

Sailing—Cuba et al 2016

log of May 5th to 25th 2016

My air travel to Saint Thomas, USVI went smoothly and I learned few things. I took a group van from the Fort Lauderdale airport to my hotel for Wednesday night since my continuing flight to Saint Thomas only flies once a day and had departed long ago. My hotel reservation was at a hotel which was 10 miles away (my mistake, I thought it was 2 miles) resulted in a 30 minute wait for taxi van and a 15 minute ride for \$22. (I was the first one dropped off so the ride was not extended for detours for others.) During the ride some of the other passengers were talking about the fact that Uber was again serving the Lauderdale airport. So the next morning I contacted Uber for a return ride. It was going to be 8 minutes for the car to arrive, so I quickly collected my things and I was able to watch the car approach the hotel along with an estimate of minutes to arrival, and the license plate number of the cab all on my cell phone screen. We were at the airport in 15 minute for \$12. Twice as good at half the price. The trip to Saint Thomas was on Spirit Air, the fare was moderate but a first bag was \$50, and a carry-on was \$55, no food or drink except as purchased. The Airbus was equipped with economy facilities which was fine, but the whole back half of the plane sounded like it was going to shake loose when the reverse thrusters were applied for braking in Saint Thomas. A little disconcerting, but I am going to sail back to Florida not fly.

The planned route for this sailing adventure is shown in the next pages. It starts in Crown Bay Marina, Charlotte Amalie, Saint Thomas, USVI, and continues to Ensenada Honda, Culebra, Puerto Rico then to Isabel Sagunda, Vieques, Puerto Rico, then to Marina Rico Chico, Fajardo, Puerto Rico, then to San Juan, Puerto Rico. A total distance of about 90 nautical miles.

The second portion is much longer with a start in San Juan, Puerto Rico, a stop in Puerto Plata, Dominican Republic, then Marina Hemingway near Havana, Cuba and finishes in Key Largo, Florida, a total distance of about 1,025 miles or about 8 days.

When I arrived Sue and Paul Roberts had arrived the day before and we meet in Crown Bay Marina in Saint Thomas. (shown below) as viewed from the high point on the island.



Lots of boats means lots of dinghy's

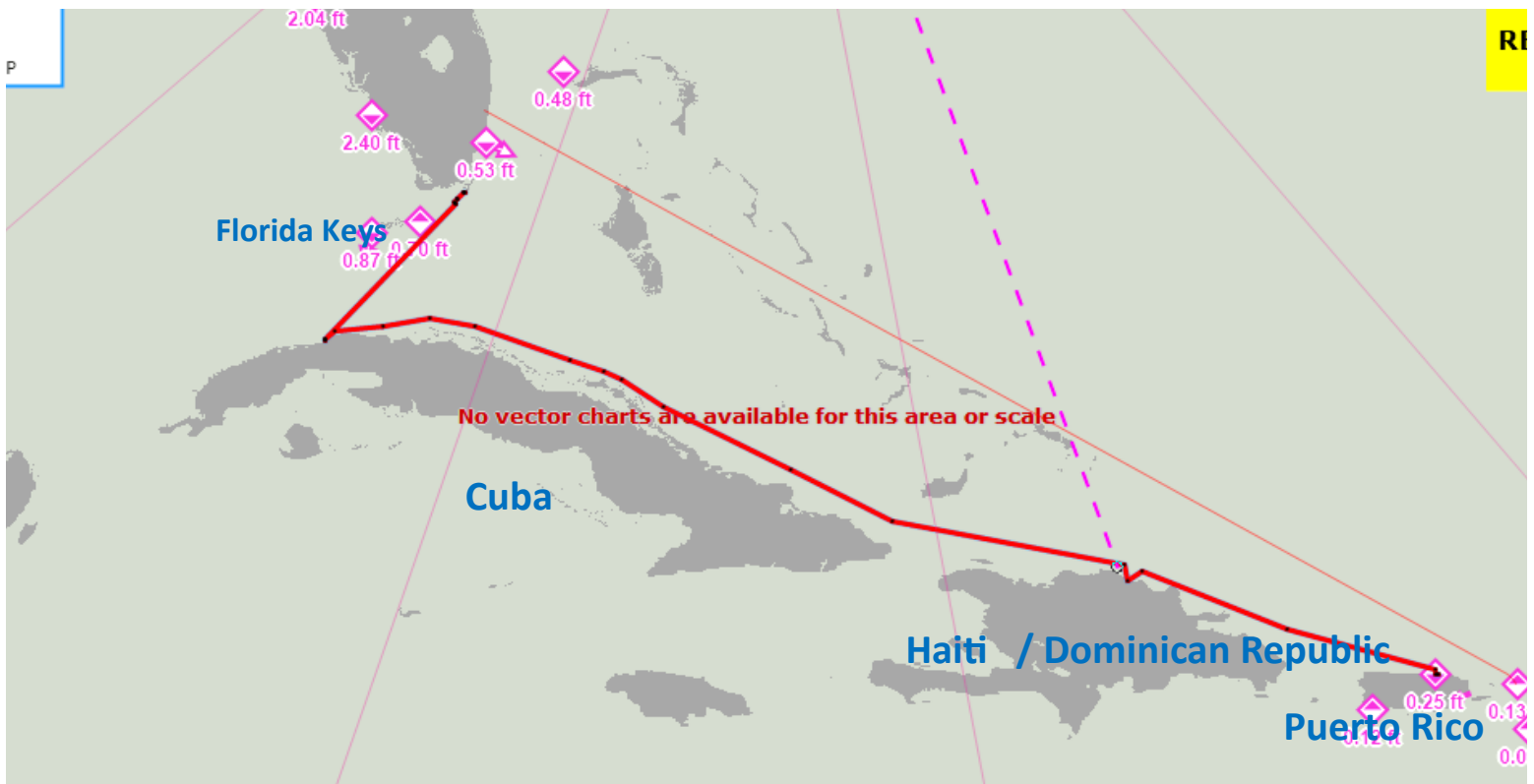


Eastern End Of Sailing Trip - as shown on Goggle Earth



Western End Of Sailing Trip - following the red line

as shown on Coastal Explorer— 1025 miles



The first portion of the log was sent via the internet connection at the café in Marina Rico Chico where we had dinner last night. A first class simple dinner with an A-1 waiter who was fluent in both English and Spanish.



(Google Earth view)

Saint Thomas Island, USVI is 12 miles long by 3 miles wide and is the most populous of the USV Islands with 52,000 residents.

We took a 2 hour taxi tour of Charlotte Amalie, Saint Thomas, USVI with several stops at high points (up to 1,500 feet) where we could look down on the hillside residences as well as the step roads and the beautiful water all around the island.

Some hillside houses were spectacular,



others,
not so
much.



Notice the beautiful clear water in Magens Bay on the north side of the island with the colors so discernable indicating sand, or coral or grass bottom by the water shades.



The US Virgin Islands are many islands and you can see some of them strung out in the picture below, with Saint John's in the far distances and to the right.





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From the hill top in Charlotte Amelie we were looking down on tree tops and I saw this ~2' long iguana among one of several that were visible.

Our next harbor after Charlotte Amelie was at Ensenada Honda, Culebra, Puerto Rico. Culebra is also re-

ferred to as part of the Spanish Virgin Islands, because a long time ago they were owned by Spain and were allegedly sold to the USA because they wanted to establish a naval base in the area in order to protect access to the Panama Canal. Since then there is still a small naval base in the area and all the nearby navigation marks are set for access to the naval base and numbered accordingly. In Culebra we found deep harbor with a little island near the end of the harbor and dropped anchor, along with another 15 sailboats.

At least one of the attractions was the protected harbor, but for us the big one was a very nice restaurant, that when we arrived for dinner had 15 dinghies tied up along the open wall, and just one table left for dining. A nice dinner with an A+ waiter was had by all. (Grouper for the author, as I recall).

The location of our boat is at the red arrow head shown at right with the island sheltering us to the S.E. ==>>





The picture above shows the Calubra harbor with several of our neighboring sailboats and the restaurant at the waters edge in aqua colored exterior and not visible in this picture but all identical aqua colored chairs at each table.



The picture above is a cruising view as we head toward our next harbor at Isabel Sagunda, Vieques, Puerto Rico

The ferry leaves Fajardo on its regular round trip to somewhere, three times a day.



Our 33' catamaran at the dock in Fajardo. We had engine overheat problems and with the help of a dock buddy found an excellent mechanic who diagnosed the problem and fixed a leaking cooling hose and a pin hole in the heat exchanger that was re-brazed, both of which were repaired in 30 hours and we were on our way west.



The skyline of San Juan, P.R. from a couple of miles off shore as we head for the inlet at El Moro light at the tip of the peninsula in Old San Juan. San Juan has a very protected harbor that is



about a 1/2 miles inland and the to left and a deep right. It contains freighters, cruise ships, a U.S. Coast Guard Station and 2 marinas plus a variety of other things.





Our boat is well equipped with an excellent selection of equipment but due to the fact that it has been in the southern Caribbean for several years under the primary care of a third party there are variety of items that don't work such as the 120 volt inverter, the wind instruments display and the blower-only function of the air conditioning. The generator had been removed since it didn't work and our primary navigation charts are Navionics on an iPad. They work well except they don't support any other instruments information such as radar, actual depth, or AIS. We also have a Garmin plotter but it is hard to read due to location and has a less friendly interface. The boat is intended to be a sailboat and therefore only carries 36 gallons of fuel which provides about 72 hours of operation when used as an assist to the sails.

The long leg of our planned journey is about 800 miles or about 150 hours depending on the wind conditions. Therefore we carried up to 45 gallons of fuel in jerry cans on deck to extend our range incase of light winds.

The first mate and the captain, Susan and Paul Roberts, Boulder residents and friends of many years. Susan is a friend of Dulcie from many years of Mahjong playing.



We will have a new first mate as we depart San Juan. Paul Hubble (picture coming later) will be joining us for the 1,000 miles to Cuba and north to Key Largo. He will be arriving this evening from AZ, his home.

The 2nd mate and the captain in Saint Thomas.

