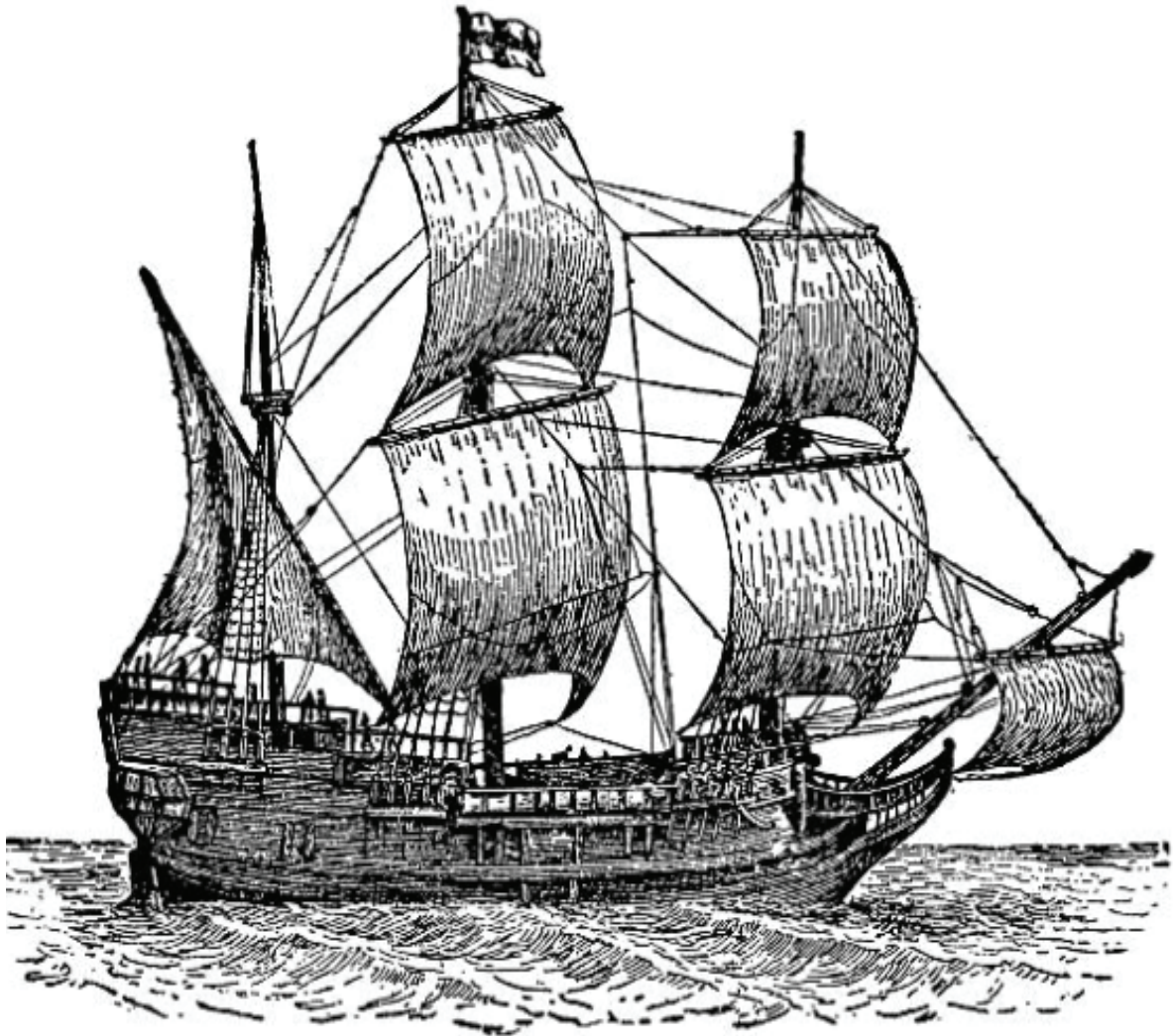


# Brazil News

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BRINGING  
YOU NEWS AND  
OPINIONS  
FROM  
BRAZIL

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THE MAYFLOWER

Editorializing

## The Spirit of the Mayflower

This little ship with only 1,600 square feet of living space for 102 passengers (approximately 15.5 square feet per passenger) had the distinct mission of carrying a new nation in it's hold. These God-fearing men and women are identified today as The Pilgrims.

It was the spiritual DNA of these pilgrims that was miraculously found in many of the men and women who settled the North American continent. We have every reason to believe that the words spoken to Abram, "*Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing,*" again echoed in the hearts of the Pilgrims and uncountable others who crossed the ocean in search of new life.

The Mayflower carried no militia, no governmental incentives or restrictions, no official mandate of any nature. It was exclusively a civilian venture. They came "armed" with axes, hoes, shovels, cast iron cookware, bedding and clothing, carefully selected seeds, muskets (for hunting and self-defense purposes), and their own "hands."

The Spirit of the Mayflower was the knowledge that the freedom, the new life, they desired would mean a courageous step into the unknown. They were the trailblazers. There was no one who could tell them what awaited them when – if – they survived the perilous sea voyage. What they would eat once the meager supplies they brought with them were gone, what kind of material would be found to build dwellings. Would they be attacked by indigenous peoples? Would their ranks be decimated by hunger, unknown diseases or unbearable climatic conditions?

If public opinion, or a colonization board, would have been the determining factor for sailors to hoist sails on the Mayflower, the voyage would not have been made. This little band of "deranged" men and women left the security of home firmly convinced that success would be determined by the Hand of the Lord Almighty and their own hands.

The Pilgrim's first winter was terrible, many died. But not the seed of hope. In the following years many more ships set sail from Europe. And thus a nation was born.

The Spirit of the Mayflower did not die out during the terrible first winter. Indeed, it proved be to be more contagious than the present-day covid virus. As more ships dropped anchor on the shores of this new world disgorging more pilgrims, a move inland began to take place. In their midst were many "Daniel Boones," unelected individuals who assumed positions of leadership of impromptu groups that pushed farther and farther inland.

Literally thousands of volumes have been written on the westward movement, about those who left the “comforts” of the established settlements on the east coast moved inland, some in Conestoga wagons pulled by oxen, mules or horses. Some in horse drawn carts, others walked. By today’s standards they would have been considered foolhardy.

We now are going to touch on just a few points in American history that show how the Spirit of the Mayflower was present, not only in individuals and families, but also in civic leaders.

**The miracle of sections.** Anyone living in rural America knows what a section of land is, a quarter section, an eighty, a forty. As a farmer leaves his house, he tells his wife: “I’ll be working on the “back eighty.” They both know exactly where this eighty is located. No need for questions. What they probably never stop to think about is how that “eighty” or “forty” came to exist.

Way back, when the westward trek was taking place, a small army of government surveyors were at head of the column dividing the land into sections, quarters, eighties and forties. With rudimentary instruments they checker-boarded the American plains. Towns followed, counties and townships. Local land offices had an accurate record of the work done by the surveyors with the identification number of each parcel.

Thus it was possible for a settler to locate an eighty, quarter section, or whatever, to his liking, go to the land office and register a claim.

**The miracle of rails.** This miracle followed on the heels of the miracle of sections. Government officials understood that for the Great Plains to become the Bread Basket of the nation, produce would have to be transported to markets. While most of the world depended on animal power for transportation, the United States soon had a more extensive railroad network than all the other nations of the world combined. As feeder lines were built from the Transcontinental Railroad, villages soon followed.

**The miracle of communication.** Even though the Pony Express had a short life and carried only a very limited amount of mail, its symbolic value was enormous. It showed the importance the early settlers placed on communication. Simultaneously with the construction of the transcontinental railroad, the telegraph poles were being erected, making it possible to have at least a rudimentary communication “from sea to shining sea.”

**The miracle of schools and churches.** Possibly the greatest benefit of American democracy is the importance placed on education. In the rest of the world, the little one-room rural schoolhouse was virtually inexistent. In the US, settler’s children had the privilege of getting an at least rudimentary education. The classical example of this are the Little House books by Laura Ingalls Wilder. Even small villages were able to establish a governing body.

Together with rural schools were rural churches in which the pulpit was often filled by itinerate preachers. Not all of the visiting evangelists were

overly-qualified, but a consciousness of God was implanted in both adults and children. Even though many times in weakness, it still upheld the title of the US as a God-fearing nation.

**The miracle of a champion of world-wide freedom.** If it weren't for a vision of freedom and democracy ingrained in the American people, many nations of the world, including the US, today would be speaking German or Japanese. Had it not been for the Allied intervention, led by the United States, in two despotic world wars, Europe, North and South America would be under foreign dominion.

America sent the cream of its youth to the European and Pacific theaters to defend freedom. Hundreds of thousands lost their lives.

**The miracle of industrialization.** It wasn't through manpower that the war was won overseas. Thousands upon thousands of ship loads of materiel and food were sent to the battle fronts. This was possible because of American productivity. Factories were converted to wartime production. Since so many of the male workers were overseas fighting for freedom, wives and children took up the slack.

German and Japanese U-boats sank unbelievable numbers of these loaded ships. Thousands of planes and tanks, as well as other supplies ended up on the ocean floor. The Axis powers could not afford this kind of losses. But when ships transporting hundreds of fighter planes were sunk, soon ships with a thousand more appeared to keep the Allied armies moving ahead.

Without the might of American industrialization the war would been lost on both fronts.

All these miracles constitute the true spirit of the Mayflower.

Does all this mean that America never made mistakes? Of course not! But that is not the intent of this little writing.

However, in all fairness we recognize that too much of the spirit of the Mayflower has sunk beneath the waves. The effects of populism on both the left and right are destroying partisanship in political circles. Can America remain great, a world leader, without the spirit of the Mayflower?

## Life in Brazil

### Winter Bible School

You folks in N America have Summer Bible School. Here we have Winter Bible School. Actually, our winter here is more like a mild autumn north of the Equator where you all live. Days are usually very comfortable.

The first classes were given last year and the results were excellent, with more than 90 children attending. This year the results were similar. The classes are

open to anyone wanting to attend. Even a bus load of children from our local town of Rio Verde came out daily.

Needless to say, this involves a lot of work by those organizing these classes and the teachers. I believe Winter Bible School has become a permanent fixture and hopefully the number of students attending will continue to increase.

## Taps (1)

### **Laura Costa**

In issue number 8, published January of 1992, included an interview with Laura, which we reprint here.

Laura was unforgettable. She was indefatigable. She approached life with zest and determination. Because of her flamboyant personality, she touched the lives of people wherever she went. She regarded death with the same positivity as life. Shortly before her death she paid us a visit. She explained the reason for her visit by most matter-of-factly informing us, "I don't have much time left." There was no self-pity, no bitterness. She wanted help with material she used in the classes she gave to neighborhood children.

From then on, up to her death, I supplied her with lessons that had a Bible verse and could be colored. The only explanation on how she did that is: That was Laura.

Now we go to the interview published over 30 years ago.

## Interview

I feel a little bit guilty about calling this an interview. Anyone who knows Laura and her spontaneous personality will understand why. After a couple of questions, she launched into the story of her life. All I could do was try and keep up as the words flowed out. After more than 60 years of typing, I'm not real shabby on speed, but even so she gave me a real workout.

What Laura has to tell us shows once again that the Lord can save to the uttermost. I must confess that I have censured her story. What remains is sufficient to give a picture of what her life was like. What you read here is the tip of the iceberg.

As you read her story, think of how many more Lauras are needing help.

BNews: Where were you born?

Laura: In Itajá, Goiás.

BNews: Where is that?

Laura: It's way out on the Mato Grosso border.

BNews: Could you tell me one of your first memories?

Laura: My parents had separated. Once in a while I would go to spend some time

with my dad. Once my mother sent for my brother Nilson to take me home. I didn't want to go. I screamed and carried on. He had to drag me to the bus. The reason I didn't want to go home was because my stepdad didn't like me. When anyone asked if I was his daughter. He would be real plain: "No! She's a daughter of the woman I live with."

BNews: What can you tell me about your real dad?

Laura: He and my mother separated when I was only a year and nine months old. When I was three my mother began living with my stepdad. At that time my mother was working in a hotel. Everyone liked me and tried to help take care of me. One time some people stayed in the hotel and when they left they kidnapped me. When my mother found out what had happened, she took out after us. About 20 kilometers down the road she found us and got me back.

BNews: What happened to the kidnappers?

Laura: Nothing. My mother understood how much they wanted to have a child of their own. Back in those days I was a pretty little thing.

BNews: And from here how did things go?

Laura: My stepdad decided he didn't like me. This was a complicated situation and my mother would let me go with whoever wanted to take me. It could be someone that lived close by or someone from a distance. But I always ran away and came back home.

During this time I was around 10 years old. My mother gave me to a mean woman. I was hungry a lot of the time. I got skinnier and skinnier. After that she gave me to a woman in Castelândia. When I was 12 years old, she gave me to a woman in Jataí. I sent her letter after letter asking her to come get me, but my stepdad found them and hid the letters.

Then the day came that I began to drink. During this time I was studying at night. After classes we would go to a filling station where they sold beer and we would drink. By this time I was a specialist at running away. So I decided to run away again. I found out there was nothing like lying to get what I wanted. This was one lesson I learned very well.

A friend and I decided to run away. She knew a fellow that worked in a place where they made metal window frames. We told him one whopper and got him convinced to take us to Rio Verde. When we got here, we told him the truth, but even so he tried to help us. He knew how my stepdad treated me.

I remember that when we got to Rio Verde, we met a man, a stranger. We told him a big whopper too. He felt so sorry for us that he took us to the best restaurant in town and then paid for us to stay in a hotel.

From here we decided to go on to Goiânia. We went to a hotel. We told lies like you wouldn't believe. We would go to a restaurant and tell such a sob story that people would buy us a meal. We would stay in a hotel as long as possible and then leave without paying. We would leave our clothes, so then we would have to go to the stores and steal more clothes so that we would have something to wear. We did this time and again. By this time we knew exactly how to do things. I was 13.

## Brazil News

Then one day we decided to move on to the city of Ituiutaba, in the state of Minas Gerais. From there we moved on to São Simão and then to Paranaiguara. I tried to keep moving back in the direction of where my mom lived. I was uneasy. When we got to Cachoeira Alta, the police recognized me. They said they had orders to arrest me. When we promised to go back home, they let us go.

On the way home, we stopped at Caçu. There we ran into a bunch of wild youngsters our age. In that bunch was an older woman who was anything but an example. Even so she gave us good advice. She told us we should go back home.

We decided to go to Itarumã to see my mom. When we got there my stepdad was just getting home from working in the field. He saw me and began to beat up on me. He drew his revolver and threatened to shoot any of my friends who might want to help me. He kicked me around and stomped on my back, breaking my ribs. It was his intention to kill me.

Then my mother showed up. She fainted when she saw what was happening. Finally someone got my stepdad to quit beating up on me. They took me to the hospital. My mother's family was very upset with what happened. They decided to turn my stepdad in to the police. But we got things patched up enough that this didn't happen. I stayed at my grandmother's place until I was stronger.

Then I took to the road again. I went on and on and on. I was on the move like this for a long time. I went to São Paulo, to Santos, you name it.

When I was 17, I moved in with a fellow. I drank a lot and used drugs, although never to the point of becoming addicted. I would go out in the evening and spend the night on the street. He told me that every time I did this I would have to spend the whole night on the street. Once when he locked me out I came home and broke the windows, cutting myself all up.

I became pregnant and when I was seven months along, I got real sick. The doctors couldn't really figure out what the problem was. Then my stepdad came and got me. By now I was extremely weak. I would cry out in pain. And worse, I didn't have money to buy cigarettes. One thing I couldn't live without was money. I didn't want to sell off the things I had accumulated. Then I remembered my revolver. I always had a gun. I asked my stepdad to sell it for me.

The man who bought it felt sorry for me and tried to help me out. With the money I got I was soon drinking again. One month later I had a little boy, Jean. I went back to Rio Verde and began living with the same man again. I became pregnant for the second time. When I was six months along, I became very sick and had to have surgery. I left Jean with my mom in São Simão.

I had a little girl. It was then I decided to stop drinking. I didn't want to have my daughter grow up and know that her mom was a drunkard. If it had been another boy I would have kept on drinking. At this point I still enjoyed spending the night on the streets. There wasn't a thing that I was scared of.

One morning when my little girl was four months old, she got sick. That evening she died. That shook me up so bad that I decided to go back to drinking.

Then one day my stepdad came to where I was living and said that my brother Nilson wanted to talk to me. When I got to where my brother was, a fellow started shooting at him. All of a sudden he turned on me. The first shot grazed my head. I began to run. The second shot got me in the back. I went down on the spot, but something told me I wouldn't die. I was afraid, though, that I might be paralyzed.

I want to mention something interesting at this point. During this time of drinking and everything that I did wrong, every night before I would go to bed, I would kneel down and ask the Lord to not take my life in my unsaved condition.

So it was after I had been shot and was lying on the ground, I promised the Lord that if He would help me to walk again, I would walk worthy of His honor and glory the rest of my life.

They took me to the hospital. The doctor said there was nothing that they could do for me, that I would be an invalid the rest of my life. He said they could take me home again and buy a wheel chair. But I knew that somehow I would walk again. My mother took me to another doctor. He said that I would have to go to Goiânia. But I didn't have money to pay an ambulance to take me there. So I sold my jewels and paid the ambulance.

The specialists there told me that it was a hollow point bullet that had damaged my spine. During the first week they built me up for the surgery.

It was in this hospital [Santa Genoveva, on the way to the airport in Goiânia] that something very impressive took place. I was sitting in a wheelchair in the wide hospital hall. I saw a man go by with a Bible. I asked a girl to tell him that I wanted to talk to him. I went back to my room and there we talked together. I asked him if he was a believer. Then I told him that the next day I planned on having surgery and I would appreciate it if he would read me something from the Bible and have a prayer. This is what he did.

Another patient saw what took place. She began to make fun of me. She said I would find out that prayer was a worthless thing.

The next day I had surgery. I went into the operating room at 10 in the morning and got out at 3 in the afternoon. I had a very rough recovery because of the anesthesia. That night was really a rough one.

That same woman kept making fun of me. She said that if I had prayed to the virgin Mary, everything would have been ok.

The next day she had head surgery. When she got out everything was fine. She was talking and feeling good. Again she made fun of me saying how dumb I was, acting like a chicken with a broken neck. Then she asked the girl that was taking care of me to give her a bite of chicken soup. But before she could give her the soup, she went into a coma and within two hours she was dead. The doctors had no explanation for her death. To me it was proof that God was still taking care of me.

I stayed in that hospital for around two months undergoing treatment. My doctor



said I was going to get better. When I was released, I stayed in a friend's home in Goiânia for another month.

When I got back to Rio Verde, my stepdad didn't want me in his house. So I rented two rooms where my son Jean and I could live. It wasn't easy. Sometimes I would fall and lay on the floor all day because there was no one around to help me up. Slowly I regained my strength. During this time I made my living selling pictures that I painted.

Then I began going to the Assembly of God church. I went there for two years.

One day while I was going to church, I saw several sisters of the Church of God in Christ. I told my mom that if someday I left the Assembly of God church, I wanted to be part of this group. All this business of talking in tongues bothered me. It scared me.

Something began to happen in my life. I would get drunk and carry on, doing all kinds of things I shouldn't, but the next day I would feel bad and repent of what I had done. That happened time after time. I went to the Assembly of God church and told them I didn't want to be a member any more.

Then I began to go to the Mennonite church. To this day I can't remember how I found their little church.

When Mark and Glenda Loewen became the local missionaries, they rented a house right in front of my mom's house. I learned to know them better and my interest in the Church kept increasing.

Then Jean had to have surgery. I was having financial problems. So I decided to get out of Rio Verde. I moved to Araraquara, a city in the state of São Paulo. I got a job in a bar in a shady section of town. I worked during the day and drank at night. After about a year of this, one day I made a decision. I told God that I wanted to go back home and be a Mennonite. I asked God to open the doors. That is what happened. My boss immediately agreed to buy my color TV. Within two days I had everything taken care of. But before I left I went to a store and bought material so that I would be able to make myself some modest dresses.

When I got back to Rio Verde, I began going to the Mennonite church again. For a while I made my living selling clothes I had bought in São Paulo for this purpose.

In December of 86, I had an experience of conversion. On the 17th of May, 1987, I was baptized.

BNews: You have now been a member of the Church for a number of years. How do you feel about this life?

Laura: The transformation in my life was like the one when Jesus turned water into wine. There's a verse in the Bible, isn't there, that talks about vessels of honor and vessels of dishonor? Before I was a vessel of dishonor and shame to God. Everything that I did brought dishonor to His creation. I believe that now I am a vessel of honor. Even with all of my weaknesses, I try to always take the name of God with me wherever I go.

I would like to make it clear that I'm not telling these things so that people will feel

sorry for me. Rather, I want everyone to know that God is able to transform people. I want others to see that God is able to pardon the awfulest sins. I can see this because I feel God has forgiven me and I am saved by His grace. If someday I lose my salvation, it won't be because of my past sins.

BNews: What would you say to someone who is in the valley of decision? To someone who doesn't know if it is worthwhile to accept Jesus as his personal Savior?

Laura: I feel that missing out on the pleasures that this world has to offer is nothing when compared with eternal life. There is nothing like being able to lie down at night and being able to sleep.

*(End of interview)*

During the following years she taught school on the Colony and I believe in the little church school in Rio Verde. She also taught school in the Police Academy in Rio Verde.

She became a Tupperware salesperson and was highly successful. With her ability to hold those present enchanted, she rose in the ranks and even won a free trip to the Holy Land.

Laura was 62 years old when she died.

## Taps (2)

### **Carman Loewen**

Carman moved to Brazil with his parents, Pete and Edna, in October of 1970. The piece of land his dad purchased was exactly as the Lord created it. There were no roads and obviously no electricity. Life began in tents. He and his brothers and sisters had the task clearing out a building site and build a shed that was initially used as living quarters. Then came clearing the land so that crops could be planted.

The early settlers were true pioneers. They learned that there are no free lunches. The old saying, "The best way to get something done is by doing it," was a daily reality they had to face. They worked from early to late, but with the passing of time their reward was what became known as "The Pete Loewen place."

They say that good marriages are made in heaven. That was doubly true in Carman's case. Celma was born and raised in Rio Verde in what we will call "favorable circumstances." She learned to know the church and became a member. She learned to know Carman and became a wife. After that it was no longer Carman Loewen, but Carman and Celma. A marriage truly made in heaven.

Carman and Celma's home was open to everyone. Anyone wondering what the word "hospitality" really meant need only visit their home. Hundreds of

people enjoyed their hospitality. Who knows, may even thousands during their decades of marriage.

Carman was active on many of the church committees, which included building projects, and probably most importantly, the committee responsible for our church hymnal, O HINÁRIO CRISTÃO.

I don't believe anyone ever heard him raise his voice or become embroiled in controversial decisions that had to be made. In a word, Carman was a peace maker. He was a sincere Christian, a great husband and dad, and brother in the church. I think that pretty well sums up who he was.

## Notes

### **Pages from my scratch pad.**

Capitalism is all about turning luxuries into necessities.

In the middle of difficulties lie opportunities. —Albert Einstein

General Eisenhower hated the enemy; German general Erwin Rommel admired the enemy – and lost the war.

Never base your opinions on a single source of information.

You aren't rich until you have something you can't buy —Anonymous

You shouldn't marry someone you feel you could live with; marry someone with whom you feel you couldn't live without. —Anonymous

It's amazing how much good you can do if you don't care who gets the credit.  
—Anonymous

A sign that was displayed in some stores when we first moved to Brazil: "As you enter this establishment, may God bless you; As you leave, may He give you a double portion of what you are desiring for me."

Faith is the ability to think as God thinks. —Anonymous

A little bit of learning is a dangerous thing. —Anonymous (Translation, those who know the least about a subject often speak the loudest and longest.)

It isn't the size of the candle, but the size of the flame that matters. —Anonymous

# Brazil News

## Reminder

We remind our readers that all of the back issues of Brazil News can be found on

**[www.mybrazilnews.com](http://www.mybrazilnews.com).**

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