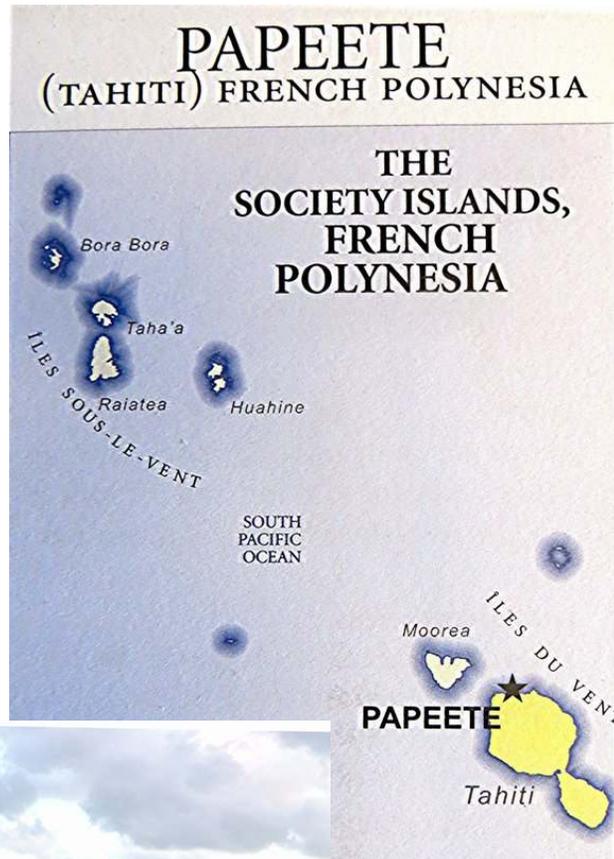


**1/27/13 - Day 22 – Papeete, Tahiti Island:** The city of Papeete is located on the northwest coast of the island of Tahiti, as shown on the right.



We arrived in the harbor at Papeete about 7am. Although it wasn't raining, there was a thick cloud cover and the scene was rather dark and brooding as we looked toward shore.



However, soon the sun was out and we had a bright, warm and humid day. We approached our dock which was located near the Oceanic Cruise Line ship called Marina.



There were also some French Navy ships and a floating drydock tied up nearby.



We had planned to just walk around the part of Papeete near the ship and revisit some of the sites we had seen on previous trips to Tahiti. We had the handy map of Papeete provided by the Amsterdam and that was sufficient to get us where we wanted to go. The map is shown below with a couple notations added to point out the location of the popular Casino Super Market and common tourist name for the local farmers and craft market.



The tourist industry is an important part of the local economy so an energetic Tahitian drum band was on the pier to greet passengers as they left the ship. The men really knew how to use their drums and they could



be heard for blocks around, sounding like thunder in the distance.



The street leading from the pier provides an inviting shaded tree lined path. We used this route to get the Visitors Center which is a wonderful place to start a visit to Papeete.

Besides information for the newly arriving tourists there was a nice display of Polynesian souvenirs. All sorts of wood carvings, colorful cloth and jewelry were on display. In this picture on the right some of the displays are shown and the Amsterdam is visible in the background to indicate how close and convenient the visitor's center is for tourists arriving on cruise ships.



In addition to tons of souvenirs, the Visitor's Center also provided entertainment. A band and singers performed while men and women dressed in Tahitian costumes showed us traditional Tahitian dances.

The male dancer was particularly



energetic. He swept one of the lady onlookers into an impromptu version of his native dance.

We left the Visitor's Center and headed for the Farmer's and Craft Market that was just a block away, as shown on the map above. Lining the narrow street to the market was an apartment building that provided an interesting display of how concrete could be used to carry out a Polynesian theme. The concrete balcony railings gave the appearance of palm thatching, as shown on the right.



The Farmer's and Craft Market is located in a large two story steel building. One of the entrances is shown on the left. This was a Sunday morning and the market closed at noon so tourists and local people were out to get their shopping done early.

In the part of the Farmer's Market dedicated for food items there was a glorious display of farm produce as well as fish and meat items. A sampling of what we saw is shown below.

The largest yellow spherical fruit shown on the right is a breadfruit.



The local currency is the French Pacific franc (XPF). While we visited the exchange rate was 90XPF for \$1 USD. The large melon with spikes on it (we think it is called a "sour soap") is selling for 200 XPF or \$2.22 USD.

Fish and meat were also for sale in the market. It was obvious that the local people used this market for their food supply.





These little guys on the left weren't for sale but were tucked away while their owner took care of business selling farm produce.

We walked up some steel steps to the

upper level where the jewelry, wood carving and fabric shops seemed to be concentrated.



**NO-NO**, Barbara, no drums this time. The last time we visited this market we bought a fairly large drum but we decided to minimize souvenir purchases this time around.

This large carved horn, shown below, looked like an elaborate Australian didgeridoo. Grandson, Andrew, has learned to play a didgeridoo but we decided to pass up the opportunity to take this one home to him.



We finished our browsing through the market and went out through the exit on Colette Street. That is when we discovered the Casino Super Market.

Today was Sunday and most of the stores were closed. The Casino Super Market was more popular than ever with cruise passengers because it was one of the few stores open for business this Sunday. It was recommended as a source of all those miscellaneous items that seem so essential but are hard to find in some of the remote ports of call.

We didn't need anything at the Casino Super Market but we noted its location and passed on this information to

cruise passengers we met on the street that were desperately looking for it.



We walked down the main street of Rue du General de Gaulle and passed the pristine looking Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception, shown on the right.

We continued on down the street until we came to the Bougainville Park. This is a park dedicated to an early French explorer named Bougainville. He was the first European discoverer of Tahiti. Bougainville managed to get here before Captain Cook, the more famous British explorer.



The Bougainville Park has a nice stream running through it and cool shaded pathways that we like to visit. This stream, on the left, has some connection to the city name of Papeete which is a Tahitian term meaning “water from a basket”.

It is a small but beautiful park in a busy city.



We spent some time looking for a prominent sign on a public or commercial building that clearly indicated we were in the city of Papeete. We needed this evidence for the visit of Barbara's library card to Papeete. Alas, even the post office and other government buildings didn't proudly proclaim residence in Papeete, Tahiti. We have found that in some cultures, unlike the USA, there apparently is no urgent need to clearly identify public buildings as belonging to a specific town or state. Perhaps they feel that limited public funds are better spent elsewhere rather than on a substantial sign.

Anyway, we eventually found a wooden street sign that had "**Ville de Papeete**" painted on it. We took a picture of the library card for the record, as shown on the right.



With the temperature climbing and no relief from the humidity, at this point we turned our steps back towards the Amsterdam. The gangway to the Amsterdam was a welcome sight when it came into view.



At 4:00pm there was a special show in the Queen's Lounge. It was a Tahitian folkloric show featuring a troupe of talented Polynesian musicians, singers and dancers known as "O Tahiti E".

They put on a wonderful show of non-stop dancing which involved innumerable costume changes and great dancing skill. It was not possible to get good photos from our location in the audience but the following give some notion of what O Tahiti E presented to us.



Anyone who has seen women Tahitian dancers could tell you that the above scene would be better viewed as a video but we have to be satisfied with still pictures here.



A favorite among many of us was this young lady who had gone to the trouble of having a tattoo that simulated a bikini (both fore and aft). Engineers in the crowd marveled at how she was able to keep her grass skirt so precisely positioned through the performance.

Near the end of the show the performers came down into the audience and “recruited” some volunteers from the passengers. This led to a humorous scene as we saw familiar faces climb bravely onto the stage and do their best to mimic what they had just seen the dancers do.

The lady dancing in the picture below made us all proud as she was nearly perfect in following the lead of her Tahitian dancer.



The show came to an end and we all gave our visitors a standing ovation. They delivered a folkloric show that we would all remember.

The Amsterdam got underway about 6pm, headed for the nearby island of Moorea. We will be there tomorrow for an opportunity to explore that beautiful island.