

**Day 14–Papeete, Tahiti–Papeete Walking Tour-Tahitian Folkloric Show-9 Oct 09:**

Today started with scattered clouds, a gently rolling sea and temperature of about 80 degrees. We were headed for Papeete on the island of Tahiti but were out of sight of land until about 9am when Tahiti took shape before us.

The pilot boat out of Papeete Harbor met the Amsterdam as we neared the island.

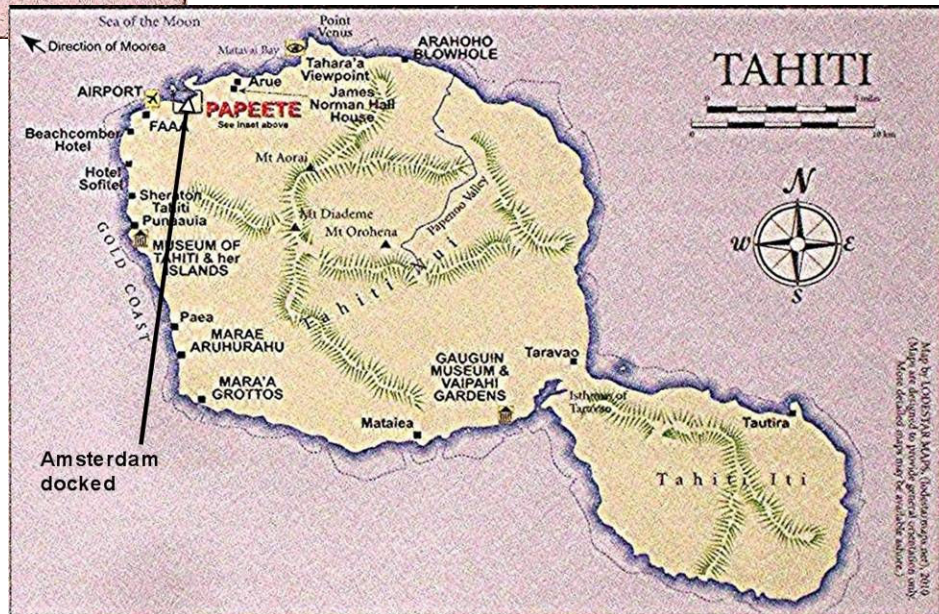
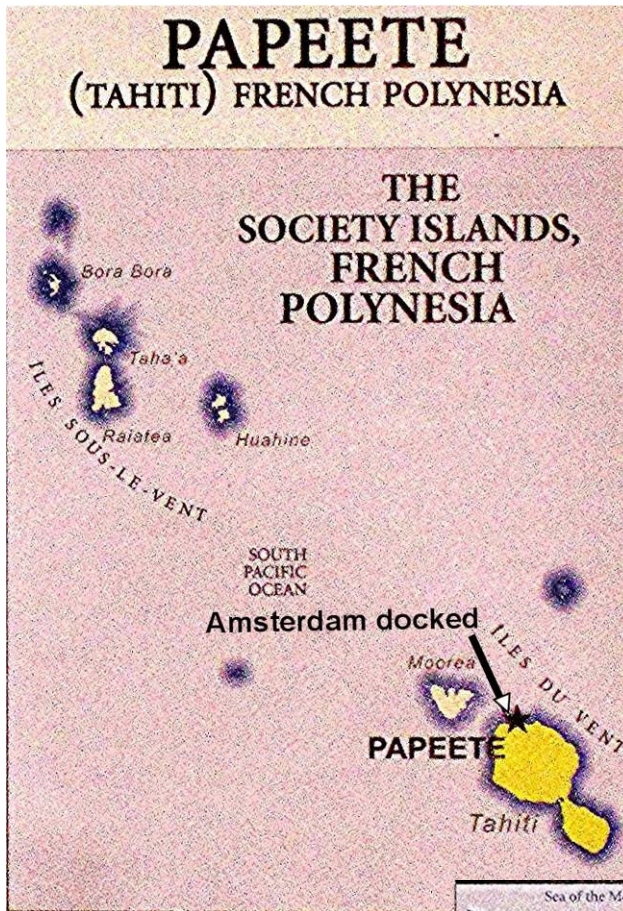


The nimble pilot swung on board the Amsterdam, as shown on the left, and then we headed into the harbor.

We joined Karen at the rail of the aft Lido Deck and enjoyed the scenery of Tahiti and the city of Papeete.



The pilot assisted Captain Eversen gently ease the Amsterdam into her berth at the North Finger Pier of Papeete Harbor. The following maps show where the Amsterdam was located for this visit to Papeete.







There were some energetic Tahitian drummers and dancers to greet us on the pier as we left the Amsterdam on our walk into Papeete.

Our first order of business was to stop by the Visitor's Center which was located in a park next

to the South Finger pier. The sign for the center gave Barbara the opportunity to document the arrival of her library card in this idyllic tropic island of Tahiti.

There was a nice sampling of native crafts at the Visitor's Center. The friendly staff members were busy answering questions brought in by the tourists, eager to get started with their exploration of Tahiti.

We had been in Papeete during a cruise in 2007 and wanted to return to the main market to look around. Referring to the street map above we crossed Blvd. Pamare and walked about a block on Rue F. Cardella to the Market. We enjoyed



just browsing through the rows and rows of products for sale. The Market has two levels, both packed with Tahitian goods. These photos show how large this Market is.



While we were in the Market we were pleasantly surprised when a lady came up to us and said she recognized us from reading our blog. It turned out that she was Janice, who is the person on the Amsterdam who conducts crafts workshops for passengers interested in developing those skills. We had a most interesting conversation in the midst of the Papeete Market where we took this picture. We parted ways but will look forward to seeing Janice frequently on the Amsterdam.



After doing a bit more shopping, Barbara found some shell earrings that struck her fancy at a reasonable price of 800 XPF (\$10 USD). By this time it was about noon so we made our way back to the Amsterdam where we had lunch in the Lido.

After lunch we walked back to the Market because we had spotted a small drum that we thought might make a nice gift for our grandson, Andrew, who is becoming an accomplished drummer. We found the drum and eventually arrived at a reasonable price so the deal was done. Here is the saleslady with the drum that had deep Polynesian style carvings around the base.



**Papeete Walking Tour:** About this time we noticed a young man with a sign advertizing a free walking tour of Papeete. We had time to do a walking tour and our energy level was high so we joined in the walking tour. It turned out that the walking tour was sponsored by the Papeete Chamber of Commerce (C.C.I.S.M) to make tourist more informed about Papeete. At first we were leery about getting involved with any tourist oriented activity advertized as “Free”. However, after we met the charming ladies shown in the picture on the left we



were convinced that the Chamber of Commerce was really trying to help us learn about Papeete city and have a good time.

Unfortunately we didn't get the name of the lady with a black blouse but the others from left to right were Crystal, Hinerava, Odile and the Chamber of Commerce guest for the day, Barbara. They explained what we would be seeing and doing in the next 1.5 hours. Our group then walked out of the Market into the busy streets of Papeete as Hinerava explained that the market place had existed in one form or another for over 150 years (Hopefully Orlin remembered the statistics right. Apologies to Hinerava if they are wrong).

At the start of the walking tour we passed by the wonderful display of intensely colored flowers that were for sale. We had to stop and take some pictures of these exquisite flowers, as shown on the right.



We were joined by a couple of brightly dressed men who, as part of the Chamber of Commerce full service team, played on their musical instruments and sang Polynesian songs while they accompanied us on the walking tour. We felt like real royalty getting all of this personal attention.



During the tour, Hinerava and Crystal stayed with us while the other ladies left. Hinerava, with assistance from Crystal, provided most of the information about the various places we visited. Both ladies were recent graduates of the Brigham Young University branch in Oahu, Hawaii. They were extremely courteous and knowledgeable. Like many young people in this time of international economic downturn they have not been able to find full time employment.

We proceeded about two blocks to the front of the Catholic Cathedral de L’Immaculee Conception. This beautiful church is on the order of 100 years old and has survived many changes on the Island.



Near the church, the Chamber of Commerce had stationed a young lady dressed in what was called a “missionary gown”. The Christian missionaries who came to Polynesia in the early days thought the women

should wear clothes that covered more of their bodies. They devised a high necked robe that women could wear to more thoroughly cover their bodies. Shown below is Hanreva wearing her “missionary dress”.



We then walked about two blocks further on Rue du General de Gaulle Street to Bougainville Park. The part of Bougainville Park that faces Pomare Boulevard has two large artillery guns mounted there. They reflect the colonial time when occupying powers provided military protection for Tahiti. Here is a picture of the guns of Bougainville Park,



on the right.

Some kids were scampering around in a nearby playground and Barbara got their attention to take this picture on the right.







Part of Bougainville Park contains Papeete Creek which Hinerava said came from the Queen's Bath further ahead. The city of Papeete got its name, which means "water bucket", from the creek. We got this picture of us with Papeete Creek in the background.

We got a big surprise when we came to the Government Buildings that were located adjacent to Bougainville Park. Arrangements had been made

for us to enter the room where the Assembly of French Polynesia, with representatives from all the islands, meets to conduct legislative business. It would be equivalent to visiting the legislative chambers in the Capital Building of any state in the USA. The assembly was not in session so they led us in to a large, single story room filled with the desks of the legislators arranged in front of a raised section. We took a couple



pictures to show what the room looked like. The colorful flag of French Polynesia was displayed in front. Near the entrance we had taken a picture of the French Polynesian emblem which is shown on the left. Hinerava explained all the symbolism but all we could remember was that the two "J" shaped features represent the large twin hulled canoes used by early Polynesians in their fantastic voyages across the wide Pacific.



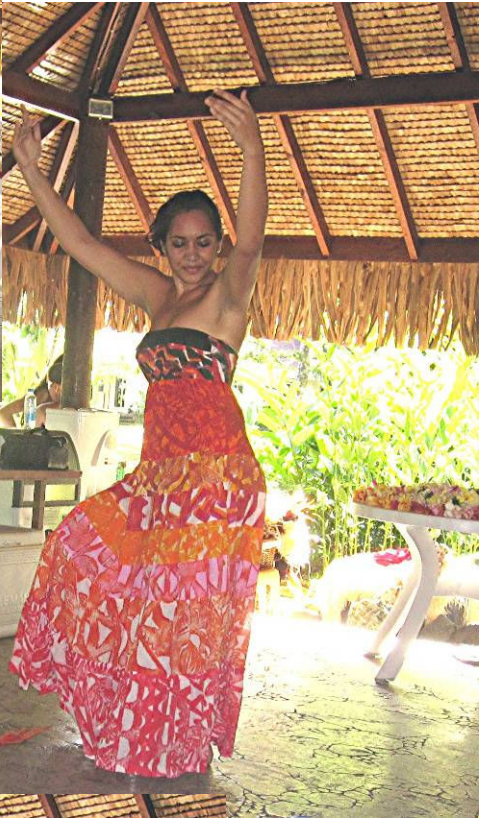
On a political note, Hinerava said that the citizens of French Polynesia elect their own representatives from the various islands. They also cast ballots for the prime minister of France in those elections.

After visiting the legislative building we moved on to the Queen's Bath which was a pool of crystal clear water with white carp swimming about. Back when Tahiti had a Queen this was her private pool. When the French took over French Polynesia, the Queen was deposed and the pond was used by the citizens as a public swimming pool. Eventually the public was banned and it became part of the Government Building Compound. In this picture, Hinerava is dipping her toes in the cool water of the Queen's Bath.

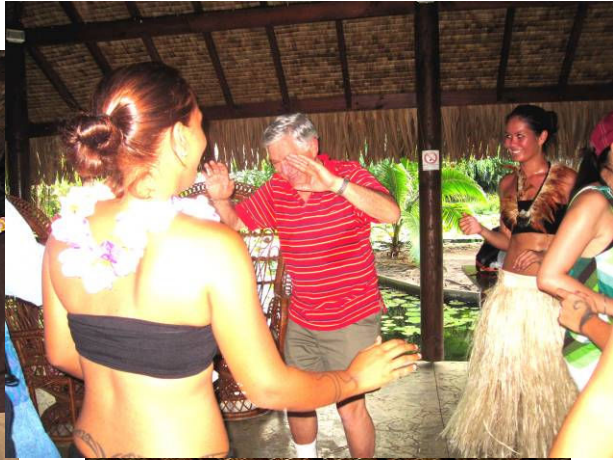


After viewing the Queen's Bath we were taken to an open pavilion where tables had been set up for us and other tourists who had taken the Chamber of Commerce Walking Tour of Papeete. We were treated to a wonderful demonstration of native Polynesian dances put on by accomplished young women in beautiful costumes. The following is a selection of photos that we took during the show.





After all that grace and beauty, the scene took a humorous turn when they asked the tourists in the audience to get up on stage and learn how to do a hula dance. After swallowing hard a few times we got up and tried to follow the instructions from the experts. Well----- here's how the scene developed!



We are just hopeful that the ancient "Hula Gods" don't take retribution on our souls.

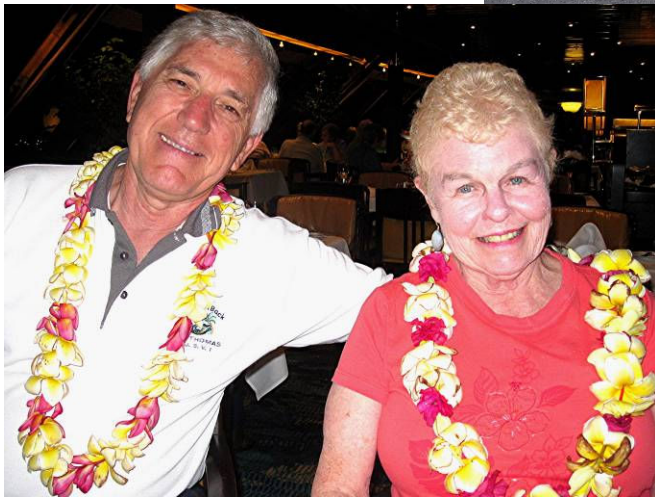
After the commotion died down from the tourist hula dancing everyone was given a beautiful flower lei that smelled wonderful. Then there were some group photos taken with the cast and some of the tourists, as shown below.



Just before we left, Odile, came by. We had met her back at the Market and lost track of her as we took the walking tour sponsored by the Papeete Chamber of Commerce. We really appreciated what she and her associates had done for us in conducting the Walking Tour of Papeete today. Here is a picture of this gracious lady.



After this wonderful experience we retraced our steps and returned to the Amsterdam. We had enjoyed ourselves immensely but the heat and humidity had taken a toll. We were looking forward to a long shower to refresh ourselves before dinner. With this in mind Orlin was glad to see the “Blue Hose of Drinking Water” hooked up to the Amsterdam and filling those fresh water tanks soon to be tapped.



When it was time for dinner the flower leis that we received at the end of the Walking Tour of Papeete still looked pretty good. We savored some more of our afternoon’s adventure by wearing the flower leis to dinner, still feeling kind of special.

**Tahitian Folkloric Show:** When the Amsterdam visits some ports it

is possible to schedule a performance of local performers who can show us some of the traditional dances and songs of the particular region we are in. Tonight was one of those times and the Tahitian dance team of “O Tahiti E” put on a show at 10pm in the Queen’s Lounge. The “O Tahiti E” cast was made up of 5 musicians, 5 male dancers and 10 female dancers.

They put on an energetic show with several elaborate costume changes for the ladies. Here are some photos of different folk dances they did.





The whole cast came on for the Grand Finale dance and O Tahiti E got a standing ovation from the Amsterdam audience.



This closed out another day on the cruise. We had packed a lot of activity into today's schedule while in Tahiti. During the night the Amsterdam will get underway and sail the short distance to the neighboring island of Moorea. We have heard wonderful things about the beauty of Moorea so we are looking forward to that.