

“Somewhere in South America probably Brazil”

Friday
5/19/44

Dear Miss McGlynn,

I should have dropped you a line before this thanking you for selling I got my copy of the “Log”, etc. It made very interesting reading, especially those articles about the guys I knew; Connie, Joe Sullivan, etc. I kind of let my mail slide, and as a result I have about 15 letters staring me in the face. However, I’ll get em caught up in a week – I hope.

I’m still living in the same routine life so I’ve nothing exciting to write about the life down here. That excerpt from Johnny Constantine’s letter in the March 31st not issue of the “Log” might well describe the life down here even if not for the fact that the people down here are on the conservative side. Slightly European-ish, if I am expressing myself correctly.

There are two distinct classes down here. I suppose you can call it upper and lower. The lower class is slightly on the dusky side, more or less a by-product of inter-racial marriage, etc. ~~Socially, they are [not worth meeting or knowing]~~

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These living conditions are primitive; to me it seems even moreso than you might be able to find anywhere back in the states. On the other hand, the upper class is strictly what the term denotes. They still contain the old country conservatism and customs. The younger set attends all the U.S.O. dances but they are always chaperoned by their mother. Perchance you might like to sit a dance out, the moms always sits herself between you and the demure little miss. Were you to go riding or to the movies, an invitation always includes the mother. It’s an old (censored) custom. I can tell you an actual experience I had that very plainly shows that I am driving at. There to four days previous to the Lenten season, the natives have a three to four day “carnival”. They really deserve Lent down here; so, they make merry previous to this time. Regular festival spirit. I had been in town enjoying the sights and was on my way back to the U.S.O. to catch some transportation back to the base. I was on my way down a hill in the better section of town when lo

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and behold my eyes cast themselves on a vision of loveliness (bland at that) such as I hadn't seen since I had left the states. Trying to live up to Navy tradition I tried to engage her in a conversation. By the way, she was leaning over a wall about 10 feet above my head. She spoke fairly good English. I judge she was married for she told me she was very good to meet an American sailor but it didn't look right for her to be talking to me, her people wouldn't approve, and would I please leave. I left. That little episode should give you some idea of what I mean by upper class.

The [?] situation down here is well worth observing. The laborer or those from the lower class haven't gained much from a monetary view point. Prices have risen tremendously. The upper class who are able to invest are making the profits. I judge our high standard of living affects places the same the world over. It will be interesting to see the outcome of all these after the war.

Please excuse the scratchouts, etc. I can do much better on the typewriter, but I use that enough. I like to try writing in longhand every now and then. Hope you can read this - As ever - Henry