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# COLOMBIA



The  
Treasure  
Land



1933

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Land



1933



CONSULATE GENERAL OF COLOMBIA  
21 WEST STREET    ::    NEW YORK CITY

copla



*Simón Bolívar, Liberator of Colombia  
and of four other  
South American countries.  
(Statue in Independence Park, Bogotá.)*

# C O L O M B I A

## THE TREASURE LAND



**T**O the south and east of the Isthmus of Panamá lies South America—the Continent of the Future.

Nestling under a tropic sun at the threshold of the Panama Canal, in the northwestern corner of South America, is Colombia—the Treasure Land.

On the north and on the west, her shores are washed by the waters of the Atlantic and Pacific oceans, respectively. In this Colombia is unique, for she alone, of the countries of South America, is thus blessed by Nature.

To her east are Venezuela and Brazil, while Ecuador and Peru are her neighbors where the upper Amazon and its giant tributaries flow silently but wide and deep before her southern door.

From the Statue of Liberty, the path due south to the northern coast of Colombia, through the blue waters of the storied Caribbean, is 610 miles shorter than the distance from New York to San Francisco.

Of all the spots where Columbus is known to have set foot, on his four voyages to the New World, Colombia is the only country bearing his name.

Here, while men who sailed with Columbus still lived, the oldest Spanish settlements of South America were founded, which later

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*The Capitol, Bogotá, a masterpiece of architecture.*

became the pivotal point of that part of the Caribbean coastline known today as the Spanish Main.

Here landed the Colonists from Spain, with galleons loaded with Spanish goods.

Here, while these same galleons returned twice yearly to Spanish shores, heavily loaded with cargoes of gold, emeralds and other precious minerals and jewels taken from the rich soil of Colombia, Colonial cities grew and thrived under the covetous eyes of English and French pirates and buccaneers.

With two of her oldest cities having been founded and settled by the Spanish Colonists in 1525 and 1533—Santa Marta and Cartagena—Colombia enters upon the fifth century of her existence—a long time in New World history.

If Colombia is rich in the historical—which frequently savors of the fantastic—she is doubly rich in all that the combined climates of both a tropic and a temperate land may bestow.

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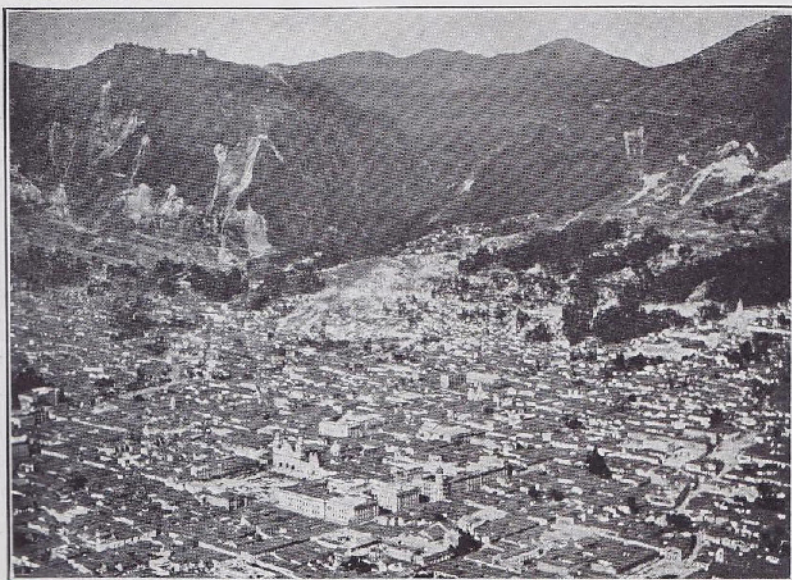
**Position in World Markets**—Colombia ranks first in the world production of mild coffee; is the largest world producer of emeralds; the second world producer of platinum; the largest South American producer of gold; the third largest producer of bananas; and one of the largest prospective oil producers of the world.

**Area**—Colombia has nearly a half million (444,270) square miles of fertile land, where practically all the products of the world can be raised. A similar area would be that of the States of the Atlantic Coast of the United States, from Maine to Florida, with the addition of Ohio and West Virginia. She is the third largest country of South America and is larger than France, Germany, Austria and Belgium together.

**Topography**—The Andean mountain system forms a gigantic wall in South America, running along its western coast from the Caribbean to the Straits of Magellan.

*Bogotá, almost 9,000 feet above sea-level, surrounded by mountains "standing like grim sentinels above the majestic city they guard."*

Courtesy of Senda





*15th Street, Bogotá. On the left, the State House of the Department of Cundinamarca. In the background, the Hotel Granada, one of the best in Colombia.*

These mountains extend fan-like from the southwest corner of Colombia, in three distinct ranges that cross the country from north and northeast to south. The left branch, known as the Western or Chocó Cordillera, runs parallel to and not far from the Pacific Coast. The middle range is known as the Central or Quindío Cordillera, and the right branch is called the Eastern or Sumapaz Cordillera.

Many high, cool and healthful table-lands are found in these mountain ranges, the most densely populated of which are in the Eastern Cordillera. The three Andean mountain ranges cover approximately one-third of Colombia's total area, but in this one-third of her area dwell almost three-fourths of her white population.

Descending from the Eastern Cordillera towards the east and southeast, Colombia's rugged terrain fades into great flat and low plains, drained by such streams as the Caquetá and Vichada which, though tributaries of the mighty Amazon and Orinoco rivers, are themselves gigantic in length and breadth.

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*Plaza de Bolívar, Bogotá, which combines "the old and the new, the quaint and the modern."*

*A wing of the modern La Hortua Hospital, Bogotá.*







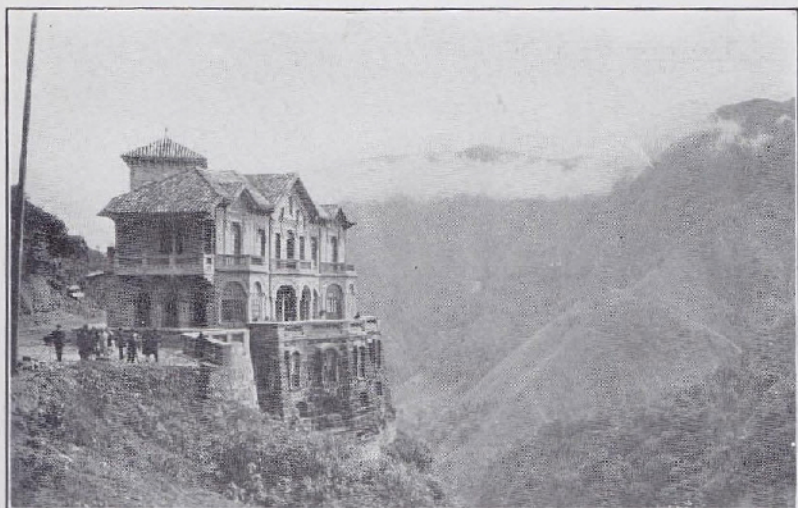
*Avenida de la República (7th Avenue), one of the principal streets of Bogotá.*

**Climate and Seasons**—Topography and location come into strange union in Colombia. Although the country lies in the tropic zone, Colombia enjoys practically every climate in the world. Her variety of climates is attributable to the Equator and the three ranges of Andean Cordilleras.

On the coast and in the valleys of the lowlands, where her great rivers run through dense and heavy growths of jungle forests, the climate is generally hot.

There is a strange exception to this, however, on Colombia's northern coast. During about three months of the year, Cartagena, Barranquilla, Puerto Colombia and Santa Marta enjoy a steady, cooling breeze of the trade winds from the Caribbean.

In these regions are raised bananas, sugar cane, tobacco, pineapples and a wealth of other fruits and vegetables, some of which never reach northern markets. Here brilliant tropical vegetation of every kind vies in color with the plumage and shades of tropic bird and butterfly life.



*Facing the magnificent Tequendama Falls stands this hotel built on the Chibcha Indian style.*

On the mountain slopes, at altitudes ranging from 1,000 to 3,000 feet above sea level, the climate is temperate. Here, among other crops, are found the thousands of plantations that produce Colombia's famous coffees. In the lower reaches of these areas, too, may be seen the orchid, queen of flowers, growing in its native habitat in the tops of trees. From the *Cattleya* species of orchid, native to Colombia, have been developed 75% of the orchid types commercially grown in the United States today.

Higher up, from 3,000 to 10,000 feet above sea level, the climate is one of perpetual spring, with grain, fruit and vegetable crops (barley, potatoes, apples, peaches, etc.) that are common to the temperate zone, raised in abundance.

Climate in Colombia is simply a matter of elevation. From sea level to an altitude of 27,000 feet, one encounters every degree of temperature from that of summer heat to that of perpetual winter.

The sight of her majestic mountains, such as Ruiz, Tolima and those of the Sierra Nevada, reaching from 15,000 to 27,000 feet into the heavens, with their crests eternally wreathed in snow, though

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almost over the Equator, is but another strange paradox of Nature's pranks in this land of contrasts.

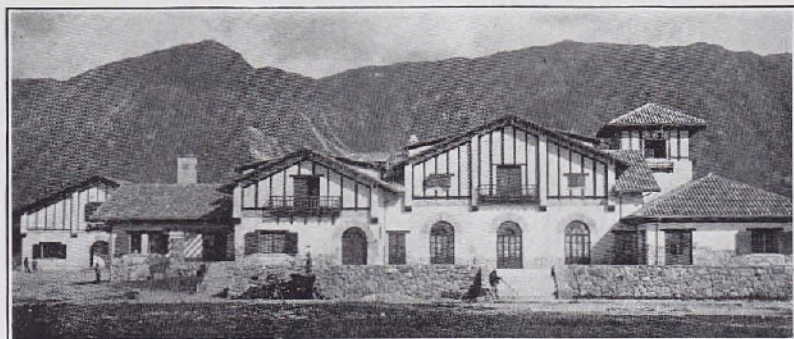
Several of her Departments have all the climates of the world, in small areas. For example, one takes the train at Girardot on the upper Magdalena river at 7 o'clock in the morning, with its average temperature of 95° Fahrenheit, and arrives at 3 o'clock in the afternoon at the immense plateau or Savanna of Bogotá, with its delightful temperature that is perpetually from 50° to 60° F. By airplane the trip from Girardot to Bogotá, accomplished in about 40 minutes, marks even a greater contrast.

Bogotá, located in a climate of perpetual spring, yet only a few hours from tropic regions below the rim of her plateau, enjoys the rare privilege of choosing from 64 different fruits of the tropic and temperate zones that daily come into her municipal market.

Another notable example of Colombia's variety of climates within a small area is the fact that at a few miles from Santa Marta, one of her Caribbean seaports with a hot, tropical climate, is the Sierra Nevada with its glistening peak of eternal snow, resembling a silver-capped tower or a huge skyscraper raised by the hand of Mother Nature.

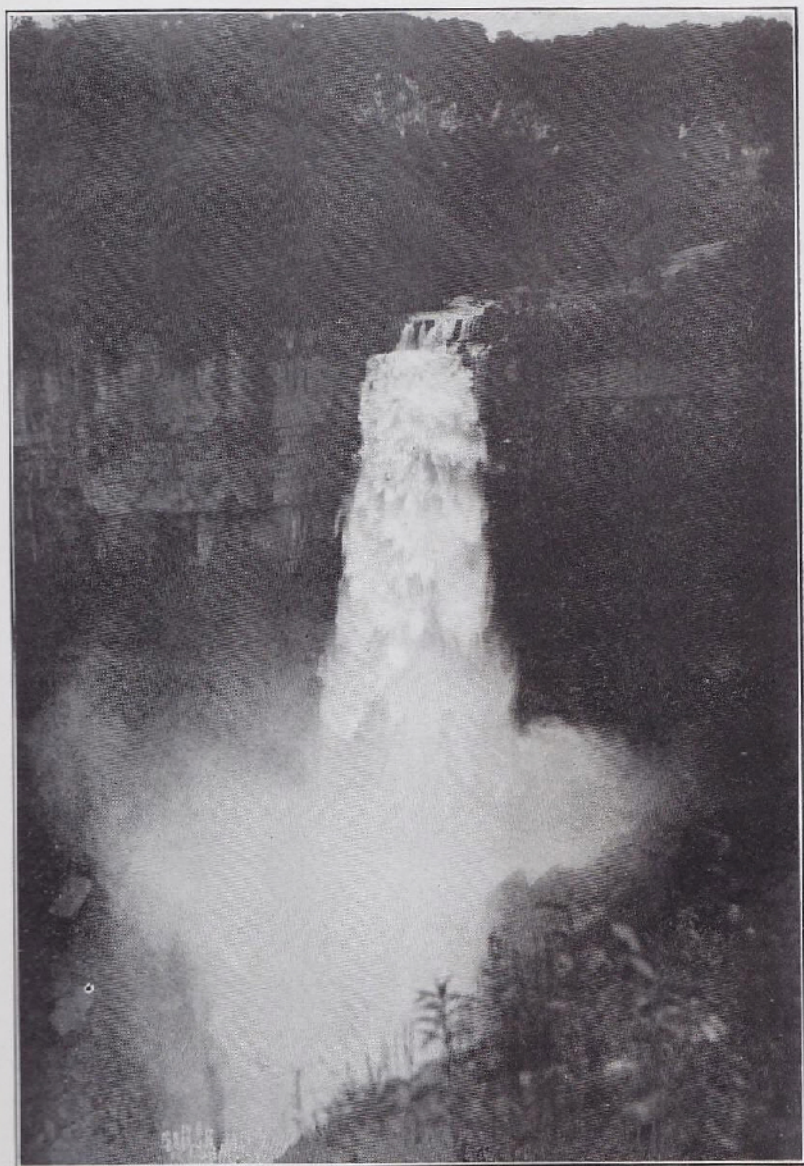
Due to her proximity to the Equator and the fact that she lies within the tropic zone, there are no changes of season in Colombia,

*Country Club, Bogotá, which has one of the finest  
golf courses of Colombia, besides facilities  
for almost every other sport.*

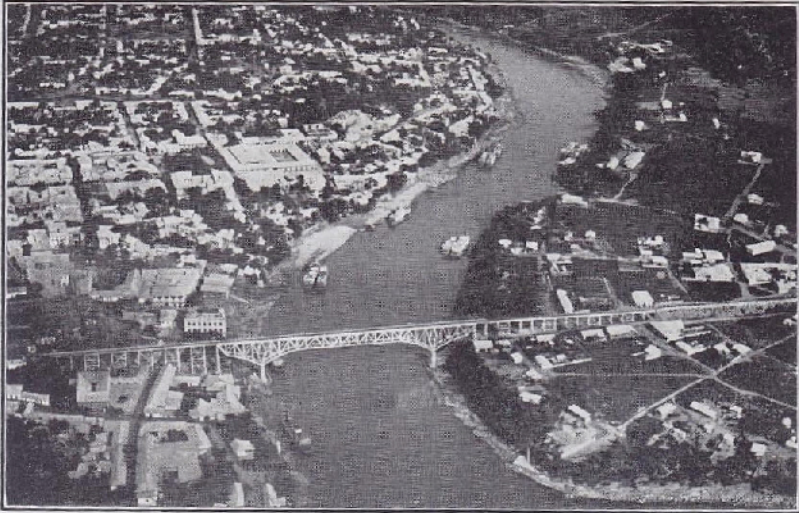


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*Tequendama Falls, near Bogotá, a natural wonder, which according to the mythology of the Chibcha Indians was created by the God Bochica by a stroke of his golden sceptre.*



Courtesy of Scadta  
*Girardot, joined to Flandes by a modern steel bridge  
 crossing the Magdalena River, Colombia's  
 main commercial artery.*

as in the temperate zone, but only two seasons: dry and rainy, the former called "summer" by the natives and the latter "winter."

Change from one season to the other occurs about every three months, but not uniformly throughout the country, as each region is affected by its geographic position, its geologic structure and its vegetation. In some of the northern sections of the country, and in the low, flat plains of the east, the rainy and dry seasons each last about six months.

Generally, the seasons are as follows: dry season, December to February; rainy season, March to May; dry season, June to August; and rainy season, September to November.

**Population**—In round numbers, there are eight million industrious, peaceful Colombians. According to the 1928 census, the population of the country was 7,852,564, of which 35% are White, 5% Negroes, 2% Indians, and 58% are mixtures of these races. The basic racial elements are the Spanish Conquistadores and Indian aborigines.

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The principal resources and bulk of the population are concentrated in the western half of the republic.

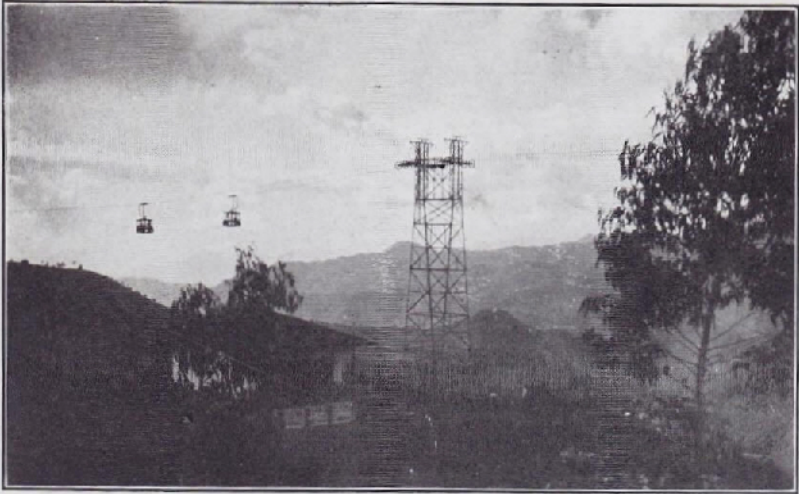
**Language**—Spanish is spoken throughout Colombia, and the purity of the Castillian tongue—a heritage of the Spanish explorers and discoverers—has been remarkably preserved. Generally it is spoken and written correctly. Madrid, the capital of Spain, and Bogotá, the capital of Colombia, are, perhaps the two cities where the pure Castillian language is least corrupted and best spoken.

Many Colombians speak English and French, the study of which is compulsory in the high schools of the country. In many Colombian colleges, the study of Latin likewise is obligatory.

**Education**—Free education, which is not compulsory, is largely maintained by the national government. There are 531,658 pupils in the primary schools.

*Plaza de Berrio in Medellín, one of Colombia's most important commercial and industrial centers.*





*Manizales-Mariquita Cable Way. Steel cables are strung from peak to peak in the Colombian Andes.*

**Religion**—The large majority of Colombians are Roman Catholics.

The National Constitution provides that no one may be molested because of his religious beliefs and all creeds are permitted in Colombia.

**Transportation:**

*Waterways*—Among the rivers that empty into the Caribbean Sea, the most important is the Magdalena; in fact, it is the most important river of the country. It has a length of 1,000 miles and is navigable by 500-ton steamers for a distance of 900 kilometers (514 miles), from Barranquilla to La Dorada. From the last mentioned point to Beltrán, a distance of 115 kilometers, (72 miles), there are many rapids that are not navigable, and between these two points traffic is taken care of by the La Dorada Railway. From Beltrán up to Girardot, a distance of 92 kilometers (57 miles), the river is navigable by steamers up to 120 tons. Navigation from Girardot to Neiva is very difficult.

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The principal tributary of the Magdalena is the Cauca river, which is also partly navigable.

Colombia shares the mighty Amazon with her neighbors to the south: her southern boundary runs along the north bank of this stream for a distance of 75 miles, in the sector known as the Leticia territory.

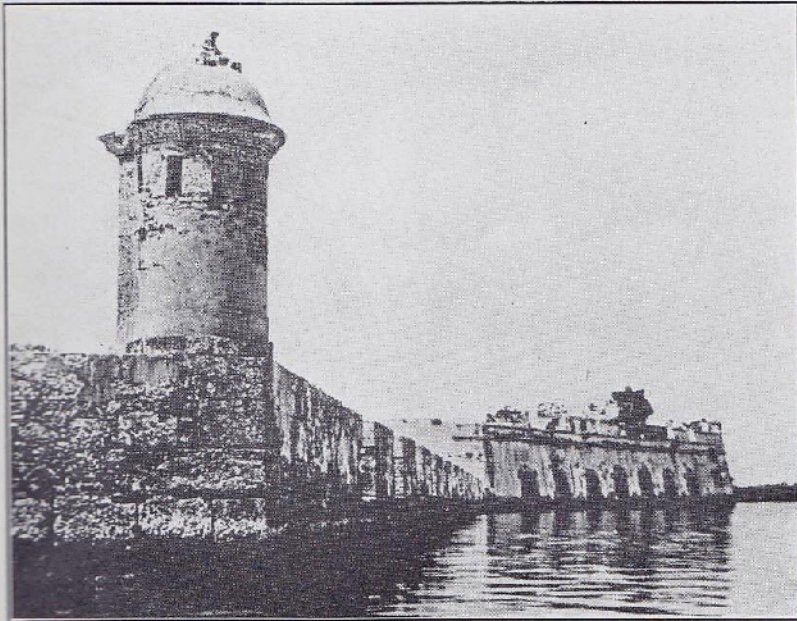
The Atrato river empties into the Gulf of Urabá and is navigable by steamers plying between Cartagena and Quibdó, for a distance of 500 kilometers (310 miles) from its mouth.

The Sinú river is also navigable for a considerable distance.

The principal rivers that flow into the Pacific Ocean are the San Juan and the Patía.

Rivers tributary to the Orinoco are the Meta, the Guaviare, and the Arauca; and to the Amazon, the Putumayo and Caquetá rivers

*"El Pastelillo" Fortress, Cartagena. This city was a stronghold of the Spanish Colonists and its walls and fortifications still stand with their patina of 200 years.*





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*Highway System*—There are 7,000 kilometers (4,550 miles) of automobile highways and 63,500 kilometers (35,450 miles) of other roads in Colombia (in 1933).

*Railways*—Railways in industrial operation (in 1933) total 3,341 kilometers.

*Air Transport*—The "Scadta" (Sociedad Colombo-Alemana de Transportes Aéreos—Colombian-German Air Transport Co.) has had in operation in Colombia, since the year 1919, a complete aviation service for both passengers and mail, operating between the cities of Barranquilla, Girardot, Neiva, Buenaventura, Cartagena, Ciénaga, Puerto Wilches, Puerto Berrio and Bogotá, in Colombian territory; and Cristobal and Guayaquil outside of the country.

The planes of the intercontinental service of the Pan American Airways also touch at Colombian ports and connect with the Scadta line.

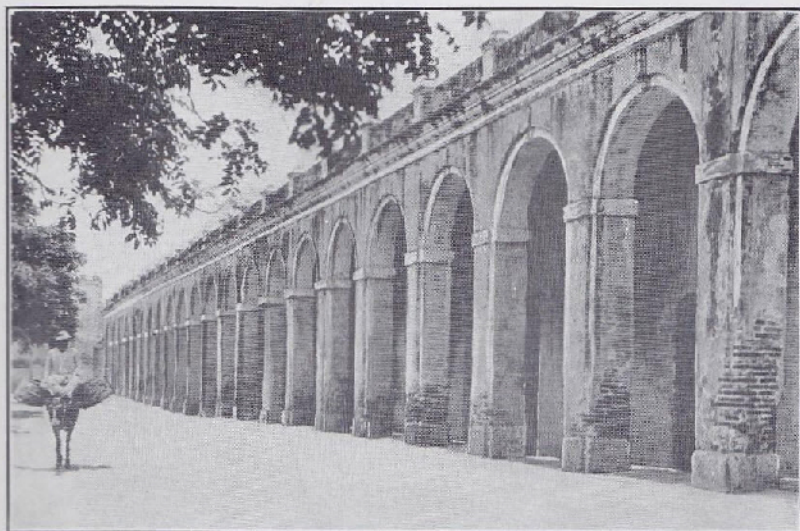
The Urabá-Medellín and Central Airways connect Cristobal with Medellín, via the Gulf of Urabá.

There are also several inter-city aviation lines operating in Colombia.

*Bird's eye view of part of the modern waterfront of  
Cartagena, one of the oldest cities of the  
Western world (founded in 1533).*  
Courtesy of Scadta



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*"Las Bóvedas", Cartagena. This ancient wall, built by the Spanish colonists to withstand attacks of pirates, was honeycombed with prison cells in which many patriots of the War of Independence were confined.*

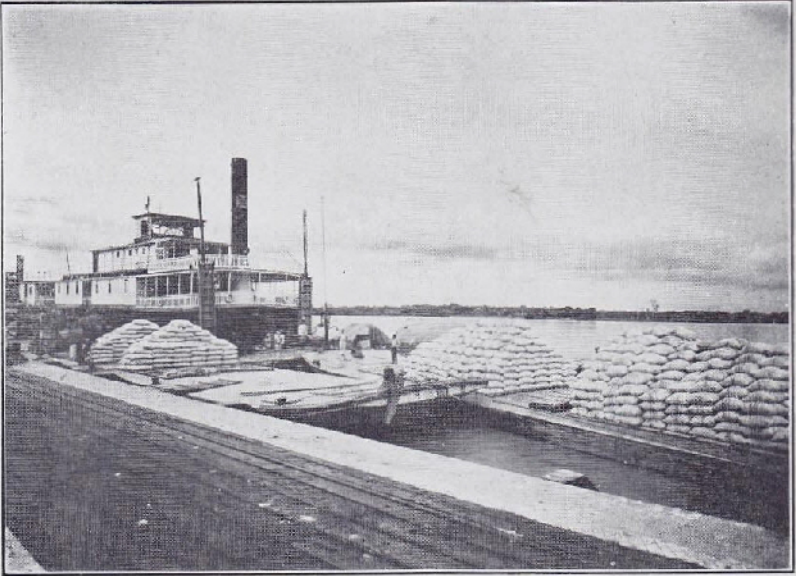
### Communications:

*Postal Service*—Colombia's postal service reaches the most remote regions of the country, including even the smallest villages and hamlets. Due to the rugged topography of the land, mail sometimes takes several days to reach isolated points in the interior; and in this case it is advisable to send correspondence by air mail. There are 987 post offices in Colombia (1933).

*Telegraph Service*—Not only the principal cities and towns but also the smallest villages of Colombia are served by the National Telegraph Lines, which render rapid and efficient service, having been organized on the most modern basis. Rates are quite moderate and the telegraph offices also connect with the cable and radio stations communicating with the world.

There are 22,807 miles of telegraph line in service in Colombia (in 1933).

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*A Magdalena River boat, loading a cargo of Colombian coffee, the finest in the world.*

*Radio Stations*—Wireless communication in Colombia is quite up to date. There are 21 commercial radio stations (1933).

Colombia is also connected with the United States and other countries of the world, by radio telephone service.

*Cables*—Offices of the All America Cables, Inc., are located in the cities of Buenaventura, Cali, Bogotá, Cartagena and Barranquilla; and cables may be sent to and from any other point in Colombia via the National Telegraph Lines. Radiograms through the Radio Corporation of America may also be sent to and from any point in Colombia.

*Telephones*—Every important city and town of Colombia is equipped with a modern telephone system.

There are 318,069 kilometers of telephone line in service in Colombia (in 1933).

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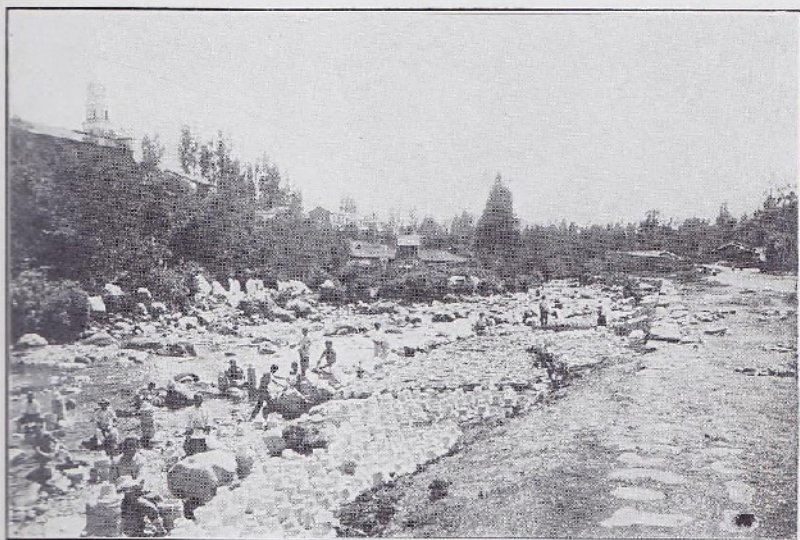
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### History:

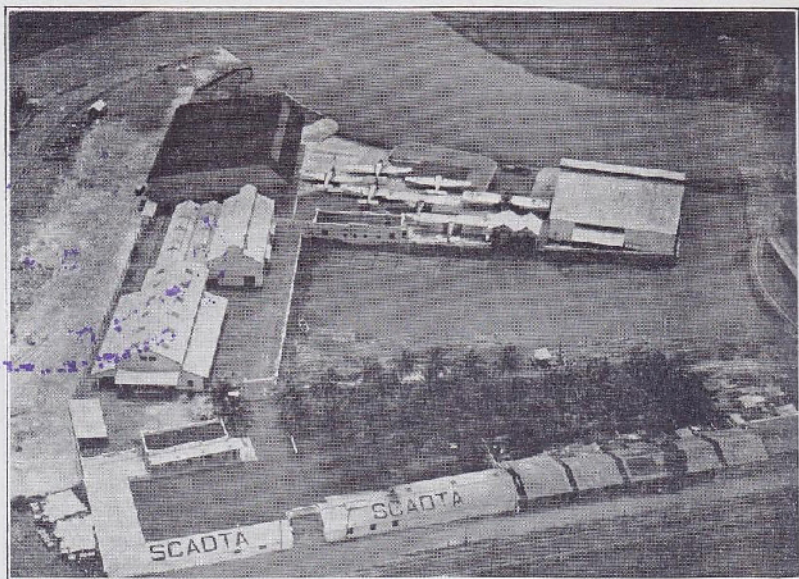
(1) *The Conquest, 1499-1550*—The country, where an Indian civilization existed, was explored and conquered by the Spaniards. Among the Conquistadores the most noted were Gonzalo Jimenez de Quesada, Alonso de Ojeda, Diego de Nicuesa, Jorge Robledo and Pedro de Heredia. The Indians were subdued by the Spaniards, many cities were founded, and the Spanish language and the Christian religion were established, as was also the dominion of Spain. The courage of these valiant Spanish soldiers won for them the admiration of the entire world.

(2) *Colonization, 1550-1810*—During this period Spain was very zealous in the collection of taxes, the monopoly of commerce, the mining of gold and silver, and imposed her will oppressively, injuring the interests of the colonists. All this created much discontent among the people and led to the War of Independence.

*Panama hats (which properly should be called Jipa hats) drying in the sun. The manufacture of Panama hats is a typical Colombian industry.*



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Courtesy of SCADTA

*Barranquilla Airport. Colombia is the pioneer in commercial aviation in the Western Hemisphere, her first commercial aviation company, the "Scadta" having commenced carrying passengers and mail in 1919.*

(3) *War of Independence, 1810-19*—The revolution that resulted in the overthrow of the Spanish Government broke out in Bogotá on the 20th of July, 1810. The people congregated in the principal plaza of the city, the municipal council held an extraordinary session and the Act of Independence was signed. After a long and cruel war, in which the armies of the revolutionists were commanded by the great Liberator, Simón Bolívar and other notable generals, such as Santander, Sucre and Nariño, Spanish dominion ceased with the battle of Boyacá on August 7, 1819.

(4) *The Republic from 1819 to date*—Since winning its independence from Spain, the country passed through a number of civil wars, during the 19th century, but has always been free and independent. With peace and order permanently established since the beginning of the present century, the Republic of Colombia is now firmly and steadily progressing.

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**Government**—Colombia is a genuine republic. The government is firmly established and exercises its functions under authority of Congress. Public opinion is expressed freely through the press of the country.

The daily press is as free as that of the United States of England; and every Colombian feels himself a free citizen of a free country. That is why peace has been made permanent and the political situation is tranquil.

**Conditions and Rights of Aliens**—In the Republic of Colombia, in conformity with the National Constitution, aliens enjoy the same rights as granted Colombians by the laws of the nation of which they are citizens, save special stipulations made in public treaties.

Foreign companies and individuals suffer no special restriction in their business and enjoy the same rights as national companies and Colombian citizens. Aliens may acquire every sort of property in the Republic and engage in every lawful business, exactly the same as nationals.

*Hotel El Prado, Barranquilla, one of the finest on the Atlantic Coast of South America.*



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Courtesy of Scadta

*Bird's eye view of Barranquilla, one of the most progressive cities of Colombia, and the second in population.*

### Industries and Production:

*Agricultural Production*—Colombia's soil is very fertile and is crossed by many rivers that supply it with natural irrigation.

As already stated, Colombia leads the world in the production of mild coffee, and her products command the highest quotations on account of the unquestionably excellent quality of the bean. In 1932, Colombia exported a total of 3,184,328 bags (60 kilograms—135 pounds per bag) of coffee valued at \$42,910,412.00. Of this total, 88.09% was exported to the United States, 10.97% to Europe and 0.94% to other countries.

Coffee is Colombia's principal export product. It is a very important factor in the life of the country in general; in the financial affairs of the country coffee exercises an influence on the foreign exchange situation as it tends to create a balance between imports and exports.

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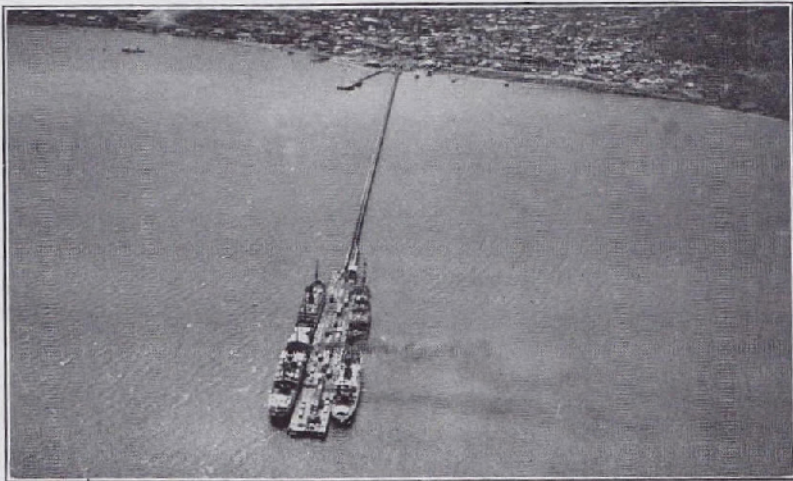
Sugar cane, cotton, corn, wheat, rice, beans and a thousand other agricultural products are cultivated to satisfy the needs of local markets. Tobacco, coconuts and ivory nuts are exported.

Banana exports reached 7,021,000 stems in 1932 valued at \$6,007,273.00. Large scale production for export is confined to the banana zone of Santa Marta.

*Forestry*—In her forests, billions of feet of timber of every kind await the ax of the woodman. Besides timber (cedar, “comino”, mahogany, balsa wood, lignum-vitae, etc.), medicinal barks and roots, balsams and gums, rubber, chicle, ivory nuts, ipecac, sarsaparilla, cinchona, “dive-dive” and tan bark, are all to be found within these great forest lands.

*Cattle*—Cattle raising is one of the most important industries in Colombia. There are about 7,500,000 head of cattle and in the spacious plains of Colombia the largest cattle herd of the world could be gathered. Near Cartagena there is a packing house with daily capacity of 500 head.

*Wharf at Puerto Colombia, on the Atlantic Coast, connected with Barranquilla by a 17-mile railway, and by highway.*





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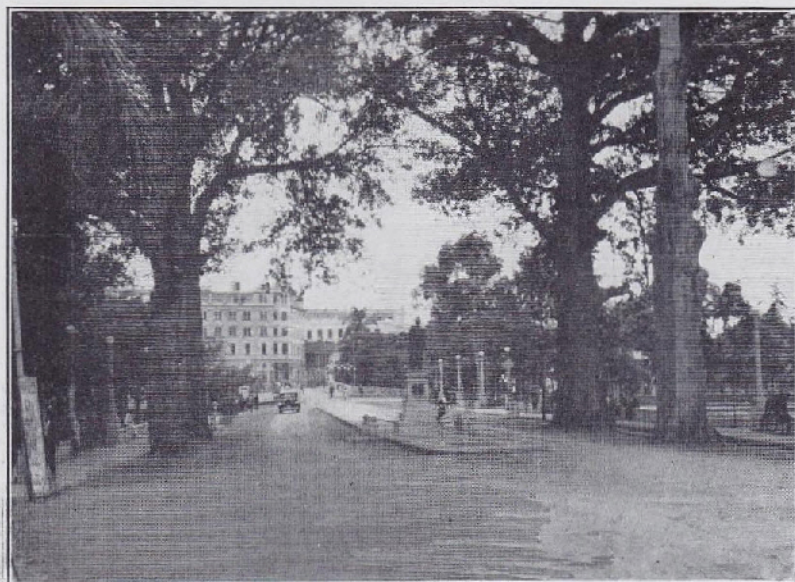
*Minerals*—"El Dorado", that fabulous treasure supposed to be located in some part of South America, has real being in the sub-soil of Colombia. An enormous wealth exists, almost untouched, beneath the surface of the ground, and the doors of that treasure house are opened, not by the wand of fairies as in ancient legend, but by the pick of the miner.

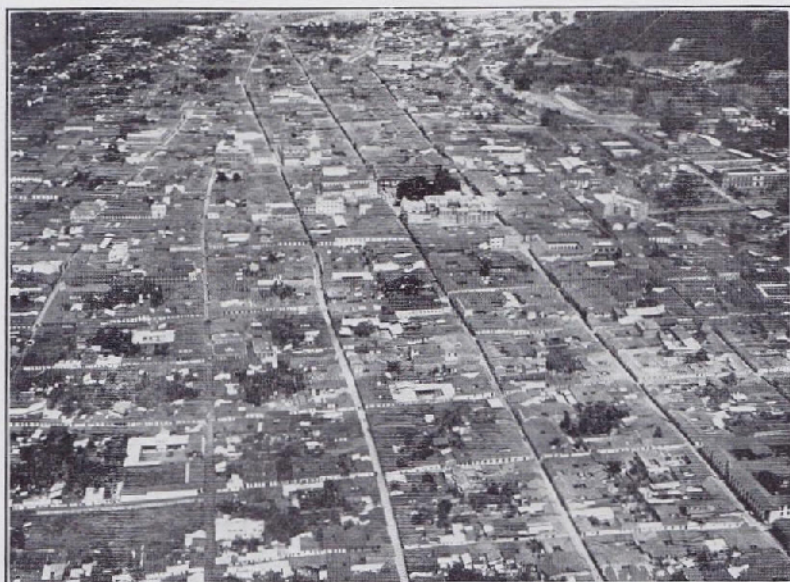
Nearly every mineral of commercial value may be found in Colombia, from coal valued at \$4.00 a ton to emeralds valued at \$1,000,000.00 a pound.

Since the discovery of America, Colombia has been noted for her mineral wealth. It is estimated that the Spanish Conquistadores took from her soil about two million pounds of gold, with a value of about six billions of dollars.

Being the first world producer of emeralds, the second world producer of platinum and the first producer of gold in South America, Colombia also has great deposits of silver, copper, iron, tin, cinnabar

*Bolívar Boulevard, Cali. In the background the Hotel Aljérez Real, a modern establishment, offering all comforts and conveniences.*





Courtesy of Scadta

*Bird's eye view of Cali, a modern and progressive city, connected by railway with Buenaventura on the Pacific Coast.*

(mercury), lead, nickel, asbestos and many other minerals, and, as we have already said, is one of the largest prospective oil fields in the world. Exports of gold in 1932 amounted to \$3,223,828 and of platinum in the same year to \$495,056.

Oil production in 1932 amounted to 16,414,000 barrels; and exports to 15,320,000 barrels with a value of \$16,437,783. A 335-mile pipe line runs from the interior, where Colombia's present oil supply is produced, to the Caribbean, having a transport capacity of 50,000 barrels per diem. A large fleet of tankers plies continuously between the ocean terminal of the pipe line, near Cartagena, and various oil markets of the world.

*Manufacturing*—While not a manufacturing country, Colombia does possess all the elements necessary for a great manufacturing development, such as abundance of raw materials and cheap labor.