airport
Scala	8	10			6						Oranjestad
Basi Ruti			5								Palm Beach
Marchena			12		12						San Nicholaas
Holland				5	4						Oranjestad
Primavera					6						Oranjestad

A.C.= Airconditioned, P.B.= Private bath, W.B.= Without private bath, s= single, d= double, p= person.

FLOW OF TOURISM:

1956 Total Visitors - 3600, who spent 38.000 nights on the island, e.g. 4000 nights in hotels, 3600 nights in pensions, and 30.400 nights in private residences.

Cruise Passengers: 5100 (Those on pleasure cruise).

Other passengers: 3100 (Mostly returning or departing residents from neighbouring countries).

There is a tax exemption law (Nº 194, 1953), which grants a 10 - 11 years tax exemption to new industries, hotels included. Also owners of such new businesses and hotels are exempted of paying duties on the imports of new furniture, furnishings and machinery for their establishments and also for all replacements of such goods during the first 10 years of operation.

TUITION:

All figures as per January 1957.

T Y P E	C A T E G O R Y				P U P I L S			
	PUBLIC	P R I V A T E		T o t a l	PUBLIC	P R I V A T E		T O T A L
	Dutch	Dutch	American		Dutch	Dutch	American	
Kindergarten	6	9	1	16	362	1162	50	1574
Elementary	4	16	1	21	765	5431	263	6459
High ')	4	7	1	12	1366	3713	197	5276
Special Elementary")	1	--	--	1	32	--	--	32
Vocational (Techn.)	1	--	--	1	412	--	--	412
Vocational (Housek.)	--	1	--	1	--	86	--	86
Total	16	33	3	52	2937	10392	510	13839

') Higher tuition is given on 7 of the elementary schools, i.e. there is no separate building for the 7th. - 10th. year of tuition except in the Lago Colony. Therefore the high schools should be considered as part of the same institutions to which belong the elementary schools.

") For backward children.

Thus 24,69% of Aruba's population goes to school, despite the fact that attendance of school is not compulsory here.

HYGIENE:

Tropical diseases are practically absent on this island. Malaria and yellow fever are unknown.

DOCTORS (Medics)

<u>Private and Government:</u>	<u>Employed by the Lago:</u>
Specialists: 8	4
General practice: 21	18

DENTISTS

<u>Private:</u> 8	<u>Working for the Lago:</u> 4
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There are two hospitals; namely the San Pedro in Oranjestad (R.C.), and one in the Lago Concession.

RELIGION:

The majority of the population is Roman Catholic. The balance: Protestants, followers of several creeds. There are also: Israelites, a few Hindoos, Mohammedans and followers of Confucius.

AGRICULTURE:

In Aruba agriculture concentrates mainly on growing sorghum or millet. The local name is "Maishi Rabo", the flour is used generally for making a sort of porridge and also a sort of pancake or "pan bati". Predominant however, is "funchi" another national dish made of imported coarse grain corn-flour.

Another crop abundant on the more arid grounds is "Aloe" of which a cathartic is made.

A 24 acres hydroponix farm is under construction, and slated to go in production by mid 1957.

CATTLE:

Livestock consists mainly of sheep and an abundance of goats, which roam freely over the island. There are about 100 cows and 40 horses.

POST TELEGRAPH AND TELEPHONE:

Aruba has her main post-office in Oranjestad, an auxiliary post-office in San Nicholaas. Lago has a post-office of her own. Cables are taken care of by All America Cables, and radiograms by the Government Radio Service. There are telephone communications with practically all nations on both sides of the Atlantic. Connections can be obtained at relatively short notice (1 - 12 hours, depending on remoteness of country).

BANKS:

The oldest bank of Aruba is the Aruba Bank. The second bank is the Hollandsche Bank Unie. Both have an annex in San Nicholaas. The third bank is the Aruba Commercial Bank, in Oranjestad.

CHAMBER OF COMMERCE:

The local Chamber of Commerce resides in Oranjestad. Subscribing businesses 1956: 586. Number of visiting foreign manufacturers agents 1956: 302.

Telephone: 1566.

ARUBA MERCHANTS ASSOCIATION:

Commerce is further organized in a private organization, bearing the above name, office in Oranjestad, membership 120.

Telephone: 2026.

PRESS:

De Arubaanse Courant (partly Dutch, partly Papiamento) has most readers in Aruba, daily.

The following papers are listed according to numbers of readers in Aruba:

La Prensa: Daily, printed in Curacao, Spanish and Papiamento.

Beurs & Nieuwsberichten: Daily, printed in Curacao, Dutch.

Amigoe di Curacao: Daily (R.C.) printed in Curacao, Dutch.

The Local: Weekly, printed in Aruba, English.

Chuchubi: Daily, advertisement paper, free distribution, local news, Papiamento, published in Aruba.

The Lago Oil & Transport Co., Ltd. publishes:

The Pan Aruban: Saturdays, stencilled, English.

The Aruba Esso News: Illustrated, fortnightly very well printed on art paper, distribution gratis. English and Papiamento. Distribution 9.000, partly abroad.

Aruba has a press association, office in Oranjestad.

Telephone: 1116.

RADIO STATIONS:

Radio Kelkboom: P.J.A.-5, wavelengths: 1435 KC, 209 M.

Voz di Aruba (Voice of Aruba): P.J.A.-10, wavelengths: 655 KC, 457 M.

CLIMATE:

The climate is, for an island under the circumstances of Aruba, relatively very mild. The heat of the sun is cooled off during almost 12 months of the year by the N.E. trade-winds. Rain is scanty. Here are a few figures:

	Max.	Min.	Average
Temperature (Fahrenheit)	92	73	83
Humidity	80	64	73
Rainfall (annually)			17.16"

Sunratio: Over 90%.

Tradewinds blow continuously about 10 - 11 months a year.

Hottest months: Mid August - Mid October.

Coollest: December, January and February.

ETHNOLOGY:

The Aruban of today is a descendant from the original indigenous Indian tribe mixed with Spanish and Dutch blood of the early colonizers. It is a strong race, preponderantly fair coloured, honest, thrifty and laborous, with a special knack for technical work. They number about 36.000. There is a great number of people from all parts of the world here. Asiatics included.

CONSULAR CORPS:

At the end of 1956 the following countries had a Consular representation:

Brazil	-	Honorary Consul
Chile	-	Consul
Colombia	-	Consul
Costa Rica	-	Consul
Cuba	-	Consular Agent
Denmark	-	Vice Consul
Dominican Republic	-	Consul, Honorary Consul, Hon. Vice-Consul
El Salvador	-	Consul
England	-	Consul
Guatemala	-	Consul
Haiti	-	Honorary Consul
Italy	-	Consular Agent
Nicaragua	-	Honorary Consul
Norway	-	Consul
Panama	-	Consul General, Consul, Hon. Vice-Consul
Peru	-	Honorary Consul
Portugal	-	Vice Consul
Spain	-	Honorary Consul
Switzerland	-	Vice Consul
Venezuela	-	Consul General, Consul
United States	-	Consul, Vice Consul

TRADE:

The bulk of imported consumer goods is of U.S. origin. A shift to more European goods is perceptible. Export and import figures of Aruba are given below. It must be stated however, that the export of goods is actually not an export, but an export of goods imported before. They represent goods bought by tourists, ships' crews and goods sent mainly to the Caribbean area and Europe by people who have relatives there.

IMPORT: (1955)

Crude and other petroleum products	-	Fl. 736.991.000
Other products	-	Fl. 62.519.000

EXPORT: (1955)

Refined petroleum products	-	Fl. 811.727.000
Other goods	-	Fl. 5.516.000

CURRENCY:

The local currency is the N.A. Guilder or Florin. Symbol: Fl. or F.
Rate of exchange: Fl.1.88 to the U.S. dollar. Fl.0.57 to the Bolivar.

Edited and released by:

ARUBA TOURIST BUREAU

February, 1957

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