

A REVIEW/PREVIEW OF THE TRANSAMAZON

Since I hadn't really gotten to sleep yet, it wasn't hard to roll out of the hammock at 3:30 a.m. Pre-dawn is the one time of day it gets cool in Belém. I was relieved to find that the hammock and the other things I was taking on my trip to the Transamazon road fit easily enough into three small bags. When I collapsed into the hammock an hour earlier, I wasn't sure they would. After a final shower (at times I had taken five a day in that sauna-like atmosphere), I descended the long, narrow stairway to the street, leaving probably for the last time the stuffy room in Belém's former red-light district (now making a comeback) that had been my foster home for several months the previous year. I carried my bags up rua Riachuelo with mixed feelings of sorrow (Brazilian *saudades*) and relief.

The aroma typical of the streets of Belém still lingered in the air. It was quiet, but the street was not abandoned--the fat, ugly wench across the street was still in her doorway at 4 a.m. *Meu deus!* I guess the only way she can make it is to outlast her abundant competition. Besides Condor, the re-knowned riverside emporium of whoredom (also known as Praça do Pecado, Sin Square), and other classier boites, there are droves of streetwalkers on Avenida Presidente Vargas, the main thoroughfare half a block away. Rua Riachuelo was nothing like the spectacle I first saw four years ago, but respectable houses display signs warning "FAMILIA" to warn off unsuspecting male visitors. The coordinated patrolling of the various police forces--Operação Mariposa--could not or would not eliminate the livelihood and pastime of such a large part of Belém's population. There is undoubtedly a lot of money involved, but not enough for many of the girls who have no other recourse. There are so many women "in the life" that it's definitely a buyer's market. Sometimes the streetwalkers who haven't turned a trick by midnight beg passersby for bus fare so they can go home.

At the corner of Presidente Vargas, I bade farewell to the Canto do Uirapuru, the bar from which I had observed so much of this nightly circus with the other foreigners that could always be found there. I left the keys to the apartment with a friend at the Hotel Excelsior Grão Pará, Belém's finest but overpriced hotel, with a note to the friend renting the apartment to please move the rest of my stuff out before he gave up the lease. Letting the apartment pass out of Peace Corps hands was the end of a tradition. If its walls could only talk, they would have a thousand tales of the volunteers and world travellers that had taken advantage of its convenient location and privacy.

I couldn't understand why the bus the Marabá had to leave at the ungodly hour of 4:30 a.m. I had nearly half an hour to wait, but didn't want to sleep. My mouth was dry with thirst, but the three men working in the bar said it would only open at 5 a.m., in spite of the fact that the station was already full of people trying to kill time and possibly thirst. The station was becoming to me a symbol of what makes life in Brazil, especially the north, so frustrating. I had discovered the previous day that this super-modern bus terminal has no public telephones. The gas station across the street was closed and the hotel's phone is only for their guests. *Arggh!* Some of these apparently senseless signs of backwardness do have logical explanations, like the bus which leaves so early in order to reach the Tocantins ferry before sundown, but others make me certain that I can't live in Brazil permanently (which isn't to say that I could stay anywhere else either).

At 4:30:00 a bell rang and the driver stepped on the accelerator. Almost as quickly, I went to sleep. Some time later I awoke briefly to see palms and other tropical trees silhouetted against a pink and orange sunrise. When we stopped for breakfast at 8:30, I was craving orange juice, but settled for Crush, coffee, and bread spread using a wooden paddle with butter from a large unrefrigerated can. I was just getting to sleep again when the girl behind me woke me to say that we had to get out at the posto fiscal. I wondered if she was going to Marabá too (no). While we waited outside the bus and ate Gelar popsicles (mine was murici) it brought as freight from Belém, an inspector sprayed the inside of the bus with an insect bomb. It seems that the government is concerned with the spread of insect-borne diseases.

I woke up for good at Paragominas (Pará + Goiás + Minas), the lunch stop. The churrascaria, with tables and chairs of large log sections and covered by a circular wood-shingle roof, was under construction when I passed through four years ago. Now, I understand, the place will be forgotten, since the new Belém-Brasília will pass twenty kilometers away. Change is rapid and cuts both ways.

I've become very fond of these roadside meals. This was not as complicated as some, but was very good. Churrasco (barbecued beef), rice, beans, a meat and potato dish, spaghetti, tomatoes, sauce, coffee, all for seven cruzeiros (\$1.17) plus one cruzeiro for a cold Pepsi, and served by a pretty mulata.

I wanted pictures of her, the bus, the drivers, a clowning road construction worker like a fat Sammy Davis Jr., etc. But I didn't want to take them. It's chato, and I don't like to do it. The realization of how worth remembering this all was and how pictures couldn't tell the whole story anyway, led me to decide to write down my thoughts and impressions in some detail. I put reminders in a pocket notebook so that I can write it all up coherently when I find time and a place to sit.

Back on the bus, the fat Sammy Davis Jr. gave me three pulp paperbacks of cowboy stories. I started reading one about a murder in Wichita Falls, Texas, and wondered if someday there might be similar stories about places with names like Marabá and Altamira. Sammy--or Samson--had shiny, chrome-like sunglasses, a toothy grin, and a bare beer-belly hanging over his belt. His open dark green shirt was marked with the red and white "M" of Mendes Junior, the mammoth construction company which is building a good part of the Transamazon and paving part of the Belém-Brasília. He wasn't sitting by me, and we never talked--I don't know why he gave me the books.

I soon put the book down just to watch the scenery and ponder it. My vantage point, next to the window behind the driver, was excellent. We roared through the green immensity like a rocket headed for outer space, trailing a billowing cloud of red dust. Occasionally, however, we slowed to a creep climbing steep hills. As the gears and the progress of the bus diminished, so did the ventilation, and I counted the seconds until the top was reached and the rapid descent swept away the heat. Sometimes the road drops so steeply that you can't see it in front of you. When it was first built, the planners didn't know these hills were here, but the builders were in such a hurry that they still followed the original straight-line plan. The new road is also basically straight, but there are huge cuts and fills.

The Belém-Brasília is free, but it takes a heavy if uneven toll in wear and tear and accidents. The dust often brings visibility to near-zero, and there are many slow-moving trucks (some even stopped in the road) to pass. There is no railing on the fills and often parts of them wash away in the heavy rain. The truck drivers (± 80% of the traffic) are often worn out from

the 2000-kilometer trip. The vehicles get worn out too. We passed an overturned truck, and several hundred meters beyond, two wheels that had fallen off and continued on their own. Another truck was straining so hard to make it up a steep hill that its gears gave out and it rolled back and off the road. Sitting in the front of the bus provides a great view, but I'm wary of the danger in case of a crash or sudden stop, and am not comforted by the fact that so many of the trucks and tankers carrying gasoline.

Most of the land beside the old road has been cleared and is now pasture. During the first year or two after clearing it was probably planted with rice or corn for a quick cash return. Some of it shows the wear badly, especially on the slopes. I wonder if it is permanently ruined. That seems to be the question for this whole area. What happens if cleared land is immediately turned into pasture? Can legumes be used to maintain the nitrogen content?

The road is bordered by a large variety of fences. Barbed wire is supported by posts spaced from one to twenty feet apart. In the north, palm stalks are woven between the posts. There are a few American-style split rail fences, some with posts with holes and others with criss-cross supports.

Much of the trip was actually over detours beside the roadbed that is to be paved. Huge earthmoving machines and trucks were at work. One bulldozer perched high on a hill was pushing earth down a slope of at least 45°. The new road has high standards for slopes and curves. With these standards and no dust, driving conditions will be infinitely improved, the accident rate lowered, and travel time cut considerably.

At Gurupi (do Pará), another stop on my 1968 trip, a young woman with three kids sat down next to me. At least she wasn't fat, which is usually my luck. And I was much better off than the volunteer who had one youngster vomit on him as his mother thrust his head out the window, while the other infant deposited on his lap wet on him. It was disturbing to have the little one keep putting her scab-covered hand on my stomach and lap.

At Ligaçao, not far from the Maranhão border, we left the Belém-Brasília to head southwest toward Marabá over the "Estrada da Castanha", the "Brazil Nut Highway". Since practically no one lives on the first part of the road, we developed considerable speed. The road is straight, but the terrain is rolling, so the effect is like a roller coaster ride. When the second driver kept asking me the time, I discovered the reason for our haste--the ferry across the Tocantins would not operate after 6 p.m., and we were behind schedule. The detours along the Belém-Brasília had slowed us down. I began to think about spending the night beside the river and was glad I had brought a hammock and mosquito net.

About 20 kilometers from the Belém-Brasília we passed the sawmill belonging to CAPAZ, which I think stands for "Companhia Agropastoril Agua Azul." It and the fazenda 10 kilometers farther on are run by a former Presbyterian missionary named Davis. At various points, small logging roads penetrate the forest like tunnels. I wondered if the Davis's had found a way to transport the wood since I talked to them last year in Belém, and if they also have another group of American students working with them this summer. Maybe I can take advantage of their invitation to stop by on the return trip.

The middle section of the road is densely settled. The road is so new that it does not appear on the Esso-Quatro Rodas map, but Vila Rondon is already a sizeable town, and there are innumerable houses and vilas along the road. The settlement seems to be completely spontaneous. This could be an interesting contrast with the INCRA settlement project on the Transamazon road.

As the sun was setting, we shot past about a dozen Indian men. If they hadn't been carrying bundles of bows and arrows, they might easily be taken for Brazilians--the only distinguishing marks besides their vaguely different physical features were a few headbands and a feather stuck through an ear lobe. The bows and arrows that distinguish them from Brazilians have become a means of integration, since they are made to sell to tourists, and the money gained is used to buy white men's food or weapons. These are probably the Gavião Indians that killed some road construction workers several years ago. Now their lands are being taken over by whites and they are being forced into his economic system.

The sun was long gone by the time we arrived at the river's edge. Fortunately, there was a bus waiting on the other side to take us the remaining 12 kilometers into Marabá. We crowded into two small boats and finally cast off after a long hassle with the pilot over who would pay the one cruzeiro fare, the bus company or the passengers. The moon hadn't come up yet. It was very dark except for flashes of lightning, one of which struck very near us. The waves lapped at the gunwales, which were practically underwater anyway from the overloading. It seemed that we were crossing an ocean rather than a river, and I wondered what direction to swim in if we went under.

In Marabá I went straight to the Hilda Palace Hotel, "dirigido por sua proprietária para melhor servir sua clientela." It is the classiest (albeit no palace) hotel in town and a bit expensive for my budget, but since I had missed a night's sleep and didn't want to search for other lodging I thought it was worth returning to. After a bath and supper I hit the sack.

The first place I went the next morning was the police station. Now that I had my identification and letters of introduction, I wasn't afraid to walk past the soldiers with tommy guns and rifles guarding the garrison of Brazilian green berets. Since a colleague of mine from Harvard had been arrested here in April, I planned a protective reaction strike. I didn't arrive with a beard and knapsack, but I wanted them to know right away that I am not a Cuban guerrilla, however subversive I may be, and hoped that in some subtle way I could thumb my nose at them. I waited a short while outside the cells where my friend had spent such a miserable night. I remembered the experience of another young American who was arrested in Belém and spent several nights in jail while trying to explain in Spanish that he was a Peace Corps Volunteer from Ecuador. Conclusion: Don't ever speak Spanish to the police in Brazil no matter how well you speak it or how poorly you speak Portuguese. Speak English or Portuguese or nothing at all, because speaking Spanish will convince them that you are an undercover agent from Havana.

I told the delegado that another American student had been arrested in Marabá several months before (suggesting that their foolish and illegal caper was widely known), and that in order to avoid any such problems (i.e., I didn't think they could tell the difference between an American sociologist and Che Guevara), I wanted to identify myself. I showed him my letters from Rio and Belém explaining that I am a graduate student doing research for a thesis on colonization on the Transamazon and gave him my calling card. I left with an invitation to see him if there was anything he could do for me.

I then took my credentials to the local office of INCRA, the Instituto Nacional de Colonização e Reforma Agrária or National Land Reform and Settlement Institute, from which I needed information and logistical support. The administrator wasn't at the office, so I presented my letter from their Rio office to an assistant, who turned out to be the Adventist pastor who was in charge of public relations in Altamira last year. During the time I was in his office,

he must have talked to fifteen other people. I think I'll have to plan my research so as not to expect much attention from INCRA people. I hoped he remembered that I sent him a thank you note and some 8x10 prints after my visit to Altamira.

Cleto introduced me to Moacir and asked him to take me along to Km. 97, where incoming colonos (settlers) are received. Since Moacir was leaving at 11, I went back to the hotel to do some writing. We finally left at 1:30.

Four people in the front seat of a pick-up in the midday heat is really two too many, but at least the company was pleasant. The person on my left was a young female social worker named Jaci, who had taken a course on cooperativism in the States. Like it or not, talking about the States often seems to be the best way to begin an acquaintance. From there we moved on to topics more related to my research. As we headed east, now on the Transamazon itself, I felt that the conversation was leading to real communication, for once.

Km. 97, only twenty kilometers from the Araguaia River, is a post where incoming colonos are received, selected, lodged, and sent on. Each of the six lodges (labelled consecutively MA - I - N - C - R - A) has sixteen rooms in a row and separate sets of latrines and wash stands. Each room is outfitted with hammock hooks and has a small kitchen in back (i.e. a porch with a wood stove). There are also buildings for administration, lodging for INCRA personnel, a medical post, etc. Until construction of the administration housing is completed, the INCRA people stay across the road in what was a construction camp, required by law to be left intact for INCRA's use.

As soon as we arrived, Jaci had to hear the case of a couple from Pernambuco that was about to break up, although they weren't yet married. The girl already had a child by another man and was pregnant by her present companion, who had persuaded her to come to the Transamazon because single men can't get land from INCRA. She decided to stay with him and get married in Altamira, perhaps in one of the mass marriages now being performed there.

The colonos at the post at that time consisted of fifteen families of pernambucanos, including 105 people. They were flown from Recife to Belém and brought by bus to Marabá. They must have been one of the last contingents sent there by INCRA, as I had just been told in Recife that INCRA was no longer providing transportation due to the number of spontaneous arrivals. I imagine that this self-screening separates the real pioneers from the free-loaders and tourists. I hope there is employment for arrivals that INCRA does not accept as colonos.

Jaci, who is a paulista, explained some of the problems of working with Northeasterners. She finds herself in roles like marriage counselor and justice of the peace dealing with problems like the one mentioned. She explained that nordestinos, at least in the working class, don't have rigid ideas about marriage and family. A man may live with a woman who already has children by other men, and they often raise even more; there are few abandoned children in the Northeast. Language differences reflect these cultural differences and sometimes confuse the university-educated social workers. "Casar na fogueira" means a common-law marriage and "casar na vela" means a church marriage. Other expressions are more obscure. Jaci couldn't understand the astonishment when she saw nothing wrong with the accusation that one woman "faz sabão" with another. Colloquially the expression means having lesbian relations rather than making soap. On the other hand, they couldn't understand her surprise upon hearing that a pregnant woman "descansou". In her slang it meant she died, while in theirs it meant she gave birth.

When I found out that the colonos would be leaving for Altamira that day or the next, I decided to go with them. So I stayed there when Jaci left.

As the sun went down I took a bath in the brook, a quick one to avoid any passing women (my bathing suit was still in Marabá). While waiting for supper we were entertained by a monkey who lights matches and puts out cigarettes. After the jabá we compared notes on the relative merits of various Brazilian cities and of boites in Belém.

Moacir then invited me to go along to the Araguaia to look for meat, which was not available in the immediate area. On the way we stopped to look at the alligators in a swampy area beside the road. The beam from my mini-flashlight was enough to make their eyes glow bright. Even this jacaré had been used for meat in the camp.

Pôrto Jarbas Passarinho, where the Transamazon crosses the Araguaia River (or vice versa is more like it), is several kilometers upstream from Araguatins, the lights of which we could see. When we arrived, the ferry was bringing over a bus--the only thing that passes here after 6 p.m. The passengers had a few minutes to get drinks and fried fish in the palm-thatch stands built down the slope of the bank during the dry season and removed in high water. We didn't find the meat man, but sent an order on the boat to Araguatins, and went to the Hotel Altamira for cold beer and fried fish. The beer was cold, but the fish never arrived. While waiting for the fisherman we talked with the various local people, including one old woman from Tocantinópolis who was spinning cotton on a hand spindle.

I tried to sleep in a hammock in the lodgings for colonos, but never really did because of the cold and the noise. I had neither cover nor extra clothes and it was chillier than Marabá, perhaps because of the undisturbed forest all around. The colonos expected to leave early and were up long before dawn with radios blaring and kids crying.

We finally left at about eight in two trucks with people and one with baggage. The trucks for people, the famed pau d'arara, which has transported millions of nordestino migrants, were covered with tarps and outfitted with hard wooden benches. Like the device of the same name used by the police, they are made to torture. If the road is rough--and this part of the Transamazon is already full of washboard and holes--they shake you to pieces. My bouncing belly felt like it was being ripped from the bones. I felt that if I didn't keep my mouth shut, my teeth would crack from the impact. The wood frame supporting the tarp cracked in several places. A woman in front of me who was very pregnant could not take the blows from the seat and tried standing up. She was crying with pain. Then the woman behind me fainted. While her husband tried to revive her, I took her baby, who promptly wet in my lap. At this point the truck stopped and the two women were sent to the hospital in Marabá in a passing Volkswagen.

We waited in Marabá for several hours while the trucks got gas. I talked with Cleto more and went to meet his wife. I bought some tomatoes for the trip (I'm now remembered for eating tomatoes for breakfast). Then I rode all over town in the back of a pickup while the social worker accompanying the colonos looked for ice and styrofoam chests to put it in. Already things seemed terribly disorganized.

We finally made it to the edge of town and the ferry across the Itacaiúnas, only to discover that the barge was on the other side with a bus that had run out of fuel. After fuel was obtained and the crossing completed, the bus got stuck in the mud trying to disembark on our side. Then we watched a truck of bricks come out of nowhere and cut in front of us. When it reached the other side, the ferry stopped for lunch.

At this point it was already 12:30 and everyone was hungry and upset. We were supposed to eat lunch at the agrovila an hour away on the other side. There were dozens of babies and young children who needed milk and were even crying with hunger. Nevertheless, we only got across an hour later after the ferry crew--employees of the construction company--had their lunch. I began to have some rather negative thoughts about how Brazil was ever going to get anywhere at this rate.

The pau d'arara I had come in went on without me, so I not very reluctantly got into the back of the Ford pickup carrying the social worker and the food. That way I also provided company for Lúcio, an INCRA bureaucrat going to see Altamira, who was afraid of falling out unnoticed. Although at one bump we bounced awfully high, it wasn't a bad seat (a tarp over the food supplies), and provided an excellent if backwards view of the passing countryside. Fortunately for the colonos, this part of the road has had very little traffic, and the ride is therefore much smoother.

Marabá's first agrovila is an impressive sight. The administrative buildings are located on a hill beside the road, and three rows of houses complete a rectangle below. A towering castanheira stands by the entrance, marked by immense log sections. The buildings on the hilltop include an administration building, a health post, school, restaurant, warehouse, and store. Other buildings are under construction.

The colonos had to wait another half hour until the food was unpacked and sandwiches and milk prepared. They hadn't eaten a meal for almost 24 hours. Consequently, the sandwiches and guaraná weren't enough, especially since there were fewer of each than there were people. The colonos who complained were told that the instructions were to provide a lanche (snack), not a meal, and that INCRA could only help them, not provide everything. Where they were supposed to find their own food in the middle of the jungle, I don't know. Besides the lack of simple planning (the restaurant operator would have prepared lunch beforehand if notified in advance), what was most annoying was the attitude of some of the INCRA people that the colonos were being a nuisance. This, of course, from those who rode in relative comfort in the pickup and sat down to a hearty lunch while the colonos waited for their bread and corned beef. The attitude that colonos are only half human may lead to serious problems for INCRA and even for my working with them.

I wanted to avoid getting involved, but that was impossible. I helped distribute guaraná to the crowd outside the kitchen. Instead of giving one of the few remaining bottles to a colono who had already taken four (and four sandwiches) for what I thought was a small family, I gave it to someone else. When he complained, I said that he'd already taken four, and there were larger families that had received none. Later, he and another colono did not want to continue the trip until they had eaten. Some INCRA people wanted them to sign papers quitting the program, while they only wanted to stay behind until they got a meal. They were persuaded to go on, with a soldier along, since it was decided that sending them away would cause bad press for INCRA. The one I didn't give the extra guaraná to insisted on riding with his whole family in the cabin of the truck. Even though he had some right to complain, even I was pretty fed up with him, as he was very selfish with no desire to cooperate or sacrifice. I doubted that he had worked in agriculture and that he would have come at all if INCRA had not flown him from Recife. The whole situation was tense, and it was far from over.

More than three hundred families have been settled along the road north of Marabá. Most of them have built their own houses, of palm thatch, poles, or daubed mud. Clearing is well underway.

The terrain is quite hilly, which requires considerable cutting and filling in building the road. The low areas are often flooded because the fill serves as a dam. Many of the hollows have açai palms with their slender trunks which curve gracefully upward for as much as 70 feet and are topped by delicate fronds. The majestic castanheira, source of the famous Brazil nut, is found on higher land and often stands free where other trees are cleared and it is left. The trunk is strong, tall, and straight. Once in a while we passed a middle-sized tree completely covered with yellow flowers and practically no leaves. The red road, green forest, and blue sky-- these are the colors of the Transamazon.

Most of the natural sounds were covered up by the noise of the motor and of the wheels against the gravel. One that I could hear above this was a loud bird call that sounds like an off-key wolf whistle. When we stopped we could hear various chirping insects. At dusk I thought I heard frogs croaking busily in the distance, but was told that it was large monkeys that were probably at least 10 kilometers away. In spite of these occasional sounds, the overall impression is of silence.

As the novelty of the scenery diminished, I drifted off to sleep. Although Lúcio thought he was suffering, the back of the pickup was probably the best place to be--almost like a leito bus. After finding a reasonable posture among the boxes and bags, I used my hammock as a pillow and pulled part of the tarp over me as protection from the wind.

I woke up when we passed the lights of the construction camp at Rio Repartimento. This marked the end of the section constructed by Paulista (?) and the beginning of that constructed by Mendes Junior. After passing this city in the middle of the jungle, I saw the splendor of the stars where there is no pollution and no glare of city lights. The number of stars you can see on a clear night in New York is multiplied by ten.

I awoke again when we reached a site where construction was continuing at night. We stopped to let the giant machines pass. To the left was a steep drop, and to the right a bank scored with the great claw marks of the machines. Above that, the towering trees reaching for the stars. Then the roar of the machines grew louder and two of the giant earth movers sped past, monsters of the night with wheels higher than a man and blinding fire in their eyes. I pity the Indian who sees this for the first time.

Later, the trucks in the lead stopped at a small camp because the babies needed milk. The social worker was surprised; she thought the colonos wanted to move on. That had been true when we were stopped for no good reason, but this was different. Of course, she never tried to find out from the mothers how the children were or what they wanted to do.

By now I was having a hard time staying around either the colonos or the INCRA people. I was quite angry at the incompetence and selfishness of the latter; for them it was the colonos who were causing all the trouble and they were the ones who were suffering. When the colonos complained that two of the benches were broken, Célia commented that next they would want benches of Bahian rosewood. Gad!

On the other hand, I couldn't stay around the colonos either. They thought I was an INCRA man and were probably jealous of my relative comfort. Of course I was very sympathetic, but I couldn't tell them what I thought of INCRA, and didn't want to tell them that pioneers have to suffer. I was afraid that if I opened my mouth, some pretty nasty comments would come out.

Since the drivers were tired, we stopped at the Rio Tueré to sleep. I stayed in the back of the pickup and slept soundly. Fortunately, my dreams took me far away from that spot. I was tired, but what I needed more than physical rest was release from the psychological tension.

We went on to the Jacaré Pequeno construction camp for breakfast. A while later we passed the Jacaré Grande and the Anapu River. The "bridge" over the latter consisted of a steel barge secured at each end to earth causeways. Normally the bridges are made of hardwood timber with board retaining walls at 45° angles on each end. The retaining walls are anchored by steel cables.

After reaching an area of long, steep hills with outcroppings of rock, we reached the flatter land close to the Xingu. The road was also better, having been covered with crushed stone. Eventually the INCRA land markers and the outermost settlement appeared. Finally, the Xingu came into sight. While we waited for the ferry, I took a bath under the ramp of a new ferry not yet in use. The sand stirred up in the clear green water glittered in the sunlight.

Altamira was still an hour away. My shirt, blue again after I washed the mud and dust from it in the Xingu, dried rapidly in the noonday sun, which was also making my skin very red.

Near Altamira, the inaugural monument for the Transamazon was under construction, and between it and the city, the road was being resurfaced--para o presidente ver. At the top of a hill, the Xingu reappeared, this time with Altamira beside it. The entry of our caravan attracted considerable attention. I felt like we were a circus parade or an army. The town is twice as big now as when I saw it a year ago. There are new buildings everywhere. One of these is the INCRA headquarters, which was being built last year on the far fringes of the town. Now the whole area is built up.

The heads of the colono families stayed at INCRA headquarters to receive their first salaries while the women and children went ahead to a receiving post for lunch. Since the guest house in town was full, the male nurse and Lúcio went out there to see about accommodations. The arraial, named after João Pézinho (a pioneer who started building a road toward the west long ago), is located 20 kilometers out on the Transamazon. It wasn't there last year.

Lúcio was worried because one of the babies that came from Marabá was nearly dead. His concern, however, was that he and the nurse would be considered negligent, since they knew nothing of the kid's state. He insisted that it had happened between Altamira and the arraial. So far as I could tell, however, no one had ever tried to find out how the colonos and their kids were doing on the trip.

After lunch in Altamira, I went to look for Dona Antônia, in whose pensão I stayed last year. As in Marabá, where I went was more a matter of custom than price. The difference was that I had paid Dona Antônia only ten cruzeiros for four days, for the use of two hammock hooks and little else. I left my things there and went down to the river for a bath. The water in front of the town is shallow and dirty. The Xingu is already showing signs of Altamira's growing population and lack of sanitation.

Since I would have had to sleep in Dona Antônia's hall, and wanted to go to bed (i.e., hammock) early and sleep late, I decided to go to a hotel where I would have privacy, a shower, a table to work at, etc. The Hotel Altamira, on the edge of town beyond the INCRA office, is one of the last to fill, and I got the last room. Without waiting for dinner, I went straight to bed.

Since I was still recuperating (I hadn't realized how exhausted I was) and since my sunburn made walking outside painful, I spent the following morning in the hotel writing about the trip. I met some people there from the Ministry of Education and went to lunch with them. As well as training teachers and distributing uniforms, they were training kids to march for the Independence Day parade September 7. They spent most of the hour arguing about whether the band members from different schools should get new uniforms so that they would all be the same.

After lunch I went to INCRA and talked to a sociologist named Gilka, a catarinense. We were just getting into things when I was told that some trucks were leaving for Itaituba, so I grabbed my bags and went.

The first agrovila I visited last year is now the agrópolis Brasil Novo. In every direction, trees are coming down and houses are going up. We stopped near the huge tent-like warehouse holding this year's bumper crop of rice to buy some provisions for the trip at COBAL's mini-supermarket in a trailer. There are now half a dozen other agrovilas, with names like Nova Esperança and Medicilândia. There are also lots of houses along the road. The crops which surround them and the flowers which often decorate them provide a general air of prosperity. The crops I could see were mainly sugar cane, bananas, and mandioca. The land is deep red. People are euphoric about the first harvest, but don't seem to be very concerned with its fertility several years from now.

As the sun got lower in the sky, driving became more difficult; we were heading directly toward it. Of course--this is the 1970's version of the Marcha para Oeste.

We stopped at the Queiroz Galvão camp at Km. 195 and had supper. The place was crawling with crickets. The meat was mutum ("turkey of the jungle") and paca, supplied by a professional hunter who is paid a salary plus two cruzeiros per kilo of meat. It was quite tasty. I'd still like to try alligator and monkey.

The trip leader, a retired army officer and musician from Rio, decided that we should get a few hours rest before proceeding. I stretched my hammock between the truck and the pickup and used the mosquito net as a cover. Sleeping under the stars--and what stars they were. Again my dreams took me far away. At 1 a.m. we were up and off.

The road beyond that point was extremely dangerous, at least at night. Where new culverts had been installed recently, the trenches had been filled but not packed, so that there were sharp dips in these places, with no warning. Once after passing a sign for a detour we found ourselves on a bridge, but that was only unnerving rather than dangerous (they forgot to take down the sign after finishing the bridge). What was really dangerous were the unfinished culverts with no warning but a branch in the road, often after the detour and just before the open trench. One branch was only a palm frond which was practically invisible. When the pickup later caught up with us to say that another truck had overturned, I knew immediately where it was.

We drove back and spent the next several hours unloading the six tons of boards, righting the truck, pulling it out with a steel cable borrowed from a nearby construction camp, and reloading the boards. Then we had to straighten out the steering bar, which was badly bent. At dawn we heard an approaching rainshower drumming against the large leaves of the forest for about 15 minutes before it arrived, and for about that long afterwards, as the water continued to drip through the various layers of vegetation.

The rain had wet the surface of the road in such a way as to make it extremely slippery. We managed to get through the various detours, but on the approach to the Eliseu Resende Bridge, the truck I was in slid off the road and came to rest against a bank. We gathered wood to put under the wheels, and getting out was relatively easy.

Finally, nearly seven hours after the first accident, the trip leader showed up. He must have gone awfully far before thinking that something was amiss with the trucks following him. He tried to blame the drivers for going too slow!! He said they could never get help if they didn't keep up with him, although it seems elementary that the car that provides aid should go last. But a bureaucrat can't admit a mistake; someone else must be at fault. I later discovered some other very interesting reasons for this bureaucrat's behavior.

We'd only been on the road another half hour, still behind the pickup, when we went off the road again. We were climbing a hill at about 30 km. per hour when the slide toward the left started. If the driver had been used to snow and ice, he might have pulled out of it, but since he wasn't familiar with slippery conditions, we went over the edge of a six-foot embankment. As the driver asked for Jesus to help him, we came to rest on our side, held by a stump which barely kept us from rolling over. It wasn't until I realized that my camera had fallen out of the bag and crashed against the door some four feet below that I got shook.

Fortunately the other trucks were right there. I got in the one that had already tipped over once for the rest of the trip. Farther along, when I saw the precipices we could have fallen off, many with water at the bottom, I was thankful that our accident happened in a place where no one got hurt. At the same time, I was pretty anxious about the steep hills and embankments we were encountering. Previous accidents didn't make another accident less likely, but seemed rather to reflect the conditions of the road and the drivers that made one more probable.

Sure enough, in less than two hours we were off the road again, and this was really a close call. It happened on a bridge over a deep river. The bridge was a temporary one constructed of large logs covered with small logs, palm thatch, and dirt. We were too far to the right, and the back wheel slipped off. If the spare tire under the back of the truck hadn't caught on the dirt, we would have tumbled about 10 feet into the deep water. I almost climbed over the driver trying to get out before something gave way.

It looked like we were going to have to unload all the lumber again and carry it off the bridge to reload it later. Even then, we thought it would take a large tractor to pull the truck off, and all the big machines were behind us with no way to pass in front. The drivers of the trucks that arrived and were impatient to pass thought that the small tractor being used in constructing the new bridge could pull us out even without unloading the lumber. I had seen a tractor that size spinning its wheels trying to pull a jeep out of the mud, and thought it entirely possible that the truck once it budged would fall into the river and pull the tractor with it.

Their gamble worked, with a little help from the extra logs I put over another hole in front of the rear wheels. We were off again. As the road dried, memory of the accidents faded, and anxiety grew to reach Itaituba before falling asleep, the driver took the hills with increasing speed. It got to be like another super roller coaster ride, the main difference between this and the real thing being that there were no rails to hold us on track.

By then I was getting hungry and realized that I had left my food in the overturned truck. I inquired about food at the construction camp 112 km. from Itaituba, and found that there was an INCRA survey camp twenty kilometers ahead. The camp is beside a river which rushes through a boulder-strewn hollow in a picturesque but rather un-Amazonian setting. After a refreshing bath, we had a lunch of rice, beans, spaghetti, and jungle pig, served on a board table under a palm thatch roof.

We passed the road to Santarém on the right, where the first car made it through from São Paulo a couple of weeks ago. Instead of continuing south from this intersection, the road to Cuiabá turns off to the left an hour or so toward Itaituba. This change in the original plan distorts considerably the southern cross that the two Transamazon roads are supposed to trace across the heart of Brazil.

The camps of INCRA, DNER, and the construction firm came into sight at 3:30, almost twenty-four hours after our departure from Altamira. Hopefully, the return trip will only take half that time to cover the 300-plus miles.

INCRA's Posto 4 is built on a bluff over the Tapajós opposite Itaituba, the rubber and gold town more than two kilometers away over the clear green water. The view is nothing less than splendid, and for me it compensated for the inconvenience of being so far from the town. The height also means relative freedom from mosquitoes. For INCRA, of course, the site is on the same side of the river as the settlement project.

I presented my credentials to Dr. Geraldo, the tiny but energetic administrator, and did a better job of explaining myself than in previous similar situations. We got into a discussion of Indian policy, even though the subject is a delicate one I preferred to avoid. Geraldo says that some people want to keep the Indians separated from Brazilian society. He, on the other hand, feels that Indians are fellow human beings to whom we should make available the benefits of civilization, although they should not be forced. If given the chance, they will be attracted naturally, because (cf. "fellow human beings") Indians only think about eating and sleeping. Brazilians need to study some anthropology.

Geraldo then took me to see the lodgings for colonos in transit to their plots. The buildings are nicer than those near Marabá, and even have running water. A visiting Swede had criticized them severely, which provoked a very un-Brazilian explosion in Geraldo, but I didn't have to stretch the truth when I told him I thought they were quite adequate and even pretty.

I then stayed to chat with some of the families there, most of which were in the process of being transferred to new lots from ones considered inapt for agriculture, primarily because of being too hilly and prone to erosion. Unfortunately, some of the families had already built houses and cleared land, but they are probably better off with the transfer.

Arrangements were made for me to stay in the lodgings of the INCRA functionaries. I had a cot in a room with three other people. The dozen or so men who stayed there (the younger ones have a república in Itaituba) have a cooperative system for meals, which are prepared by two very inventive local girls. They don't have much to work with, especially with regards to meat and vegetables, but nevertheless turned out some very tasty meals with eggs, canned meat, local fish, etc. After supper I collapsed on the cot and slept soundly in spite of the light, bugs, and conversation. I might have kept the others from sleeping well, because every time I moved the cot made a horrible squeaking racket.

On Saturday morning an agricultural technician from Rio Grande do Sul took me along to see the clearing and check on the progress of the colonos. Dirceu, who is 21, rode to Belém in the back of a dump truck in order to get a job with INCRA. He sees it as a "trampolim," i.e. a short-term job that will enable him to get a better position later. At the moment he is filling three positions: agricultural technician, land clearing, and planning.

First we went to a chain-saw post at Km. 33. INCRA purchased several hundred Danarm chain saws in England. Dirceu says that they aren't very good. He is trying to calculate exactly how much it costs INCRA to clear a hectare of land. They clear four hectares (200 m. x 200 m.) for each colono plus whatever he wants to pay for. It will cost about 100 cruzeiros per hectare. Arrangements are also being made for the colonos to borrow chain saws to use themselves.

Next we went to visit colonos to find out what progress they were making so that INCRA would know whether to pay their salary. They must work in order to receive. It was mostly a formality, but it was an excellent opportunity for me to find out what the colonos were doing.

One black colono was clearing his land by himself with an axe, and wasn't interested in a chain saw. "Cabra macho!" remarked Dirceu. The first step in

clearing is to brocar, which means cleaning away the underbrush and vines. Then the large trees are cut, except for species such as castanheira and some hardwoods. When a chain saw is being used, it is wise to begin away from the road and work toward it so that the saw does not have to be hauled back over the fallen logs.

On the plot of another family, there is a small waterfall with a cave behind it. A small boy and girl, both naked, were taking baths in the sparkling, sunlit cascade. It made me wonder whether this is a green hell or a Garden of Eden.

We found several colonos at another house where farinha was being made. Toasting this manioc flour is a real social event. The mandioca is first soaked in water to soften it. Then (I think) it is pressed to remove the poisonous prussic acid. These people were using their bare hands to break the tubers into pieces small enough to pass through a sieve made of a perforated flattened tin can. The coarse meal is dried and toasted on a large (1 m. x 2 m.) flat pan over a wood fire. This requires constant stirring and mixing, at which the various people present take turns. The resulting farinha is the staple food of the Amazon valley.

Most of the colonos in Itaituba are from the Northeast. They are more humble than the Altamira settlers, many of which are southerners who have money and expect to be treated well. None of them yet have houses built by INCRA, like the ones in Altamira. When they first arrive, the family stays in INCRA lodgings while the men--often working together--build palm thatch huts called tapiri as temporary housing. INCRA is now beginning to build four-room wooden houses on the Altamira pattern which will be paid for over a period of twenty years. Some of the colonos have such good houses already that I wonder if they will want the new ones they have to pay for.

That afternoon the head of the transportation sector took me around the various installations on the east bank, primarily because he wanted me to take pictures of him. In contrast to Dirceu, who is a pretty decent and likeable guy, Alfredo is a real puxa saco jerk. Before each photo, he carefully arranged his hair, which is too short to get messed. He took along the three-year-old son of Geraldo, whose wife was in Manaus, and told him to tell his father that Alfredo is the only dirver he feels safe with. If I didn't think I needed his help getting a ride back to Altamira, I would have told him I'd seen enough.

After a couple of hours of writing on Sunday morning, I crossed over to Itaituba with some of the men. The town only has about three thousand inhabitants. One of the most prominent buildings besides the church, which is run by American priests, is the Foundation for Aid to the Garimpeiros, the gold panners. This is the region from which large quantities of gold, so much of it contraband, are channeled through Santarém.

Our destination was Itaituba's famous sulfur spring. In the center of a small square beside the river is a well from which warm sulfur water bubbles up. I'm told it is the result of oil exploration--they hit water instead of oil, at a depth of 300 meters. The water is piped to a spout at the river bank, where the temperature and volume of the water are just right for a very pleasant warm bath. With all the dust, scratches, bug bites, and sunburn of the last few days, the bath was therapeutic indeed. It would have prepared me for an excellent siesta after lunch back at the lodgings, except that the swarms of flies kept interrupting my snoozing.

Sunday evening I was tired of writing and decided to chat, but soon tired of that, for I ended up just listening to Paulo talk. Fortunately, or not, I won his liking at the supper stop on the trip from Altamira. He told me not to mind the food because we were at the end of the world. I replied no, it's the beginning, which really impressed him. Further, when one of the workers offered

me a piece of paca from his plate, I took it in my fingers and ate it. I like paca and am a slob anyway, but Paulo thought I was making a noble gesture. He kept talking to me, in spite of my lack of response, for several reasons. One is that he is a serious musician, and wants me to send him some orchestra scores from the States. Another is that his son is a hippie or something, and he sees in me what his son might have been. (What he doesn't know.) Finally, I think he is so eager to impress everyone because of frustration with his color. On his father's side he is the descendant of a slave who married the bastard son of a slave master, and he feels he has been prevented from being a conductor because of his color, which is probably true. His experience counterpoints nicely the Brazilian government propaganda film which claims that everyone from the simple triangle to the grand piano has his place and function in the symphony of Brazilian life. The triangle shouldn't complain that it doesn't have the range of notes of the piano, and a black shouldn't complain that he can't be conductor. Paulo doesn't usually complain out loud, but he apparently wants to show everyone that he is worth something in spite of his color. Most white Brazilians wouldn't accept this explanation, because according to them there is no racism in Brazil.

Paulo also illustrated dramatically that one kind of consciousness is not necessarily linked to another. He read to us a piece by Victor Hugo about man and woman, explaining how the first is strong, intelligent, active, etc. and the latter noble, sacrificing, etc. A poetic statement that would provide fascinating material for an anthropologist and ignite flames of fury in a woman's libber. It will be a long time before Brazil figures out what sexism is.

To my relief, Dr. Geraldo (all INCRA's administrators are called "Doctor") came back from the road with a very interesting problem. He had received instructions the previous day that the left-hand (north) side of the road is to be left unsettled as a reserve for the Brazilian Institute of Forest Defense--or is it Development? The problem is that some 80 families have already been settled there. Most of them have built houses and some have cleared as much as 12 hectares (30 acres) of forest--by hand with axes. I'm very happy to see that the government is doing something about conservation, but in this case I'm on the side of the colonos who want to stay. Moving them to new and distant plots on the south side destroys INCRA's claim that the colonos are now landowners instead of hired hands. In this case INCRA would be no better than the fazendeiro who turns his cattle loose in his worker's plantings. Beside the extreme ineptitude and injustice of such a move, it is irrational. Colonization is costly enough and the colonos isolated enough without doubling the distance between them and Itaituba. Land along the road is at a premium. Any reserve near the road will be invaded, if not by farmers, at least by hunters. There are millions of acres of more remote and more secure land for parks and forest reserves. How this problem is solved will be crucial in my judgment of Brazil's efforts in the Amazon. I hope for the sake of my research as well as the colonization that an intelligent solution is found. If the colonos are thrown off their land I think I will find it extremely difficult to maintain a workable relationship with INCRA. (I later found out that the colonos already settled on the north side will be permitted to stay.)

On Monday my main concern was getting back to Altamira, as I had less than a week left on the Transamazon. I had hoped to return with the trucks that were on their way with fifty families of new colonos. When it became clear that they wouldn't leave before Tuesday, I decided to pay the Cr\$158 for the 11 a.m. flight to Altamira via Santarém. The VASP plane was an ancient DC-3, but I felt safer in it than on the road. I got the last of the twenty seats and relaxed for a couple of hours as we flew down the Tapajós (i.e., north) past

Fordlândia and Belterra to Santarém, then over interminable jungle to Altamira. From my high vantage point I could see the numerous feeder roads branching off from the Transamazon like roots penetrating the soil. The trip back to Altamira took about one tenth the time of the trip from there to Itaituba. I had solved the time problem, although I wasn't sure what I would do for money.

At the airport I met Jorge Pankov, the big man in INCRA who gave me a ride to the agrovila last year. He was on his way to Belém, where he spends most of his time now. A man of his intelligence and ability makes up for a lot of INCRA's deficiencies. He must understand better than the rest what is really happening, although one of his strong points is that he admits they don't know whether the colonization will really work.

The people I wanted to see at the INCRA office weren't in, and the others seemed unwilling to give information to a stranger, so I spent most of the afternoon writing. I did have a chance to chat with some of the pernambucanos who had come from Marabá. I explained that I was not working for INCRA, although it supports my work, and commiserated about the trip and the attitude of the INCRA personnel. They were encountering all sorts of other problems in Altamira, like the fact that one month's salary (Cr\$206) isn't really enough to buy all the equipment necessary to get started. If the father of nine bought hammocks for his family to sleep in and nothing else, it would use up all his money.

I missed Gilka when she returned from the field because my watch was still set for Itaituba time (one hour less). I then set out to find a place to eat an inexpensive supper, having used most of my remaining cash for air fare. It took a while to find a place that looked both economical and decent, but the search was fascinating. The dirt streets are full of holes, as are many of the mud walls of the poor people's houses. The houses are generally built one against the other in a continuous row. At dusk their inhabitants come out to sit and stand in small groups while the near-naked children run to and fro. Many are on their way to or from the Xingu where they bathe away the day's sweat and dust. The more aggressive shopkeepers stay open into the evening trying to get a foothold in the backbiting competition. After the last glow of the sunset had faded, I found the Sul Goiano, a restaurant offering a surtido (a one-plate meal) for six cruzeiros. With two slices of fried meat, rice, beans, spaghetti, a fried egg, and a salad of tomato, green pepper, and cabbage, it was more than enough. I discovered that the owner of the restaurant had been the commander of the "Boatel", the floating hotel on the Araguaia, for three years, and that we have a number of mutual acquaintances.

On Tuesday morning I found Gilka and rode with her to the first agrovila, which was being begun when I saw it more than a year ago. It is now being made into the first agrópolis, an urban center to support about twenty agrovilas of sixty families each. Gilka had to leave, but left me with João Pézinho, the pioneer who brought a group of settlers from Piauí eighteen years ago, and started building "the first Transamazon" by hand. He now works for INCRA ("What function does he have?"--"Everything.") and has become a figure of at least local fame, apparently well deserved. I was pleased to see that INCRA had taken him in, even naming the arraial after him, rather than ignoring or overriding his previous work.

I tagged along while he went from place to place attending to problems of preparing for the Independence Day parade, feeder road construction, etc. After watching the kids practice marching, we went out on one of the feeder roads, which run ten kilometers perpendicular to the Transamazon at intervals of five kilometers. The company which built this section of the road now has a contract to build 300 kilometers of feeder roads and 25 agrovilas. Since the secondary roads are little more than bulldozer tracks, I doubt they will be very passable in the rainy season, but they are very important for the colonos, and at least the harvest is in the dry season.

The crop I saw most of, although this is partly a function of timing, was sugar cane. Slips were brought from Pernambuco and São Paulo, and the plantings seem to be doing quite well. A mill is being constructed. The present crop will be used for seed. INCRA was afraid that the colonos wouldn't be able to plant as much as they brought and bulldozed a large area near the brick factory. The extra land wasn't needed, but it is too bad that at least some of it wasn't planted so that the fertility of bulldozed land could be tested. This large open area, crossed by rows of piled up logs and stumps, is the same that was virgin forest to the edge of the road last year when I saw the first shipment of chain saws being tried out here.

Later we visited the motel, which at least at present is used for putting up visiting dignitaries like the president of INCRA--or of the Republic. It presents a rather anomalous sense of luxury, although this is achieved largely through the use of local materials and workmanship. The panelling, the furniture, and the decorations are made of local woods cut and finished in the nearby sawmill. The rustic furniture in the bar is made from log sections. An artist has been at work carving talhas and furniture. Local products of cast aluminum and iron are on display. There is a large cage in the patio to display local birds. In addition to these touches of local color, the motel is distinguished by air conditioners, modern plumbing, upholstery and other conveniences not usually found outside the large cities.

The agrovila which consisted of several new houses for colonos last year is now taking on the appearance of a city--the first agrópolis. A much larger area has been cleared. The center of the agrovila now has administration buildings, a school, etc. There is a large elevated water tank. The small sawmill then housed under a palm thatch roof is now a large plant with sophisticated machines. To one side, blocks of houses are being built for administrators, técnicos, bureaucrats, workers, etc. A real company town. Some of the INCRA people are looking forward to living there. I wonder what it will be like.

At the house of the construction supervisor, who seemed to be running a tight ship, I met two English doctors from the Instituto Evandro Chagas in Belém who are doing research on leishmaniasis, a jungle disease which causes open sores that take months to heal. I rode back to Altamira with them and the public relations man from INCRA, and had lunch with them (the doctors). One of the interesting things I learned is that flies don't like the color blue, which was borne out by a comparison of the number of flies on the tablecloths of various colors. As we enjoyed our Brahma and churrasco, I also learned about the construction of the road during the rainy season, which the doctors had seen first hand. The workers were real heroes, sometimes working in mud up to their chests, all for a pitiful salary.

After lunch I had a chance to look over the book with the plans for Project Altamira I. It would be a very valuable document for my work, but was difficult to find even in Rio and Belém. I therefore tried to microfilm the most important parts of it in my hotel room. I had to open the windows, which are right next to the front door, in order to let light in. That also made me nervous that someone might see what I was doing and become suspicious. I had to be somewhat secretive in order to avoid suspicion, but of course being discovered in those circumstances would make the suspicion much worse. This sort of dilemma pops up from time to time in my research. I think I could defend myself if confronted directly with an accusation, but a more serious problem is lack of cooperation from people who suspect me but don't say anything.

After lunch I went with Gilka to the third agrovila, at Km. 70, to look up the gaúchos I had met when they first arrived last year. I wanted to deliver the color prints of the pictures I had taken of them. The agrovila is named Jorge Bueno da Silva after a colono who was killed by a tree he was felling. This sort of accident is certain to happen again, which is not to say that the jungle is any more dangerous than city streets. Unfortunately, INCRA is in too much of a hurry to train its people properly and be much concerned with safety, though it may be learning from experiences such as this.

The colono I had known best and photographed most is a young gaúcho who got married the day before he left for Altamira. Three months later, his wife came. Five months later, the baby came, on April first. Since that didn't look good, the registration was made for May first. Ahem. The little girl, with white skin, blond hair, and blue eyes, is about as atypical of the colono population as her parents. Cereneu had studied agricultural technology and his wife was also educated. He arrived in Altamira wearing Lee jeans and a tie-died shirt. Why did he come? He says it's because there is a future here.

Unfortunately, the men I wanted to see were in Altamira. So, I delivered the pictures to the wives, whom I had not met before, and drank ximarrão with them. At least in this respect, these gaúchos are not about to become caboclos. Of course, the continued use of mate is not purely cultural; the women say they get headaches if they don't drink it every day. But they are also trying to preserve other traditions, having even proposed the formation of a center of gaúcho traditions.

One of the women had come recently with her husband, paying their own way, and bought the rights to a lot from another colono for Cr\$3,500. They had gotten impatient trying to get a lot directly from INCRA. I don't understand how this works legally, since the colono's contract with INCRA prohibits selling or renting the lot for five years after obtaining the title.

The woman's son, about age five, was a poignant example of a gaúcho out of his element--he was lassoing imaginary cows with a hammock rope and counting imaginary piglets in a play pig pen.

Not only do the gaúchos have a distinctive cultural background, but they also have the most closely knit contingent of any state. Many of them belonged to a colonization cooperative formed in Tenente Portel. They maintain connections with the home town, in spite of the enormous distance. At the time there were two trucks from Tenente Portel in Altamira selling stoves.

Cereneu's sister-in-law came to the agrovila and works in the pharmacy. The money she makes is helpful, especially because Cereneu works his plot alone and was only able to harvest one hundred sacks of rice instead of the four hundred expected. Because he doesn't go hungry, and (perhaps more importantly) because of his life style, his family is seen by most colonos as rich. He is different in that he made a flower bed in the front yard (he has yet to find flowers to plant there) and a decorative table out of odd shapes of jungle wood. His baby sleeps under a mosquito net in a metal and nylon net crib. Nordestinos apparently see such decoration and health measures as luxury or ostentatious display. From their point of view it often is luxury, for some of them are desperate. After six months, they receive no more money from INCRA. They are required to deliver their production to COBAL, which delays payment for as much as three months. Consequently, they have nothing to eat but whatever game they can hunt and tender palm leaves which they boil. Then they come begging to fellow colonos like Cereneu, who in theory are equal but who in fact are better off.

I rode back to Altamira with Maristella, a colleague and close friend of Jacy's. I will need opportunities like this to talk and set up good entrosamento with the INCRA people, to gain their confidence.

Back in Altamira, I went with the son of the hotel owner to visit some American and English missionaries. Cácio has studied English and speaks it quite well. He practices it with Keith and Paula, the protestant missionaries, and an American called Billzinho who works and lives with them in one of the town's old two-storey houses. Bill was very happy to have some contact with a real live American after a year and a half in the interior. The fact that he lives with English-speakers probably makes it harder on him since it keeps him from learning Portuguese well and making Brazilian friends.

Afterwards I tried to track down one of the gaúchos whose picture I had taken. I didn't know his name other than Baixinho (Shorty), but the picture was worth more than his name. Nicknames reflecting geographical origin or physical characteristics are quite common where people from different places are thrust together. Some of those I knew were Pernambuco, Macapá, Gauchinho, Baiano, and Seu Caracol (though not to his face, for a hunchback). I traced Baixinho from a bar in Altamira, where he went after giving up his lot, to a nightclub in the zona. Thus, midnight was actually an ideal time to look for him. Not only did I want to keep my word on delivering the picture and find out what happens to colonos who quit, but I also wanted to find out what is happening in Altamira's famed red-light district.

Actually, the lights in the boite where Baixinho worked are blue, appropriate to the establishment's name--Danúbio. It is the same place pictured in Life magazine about a year ago, with some of the girls posed out front in their finery, which they don't usually bother with. Various U.S. magazines have reported that the Transamazon prostitutes, which are indeed abundant, are preferably blonde and buxomy. That, as so much other reporting on the region, seems to be based on hearsay rather than first-hand experience. Even superficial investigation will show that the girls tend to be fat, flat, and black, and closer examination will show that the blondes aren't real. I don't subscribe to Time's specifications as ideal, but it would take a formidable consumption of Cerpas or Cubas to make the spectacle very inviting. Inside the building you can see things like mini-skirts well above the crotch, and outside you can sometimes see a lot more. When I found out that Baixinho had gone to Itaituba, I took a look around the Caitetu ("jungle pig;" and I wonder if there's not an additional meaning based on the verb cair) and some other boites, where things weren't much different. I imagine that two things circulate through these places at high rates--money and disease.

Since I had missed Dr. Amaury, who arrived that night with a group of pau d'araras returning from Itaituba to Marabá, I got up very early to be sure to catch him before he left. Wednesday was the ideal day for me to go to Marabá. If I was lucky I could ride in the pickup with the doctor (a real one) and learn about health problems on the Transamazon, a field he had been in charge of for INCRA. The doctor didn't take me, claiming that he had other business to tend to along the way, but arranged for me to go in the cabin of one of the trucks.

One item a traveller in the Amazon area should always have handy is soap. While we waited for the ferry at the Xingu crossing, I took a very refreshing bath and swim, using the soap I carry with my camera equipment. In spite of some oil slick downstream from the ferry (the new one was in operation), the water is much clearer and cleaner at Belo Monte than Altamira. I enjoyed the water and the scenery tremendously and tried not to think about what else might be in the water, like piranha, sting rays, or the little fish that lodges itself firmly in any available human orifice (yes, indeed) with backwards pointing spines--beasties that must have come out of Pandora's box.

We stopped for lunch at an INCRA survey camp. Our trip leader, who was so obviously carioca I didn't have to ask him (bermuda shorts with "Take me back" printed all over, and aquela conversa), was trying to arrange for colonos to eat there on their way from Marabá to Altamira. I hope it can be worked out. I later learned that his next trip to Altamira with colonos took two days, so such arrangements were very important.

The work of the survey teams is probably the most heroic within INCRA. The men live far out on the road and penetrate for miles into the trackless jungle, carrying all their equipment and supplies on their backs. They don't go where it's easiest, but where the map requires. It's not a life for the timid, the weak, or for the simple. Some of the men have trophies like a jaguar claw hung around the neck. Others probably have souvenirs like recurring malaria.

This seemed to be the day for animals. First, there were the alligator and arara skins at the topography camp. Then I found a jaboti (gopher tortoise), which I thought might have been another species called cagado; this would have been more appropriate to the occasion on which it was found. Later several large arara parrots flew over, squawking. We saw a kingfisher and several other water birds. We almost ran over a chartreuse and black snake about two meters long (NB: This was only the second large live snake I've seen in all my travels in the interior of Brazil). There were also some interesting insects like swarming yellow butterflies, the solitary and mysterious morpho with its large iridescent blue wings, and a huge beetle that came crashing into the cabin like a stone.

The rhythm of work on the road is so rapid that much had happened in the week since I passed through the area going west. The camp where we stopped for breakfast had completely disappeared. At a construction camp, one worker was complaining about not being able to sleep; his work shift is from 6 p.m. to 6 a.m. The area of the steepest hills was torn up by the huge machines. The bare earth was red, pink, orange, yellow, purple. Some of the deep cuts, with this coloring, made me feel like I was in a miniature, man-made Grand Canyon. Were these man-made gashes wounds inflicted on the earth? Is the earth helpless, or is it fighting back? Can these vast forms and fields of color be seen as art? If one doesn't think in terms of violence to the environment, they can be seen as environmental sculpture which dwarfs other purely esthetic attempts both in dimensions and in visual interest.

Smaller but equally interesting "sculptures" are found in the burned-out stumps along the road. Odd as it may sound, the charred remains of the forest kings are truly intriguing to contemplate. One has been preserved outside the INCRA headquarters in Altamira. It is probably seen primarily as something of a regional artifact, although others may think of it as a trophy or a funeral marker. Someone should make a photographic album of other interesting stumps along the road or in less accessible areas. Sometimes reaching heights of twenty feet, the shapes bring to mind dancers, the cathedral in Brasília, embracing couples, or figures in mourning, or else they are just fascinating in themselves. They stand like monuments to the (pick one) construction or destruction of the Transamazon.

The original bee-line swath that was cleared through the forest is now growing up again with various species of bushes and small trees, which in contrast to the surrounding vegetation are often found in relatively pure stands. While the clearing and the small initial road go straight over all hills, the new road sometimes goes around or takes a less direct approach. It will be interesting to see what happens to the cleared areas that are left to regrow. Can the rain forest reestablish itself?

It's remarkable how well the trunks and stumps have been disposed of. Where they remain, you can see that even giant trees were felled by axe. Many are hollow. Where stumps have been pulled out, you can see how shallow the root systems of these towering organisms are. Since the subsoil of the jungle is worthless, the highly superficial root systems immediately absorb nutrients provided by the rapidly decaying organic matter deposited on the very shallow topsoil. The luxuriant plant growth does not indicate that the soil is fertile. It merely supports a tenuous but very efficient ecosystem which rapidly recycles nutrients back to the plants.

Another ecological effect of the road construction itself (most effects are of course from settlement) is the damming effect it has on the streams that drain the valleys and hollows. The drainage pipes are not usually placed at the lowest point, perhaps because it's easier to build them above the water and mud. Consequently, a pond or puddle forms on the upper side of the fill. The trees that are left under water then die. Many of the pools have fish and the larger ones have alligators (jacaré). Some are clear, others are clogged with algae. They are the water supply for many colonos who live along the road. In the dry season, the backed up water and the lack of water down the hollow may have significant ecological consequences.

The driver pointed out an abandoned hut beside the road where a colono's wife on the way to Altamira had given birth while lying on the fireplace. I suspect that one of the next trips will produce at least one death, but hopefully not as many as the 39 who died when one of INCRA's boats burned.

Since I was low on cash, I went to the Hotel Gloria in Marabá instead of returning to the Hilda Palace. Never again. I've grown somewhat accustomed to inadequate bathroom facilities in the interior, but there's no excuse for the raunch of this installation. I nearly vomited in the cracked and filthy washbowl. It wasn't easy to tell the shower stalls from the toilets, and judging from the smell, some users don't discriminate. The water from the showers drains directly into the street, which may be slightly more tolerable in the rainy season. The whole scene is absolutely revolting. At least there is always running water, the lack of which sometimes makes Hilda's cleaner bathroom even less bearable than this one.

Thursday was September 7, Brazil's Independence Day, which this year marks 150 years since the Portuguese prince in Brazil declared independence from the mother country. Since Brazil is pushing patriotism now, there was a super-celebration all over the country. The occasion provided an excellent opportunity for sociological observation as well as some participation.

I started out by reading the special edition of Marabá's weekly newspaper. The copious advertising wishing the country happy birthday indicated what the important local businesses are, although I think it gave a misleading impression of what government agencies are important there. The Ministry of Education was consistently mentioned along with the Transamazon and INCRA as one of the "big three" government programs. I suspect that the main reason MEC was included is that the former governor and leading political figure of Pará is now the Minister, and groups in the region hope to stay in favor with him. The Ministry played a reciprocal role in this symbolic interaction which I will explain soon.

The principal story in the newspaper concerned plans to build a large air base across the Itacaiúnas from Marabá. In order to ensure enough room for expansion (which is now unavailable in Santarém), the government will expropriate an area three by five kilometers. The many people who already live in this area have been warned to stop any new construction. One unfortunate family I met had just planted several hundred fruit trees.

Another theme which kept recurring in the ads and articles is that the Amazon region is the "celeiro do mundo," the "breadbasket of the world". So far as I know, this view does not appear in official government publications, and I hope the planners realize how unfounded such an assertion would be. Nevertheless, the image might be important in the popular mythology of the Transamazon. Instead of gold fever, it's the idea that "o que plantar, dá." Yields may be good the first year, but what they are like several years later and where they will be sold are the crucial questions.

The main event of the day, for which a cast of thousands had been rehearsing for weeks, was the parade of students in primary and secondary schools, as well as a contingent of adults taking the MOBRRAL literacy course. Children were brought into town from nearby rural areas and from INCRA's agrovila. Most were uniformed and marched in military fashion. Some wore costumes alluding to 1822 or to other countries of Latin America, and a few jeeps were decorated as floats. This year there was no contingent of prostitutes, as was reported for such a parade in Marabá's earlier years.

The sheer number of children was astonishing. It showed dramatically not only that there are a lot of people in the area, but also that a very large proportion of them are young. In addition to the development of the area, this may also reflect that Marabá is becoming more of a family town and less a mecca for unattached adventurers. What will all these children be doing ten or twenty years from now, besides probably having children of their own? Will there be that many jobs? Will they be satisfied to be pioneers homesteading off somewhere in the rain forest?

Most of the primary school children wore brand new uniforms distributed free by the Ministry of Education. The trousers, worn by boys and girls, were blue jeans, the clothing coveted by upwardly mobile Brazilian youth; legitimate Lee jeans from the States (and some excellent counterfeits) sell for about \$20. The shirts are T-shirts printed with a map of Brazil showing the Transamazon, a few words about the sesquicentenary, and MEC-DEC in large capitals. This to me is a good example of the visibility principle in Brazilian political spending. This requires both that public funds be spent on tangible things seen by as many voters as possible, but also that the politician's name be prominently displayed on them. It's more subtle than the case of the mayor in Goiás who put his name on every single curbstone his administration installed, but I think the general purpose is the same. It seems to me that the Minister wants to remind his geographical constituency (the three big towns on the Transamazon are in Pará) that in spite of being far away in Brasília, he's still doing things for them--presents of Lee jeans! The uniforms with the Ministry's name on them also serve to signal the high government authorities that this ministry is doing its part on the Transamazon. Lack of enthusiasm by another minister is supposed to have been a factor in his dismissal.

I don't know how the schoolchildren or their parents reacted to the regimentation and fanfare, but in me it stirred some apprehensions about excess nationalism and militarism. The soldiers from the local military garrison had a prominent part in the whole affair, from the soldiers marching to the officers reviewing the parade. One group of small boys was dressed in soldiers' uniforms. The nationalism has its positive side in that it probably instills some pride and mobilizes people, but we see what nationalism has brought the United States to do in the last decade. I wonder if these boys will be marching in real soldiers' uniforms a decade from now, and if so, where.

I used the occasion to take dozens of pictures of people and of the military men and installations. This would have been awkward and even risky on

any other day, but that particular day there were dozens of cameras out and mine didn't attract attention.

I wanted to deliver a picture I took last year of Cleto, the former public relations advisor in Altamira who is now an administrative officer in Marabá. I found him at the INCRA office with the INCRA coordinator for northern Brazil, the intended recipient of my letter of introduction from INCRA in Rio. He had been away when I was in Belém. I was glad to meet him at last, of only to make myself known. At that moment, however, he was pre-occupied with an Indian reservation along the Transamazon. The Paracaná are to have the land west of the road near Jatobal. It might be more accurate to say that FUNAI, the Indian agency, will have the land.

Cleto then invited me to his house and took me for a ride with his family. After a turn around the town, we went east along the Tocantins to the spot where the INCRA helicopter is kept. The bairro of Marabázinho follows the high bank of the river for about two kilometers. Beyond that is a fine ranch belonging to the most powerful family in Marabá, the Mutrans. Nagib Mutran, a member of Marabá's Lebanese colony, was the political and economic chief of the whole region. His son Oswaldo is now a federal congressman. The family has resisted vigorously the incursions into its domain by the federal government, but seems to be losing the battle. It will be interesting to see if the new reality is totally inimical to them or whether they will be able to adapt and survive.

I was happy to have another chance to explain my views on the Transamazon to Cleto. Our brief conversation the previous week had been mostly about how disastrous many Americans think it is, and I suspect he was grouping me with them. From his extremely optimistic point of view, this may be reasonable, but to me there are significant differences, and I can't afford to have INCRA view me primarily as a critic. Cleto's optimism and enthusiasm seem to be related to the fact that he is an evangelist; his outlook is based on faith. Colonization on the Transamazon is a crusade, a people finding its promised land. God is on our side, and we can't fail. Consequently, it was as hard to talk with Cleto about the Transamazon as it was about religion. Before he could invite me to lunch, I said I wanted to go to the beach, and split.

When the Tocantins is low (there is a difference in water level of about 15 meters between the rainy and dry seasons), huge beaches of beige sand appear. On one large island opposite Marabá, there are a few palm-thatch shelters where some of the more para frente townspeople and outsiders go on Sundays. Since September 7 is like the Fourth of July, there were a number of people, although only those willing and able to shell out a few cruzeiros to hire a boat.

One group took a long net which was let out in the shallow water far from shore and dragged up to the beach. Since the net might have been fifty meters long, it swept a large area, and caught about a dozen eatable fish, mostly pacu and cará.

I didn't swim very much, since getting to deep water involved walking a long way through shallow water in which the sting ray is common. So I spent a lot of time chatting with two INCRA fellows from Rio and listening to music in a makeshift palm-thatch bar. I don't know if being there relieved their saudades for Ipanema and Copacabana or made them worse. I'd had a good time on a Tocantins beach before, but this was pretty dead.

Some of the local "green berets" were trying unsuccessfully to water ski behind their special rubber boat. The boat, motor, and driver left much to be desired, but their main problem was that they were trying to start off at full speed. After I commented a couple of times that that wasn't the way

to do it, they invited me to try. (I wondered if these were the same officers who arrested my colleague in April and caused so much grief.) Unfortunately, while I was enjoying my spin around the river and my good relations with the military, the commander was stung by a ray, and went through several extra minutes of agony before we returned with the boat to take him to the hospital. I hope he's not holding a grudge.

Friday morning I could finally get on with some of my business. The people at INCRA were inundated by colonos (many of whom probably came in for the holiday), so I went elsewhere. The French priest I had met on the Belém-Brasília a couple of weeks before had not yet returned from Belém, but the Brazilian priest suggested that I talk with Frei Gil, who works with the Kikrin Indians. When I finally found his modest house on the edge of the zona, he was very open and informative. He has been working with the Indians for many years, and has studied in France. He quietly condemns the treatment that the Indians and those who try to help them have received, and has in turn been called a communist subversive. He also told me a lot about the economic and political situation in Marabá.

On his tip, I went to the Hilda Palace to look for René Fuerst and a group of Englishmen from the Aborigines Protection Society who are evaluating the condition of Indians in Brazil. The Englishmen were at the Gavião post, but René was having lunch with Expedito Arnaud from the Museu Goeldi in Belém. Expedito was on his way to restudy the Gavião and met René there by chance. Expedito had been away when I visited the museum, so I was doubly fortunate in meeting him too. Furthermore, René invited me to fly north with them to Belém on Sunday.

After lunch I looked up another foreigner who has worked with the Indians. Roger Bailey is a missionary of New Tribes who spent many years working with the Krikati and Timbira in Maranhão and is now working with the Gavião. The Gavião shot at him when he first went in about ten years ago. He hadn't known that seven of them had just been killed by a punitive expedition, so that their reaction was quite reasonable. He still doesn't have permission to work on the post, but lives seven kilometers away, and the Indians come to him. Still, there are precious few that have given any indication of "accepting the Lord as their Savior." This seems to be the case all over the Amazon region. I don't know if it's because conversion takes a long time or because it's futile. The faith, determination, and even great personal sacrifice of the missionaries often results in badly needed medical attention and material assistance that the Indians would not otherwise get, at least in the more remote areas. Since the missionaries no longer try to destroy the Indian culture (e.g. forcing them to wear clothes), their presence in the outermost areas may be more beneficial than harmful, even if other forms of assistance are more desirable. Until FUNAI becomes effective, the missionaries will have to "quebrar o galho."

After supper I met the English members of the expedition sponsored by the Aborigenes Protection Society. The leader is Edwin Brooks, a professor of geography at Liverpool and former Member of Parliament. Francis Huxley, who I think is the son of Julian, is a social anthropologist at Oxford. John Hemming is an author who recently wrote a book on the conquest of the Incas which I read this spring, and is now working on one on Brazilian Indians. They had been travelling all over the Amazon area for about five weeks, i.e., since the opening of the Indigenist Congress in Brasília, at the invitation of Itamaraty (the foreign office) and with the full logistical support of the Brazilian Air Force. The invitation may be a political maneuver within the Brazilian government to embarrass the head of FUNAI and the Minister of the

Interior, with whom there has been considerable dissatisfaction. They had visited several dozen Indian posts, with full clearance from the head of FUNAI, and planned to finish the trip with a week in the Xingu park seeing the famous Vilas Boas brothers. The trip was really too quick for them to get more than superficial impressions, and they heard practically nothing from the Indians themselves. Nevertheless, they think the investigation will be the most complete yet. From what I can gather, its general conclusions will be that Brazil's Indians are in bad shape, but not as bad as European newspapers make them out to be, and that FUNAI is woefully inadequate but is improving. It will be much more complete than the Red Cross study and much more objective than Bodard's book called *Green Hell: The Massacre of the Brazilian Indians*. (This book consists of fabricated conversations with the Vilas Boas brothers. Bodard spent two days in the Xingu park and never really conversed with the brothers because of the language problem; Orlando even wrote to Bodard of his surprise at seeing the lengthy "quotations".) I hope the mission will send me a copy of the report as soon as it is finished.

I spent most of Saturday morning writing, then had feijoada with some of the INCRA people at the hotel. Frei Gil showed up there before lunch looking for a young Frenchman who had just spent a month at "his" village without notifying or consulting him first. Gil wanted to see what documents he had, and wanted them shown to the police, who found Marcel before Gil did. They told him he could not go back to the village and would have to leave Brazil. Even though he explained himself at length to the Englishmen after dinner, I couldn't understand enough French to piece together his story. (I'll spend next summer in a place like Marseilles rather than Marabá and learn French.) He said he was sent by a French priest who had worked with the Indians and he was concerned about them, but he was very unclear about what he wanted to do and is quite naive.

I spent Saturday afternoon reading a book called Marabá: City of Brazil Nuts and Diamonds, written fifteen years ago by a French priest. He did a fairly complete social and economic study of Marabá, and documented the exploitation and instability of the population. His general conclusion was that the area was ripe for revolution, which would hardly be unjustified. Frei Gil said that the book had even been burned here. I could only find a copy to borrow from the nuns' library. Since I wanted a copy to keep, I microfilmed it. I was luckier in obtaining a copy of a study of Marabá compiled by the normal students.

Most of Sunday I spent waiting for the plane. In all the expedition's travels thus far, the Brazilian Air Force has been flawless in providing transportation, but this time it fell through completely, without even an answer to the radio queries. I was able to get some writing done, but was suffering from dysentery (my first real case) and the psychological let-down that comes near the end of a trip. Marabá is not a very pleasant place to be stuck even when you are feeling well, but especially when you have to stay put waiting for a plane.

By three in the afternoon, I couldn't write any longer, so I went to drink beer and batidas with the Englishmen. We were amazed at what a gross beast Dona Hilda was. She sits in the kitchen ranting and raving at the practical slaves who work for her. One distinguished member of the expedition, whose three-word description of her is unprintable but quite fitting, speculated that she speaks by forcing air in and out through her genitalia, which were supposed to be clearly visible when she rocked back in her chair at the end of the hall. The view is truly gross, but it is difficult to tell one flabby fold of her rhinoceros legs from another.

In sharp contrast, many of the women in the streets of Marabá that Sunday afternoon were worth watching. More than in any other interior city I know, they are bicycle riders. I think in some places the girls are afraid they would lose their virginity. We also watched the children leaving the matinee movie and wondered how there could be such clean people in such a dirty city. Even if sewage does flow in the streets, the people bathe frequently and dress neatly.

When it became apparent that the plane would not appear that day, three of us decided to go swimming in the rapids a couple of miles outside town on the Itacaiúnas. Darkness fell just as we arrived there in the taxi. We took off our clothes and waded through shallow water and prickly bushes to reach to rocks beside the rapids. The moon we were waiting for turned out to be no more than a thin sliver of orange, so we swam mostly by the light of the stars and the glow worms along the shore. The idea is to throw oneself into the torrent and be carried downstream through the waves and over the rocks. I soon learned to keep my hands in front of me in order to avoid getting badly scraped--or castrated. I had a bad scare after passing through the rapids. The strong current was still carrying me downstream and I feared that I would be carried all the way to the Tocantins before reaching shore, or that in any case I would have to grope my way back through the underbrush naked. But soon, even though the shore was about fifty yards away, my feet hit the bottom--the water was shallow enough to walk back. I wasn't comforted to know that sting rays are also found over pebble bottoms, not just in sand and mud. One more fling was enough. The return trip through the bushes and smaller rapids was made more difficult by the fact that I was feeling the effect of the batidas, but we made it. Back at the hotel, I just collapsed on the bed, scratches and all, and stayed there until the next morning.

All day Monday there was still no plane and no message. Fortunately I was feeling better and was able to write quite a bit. By that night, however, we were all ready to do something to break the monotony. With high spirits and some company from the Maloca, the least reserved among us set out for the beach on the other side of the Tocantins. After half an hour of merry-making on the hired boat, with our commander on the prow all set for a skinny dip, the sleepy pilot emerged to say he had lost the nut which holds the propellor on--we had gone and were going nowhere. So we paraded along the water's edge, through hundreds of yards of slime and goo, to find another boat. If the racket aroused any of the local citizens, at least they didn't call the police, who were supposedly waging a campaign against orgies on the beach.

Even though the group was much smaller, the beach house was much livelier than when I was there on the afternoon of the seventh. Dancing, singing, drinking, challenges of various kinds, walks in the sand, swimming, unforgettable. I was no longer sorry that the plane was late. René and I stayed after the others left. I went to Marabá at mid-morning to find out about other transportation to Belém, but René was determined not to leave the island, which he was reigning like a sneik, until the plane came. But his reign was short, because after lunch we received word that the plane would arrive in an hour. We hurriedly fetched René and our belongings, took two cabs to the Itacaiúnas and two canoes across it, and piled into a jeep to the airport in Amapá. The plane was a C-47, the military version of the DC-3. It apparently had not received the expedition's revised schedule--an honest mistake. We piled bundles, baskets, and bows and arrows into it and took our places on the benches along the walls. We then baked for ten minutes or so waiting for take-off. Sweat flowed from every pore. After we reached cruising altitude, the temperature dropped severely. I moved away from the window, where cold air was blowing through a hole, but could not sleep because of the cold.

Through the clouds I could see the green carpet of rain forest stretching to the horizon. Beyond that horizon was more of the same. From that perspective, the occasional clearings I spotted could be seen as malignant tumors slowly destroying their host. The rain forest is immense, yes, but so is the human body for the tiny organisms that destroy it. The problem with this perspective is that you cannot see the people on the ground. For them, colonization of the Amazon means food, jobs, hope for a better life. If it works, it could in fact help the Brazilians that are already there, those who migrate, and those who are left in other regions. At this point it is a big if, but to me the question is not whether or not it should be attempted but how it can be made to succeed. The Indians and the ecology are in some danger, but I doubt that their destruction is inevitable. The road may help multinational corporations exploit the region's resources, but its primary effect will be to open the area to Brazilian capitalists (who can be even more exploitative) and to the Brazilian government. It may be a disaster, but I suspect that it might work out in a very Brazilian way with various kinds of unexpected consequences. Now that I have seen it first hand, I'll have to try to fit the information and impressions I got into some sort of coherent analysis.