

Summer 1977

[This story of the Burrows' most extensive vacation ever was written by Betty Burrow. The family camped in a motorhome while traveling throughout western Canada and up to Alaska. On the trip were Betty, her husband George (often referred to as "Pete"), their daughter Margaret (sometimes called "Peg"), and their sons Paul, Steve, and David. Betty took along a portable electric typewriter, on which she typed this travelogue. It was typed onto a thick packet of smelly, pressure-sensitive NCR carbonless copy sheets that had been pilfered from the Area 16 media center where her husband George worked. The copies were sent to her penpals around the world. To save money on postage margins of about a quarter inch were used, there were no spaces between paragraphs, and there were frequent uses of abbreviations and the ampersand symbol. Betty's daughter Margaret kept a copy of the letter, which was found in her home after Margaret's death. Forty-one years after the travelogue was originally written Betty's son David transcribed badly faded NCR sheets into an electronic version. The Courier font is used to provide the feel of the original typewritten version, but spacing has been added for greater readability. Emphasis has also been added on the daily headers, modern font embellishments have been added, and some typographical errors have been corrected. Betty added handwritten comments each time she mailed off installments of the letter, which will appear in a *script* font. The header for each day begins with a reading from the motorhome's odometer.]

3630 -- Friday, June 17

George and I were up at 5:15 this morning, and I washed my hair and dried clothes, vacuumed the house, and generally closed it up for six weeks, and by 7a.m. we were off for our six week vacation. We had to go past KKSI, Steve's radio station, so that he could leave some papers that he had brought home to work on. The day was partly cloudy, and despite Iowa's dire water situation, the corn crop still looks good.

It's good to be on our way. We're all tired, and there has been a lot going on. Margaret and Paul came down June 6<sup>th</sup>, and of course Margaret and I had to go out for coffee often, as well as having some others in. She had lots of sewing to do, and I made four skirts, so the house was a really chaotic mess right up until 9:30 last night. That's why I was vacuuming this morning—or rather why George was.

Paul came home not feeling well, and he's still having quite a lot of upper abdominal pain. Dr. Scott says that it's an inflammatory arthritic condition of some of the muscles, and of course he's on Indocin. I vow that he sees any member of our family coming into his office, and starts writing out a prescription for Indocin. I hope that Paul gets to feeling better soon. My knee is still just about useless, and I'm walking with a lot of difficulty and stiff-legged. That complicates my hips and back, and it's a mess. Good thing we'll be sitting a lot this holiday! Lola, from across the street, is also under the weather, and my friend, Joyce, had a car accident—seems as if one and all are under the weather in some way or other.

George has been spending this week up at the University of Iowa, taking some sort of course in media. He came home last night, and we finished packing the motorhome, and all of us left with him this morning. We got to Harv and Max's about 8:10 and parked in their alley. Pete scooted right off to his classes, without breakfast. The rest of us ate and sort of tidied up the last minute things, and I got a pot roast, potatoes, carrots, and onions ready for the oven. I'm taking supper up to George's folks' for tonight. We spent the rest of the morning in talking with Max, and we all had lunch with them after G. and Harvey came home.

It was still cloudy when we left Iowa City, but no rain then. Creeks and rivers are very low, almost dry in places. For a while it got terribly cloudy with wicked lightning, and around Brandon we ran into a regular cloudburst—so bad that we pulled off the road for half an hour. It made it 4:15 when we got to the folks', and Margaret, Paul, and David drove on up to Cresco in Dad's car to do some last minute things up at Margaret's house. I got my roast in the oven so we were ready to eat when the kids got back at 7:30. Jin, and Janet and Garth got there before we ate, and Bill came for the evening too. I had wanted to get in a visit with Hazel, but she was busy that evening.

3829 -- Saturday, June 18

It was 11a.m. before we left the folks' this morning. George fixed some faucets and a toilet there, and then when we went out to leave, he found that there was some

generator problem. Luckily the motorhome has three batteries, so it didn't stall us for long. It was a lovely day to travel. Paul did his first driving of the trip, and I bit my fingernails, figuratively, at least. Wonder why I ride so easily when G. drives, and need tranquilizers, again figuratively speaking, when the kids do? At that, Dr. Scott did give me some Librium just in case all those mountains in our future get the better of me.

We got to Marcus to our friends, Mel and Margaret Dorr, about five, and Margaret had a good supper for us and for their Tom, Ann, and Allison—tossed salad, cold cuts, cheeses, breads, and a good ice cream dessert. AND some yummy sugar cookies. I forgot to mention that their Kurt was also there, and Phillip came in later on. The Dorrs are an easy family to visit, and it was a pleasant evening.

**4025 -- Sunday, June 19<sup>th</sup>**

Today is Father's Day—also Dale's birthday and Dale and Lois' wedding anniversary. We got up late, talked with Mel and Margaret, and Margaret had a delicious brunch for us all about 10:30. Then it was more talk until we left for Sioux City. It does seem to us that it's greener around here as if they had had more rain, but according to everyone out this-a-way, it's been spotty. The Dorrs were telling us about a farmer in southern Minnesota who plows with horses—one dry as a bone and the other wet. Guess that's just about the way the rain has come this year. We also got a kick out of their talking of the new Catholic Monsignor in Marcus—guess he's quite a ladies' man. They call the rectory "The Holy Name Hilton".

We got to Macky's in the early afternoon and had a good time with her. John and Jan and Jason came over for supper, and they didn't stay long because they were in the process of moving. We went over to see their new house, which is very nice—an older home with a graciousness about it. We also stopped at Joyce's so Margaret got to see that house too. They both have lovely homes.

**4081 -- Monday, June 20**

We all went into Macky's this morning about 7:15 and talked with her until she had to leave for work. G. and the boys all took the camper into Sioux City to look for a Dodge dealer to work on the generator problem, and Margaret and I did our laundry at Macky's. Then I took a nap and she sewed—buttons and hems and such that hadn't gotten done before we left. We finally ate a sandwich at about 1:30, thinking that G. and the boys would have eaten downtown, and they came in almost immediately. George was disgusted with the Dodge dealer who did nothing for the generator. He had decided that it was the isolator, but he couldn't fix it. G. came back to Macky's, worked 15 minutes, by-passed the isolator, and got the generator working. We all loaded up and started off about 2:20. We got into S. Dakota almost immediately and made good time going up I 29. I got a kick out of the sign by one little town—"Home of friendly people and one old grouch". That's Elk Point, S. Dakota! We drove on to Arlington, S.D. and camped in a pleasant little city park—goulash and popovers for supper.

**4262 -- Tuesday, June 21**

It was cloudy and cool when we left camp this morning about 7:30, but no rain then. It looks as if they've had too much rain around here—water standing in the fields, crops drowned out, etc. We've come into the area of lots fewer trees, windbreaks—also hail-damaged corn,

We stopped at the little town of DeSmet for breakfast and to buy groceries, and we looked around some for the places of Laura Ingalls Wilder fame. If any of you know the books, this is where the "Little House" books took place. Little Town on the Prairie, On [actually "By"] the Shores of Silver Lake, These Happy Golden Years, etc. It was raining by then, so we didn't look at much. I understand that they have a weekend pageant through the summer, and that would be interesting to see.

It rained most of the afternoon, but was just cloudy and windy when we stopped for the night at Sykeston [actually spelled "Sikeston"] City Park on Lake Hiawatha. This is in N. Dakota. Margaret cooked supper—"frizzled" ham, fried potatoes, green beans, etc.

**4591 -- Wednesday, June 22**

It was 7:30 again when we left this morning, and we drove through the town first to look it over. It's totally cloudy again this morning, and we drove through occasional rain. Luckily it was a bit drier when we stopped at Rugby, N. Dakota where they have a monument to the geographical center of the N. American continent. The boys noticed a small motorhome with an odd license plate which David immediately recognized as coming from the Northwest Territories. He even took a picture of the plate. The people were from Yellowknife and are heading for Nova Scotia—they said it was shorter to come down into the U.S. to make the trip than to go straight across Canada. They passed on some information to us about traveling in their country—mostly the same old things about covering gas tanks, propane tanks, headlights, etc. They told about a road up there called "The Sixty-Mile Highway" or "The Top of the World Highway" which goes along the tips of the mountains. The woman said she wouldn't advise anyone to go on it, but I have a sinking feeling that my family has already included it in their—and my—itinerary. I have no courage and have never been one to climb mountains just because they're there. Of all stupid reasons, that seems to me the worst. So if modern science, and the good old bulldozers have made a better, lower, road than the one on the mountain peaks, why not take it? Still I have a feeling that I'll fight a losing battle. Maybe that's what the tranquilizers are for.

We drove on to the International Peace Garden on the Manitoba—N. Dakota border. We were there two years ago, but Paul had never seen them. Quite a difference from the first visit. Then everything was in full bloom, and even a bit dried up. Today they were just setting out a lot of plants, and things were fresh and green. We went through Canadian customs immediately after that, and our agent really looked the m. home over with an eagle eye. We had quite a lot of meat in the freezer, and he gazed at that for quite a bit, but in the end, he just sent us on our way. Good thing he didn't look under the seats in the smaller dinette—they're loaded with canned goods of all kinds. Not that we tried to hide them, but just the same, we're glad he didn't look there. At least we weren't hiding liquor or cigarettes or guns. Or drugs. Except for Indocin and such stuff.

We drove on a long ways to Estevan, Sas. To Woodlawn Regional Park. It was VERY full, and we camped practically right on a driveway. It was also very noisy, but we were right by a water hydrant and were able to fill up our water tanks with good water. What we had gotten before looked rusty, and I never did trust it.

I had put meatloaf and baked potatoes in the oven to cook as we drove along that afternoon, so supper was ready right after we stopped. The juice and frease from the meat had slopped against the edges of the pans, and we had to soak and soak them to get them cleaned up. We CAN cook as we go down the road, but only oven things. I also find that we're limited in what we can do as we ride along. When the motorhome was quiet and solid on our driveway at home, I had visions of doing all kinds of things as we traveled along. Actually, it's a bit too bumpy to do much that's close. Margaret manages some needlepoint, and I'm working on an afghan for her. I've done several squares—figure that I must do 1½ a day to have the 64 squares done by the time we get home. Not that I'm going to be concerned if I don't! This crocheting with four ply yarn goes easily, and I can look around and see the scenery too. Margaret and Paul help drive, but so far I haven't done any of it.

**4901 -- Thursday, June 23**

We left camp at 7:15 this morning, only to find that it's an hour earlier, local time. We drove into Estevan to buy gas, but nothing was open at that hour. G. cruised around to find the "cheapest"—none of that description, but he did find it for 83.9 for the imperial gallon. We parked on the drive and waited for him to open up at 7—got the m. home in order and started breakfast while we waited. It takes time for six of us to wash up, brush teeth, the men to shave and all, in the tiny bathroom. Still it's SO much

better than the little camper with NO bath at all. Wonder how we did without indoor plumbing all those earlier years of camping?

It's poor country around Estevan—lots of mining. Later it turned into grazing land and farms with wheat, rape, alfalfa. It looks odd to us to see a lot of the land unfenced since most of Iowa farms have fences. Highway 18 which we were following was horrible—narrow and bumpy. We saw several school buses, so schools must still be in session here. This is a treeless land except for around farms. It looks so different from two years ago when all the wheat was ripe and golden. Now it's a pretty green.

The road generally is straight, and you can see for miles. A curve is something unusual, and everyone yells "Here comes a curve." Or a car since we met very little traffic. It reminds me of Wyoming or Montana. The huge grain pools dominate the landscape whenever we get near civilization of any kind. We're seeing some sage and juniper, but it's large and well-watered as yet.

Our reason for taking this back country road wasn't just to see the scenery, but because it leads to the little town of Gladmar, Sask., where my penpal Dorothy Varley lives.

*This is the penpal who didn't want us to visit her.*

I think I wrote you that G. insisted that we at least go through the town, and we did. We got there about 9:30 and spent an hour or more—had breakfast parked in front of the Masonic Lodge—a battle scarred board building. We all went into the tiny post office which was the front part of a house, and I mailed some postcards from there, just to prove to some doubting Thomases that we really really HAD been there. All five of the others also ruined their cameras shooting pictures of me in front of a Gladmar sign, again to prove that WE WERE THERE. "The Store", which Dorothy mentions in her letters was a nice grocery-cum-everything-else with a very friendly lady clerk. I bought some pot scrubbers (for those meat loaf pans), and walked around "the store" to clinch it in my memory. Quite a few people had gathered in front of the post office as we got ready to leave, commenting on the motorhome and saying "Iowa" in a pretty, lilting way. I waved at them from the back window, and they all waved at me—what if one of them had been Dorothy? I wonder if she'll hear of the strangers from Iowa who passed through? We looked her up in the phone directory, but she lives on a farm, and as far apart as some of these are, we thought it best not to ask where she lives. Guess I'm chicken, because while I'd like to see her home, she did say not to come and see her. It's a tiny, tiny town. All the buildings are wood and a bit unkempt and poor looking, although there were nice gardens. The streets are all unpaved, and all roads around are graveled. None of this would have bothered us a bit if she had said "welcome", but she didn't. At least we've seen her town!

Well, enough of that. We're camped tonight at Blackstrap Lake and Park, and it's simply lovely. A big lake, lots of trees, and just now one of the loveliest sunsets. I'm thinking of bed, now that I have this letter started. The boys are toasting marshmallows, and I should go and join them for a bit. Other than getting this travelogue going, I haven't done a thing this evening. Margaret cooked rice and pork chops for supper—my turn tomorrow. We're alternating, in general, although I'll take over if there's something special that she wants to do. It is nice to have her to do some of the cooking.

**5222 -- Friday, June 24**

Off at 7, but it was a slow start since we stopped at the sanitation dump and also to take on a load of water. It was a pretty day as we drove up the interstate to Saskatoon. Our literature says that "Saskatoon is an island of parkland in a sea of wheat", and it is a lovely place. We thought of Eileen Noyes as we went through, wishing her luck on her final exam at 2 this afternoon. I read somewhere that Saskatoon was founded by Ontario teetotalers as a temperance colony, but the Saskatoon berry which gave the city its name long ago fermented into wine. The same literature says, "Saskatchewan is a province of limitless horizons, breath-taking sunsets, and unforgettable scenery. It is a scenic contrast of prairie and parkland."

Sask. Is a big province, over 750 miles from north to south and 335 miles wide. It's a dry climate with lots of sunshine—temperatures over 100 degrees F. in summer and minus 58 degrees F. in winter. Its capital is Regina, which was originally named "pile of bones" from the huge piles of buffalo bones left from hunts, which in 1888 was renamed for Victoria.

To help fill up the place, the Canadian government offered free land to one and all in 1872, and people came from all over the world. Law and order came with them, as the north west mounted police was formed—they're still trained at Regina. Over half of the improved land in Canada is in Sask., and it produces 60% of the wheat, some of the world's finest. And now, boys and girls, you've had your social studies lesson for the day.

The country changed some as we drove northward, with less wheat and more trees. We saw some pretty homes as we neared Lloydminster, and many with lovely flowers around them. Of course all the flowers are earlier than at home, and the peonies are still blooming here. Ours were gone a month ago.

We got to Lloyd. About one and checked in at Weaver Park, a nice city park with a swimming pool and museum. Once that was done, we drove around town some—it's a very nice one—located the Noyes' home, and then found a laundromat. The kids all went to the post office to buy some current Canadian stamps, and the man there said it was his biggest sale in three days. Meanwhile, G. and I did the five huge machinesful of laundry to the tune of \$4.50. That's going to count up before the six weeks trip is over! We went on to a nice shopping mall where there was a big Safeway store, and I went up one aisle and down another, seeing the difference in products and in prices. I also called Jeanette Noyes to let her know we were in town and would see them on Sat., and then we went back to the motorhome to load, or overload, the fridge. I have the feeling that I'm stepping off the back of beyond, once we leave the Edmonton area, and so I load up on groceries, on the theory that they would be less expensive here than way up north. Prices are high compared to Iowa.

Supper was barbecued ribs and mashed potatoes, and we were just lazy after that. Finally we made up the beds, even though it was early, and George and Steve went over for showers. I was just collecting my own paraphernalia to head that way too when the kids said that a car was stopping by us. I had thought and said that the Noyes might be coming out, and sure enough, that's who it was—Allan and Eileen, 16 year old Greg and 13 year old Jeanette, and little one year old Wendy, their grand daughter. We crowded in—our kids and Jeanette on the back bed, Eileen and I on the small bed, and the men all crowded up in front. Wendy danced among us, and it was a delight to get acquainted with her, and with them all. They were all easy and friendly to talk with, and when they left I told everyone that I surely picked nice penpals. They said, "You pick nice ones—and an interesting one." The last a not-too-oblique reference to Gladmar. I'm getting ashamed of our attitude toward her.

**5441 -- Saturday, June 25**

We all slept late this morning and woke up to a bright, cool day, most welcome after yesterday's beastly heat. About 10:15 we went into Noyes' and spent all day long with them, and a MOST enjoyable day too. They have a really nice home, very much like ones in the U.S., and it was all shining clean too—quite a comment since Eileen hadn't gotten home from the Univ. at Saskatoon until 7 the night before. Jeanette and Greg had done the cleaning, and they'd done a fine job. The oldest son, Roger, is working away from home for the summer, but Cynthia, their married daughter, came for lunch, and also her husband George and little Wendy. Lunch was very good, served cafeteria style, just as I would probably do it at home—good sliced ham, potato salad, lettuce salad, cheese-stuffed celery, pickles, and for dessert a good cake that Jeanette had made, cookies, and Saskatoon berries. I was especially glad to taste the berries since we'd read quite a little about them. They reminded me faintly of blueberries, but not really. Cynthia said that they were better in pie, and I can see that they would be good that way too.

The younger ones took a tour of Lloyd. In the early afternoon, and later on Allan took G. and me, Margaret, Eileen, and Wendy for a drive around town. It really is a nice city—about 11,000 population, although it appears larger. It's the biggest place for a good many miles, so I imagine would draw people from a long ways away. Homes were being built everywhere. I just don't know when I've ever seen as much building underway. The houses are much like ours, but with many fewer garages, or so it seemed to me. Eileen said that there are usually outside outlets to plug in the cars at night, and I'm sure they would be needed.

Back at home, we decided to have a wiener roast in a park just outside of town, and I was a lot of fun even though the weather had turned windy and cold with some rain. We were under a shelter, though, and we really did have a good time. The boys went to see "Rocky" right after that, and the rest of us went back to the house for more talk. I hated to say good-bye to Eileen and Al, as well as Jeanette and Greg, and I do hope that we see them again sometime. I DO indeed pick the nicest penpals—and their families! And now we're off tomorrow for a day or so in Edmonton, and then the N.W. Territories come next!

*To be continued—*

*Monday*

*We're still in Edmonton, at noon, so we won't make any time today. My family can NOT see a museum quickly. David is back too, and getting lunch, so we'll at least be ready to eat.*

*It's been a good trip so far, although we broke our right mirror coming over a too-narrow bridge this morning.*

*I'll write again, and hopefully send another installment of the travelogue.*

*Love,*

*Betty*

**5449 -- Sunday, June 26**

Time for another round on this travelogue, and I guess I left off when we had finished visiting the Noyes and were about ready to leave Lloyd. It didn't take long to leave Sask. once we'd left Weaver Park. Did I mention that Lloydminster is a border city? Half is in Sask. and the other half in Alberta. I'm not sure just what they do about taxes and such, but it's seemed to work for a good many years. As we went into Alberta, it was over flat land that turned into more rolling land with occasional lakes. It didn't take long to get the 180 miles to Edmonton, and since it was Sunday we got through the city easily. We went south of the city to the Klondike Creek Campground since it was the only one with electricity. We'd run our batteries down some and needed the electricity for one night. The campground cost \$7.50—more than we had been paying, but you can't always choose.

Once we had eaten lunch, we drove back in and found old Ft. Edmonton. George and Margaret and Paul spent four solid hours there—Steve and David somewhat less than that, but they all voted it well worth seeing. I'd had ham and baked beans in the oven during the sight-seeing, and it didn't take long to finish up supper once we got back to camp. I did a lot of typing on the first travelogue since we'd paid for the electricity that I used. Usually I type with the batteries, if they're well up.

The longest day of the year is just past, and it stays light up here SO much longer than it does at home in midsummer. There was a beautiful sunset tonight at 10:30, and it's light again by four. We've been told that it stays light lots longer further on north, and they say that the long days keep people up and going. Then they sleep for a

bit when they're tired and are up again and active. We need blackout curtains these nights in the motorhome.

**5645 -- Monday, June 27**

No early start this morning. Once we got up, we drove down near the camp store and did the laundry so that wouldn't accumulate TOO fast. The kids slicked up the camper and got breakfast, including blueberry muffins, which are a favorite. Then we left to visit the Provincial Museum, and that took us RIGHT through the heart of Edmonton. There was an awful lot of traffic, and the route took us over a narrow-too narrow-bridge, and all of a sudden we heard a terrible noise. My first thought, and I guess that of all of us, was that the step had broken off. We have one that lets down by a handle inside the m. home, and we've been known to forget to pull in the step when we start off. This though wasn't the step but the right-hand mirror. George figures out afterwards that something rather small had protruded from the bridge, because that's the sort of dent it made in the mirror frame. The mirror shattered-scared Steve half to death because he was sitting right by the right mirror.

Edmonton is an attractive city-close to half a million in population, but I think that like Topay, it "just grew". At least its highway system did. It just doesn't seem to be geared to all the modern traffic. The museum was an attractive place, and everyone seemed to think it was very much worth seeing. One thing that I noticed was that there were electric plug-ins at each parking space in the parking lot. That's something you wouldn't see down our way!

David, of course, did the museum quicker than most, so he had lunch ready when everyone assembled. Once we'd finished that, we drove on to the suburb of St. Albert and got the mirror fixed and mounted. I think George felt a lot better with that back in place. It was 3:15 before we left the Edmonton area-out into flat country with good-looking wheat farms and quite a few trees. I meant to mention before all the campers and motorhomes that we've seen in northern Sask. and Alberta. They're just everywhere-on the roads, parked at homes, and of course for sale in lots.

We began to leave the larger farms behind and came into forest country-rather mixed forest, with a few pines, lots of poplar-type trees, tamarack, etc. There were occasional good-sized lakes. We made good time, although there was quite a lot of traffic on the highway, and we stopped for the night at Aasineau, at one of the Alberta Transportation Campsites. These are provided free, have no amenities-just a clearing hacked out of the woods, perhaps with picnic tables and usually a good-sized kitchen or shelter house where you can cook if you like. Just as we were getting supper, another camper drove in, and believe it or not, it was from Iowa, from Boone County. The world IS small! We said hello, and then everyone went in, to duck mosquitos and of course to get supper. It was spaghetti tonight, and a huge loaf of French bread.

Fate seems to dog us-make up our beds early, and we have company. We had the big back bed made, and I had washed up and was in my nightie and robe when the couple from the Iowa camper came over. It turned out they were the Carl Danielsons from Ogden, Iowa, and they asked if we knew Dr. Bob robinson who is our minister in Mt. Pleasant. He had been their minister some time ago in Ogden-didn't I say the world was small? We talked till after 10, with everyone scratching away. Sounds awful, but we're into the BIG mosquito country. There are also some miserable things called "no-see-'ems" and they bite as badly as mosquitoes. They're practically infinitesimal in size, but oh how they bite! They're called this because you "no see 'em, but you feel 'em". Before we went to bed, we sprayed the vents on the top of the m. home & closed most of the windows. The darned things come in through the screens.

**5840 -- Tuesday, June 28**

We were off shortly after 7 on an overcast morning with occasional sprinkles of rain. I begin to feel as if we're really getting north now. It's not pretty country, as we think of it, with bits of agriculture here & there among the trees. Tiny little houses, or maybe trailer houses, with a few out-buildings-not the prosperous Iowa farms

that we're accustomed to. There are a lot of abandoned farms, too, & always in the background encroaching on the farm, there were the trees.

We're following Highway 2, which is a good highway. It follows the route of the Klondike gold miners, heading for the Yukon back in '98. The journey took a year, back in those days, and many of them didn't survive the trip. This part of Alberta is called "The Land of the Midnight Twilight" by the information books—seems to me that it must have taken sturdy, hardy folk to settle & farm this country. Most are Scots, French, German, & Ukrainian. It would be a lonesome life living in these tiny farms with miles of forest around.

I might mention the Ukrainians who came to this part of the world. I don't know just what drove them from Russia, or why they came to this part of Canada, but they're still here & have left their marks. One of those marks is their churches which you can recognize by the onion-shaped domes that they have. Some of the tiny wooden churches around here have the domes painted silver. Some of them have the regular cross with the two cross pieces, and then some have an extra, slanted cross piece. This was to keep the devil from climbing up the church & steeple. One other interesting thing that we saw in regard to the Ukrainians was back a ways, in the little village of Vegreville. There they have the world's largest Easter egg, and it's really big. It towers up above the little park that it's in, & it's painted black, silver, & gold. Quite a sight!

We stopped for breakfast in the nice little town of High Prairie. It's under 3,000, but seems larger. It had nice homes and well-kept yards. The farms, as we left town, were somewhat bigger again, with the forest still at the fringes. I wish you could see the rape-seed fields. They are solid gold and beautiful. The farms stay larger as we get nearer to the Peace River area—looks quite civilized at times!

We stopped for a while in Peace River & drove all around—it's a beautiful setting with the wide Peace River meeting the Smoky & Heart Rivers. From the bluffs high above the town, you can see the two confluences. From there they flow another 2,000 miles to empty into the Arctic Ocean. The town itself is down in the Peace River valley, & you come swooping down 900 feet from the plains above. We got gas in Peace River & a few groceries—this is the last "big" place for a long time.

The weather had cleared earlier in the day, but it began to rain again in the later afternoon, & it made driving hard. Things worsened all around—the pavement ended, as we had known it would do as we got to the Meander River, & the gravel road was AWFUL!!! Road crews were working, gravel & rocks were piled everywhere, & we crawled along—me wondering why I'd left civilization. We missed the Transportation Campsite at Meander, & had to go another 50 miles in all this mess to the Hay River Campsite, which we were MOST grateful to reach—despite our huge mosquito welcomers.

It was my turn to get supper, so I'd had a pork roast & vegetables cooking as we drove along—inched along? I'd made an oven apple dessert, too, which we wolfed down once we arrived. There were three other campers there—all the same kind of campers & all from British Columbia, evidently traveling together. They spoke a foreign language of some kind, although we didn't get to talk with them & couldn't identify what we heard. After they'd eaten, someone played some sprightly music on an instrument which we couldn't identify—we thought that perhaps it was a balalaika. Is that the right spelling? [It was.] We enjoyed the music anyway.

**6225 -- Wednesday, June 29**

It was another dreary, overcast day when we left this morning, & I felt truly at the back of beyond, which I mentioned before. The road crews had worked all night with their heavy equipment going right past the campground, & it was muddy and terribly rough with signs saying a maximum of 25 miles per hour. The scenery was unimpressive through the murky day—low, scrubby trees mostly. For a few miles the road turned to pavement, & we were grateful for every inch, but unfortunately it was back to muddy, horrible driving. We made one stop at Steen River for gas, which was over 80¢ a gallon U.S., & \$1.05 for the Imperial gallon.



It was 9:30 when we stopped at the information booth at the border of Alberta and the N.W. Territories. We slogged in through the mud to find a pleasant and attractive room, & a nice young black woman sitting there doing macramé—and very well too. She offered us coffee and gave us information on the Territories, all in an attractive packet—the information, not the coffee! She also gave each of us an imposing certificate done in blue and white that reads: Canada's Arctic Northwest Territories. Bear witness that Elizabeth Burrow, June 29, 1977, having demonstrated the initiative, integrity, and bold adventurous spirit of true arctic explorers, will hereafter be recognized as an honourable member of the ORDER OF ARCTIC ADVENTURERS. Given under the hand and seal of the Chief Adventurer, etc. etc. Very impressive, and it has on it the bright blue circle with the white polar bear which is the trademark of the N. We. Territories. It's supposed to represent the adventurous and hardy people of this vast frontier land. Anyway, the certificate shows that we've crossed the 60<sup>th</sup> parallel of latitude. Mt. Pleasant is right at the 40<sup>th</sup> parallel—over 2,000 miles south of here.

We met some traffic going south on this bumpy road but very little going north. I can see George mentally estimating the deterioration to the motorhome with every bump and jolt! It cleared off some as the morning advanced, and perhaps we should be glad that there had been rain. We saw signs that said: Dust free passing zone 20 miles ahead." Then 10 miles, then one. I understand that we'll run into bad dust before the trip is over.

Steve collects license plates, starting over each day to see how many different ones he can get. We said that with the mud on mud that covers all the plates up here, he can make them any state that he wants them to be.

It's Dorothy Varley's birthday today, so we bellowed out "Happy Birthday, dear Dorothy" as we went down the road. Don't say that we don't have the forgiving spirit!

There are very few places to pull off along these roads—no shoulders and then trees almost immediately. We did stop at the Alexandra Falls where there's a 109 foot waterfall, but for lunch we had to stop at a firetower where there was solid ground. I keep thinking of the pioneers who came to this land and how bad it must have been for them. It's bad enough now with a "modern" road! I also wonder as we drive by these tiny "shacks" what the women do in the winter time. They must be extremely self-sufficient.

I read that this horrible road cost a million dollars a mile to construct. It's drying up some now, and the sun is making everything look better—even this boggy little forest land. The boys say that we're really making time when we have to slow down to go around a curve.

We came to the Mackenzie River at 2:30—a big, wide, and beautiful one. You cross on a ferry which is free and run by the government of the N.W.T. from June to October. In winter you drive across on the ice, but usually in May and probably November, no one crosses. It's too ice-clogged to ferry across and not iced deep enough to drive on. The ferry will take four trucks or 10 cars, and it takes 8 minutes for the crossing. We drove right up, stopped a minute, and drove right on to the ferry. The smoothest "road" we've been on all day! It does seem odd to see rivers flowing north. I think that in the States only one river goes north.

We went on a few miles to Ft. Providence, which is on the Mackenzie. They call themselves "The North's Model Community", and it's on the route that Sir Alexander Mackenzie travelled when he went on to discover the Arctic Ocean in 1789. I kept reading of three Canadian explorers or those who were active in exploring here—Mackenzie, David Thompson, and someone whose name I can't remember just when I want to! Back to Ft. Providence. It has a population of 725 and 80% of them are Slave Indians—that's their tribe, not a condition of servitude. Actually, I didn't see much BUT Indians. We looked all over for a phone so that George could call home to the media center. There's one outside phone which we didn't find until after some kind person in the Indian Settlement Office let him call from there. All seemed well way back there!

We drove around the tiny town—the houses are tiny, the streets tiny and narrow, and the stores tiny. There was a general store, the Bay, a store that is found in ALL

Canadian towns, I think, both large and small. I remember a huge, super-deluxe one that we went through in Victoria. Quite a contrast to the one today, although I imagine it means a lot to the people here to have it. We also went into a small Indian arts and crafts shop which had some nice things, but oh, what a price! They do some nice work embroidering with moose hair, and I'd have liked a sample, but the rule of thumb seemed to be: one flower \$10, only there wasn't just one. Two flowers \$20, three flowers \$30, etc. Up and up. Postcards were 25¢ each, and at the general store the same ones were 15¢. Anyway, we didn't buy anything.

We're camped tonight in a prettier campground than we've had the past night or two. It's a city one in groves of aspens, and it's well lit.

**6446 -- Thursday, June 30**

Off this morning at 5:50, or at least George and David were. The rest of us "slept in"—Ha and again ha! Going down a graveled road isn't conducive to real sleep. I "rested my eyes", though, and time passed till 7:30.

It goes from slightly overcast today to sunny, but at least there's no rain. The road is mainly long and straight, seemingly going on forever. The trees right now are rather short pine trees, mixed up with the aspen or polar type stuff. Right along the road there are big piles of rock, probably left from when they were making the road bed. The trees and brush grow close to the road, and you can't see for any distance except straight ahead. By the time we stopped for breakfast, the sun was shining, and it made our first view of the lake impressive. It was a pretty picnic area, right on the north arm of Great Slave Lake. The land around here is solid rock with only a thin layer of soil, if any at all. Trees seem to grow right out of solid rock a good deal of the time. There are huge outcroppings of rock everywhere, interspersed with muskeg and inlets from the lake.

All of the power poles around here are put up in a tripod fashion, probably again because of the solid rock underneath. I suppose they can't dig down far enough to anchor the usual single pole. The out of the way places don't have phones except for the radio ones. I noticed that one of those was going all the time down at the information booth at the border.

At least the road is curving some, now that we're following the Great Slave Lake!

It was 11:30 when we came to Yellowknife, and we found us a place to camp at the Yellowknife Territorial Park and Campground—guess we found a sanitary dump first, as we came in, and then the campsite. We went on in to the city then, and we were quite impressed with it after so many miles of nothingness. They have a busy airport here with nonstop flights to some of the major Canadian cities, daily. I spotted a Kentucky Fried Chicken place right away. Y. Knife has a real sky-line with several 10 - 12 story buildings—nice to see after our days of spotting the little towns by their grain elevators—sorry, grain pools. Must remember what country I'm in.

After we'd driven around the "new town" a little, we parked by a downtown shopping mall, and all of us wandered around, shopping and looking for about three hours. Then we drove down the hill to the "old town" which is now getting to be quite a ghost town, although some business is still there and some homes. There are lots of wooden shacks and rundown board buildings. Like everything else, Y.K. is built on solid rock following the Biblical precept—only they can't do anything else. There's one huge hill that towers over the city, simply called "the Rock", and old town is at the base of it. Y.K. was born there when gold was discovered. The town boomed fast, roared through burly days of claim-jumping, bootlegging, and brothels to become the capital city of a third of Canada. It's developing dizzily and is becoming a city of contrasts and is shucking its frontier garb. Really modern apartment buildings look out over the shacks of the past. Now it has paved streets and parking meters, but in 1944 when the first two cars were shipped north by river barge, there was only one mile of road to use—yet the cars managed a head-on collision.

Gold was discovered in 1934, and the boom started. The Mackenzie Highway (the one we came up) reached the N.W. Territories in 1960, and provided a 941 mile link to Edmonton. In 1967 the government of the N.W. Territories moved in from Ottawa—in two planes—and it's expanded enormously.

Housing is in very short supply, and a lot to build on is hard to come by. Only a few are offered each year by the city, and they cost \$10,000 to \$15,000 each. The last time that any were offered for sale, there were 86 applicants for four lots. I wonder if this is because of the solid rock—why there aren't many more lots available. Partly too, it's because of the water and sewage situation. Water is still delivered by truck to homes and businesses in Old Town—it used to be by buckets from a yoke over men's shoulders. Sewage is truck-pumped from holding tanks in many homes—all of Old Town and in many of the newer homes. The plastic-lined holding tanks are called "honey buckets". Most apropos, I imagine!

As well as being the territorial government, Y.K. serves as the service and supply center for the Arctic coast and islands where oil and gas exploration is booming. It's also the headquarters for developers and prospectors and such in the Mackenzie district.

I did VERY little shopping, although there were things I'd liked to have gotten. But Oh the price! There are beautiful carvings done by the Indians and Eskimos of soapstone and other materials, but even a tiny one, a couple of inches or so, would start at nine or ten dollars. I looked at a beauty, over a foot long, and it was \$1600. I just hope that the natives are getting the profits. There is an organization which takes charge of all such products and which gets the natives to produce what will sell and all. In some of the Arctic communities, there will be large sewing rooms where the women work on their embroidery of various kinds, do prints, etc.

Groceries were also high priced—a quarter to a third higher than in other parts of Canada, I read.

The raven is the official bird of Y.K. and you see them everywhere. They're huge, and they like to carry things off. One item they like is golf balls, and over 70 balls were found in one raven's nest. They do play golf up here, and we read an article about teeing off at midnight, playing nine holes, and then another group teeing off at three a.m. By the way, the greens on a golf course up here are not grass but oiled sand.

I just can't get over all the rocks around here—huge outcroppings of them everywhere, and piles of rock along some of the streets. There isn't much grass anywhere, although we did see a little in some of the newer houses. There are almost no flowers growing right on the ground either, although we would see window boxes or something of that sort. I suppose they had to haul in the dirt from somewhere. Some of the new homes are very modern, although we didn't see too many really large ones—maybe the cost of heating them? Or maybe the cost of blasting into the rock to get the foundations? Some of the homes on hills climbed up the rock, supported by sort of stilts.

Our campsite tonight is a pretty one, carved right out of the trees and rocks. Black rocks streaked widely with red. We have trees on one side of us and a mountain of rock on the other, with a few trees growing from it. The mosquitoes are bad, of course. That goes without saying. One of the family read that the mosquitoes are so bad around the north country that the moose go into the lakes and streams to escape them.

**6665 -- Friday, July 1 (Dominion Day)**

George was up and filling the water tank this morning before 7. All six of us had shampoos and showers last night, and that drained the tank. After "dumping", we went back into Y.K. The town was deserted because of the national holiday. We walked around to find a laundromat—only one in town, evidently. G. and I did the laundry—expensive at a dollar a load to wash. Once that deed was did, we drove down to Old Town again to find the monument to the bush air pilots that helped to open up this part of the world. Then we did another look around the new town—people were assembling by then for the parade,

but we didn't linger for it. We did drive out to the Giant Y.K. Mines—a huge affair spread out all over. This is gold mining.

We left Y.K. then—the huge B25 plane that's mounted high above—another monument to the bush pilots. It was 533 km. back to the Alberta border—all that long, bumpy road that we'd come up on. Actually it was lots drier and better going back—but still bumpy!

Now kiddies, another bit of geography to start out your day. The N.W. Territories has 35% of the total area of Canada—although I can imagine that many Canadians would ask what's there? The population is only 1/5 of 1% of Canada's total—about 40,000 people. This makes the population density only 2 people per 100 square miles—good for those who love the wide open spaces! The rest of Canada has 950 per 100 square miles which still isn't many. The people of the far north are a third Eskimo, 10% Indian and 10% Metis who are mixed blood and who live under the same social and economic conditions as the Indians. Many of the tiny native communities are served only by air or sea or river.

The N.W.T. are roughly 2,000 miles wide and about that much from north to south too. It's so big that British Columbia, Alberta, Sask., Manitoba, Newfoundland, and Prince Edward Island could all fit into it comfortably. And the prairie provinces are FAR from small! The tree line divides the N.W.T. into the Arctic and sub-Arctic regions. In the summer, in the sub-arctic south of the tree line the temperatures can reach 70-80 but are usually in the 60's. North of the tree line, temperatures are usually in the 50's, although sometimes a bit higher.

Winters in both regions are long and cold and very harsh. Blowing snow and the wind chill factor are major problems to outdoor activities. There are two months when the sun doesn't shine at all in the winter, and about two months in the summer when it doesn't set. Not for me! This is enough daylight for me right now.

Both the Indians and the Eskimos are living through a time of rapid change. One Eskimo summed it up to his own people this way: "We are living in the present times without observing what we are losing, and that is our Eskimo culture. There are only a very few of us, but there are millions of whites, just like mosquitoes. It is something very special and wonderful to be Eskimo. They are like snow geese. If an Eskimo forgets his language and ways, he will be nothing but just another mosquito."

By the way, the Indians and Eskimos do differ in looks and culture and language—not that I could really tell the difference!

And now that I've seen to your education for the day, back to an account of our travels. Not that there is much to write—it was back down our graveled road, this time with some dust blowing around, and the smell of dust permeating the whole m. home. It really wasn't bad, either the dust on the road or the smell inside. We stopped for lunch about two at the same pretty picnic area on Great Slave Lake. The lake was beautiful and silvery, shining in the sun, and the tide was in where Steve and David had walked the day before. We were interested in an Indian family who drove in right after us. The woman did all the work, including chopping wood.

It was almost five when we got back to the Mackenzie River and took the ferry across. Then it was an hour's drive to Lady Evelyn Falls Campground. It was quite fully, probably because of the long holiday weekend. The falls were really pretty. Margaret cooked—pork chops and fried rice.

**6919 -- Saturday, July 2**

We were off to another early start this morning for a long day of riding. The m. home wouldn't start at first, thanks to a wire jarred loose on the rough roads. The roads ARE rough, but not as bad as when we came up. Crews of maintenance men seem to work right around the clock, a necessity, I suppose, in this land where winter would take such heavy tolls of roads. Also the roads are drier than when we came up, and that helps—although probably the recent rains also help to keep the dust down. I keep telling myself that I should gaze intently at the scenery since I'm not likely to get back again to the N.W. Territories. But it's always the same thing—the gravel road winding on and on in the

distance and outside the windows the forests of jack pines and the poplar-aspen-birch type of skinny trees. The forest here has a "dirty" look with lots of scraggly undergrowth and dead stuff. All my life I've heard of the great Canadian north woods, but it's surely different than what I expected—at least in this area. I guess I expected the tall stands of pines that we get in our Rockies.

We stopped again at the 60<sup>th</sup> Parallel Border Station. There was another pleasant attendant who gave us coffee and answered our questions. We took some pictures at the huge signpost that marks the 60<sup>th</sup> parallel, just to prove that we've been there, and then went on our way.

In some of our "literature" I read this about the Mackenzie Hwy. that we're traveling. "There's only one road to Canada's Arctic, but it's a good one. For modern adventurers who like to get off the beaten track, it leads to the rare thrill of crossing the continent's "last frontier". From Peace River nearly 250 miles of broad, well-kept gravel highway stretches ahead to the N.W.T. border. Vehicle traffic is uncongested and "driving the gravel" at good speeds is no great problem if normal care is exercised. You have to plan your food and gasoline stops well ahead, but the rewards are great: communion with nature, solitude, scenery, fishing, and at last you reach Canada's Arctic, by car!

"Scenic adventure through almost untouched wilderness awaits the motorist along the Mackenzie Route to Canada's Arctic N.W. Territories. Penetrating some of Canada's most beautiful Northland areas, the five major sections of the Mackenzie Route wind their way past swift-flowing rivers, picturesque waterfalls, and stately jack pine ridges. The N.W.T. is no trip for the impulsive traveler. One must plan with care. The hundreds of miles of wilderness gravel road, the dust, the insects, the long stretches between services present a challenge to adventurers seeking this last unspoiled and uncrowded vacation frontier."

And that's what we've just covered—twice! Tomorrow we come early to Dawson Creek, and from there we begin the over 1500 mile Alaska Highway that will take us to Fairbanks. More of that later on. I'll quit now with this and start to get it mailed off.

July 5

*This is full of typos and mistakes, & I'm sorry. There's not much time to correct them except going down the road—then it's too bumpy.*

*We're in the Yukon Terr., at Watson Lake right now, getting gas and having a tire fixed. It keeps getting low. Better here than in the middle of nowhere, and there's lots of nowhere! I'll try to get this mailed from here, too, as the post offices are few and far between.*

*This is beautiful country—mountains and lakes & rivers & pine trees, etc.—just like the postcards. We just left our Mt. P. placard at the famous signpost with hundreds of signs on it. Also just talked with a couple from Floyd Co., Iowa. A small world!*

*We've had lovely weather the past few days which is nice after all the rain. Nights are very cool. The Alaska Hwy. has been lots better too. There are lots of campers on the road.*

*Tomorrow, probably, we start over the Arctic Circle.*

Love,  
Betty

7330 -- Sunday, July 3

Our campsite last night was such a pretty one that I almost hated to leave it this morning. It was flat & peaceful there at Grimshaw, Alberta, with a huge rapeseed field in bloom backing everything up. These fields are beautiful—solid gold. We left though,

about six, & got to Dawson Creek about 9, which was 8 local time. D.C. is a CITY—almost 13,000 people. It reminded me of the mountain towns back in the U.S. I enjoyed going through the Peace River country again this morning. It's mostly flat with big, rich looking farms and bigger farm houses. We were interested to see that many were white with a broad, bright band of color toward the bottom of the houses. It's pretty country as we leave Dawson Creek, rather rolling.

Until 1942, Dawson Creek was a tiny spot, known as the "end of the steel" of the Northern Alberta Railroad. It changed its image when the Alaska Highway went through, & now it's known as "Milepost 0". There's a big signpost where people can have their pictures taken to show they've been there. These mileposts then are frequent the whole length of the highway.

For years the Alaska Highway was just a dream of far-sighted engineers of the North Country. Now it's the important artery connecting Alaska and the Yukon with the Lower 48 states & southern and eastern Canada. Quite a monument to the friendship between the two nations!

Canada & the U.S. agreed to have the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers build the highway as an overland lifeline to relieve Alaska from the wartime hazards of shipping & to supply a land route for wartime material & equipment. The pioneer road was then turned over to civilian contractors for widening and graveling. They also did some re-routing & replaced the primitive log bridges with steel ones.

Crews worked north from Whitehorse in the Yukon, south from Delta Junction, Alaska, & north from Dawson Creek. The crews met in October, 1942, & the highway was officially opened on Nov. 20, 1942. With thermometers at 15 below zero, soldiers, civilians, & the Royal Canadian Mounted Police watched officials from the U.S. & Canada cut ribbons across the road. This was at Soldiers Summit, a windswept hill at Milepost 1061.

The road was open to the traveling public in 1948, & now more than 250,000 drive the length of the road each year. I might add that the U.S. Army helped to complete the road in a year, although the North Country experts said they'd be luck to complete the survey by then. Road making under good conditions is slow & tedious, & it promised to be a nightmare across the untracked wilderness of mountains, mud, & muskeg—the last are bogs of spongy moss & decaying vegetation. "Working round the clock, the big caterpillar tractors & the plows & graders that followed rammed through a rough truck trail from Dawson City [actually Dawson Creek] to Gairbanks—over 1500 miles in just over 6 months, an astonishing pace of 8 miles a day. Soldiers nicknamed it "the Oil Can Highway" because of the string of fuel drums along the winding, dusty, mostly graveled thread of history. To those who live along the road, it's simply The Highway. Before it was completed, there was nothing but a few settlers' cabins & wagon trails. When they built the road, they used every method available, old & new—areal photography & old Indian paths."

The advance party blazed a line through trees, etc. for bulldozers to follow, & quick bridges were put up. Then the big cats came, knocking over trees & brush. Then came two more cats that broadened the trail, then more cats, pushing brush & trees further out of the way. Then graders & culvert makers could complete a rough road. The men worked in extreme cold, in clouds of mosquitoes, etc. They say that the mosquitoes were so big that one landed at a supply camp, & the maintenance men pumped 30 gallons of gas into it before discovering that it wasn't a bush plane.

Well, back to our start along "The Highway". It was more beautiful rolling farmland along the Peace River for a while with a panoramic view of the Peace River & valley. Then we came to St. John—lots of farms there, too, but the crops are planted over oil lines. And then, UNFORTUNATELY, we came to the sign that said "Pavement Ends," and we were off onto the gravel. What a road—bumpy and muddy to boot. It was raining hard. We're getting the Alaska Highway weather eyes sharpened & we look appraisingly at other cars & campers in the gas stations & pull-off spots, & we say knowingly "They've come from the north." Mostly we judge by the amount of mud caked on. Back windows of campers are especially vulnerable, & they're usually solid mud. A pancake turner works well to scrape it off before washing.

We stopped at Wonowon for lunch. Wonowon is at Milepost 101—a little play on words there. Before the highway came through, the wide spot in the road was called Blueberry. This is solid forest country of jackpines & poplars, & there are very steep hills overlooking pine filled valleys. We saw the first runaway lane that I've seen in ages. At Milepost 153, it says "Steep Hill. Gear Down." In the olden days it used to say "Suicide Hill. Prepare to Meet Thy God." Its real name is Sikanni Chief Hill, named after the Sikanni Indians, the people of the rocks or mountains. This is a wilderness country, still much as it was when the fur traders explored it.

This road is bumpier, so far, than the Yellowknife Highway, and I complained about that! This one though is lots prettier, with more to see. The road winds all the time which is hard to drive, but it opens up different vistas all the time.

And then came trouble! About M. 180, we met a car, and George took to the shoulder. Unluckily, there had been lots of rain, and the shoulders were very soft and when he pulled off a little too far, the mud pulled us farther. The motorhome was tilted at a terrible angle, and we didn't have quite enough power to get out alone. In no time, though, several cars and campers had stopped, and a man from Texas with a four wheel drive Jeep pulled us out with a chain that George carries along. Praise be!

The rain finally stopped this afternoon, and we also had 20 miles of pavement—a joy while it lasted. We missed our campground sign, and since the next one was 80 miles ahead, we turned back to Prophet River Provincial Park. No amenities—just all us dirty campers. Both the vehicles and the people!

#### **7710 -- Monday, July 4 (Independence Day)**

I hated to get up this morning to face those horrible roads again, but off we went about 6. The road was as bad as before, but we made it to Ft. Nelson about 8:45 (terrible time). We did grocery shopping, finding prices much higher than in Iowa, and we did the laundry. I met a nice lady in the laundromat who had made the trip north and was now going south again, she and her family. She assured us that the road from then on was better, and with occasional terrible stretches we found her words true.

We drove through some of the wildest sections of the northern Canadian Rockies from then on according to our MILEPOST book—and I believe it! "In the densely forested regions, there are many vistas of unsurpassed grandeur where rivers meander through the wilderness to disappear in the haze of horizons 100 miles distant. Travelers occasionally see moose and bear." If you see some such quotations at times, mostly they come from MILEPOST—The All North Travel Guide—worth every penny.

It's a pretty sunny day, thank goodness, with high cumulus clouds. And the road IS better! This is comparatively speaking. It's still bumpy, but we don't suffer from pothole palsy. There is the smell of dust over everything, and clouds of it around the big trucks. We had been warned that the dust would be awful, but so far it's not that bad. Trucks go along, watering the gravel.

There are LOTS of curves. "The road makes so many curves that sometimes you wonder if you're going to Alaska or if you've been there and are coming back." The road is probably crooked because in the speed of building, it was necessary. They went around any obstacles they could and took the easiest way. The popular theory about the many curves is that the U.S. Army built in the curves so that enemy strafing planes couldn't wipe out several convoy trucks at once.

An explorer I'm not. I rather like mileposts along my way, even though the country in between is pure wilderness. Part of a quotation has been running through my mind all day. I think Queen Elizabeth used it one year in her Christmas Day speech to the Commonwealth. It goes something to the effect: I said to the man who stood at the Gate of the Year, "give me a light that I may go safely into the darkness." He said to me, "Put your hand into the hand of God, and that will be better to you than a light and safer than a known way." I know that's not correct, but the meaning is there. I wonder if that's the spirit that explorers had or whether they went out just for the love of the unknown—or for gold or furs or whatever. Always economics!

I wonder if the northern Canadian Rockies are lower than the ones in southern Canada and the U.S. There mountain passes or transcontinental highways go over 10,000 plus feet. Here the highest we get is 4250 feet, although with high mountains all around.

At M. 364 we saw cars and campers stopped all along the road. There was a big brown bear along the highway, and everyone was taking pictures.

Margaret is baking cookies as we drive along. She doubled the recipe and has so much dough that she's passing her mixing bowl, letting everyone take fingersful. Not very sanitary, but it's getting rid of her mountain of dough. It's not easy to do anything standing, as we go along, but you can do some things sitting down. I just got some beef ready for "swissing" and the vegetables. These can go into the oven when the cookies are baked. Two nights ago we soaked some beans, the dry navy ones, and cooked them yesterday in the oven, as we humped and bumped along. We had them in a five quart Dutch oven which has a tight-fitting lid. We set the pan in a 9 x 13 flat pan, to catch any drips, and the knob of the Dutch oven wedged tightly against the roof of the oven. Scarcely any dripped, and we had ham and beans and cornbread last night.

I forgot to mention that this road is extremely narrow as well as winding, so meeting another vehicle means SLOW DOWN. Trucks go by like bats out of Hades.

About 4:30 we came to Munch Lake [actually "Muncho"] which is truly beautiful. It's 7 miles long and a mile wide—a lovely blue and green from the copper oxide that leeches into it. We drove along most of the length and stopped at Highland Glen Lodge that I'd read about in a National Geographic book on Alaska—bought some expensive, hot doughnuts and an equally expensive loaf of homemade bread.

Shortly after we left Muncho Lake, we were stopped for a while by a whole flock of mountain sheep which were right on the road and on the hillside. One young fellow was on a rock above our heads, and he kept himself in profile for us all to take snaps of him. After that, we drove on to Liard Hot Springs to see the Sulphur pools—along with every other camping unit on the highway, I think, and all equally dirty from driving "The Highway". Then it was more driving till about 8 when we stopped at the "Whirlpool Do It Yourself Campground" as the sign said. Absolutely nothing there except for parking space.

There's a bit of doggerel about the road that we came on, and it goes like this:  
Winding in and winding out,  
It fills my mind with serious doubt,  
As to whether the lout who built this route  
Was going to Hell or coming out.

**8094 -- Tuesday, July 5**

A lovely, sunny day to start off with today, with beautiful views of the Liard River, often with mist hanging over it. As we climbed, we'd be in some fog, but then out would come the sun.

We crossed over into the Yukon, and then began zig-zagging back and forth over the British Columbia—Yukon border nine times in several miles. Eventually we wound our way into Watson Lake, dumped, and then had breakfast. The first order of business after that was to look up the famous signpost. This was started by a homesick G.I. working on the Alcan Hwy. He put up a sign telling of his hometown and the distance to it, and the thing mushroomed. There are literally hundreds of signs now, and it was fun to go down the line reading them all—they stretched way up over our heads. We added our sign, which David had made and G. laminated, saying that Mt. P. was 3950 miles southeast of here, took some snaps, and then talked with a couple from Floyd County, Iowa who knew the grandparents of Da Rhonda, Paul's old girlfriend. Small world!

We left the main artery of the Alaskan Hwy. then and turned off on the Robert Campbell Hwy., indistinguishable in bumps from the regular road. It was also narrower.



When we stopped at noon for lunch, we had rain and heavy hail for a few minutes. Then came a rather long afternoon of bumpy, narrow road driving to the little town of Ross River, population 350. We had detoured a few miles to go there because of David's "connections". As some of you know, this trip has been David's "pet" and he did lots and lots of writing to get information and all. He saw Ross River on the map and wrote their chamber of commerce or something, asking for information, and eventually got a large envelope full of letters from school kids. It seems that the teacher of the 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> graders was also the president of the Ross River Community Association and when he got David's letter, he thought it might be good to let the kids tell of their home town. They were all the same—poor penmanship, poor spelling and poor grammar, but the letters were as cute as could be. All told of the population, that there was an old town across the bridge—said bridge built 1942-45, according to which kid was writing. They all told that there was a clay mountain and coal mountain, that airplanes taxied right down the main street, that it got to be 70 degrees below zero F. in the winter, that every kind of wild animal of this part of the world was close at hand, that Coffee Lake was stocked with Coho salmon and Whiskey Lake with trout. Anyway, we thoroughly enjoyed their letters and had decided that we would go by and see the town.

We went to the campground and set up. Margaret had meatloaf ready and stuck that in the oven, and then they all went into town to see what the kids had been writing about. Once supper was over, there was a walk across the old bridge to see the old town "where a priest lived and the Indians". Not much to see. Oh yes, when they were in town earlier, they contacted the schoolteacher's home. His name is Guy Jean. He wasn't there, but the baby sitter was one of the kids who wrote a letter.

**8379 -- Wednesday, July 6**

We were up later than usual this morning—even George wasn't up till 7. We went into Ross River, and George called home to the media center as he's trying to do each Wed. They reported all was well at work except for the terrible heat—over 100 degrees which is a real contrast to here. The days usually are long and bright and the nights cool enough for blankets. G. also called Mr. Jean and talked with him quite a while. He was just out of bed and said he'd have us over for coffee if they hadn't been out so late the night before. I wish he had. I'd like to have talked with him.

We ate our breakfast by the school, a new building with slanted wood siding. It was almost windowless on the north and east and small windows on the south and west. Remember those minus 70 degree winter temperatures! Mr. Jean says that it gets there and stays there for a week or more at a time. There were silver poles that sort of marched around the building at intervals, and Mr. Jean says that they contain Freon which helps to dissipate the heat from the building and so keep the permafrost from melting. They're called cryolators. I was surprised to hear that we were on permafrost when all looked so normal. Guess I expected a sign to pop up and say "You are now heading into permafrost areas." Somehow I expected it would look different. We had noticed that the trees have a spreading out root system, along the top of the ground, which is probably because of the permafrost underneath. I suppose you all know that permafrost is a condition where the soil is permanently frozen. It will thaw some on the surface for a few feet down, but no more. Some of the buildings are built on a styrofoam foundation. In R. River they were almost all government buildings and homes, three or four different colors and plans. All were at one end of town, and the Indian families lived in log houses at the other end.

The school, by the way, is only an elementary one. Most Yukoners don't go on to high school, and if they do, they go as boarding students to Whitehorse—so says Mr. Jean.

We noticed that the floor in the store was wavy, probably again because of permafrost. One other thing that intrigued us was to see planes parked on the driveways of homes.

We drove on 37 miles to the planned government town of Faro and enjoyed seeing it. At Mr. Jean's suggestion, we looked at the school there—five years old and condemned not to be used. They hadn't used cryolators at Faro, and the building was going to wrack and ruin because of permafrost. The floor undulated.

I typed a good part of this afternoon, copying my travelogue—a terrible thing to do in the midst of great scenery. I still see most of it though, and we often pull off at the scenic view points. We followed the Yukon River which is tremendous. There were no towns, just an occasional Indian settlement that might have a rundown gas pump.

We camped at Moose River about 6:30. It was either that or driving very late since campgrounds are widely scattered in this wilderness area. Drinking water is hard to find so we decided not to use our supply for shampoos. The kids heated river water and we all had shampoos. There was also a bucket brigade to get water to wash the motorhome—a futile gesture, I know, but it's filthy as are all others that travel these roads.

**8670 -- Thursday, July 7**

Another beautiful morning, and we left about 6:30. We stopped at the tiny spot called Dempster Corner for gas and breakfast, and then we started up the Dempster Hwy., about 9:05. This is the road that is to lead us over the Arctic Circle, and I had many reservations about going. The sign at the beginning of the road said: "No gas, food, lodging, or other facilities on this highway." MILEPOST says: "Check ahead before venturing on this route. Travel well-outfitted for emergencies. Plan to get there and back without help!"

By 9:30 we were stopped, and we should have turned around. The construction man said it would be half to three quarters of an hour before we could go on, and it took 35 minutes. I improved the shining hour by writing postcards. I swear they were building that road ahead of us. The first 26 miles were terrible, and I was petrified and wished that I had never left home. There was construction and equipment everywhere, narrow, narrow roads, drop offs, meeting traffic. It was SOME better after that, but awfully rocky. We crossed the tree line about 50 miles up and were into tundra for a while with tussocky grass, but then we were back into the stunted trees. It was an interesting drive—what I could see between the bumps—and even pretty at times. We followed the Ogilvie River for miles and miles, and I liked that. It was a pretty, clear, rocky river. About M. 160 we climbed high above the river and that gave us a fantastic view. We were back on the tundra then, and the road wound and wound across the tops of the hills with great views in all directions. Oddly enough, the mountains aren't snowcapped, which I rather expected up here.

We had the road almost entirely to ourselves. Occasionally we'd meet a car or construction equipment or a truck, but mostly it was purely lonesome. We were interested to see the road widen and smooth down occasionally—not for our benefit but because it was used as a plane landing strip.

There were lovely wildflowers everywhere we looked—wish I knew what they all were. For quite a while in the afternoon we drove toward a rainbow which arched completely from the ground back down again. In fact, it was a double rainbow which we don't see too often. It turned the hills to rainbow colors too.

Eventually we came to the Eagle River, which is where the road construction really quit. They were building it another 12 miles, and we drove some of it—to where our mileage said we had crossed the Arctic Circle. We got out, took some pictures, and had the whole world to ourselves. Everyone walked on the muskeg or tundra, and the spongy mess wasn't meant for Margaret's Mexican huraches. There was a stiff wind blowing, but that was all the evidence that we were so far north. Guess I expected snow and ice and maybe Santa and his reindeer to ho, ho, ho at us. Eventually we turned around and went back to Eagle River, with beautiful mountain views, all blues and purples and greens. But underneath that TERRIBLE road—big, rock gravel, including some lava rock.

We finally got to the Eagle River construction camp about 8:20 & pulled off to have some supper—SO thankful to be off those roads for a bit. But then we drove on until almost 10:30—simply pulled off onto an army road of some kind & parked for the night. There was small danger of having anyone come along!

9037 -- Friday, July 8

It was a bright & beautiful day to come back down the Dempster Highway, & as we followed the Klondike Valley with lovely views of high cumulus clouds & the mountains. It's still hard for me to think that this is the Arctic—guess I'd better wish for a Genie to whisk me up here in mid-winter—just for a few minutes! We stopped at M. 122 which has the most northern campground in the Yukon—there's one farther north somewhere over on the eastern islands where you have to fly in and then back pack—Baffin Island or somewhere in those parts.

It was a long afternoon getting back down the Dempster, & then going 25 miles into Dawson City. We pulled into a gas station, got gas, filled with water, dumped, and also found that we had TWO flat tires as a result of that AWFUL Dempster Highway. Anyway we got the tires off, but couldn't get them fixed that day. I did a hurried supper, after planning a good leisurely one. Steve & David decided to go to the vaudeville show at the Palace Grande Theater. The rest of us though enjoyed fried chicken & all the trimmings. I also took advantage of some time alone to clean the stove & fridge better than it usually gets.

9314 -- Saturday, July 9

What a morning! G. & I were over at the laundromat by 7:30, but we should have followed our instinct & gone much earlier. The place was tiny, and was it ever jammed! I waited over an hour & finally a lady gave me one of her machines, just so that I could get started. I might mention that Paul was in the camper, in bed, waiting for jeans, & Steve was there waiting for underwear. At least I got well-acquainted with everyone while I was in the laundry. One lady had five of the 8 machines in use, and of course both of the dryers. G. & the kids came and went, got the tires fixed, etc. The kids wandered around town, sight-seeing, & kept coming over to see how I was progressing. I was getting so hot, & my knee was bothering like fury, but FINALLY at 12:30—five and a half hours later—I was finished. It was ridiculous to wait that long, but once I got started, I hadn't much choice.

*Paul got out his good pants, and Steve used swim trunks as underwear.*

We drove around town to see what was what, and then parked to do some sight-seeing & shopping. This is gold mining country, of course, so they feature gold nugget jewelry, & my jewelry-mad daughter got a lovely ring. Won't mention the price, but it was more than \$79 & less than \$81. I got a pretty carved ivory cross that I really like plus a few smaller items to take home. There was a good museum there, & I was interested when a man recognized the Old Threshers sticker on the back of the m. home. There's that small world again! One thing that I enjoyed that afternoon was going over the Keno which was a river boat used on the Yukon in the earlier days. Dawson is also Robert Service oriented since he spent a good many years there, working as a bank teller &, of course, writing his poems. We looked over his cabin, & at four o'clock his "ghost" came out & read a good many of his poems. The ghost proved to be the young man who had the lead in the vaudeville show at the Palace Grande, & Steve spent quite a bit of time talking with him about Thespians & acting in general. We were all struck too at how much this John talked and looked and acted like our John—with the same interests too.

We took a 15 mile drive then out to Bonanza Creek where the big gold discoveries were made in the 1890's, and oh how this place had been dredged for gold! The tailings were piled high on both sides of the creek, and way back from it, and the whole place looked like the moon's surface. There was a big gold dredge there, and some of us went over that—and then the rest wished that they had done it too. Then it was back through all the tailings, through town, and we ferried over the Yukon River to a campground on the other shore. We had a quick hot dog supper in order to make the Palace Grande program. It was after 10 when we ferried back over the river to the campground, and the sight of the Yukon with the sun setting over it will be one of my cherished memories.

These territorial campgrounds began in the Yukon as part of a fire prevention program when the Alaska Hwy. was opened to travelers in 1948. The road was pretty rugged then (what is it now?) and the civilian travelers built campfires and then frequently

forgot to put them out. So the Yukon Forest Service introduced regular campgrounds to provide convenient and safe places to camp and cook. You can buy a campground use sticker that's good for the whole season and any public campground for \$10 or else you can pay \$2.50 a day.

Dawson City is a tiny place of under 900 that caters to tourists. Originally it was laid out for 30,000 and it still occupies most of the original area. Mostly it dates from when gold was discovered by Bob Henderson in 1896. He told of his find to George Carmack who was salmon fishing with two Indian Friends, Skookum Jim and Tagish Charlie. They followed Henderson's lead and found gold themselves and hurried to file their claims at the recorder's office in Fortymile without telling Henderson. News of the find spread like wildfire and started the great gold rush of 1898-99. There were several hundred prospectors in the area before the big strike, and most of them had swarmed over all the creeks, staking claims long before the stampedes began trickling in from the outside. There were several routes that they followed, and each was harder and worse than the one before. Some came from Seattle to Skagway, Alaska and then packed tons of supplies over the Chilkoot Pass—they had to go over the pass time after time to get these supplies. The Mounties said that no one could come unless they had supplies to go through a winter. Then they'd go over land to lakes and rivers, build crude rafts, and finally come to the Klondike. This was the most popular route, but two others were used a lot too. Enough people came that a city was started which is now Dawson City—every nail and scrap of paper had to be carried in. But a city was built and remained a swinging thing until 1903 when stampedes to Alaska drew off the froth from Dawson. That left a sturdy government-cum-mining element that maintained an aura of big city worldliness until WWI. At the height of its boom, Dawson was the biggest Canadian city west of Winnipeg. Over \$100 million in gold had been shipped out by 1904, and since then the big dredges have made \$300 million since the gold rush. It was a ghost town for many years, but now an active historical society is making it into a tourist town.

**NO MILEAGE -- Sunday, July 10**

We started climbing as soon as we turned out of the campground this morning, and we drove over the Top of the World Hwy. Remember that I wrote in my first travelogue that a lady in N. Dakota had told us that she wouldn't recommend that ANYONE go over it? I knew then that we would, and we did, and I've been over LOTS worse mountain routes—but not worse roads! Pete was completely worn out between the terrible graveled road, complete with hills and curves.

High up in the hills, above the tree line, we came to the Canadian customs which is called "Little Gold Creek". Just across the barrier is the U.S. Customs called "Poker Creek Office". This is so remote that it's not even open in winter, but I suppose they do a brisk business with all us stupid tourists. The place wasn't supposed to open until 8, but they took down the barrier about twenty to eight. We had a nice, fatherly inspector who chatted with us, told us to stop at the visitor's center in Tok, Alaska, and then glanced at the Milepost book open on my lap and said, "Well, I see you're open to page 192, so you know where you are." He also asked for our driver's licenses, which has never happened before.

That day's travel, at least for a long time, was on some of the worst roads that we've been on, and as you may guess, that's saying a lot! It was beautiful country though and fascinating to go through—old mining towns of Eagle, Fortymile, Sixtymile, and also one called Chicken. Chicken is the common north country name for ptarmigan, a common bird, brown in summer but snow white in winter. It's Alaska's state bird. We saw a gold dredge abandoned long ago and tailings along many of the creeks. Mostly though the road wound for many, many miles up above the tree line, with the road the only mark in the wilderness. The lack of fuel way up there meant death for many an early sourdough who came over the trail on foot because he had no warmth or shelter. The wild flowers all along were simply beautiful that day.

FINALLY we got onto the paved Alaska Highway, about 2:30. It was narrow and winding, but it was CONCRETE. Finally we came to Tok, Alaska and stopped at the Visitor's Center—our first port of call in most towns of ANY size. We had a flat—and no

wonder!—so changed to the spare. We also did some shopping at the Golden Bear Gift Shop, and I made mental notes of many nice things to buy when we come back through here.

Camp that night was on Big Gerstle River, and since it was my turn to cook, I fried round steak, did mashed potatoes, beans, etc. The boys went for a long walk, and we all enjoyed the early stop. When George was taking his constitutional around the campground, he met a couple of young hitch hikers, trying to get back the way we had come that day, and eventually heading down to the boys home somewhere in southern Alaska. About 10 the girl came knocking at our door asking if we knew if there was drinking water in the campground. There wasn't any, so we filled her bottle from our fridge. She came in and talked a long time. She was most attractive, dark and suntanned with deep brown eyes—dark hair pulled straight back and gold hoop earrings. She was from Pierre, South Dakota, goes to George Washington University in Washington, D.C., & is working for the summer as a camp counselor in Anchorage. The boy was another counselor. I have no idea what their relationship is, but I kept thinking of the girl's mother and thinking how I'd feel if my daughter was hitch-hiking out in the wilds like that. Guess I'm just old-fashioned.

**NO MILEAGE -- Monday, July 9**

Off just before 7 on a lovely summer day and just drive 30 miles into Delta Junction, had breakfast while waiting for the V. center to open. We especially wanted to stop there because they issue a certificate showing that you've completed driving the Alaska Hwy. Paul says he "slept" it, but he got a certificate anyway. Driving on to Fairbanks was lovely—big lakes and lots of birch forests. As we got closer, we'd see some pretty houses too, nice after all the miners' shacks. In Fairbanks, we got the last camping spot in the state campground right in the middle of the city, marked it as ours and then off to do some sightseeing. George made up several of these large signs and laminated them, saying that spot is reserved for the Burrows of Mt. Pleasant. We prop it over a lawn chair, and so far it's kept our spot for us.

First we went to the University of Alaska which has a pretty campus and some nice buildings, but everyone voted their museum as not too great. Going back downtown, we stopped for groceries at a big Safeway store, with high prices. George says that he's coming up here to raise hogs and make his fortune. That afternoon we went to Alaskaland, a community project that has some restored villages. One of my favorites was Gold Rush Street. They've taken authentic log cabins and moved them there, with little plaques telling who owned the cabins originally. There is a saloon from the early days, vaudeville house, and old stern-wheeler ship that plied the rivers earlier, etc. The Gold Rush cabins are all little specialty shops, so I had a field day. I talked to a couple of ladies who live in Fairbanks, and they were telling me about life in the far north. One lady said that the average heating bill would be \$2,000. I wonder what their incomes are to be able to pay that? Even in summer, her electric bill was \$60 for her fridge, TV & freezer. It stays light almost 24 hours in the summer, so no need for lights. It's so cold in the winter that they just turn off their freezers—they're kept in separate buildings, or on back porches, etc. When it warms up to a few degrees below zero F., they put a lawn chair outside and get a suntan. I've heard of doing that high in the mountains in winter. One thing that all native Alaskans seem to be solidly in agreement on is that they heartily dislike the pipeliners and the kind of live they've brought. But they like the economic boost!

Back at the campground all the menfolks broiled hamburgers, and David spent the evening lying out on a picnic table watching TV, something that he couldn't do until today.

Steve surprised me with a lovely baleen necklace since he hadn't given me a Mother's Day gift. Baleen is a sort of ivory that two kinds of whales have in their mouths. All of the water is strained through this baleen as they feed. It's made into lovely jewelry, usually with a white design etched on it. It's like the scrimshaw that sailors did on whale tusks, only this is dark green or almost black with white etching. I'm delighted to have a piece of this jewelry. It's lots better than the junk they feature here called "moose nugget jewelry" which is something made up to look like a moose turd on a chain or ring or earrings. Its' everywhere.

9749 -- Tuesday, July 19

We spent quite a bit of time this morning, touring around trying to get our tire problem solved. Margaret and I washed, and we finally left town after 10. It was a beautiful scenic drive, going south. Do I keep repeating that? True, none the less. We went through one little town called Nenana where the golden spike of the railroad was driven by President Harding in 1923. This town also has the Ice Pool which gives away over \$100,000 each year. Alaskans can buy betting tickets stating the exact day, hour, minute, and second when a tripod in the ice will give way each spring, and that means that the spring break-up has begun. They also have a sign at their local campground stating "Mosquitoes can be bad here." In view of what we've found in other places, we thought that warning was unnecessary.

All the men in this country seem to be bearded.

Alaska is so huge that it covers four time zones—Alaskan, Pacific, Yukon, and Bering.

We got to Mt. McKinley about one, checked right away on the possibility of getting a campground, but nothing was available. We finally left it all to chance, parked for the rest of the day at the Visitor Center parking lot, and took the 3 o'clock bus over to "see" McKinley. The park has only one road running through it, and almost no cars are allowed to drive way in. Shuttle buses run every hour, and it takes 3½ hours to go into the park to Eileson Visitor Center, which is 65 miles in, and then 3 hours to come back. Half an hour layover at Eileson. This is if there are no flat tires, or other such things, and they tell us these are common.

Our guide and driver was a pleasant young man—"My name is Jeff"—who did his best to help us have a good time. There was an attractive and friendly girl from California, and then a couple who came from Vancouver. She was something else again! Her hair was long and done in long curls, and it was dyed bright red. Somehow though she had her husband eating out of her hand. He changed seats, closed and opened windows, got her coat, etc. etc. Her voice was a baby-doll one, but you should have seen her pack away food! She had a big bag of provisions, and she started in as soon as the bus pulled out—four sandwiches, a quart jar of pickled peaches, and I don't know what else. She ate going over and also on the trip back. I was especially conscious of it then because, dummies that we were, we hadn't taken a thing to eat, and it was 10:30 when we got back. I thought that they'd at least have a candy bar machine, but there was nothing. Food was also nothing though because it was such a beautiful drive over there and back. We were above the tree line a lot of the time, and in Alaska it runs from 2,500 to 3,000 feet—much lower than in the U.S.

Jeff did his best to show us animals as we went along, but it had been such unusually hot weather that there weren't too many out. We did see the ptarmigan, some with babies, several caribou, the long-tailed jaguar bird, and several grizzlies. Jeff said that the grizzlies and the brown bear are actually the same except that the brown bear is silky coated because he's a protein eating animal from all the fish. Grizzlies are mostly berry and root eaters. Mt. McKinley bears are blond. They started out with several of them, and it seems to be spreading. Must be a dominant characteristic.

We stopped for a "potty break" about half way out, and a good thing too after the graveled roads. It was a bit incongruous to see a "men's and women's" right at the top of Polychrome Pass where the scenery was absolutely fabulous. This was about the prettiest part of the whole drive to me. These Polychrome Cliffs date from a major volcanic action about 100 million years ago. They're really extraordinary—red, purple, yellow, etc. All around too were the flowers which were one of the major attractions to me. They were everywhere, and just to ride along and see them from the bus was a treat. I didn't know a lot by name, but there were forget-me-nots which are Alaska's state flower, anemones, yellow and orange Arctic poppies which were one of my pets, cotton grass which really looks like tiny bolls of cotton, and of course fireweed almost everywhere. This is tall and purplish-red, and it's the first thing that will grow on an area that's been burned over. Margaret got a lovely book on flowers of the north, and I

wish we had time to get out every time we saw something new. We also went through a sort of ghost forest of grisly dead spruce trees where the porcupines have "girdled" them and caused them to die.

When we got out to the Eileson Visitors' Center, the Great One was fractious and wouldn't show its face, so in the end, we never did see Mt. McKinley. This isn't unusual, I understand. On any given summer's day, a visitor stands a 40% chance of seeing it, and if the weather is bad, you can wait for many days. The weather was nice for us, but McKinley is so big that it makes its own weather with no thought for us visiting mortals. It's 20,320 feet high which wouldn't count for much in the Andes or Himalayas, but it's the highest peak in N. America. The Indians call it "Denali", meaning The Great One or The High One, and there's a move aloft to make this the official name of the mountain and the park.

Everyone was sleepy on the drive back, and it was interesting to watch the sagging faces, but eyes constantly moving to take in all the views. I meant to mention that these shuttle buses will drop you off anywhere, and a later bus will pick you up. Several times we had other passengers for a few miles. We got back to the camper with no place to park for the night, but just a mile or two from there we pulled off at a viewpoint high above a river. Technically you aren't supposed to stop overnight at these spots, but we did—along with about 20 other vehicles. We most gratefully had some soup and hot chocolate, took some outdoors snaps at midnight, and went to bed.

**9887 -- Wednesday, July 13**

We slept later than usual, then moved over to the Visitor Center's parking lot to have breakfast. Margaret, Steve, and David took off for a morning's hiking, and Paul spent the morning working on some lesson plans for his teaching in Sept. George and I had a busy morning, mostly cleaning the camper, filling with water, dumping at the sanitary station, etc. I did make a rice pudding out of some leftover rice which made a hit with most of the gang. We left McKinley around two and just drove until shortly before six. Everyone was tired, and some had naps—Margaret's was 3 hours long. When we stopped for the night in a pretty birch grove, it was raining slightly. I fried fish and fried potatoes and made a carrot and raisin salad. I'm sorry that we had to leave Denali without seeing it, but I have lots of beautiful pictures of snow-capped mountains stored up, though not the highest in the world. I forgot to mention that we saw a moose and her baby on the road before we stopped tonight.

**10,069 -- Thursday, July 14**

It rained gently all night, which was fine for sleeping, but we drove in rain and fog all the way to Anchorage. We drove around a little, located the main post office since we had asked Lola to forward some of our mail there, and we had breakfast while we waited for the P.O. to open at 9. As it turned out, we only had four pieces of mail waiting for us—maybe that's all there was to forward, or maybe they sent it back home after a certain period of time. I was delighted to have letters from Gwen Skewes and Betty Pryde. Paul got an invitation to the wedding of his Vietnamese students—the wedding now past—and Margaret got something from her university asking if she would like to reserve tickets for the football games in the fall. I came out by far the best!

My memories of anchorage aren't going to be among the most pleasant. Did I mention earlier that we had four flat tires and we had ruined the last of them? Remember the Top of the World Hwy. that I mentioned before and how rough it was after we left the customs office high up there in the mountains? Well, not only was it rough, but it had a few things on it that shouldn't have been there—like the foot long piece of iron that was in our 4<sup>th</sup> flat tire! It was completely inside the tire.

We had all noticed a noise under the m. home that got progressively worse, and one by one we mentioned it to George who replied a bit tartly that he didn't know what it was—it MIGHT be loose nuts or something. Once he got a place to stop and crawl under, that's just what it turned out to be. We also managed to find the right sized tire after several stops, and while it set us back \$104.05, I was glad to know that we again had a spare for the roads ahead. And once we had gotten these essentials taken care of, we

looked around some more, bought groceries and did a little shopping. We were interested to see whole huge lots of planes for sale, both new and secondhand. 40% of all Alaskans fly, so I suppose there's a brisk business in planes. I was impressed with the lovely flowers around almost every home, on public buildings, etc. Most were the same varieties that we have, only larger. The longer hours of daylight maybe? Like almost all towns up this way, everything is wood except for the newer buildings.

We did take time to visit Earthquake Park before we left. On Good Friday in 1964 there was an earthquake that registered 8.4 - 8.6 on the Richter Scale. 24,000 square miles of land was either raised or lowered from three to eight feet, and millions upon millions of dollars worth of property lost.

It was 2:45 when we left Anchorage—really didn't see too much there, but it didn't bother me. There was light rain again by that time, and the clouds were hanging low over the mountains. My spirits were sort of the same way! We went on into Palmer, which is the "heart" of the famous Matanuska Valley. Back in 1935, during the height of the depression, a bunch of "pioneers" homesteaded in this valley. Some of them came back to the lower 48, but quite a few stayed, and they've made it the only big agricultural area in Alaska. Not that I'd trade any good Iowa farm land for it! It was very flat in Palmer, but the Chugach Mts. formed a background. The growing season is from 100 - 120 days, but they have a great many hours of daylight. They grow enormous vegetables—like a 72 lb. cabbage. I had to buy a postcard to send to my friend, Dorothy Hite, who has given me many a fine cabbage from her garden. Can't you grow 'em bigger, Dorothy? It would seem that the government got back their investment from subsidizing the colonists back in 1935.

We went through a museum there and looked through their gift shop. I think I'll go into the business of making Raggedies and selling them there. They were getting \$20 for each doll.

Once we left Palmer, it was up winding, narrow mountain roads in the gathering—gathered—gloom. I love mountains when I'm sitting still, but going up and down them, and particularly down, isn't my cup of tea. I knit on Margaret's afghan, which, by the way, doesn't grow apace. Whatever that means! I knit by fits and starts, or crochet, rather. Mostly I get it out when there are too many curves or bumps or nerve-wracking spots, and then I crochet like fury. For one who has never in her life knit or crocheted tightly, you should see this? Much tighter than anything else I've done.

These blamed narrow, wet mountain roads remind me of Gwen Skewes. Several years ago she and Arthur had a vacation in Tasmania—rented a camper there and took off. I don't remember all that Gwen wrote, but once they were going up a mountain road, muddy too, if I recall it correctly. Gwen said that she wasn't at all happy about it in the first place, and A. didn't make matters any better when he kept singing "Nearer My God to Thee." I know just how she felt.

We are seeing a lot of glacial fed streams, and I like them. Our mountain streams at home are clear and sparkling, and some of them here are too. Many though come from glaciers, and they're a sort of dirty milky looking water, because of the glacial silt that they carry. Some of the people call this kind "dishwater" rivers. You can look down from the heights and see tiny little glacial streams all intertwined—dozens of them. They're called "braided" rivers because of this intertwining. In between the water part, there will be lots of pebbled and rocky places. I thought at first that probably all this was covered over during the spring run-off, but evidently it's not. Anyway, they're interesting and very attractive. Also dangerous. Hikers crossing such rivers in the mornings may get over easily, and they think they can re-cross the same stream without trouble in the evening. But there may have been a lot of melt during the day, and the same river might well be very dangerous by evening. They say they lose more people by this method than they do from grizzlies.

It's very cool tonight. The mist and fog over the mountains and the trees hemming us in make one feel far from hearth and home on this dreary evening—even though 6/7 of the family is right here in the 25 feet of the m. home. But at least the road is paved, though narrow. We think the clouds are lifting some, but then we climb right into them



again. Milepost says that there are lots of good blueberry spots around here "if you can beat the bears to them". Don't think I'll try.

We got to Matanuska State Park—M. Glacier State Park, it should be. We drove in and found the campground driveway blocked by a camper that had broken an axle. No one could go on through and we had three other campers who had followed us in. The men all got out to have a bit of palaver [tis word got cut off on the page and is not clear] and finally the ones behind got backed out. We backed a bit, but then pulled in beside a tent camper, onto rather soft ground. The kids went walking, in the rain, to see the glacier, and I cooked supper—pork chops, rice, peas, and a strawberry-rhubarb pie.

**10,263**      --      **Friday, July 15**

It's somewhat overcast today, but at least no rain. We stopped several times at pull-off spots to see the Matanuska Glacier. As we went along that day, we also had good views of the Taslina Glacier and many beautiful mountains—good thing as this road was either miles of construction and detours or else constant frost heaves which are found on most Alaskan roads. We got back to Tok about 3:30 and shopped at the Golden Bear (where we had stopped as we first came into Alaska) for a long time, and where we spent a lot of money. Margaret got me a lovely relish fork—sterling fork and real ivory handle etched with an Eskimo scene. I got one for Alaire too to leave with her when we visit there. Margaret got herself a pie server—really nice, but more expensive still.

We found a place to camp then, marked it with our sign and drove back to the laundromat. This was clean and nice with plenty of washers and dryers and things went quickly. Still, waiting in a laundromat has got to be one of the most time-wasting things I know of. Back to camp then—right on a pretty river. Margaret cooked—barbecued ribs. Mostly we spent the evening watching campers pull into the area. It was designed for 15, but 30 crowded in.

**10,513**      --      **Saturday, July 15**

Off about six, as usual. The man in the camper which had shared our site guided us through the maze of campers parked on the drives and all. We made good time then heading for the border, stopped briefly at Port Alcan U.S. Customs so that Steve could mail some cards with U.S. stamps, and then we crossed over into the Yukon. The pavement ended abruptly at the border, and it was back on bumpy gravel again. Canadian Customs was 20 miles into Canada at Beaver Creek. This was another spot that crews working from north and south on the Alcan Hwy. met back in 1942. The bulldozer operators heard each other's machines in the distance. They crashed through the trees, and when they met, they leaped from their machines and hugged each other.

There is a narrow clearing bulldozed through the trees to make the U.S.—Canadian border. It extends due north and south on the 141<sup>st</sup> meridian for 700 miles from the St. Elias Mts. to the Arctic Ocean. You can see it winding over the hills at various times as you travel.

At Beaver Creek, which is the westernmost community in Canada, we set our clocks ahead an hour. At customs we picked up a hitch hiker, a young Austrian fellow who is heading for Whitehorse to catch a bus for Banff to meet his friends. He was very nice, and I thoroughly enjoyed having him with us for a day. Probably we wouldn't have driven clear on to Whitehorse that day except for him, but it didn't hurt us. He's traveled in over 60 countries, all over N. & S. America, all of Europe except Albania, most of Asia and the Middle East and a lot of Africa. So far he hasn't gotten to N.Z. or Australia. He said a bit wistfully that he supposed he'd better try sometime, only it cost so much. He goes back to Austria late in August to take exams at his university for a business administration degree, and he said, again wistfully, that he supposed he'd better settle down soon. He's 28, so there's still time. I'd planned to have pizza for lunch, but I had the makings for only two of them, and that barely satisfies our tribe. I substituted grilled cheese sandwiches and fruit instead to include Walter.

We went past Skag Junction where a temperature of minus 81 degrees F. was recorded. BRRR!! We also drove for a long time along Kluane Lake, and it was beautiful with the snow-capped St. Elias Mts. as a backdrop.

It was almost 8 when we got to Whitehorse, looked up the bus station and dropped Walter off. A very nice young man. Then Margaret and Paul said they'd treat us to supper at the A&W drive-in which made an easy and very pleasant supper for me. We drove just south of Whitehorse to the Robert Service Community Campground, and although it was rather crowded, we did get a spot. I was glad not to have to think of getting supper then!

10,019 -- Sunday, July 17

[Note the mileage is obviously a typo and should probably be 10,819.]

We were all glad to sleep later this morning, and we filled up the tanks with water and did the "dumping" before we left the campground. We went into W. Horse to the Visitor Center first and then went sight-seeing. It's an interesting town, about 15,000, but it seems smaller and sort of folksy. Everything is low, and there are still a lot of log buildings and homes. One of interest is a log "skyscraper" which is three stories tall. It's apartments now, but I believe it's to be turned into offices. There were old log churches, a good museum which also included Sam Magee's cabin, and we also toured the Klondike, an old river sternwheeler. We kept running into Walter everywhere. He was sightseeing until his bus left. We did a little shopping and then went to see an old Indian cemetery. This one was rather rundown, but some are in good condition. They have brightly painted "spirit houses" which are miniature houses placed over the graves 40 days after death to house spirits of the dead and to protect the possessions buried with them. Then we decided to go back to "Mac's" to buy some ivory and jade jewelry that Margaret and I had looked at. I got myself a necklace and brooch, Peg got a more elaborate necklace, and we got some for Christmas gifts.

We left Whitehorse in beautiful weather, which we had had all the time we were there. We immediately ran into hard rain and hail, but at least we were still on pavement. Whitehorse is supposed to be semi-arid with less than six inches of rain, but they had rain for five straight days—an inch and a half in one rain. Even the gauges along the roads read low fire hazard.

It was a pretty drive even though light rain continued. The lakes are particularly lovely, & we followed Marsh Lake for a long ways, and always with the mountains behind it. We camped for the night at Squanga Lake.

[The personal message at the end of this section of the travelogue was addressed to Dorothy Hite, the friend Betty referred to who gave her cabbages from her garden.]

July 20, 1977

Dear Dorothy,

*I'm almost ashamed to send off this huge travelogue. Shall I lay you a bet that you won't get around to reading it until some cold week next winter? I didn't have any of it written up and ready to send when we were in Alaska, and since we left there we were in such wilderness that there just weren't any handy post offices. Maybe just a shabby log store where the mail was picked up once a week or something like that. So the travelogue grew and grew.*

*This morning, though, we got back on PAVEMENT, and only someone who has driven hundreds of miles on the terrible gravel roads that we have can really appreciate the paved ones. It is a true blessing! A couple of nights ago when we were camped, Margaret said, "There goes Hite's car." It was just like yours. I said, "Good. Maybe Kenneth can do something about fixing up these awful roads."*

*George called home to the media center today, and everyone was telling him about how hot it was. Then we called his folks, and they were fine except for complaining about the heat and drought. Personally, I'm glad that we're missing out on as much of the heat as we are. It's nice here. Usually a rain sometime during the day, the way it does in mountains, but the days are warm and the nights quite cool. I told George that I'm glad that we aren't at home running our air conditioner all this time, but then I thought that maybe John had moved up and was using it. I really hope not though.*

*I was just figuring up, and we're still about 750 - 800 miles from Seattle. We had hoped to get to Alaire's by Friday, but these gravel roads slowed us down so much.*

*Well, I'll get this into an envelope and get it ready to mail in some town that we go through. I do apologize for the terrible length of the travel letter. Do leave it till you have the time to read it, but at least it's on the way. I also apologize for the typing mistakes, but I do it as we bump down the roads. It makes me hit extra keys or skip letters, or commit every other typing mistake in the book. Not that I'm ever a good typist.*

*Tell everyone hello for us.*

*Love,  
Betty*

**11,002      --      Monday, July 18**

*Did I send you this before?*

Another day of much beauty to be seen, but not to drive on. We followed Teslin Lake for a good many miles. It means "long waters" in the local Indian dialect. It's 78 miles long, about 2 miles wide and is 700 ft. deep. We would back and forth over the Yukon-Br. Col. borders for a long time, through mountains and forests, also lots of road construction. At 1:15 we turned south onto the Cassiar Hwy., hoping it might be better, but it was the same old thing, narrow, winding, and of course very bumpy. Unfortunately, it's getting quite a bit of traffic this summer because the Alaska Marine Hwy., the Inside Passage, isn't in operation. The workers are on strike against the state, and so no boats. Lots of people who had thought they would be driving the Alaska Hwy. one way and taking the Inside Passage the other are now using this Cassiar Hwy. as an alternative to the Alaska one.

We stopped at the first possible place to pull off the road to have lunch, which meant a wide spot with a litter barrel. Quite a bit of traffic went by, and G. made the remark that a car and camper from California was going too fast for conditions. Sure enough, about 10 miles down the road, he'd slid into a ditch. Two or three others had stopped by the time we did, so everyone had a conference, we drove to the front of the ditched vehicle, hitched up with a chain and pulled him out. Then WE led the procession of cars and campers and did so most of the afternoon. So one goes fast, but you can still go TOO fast for the condition of the roads.

We pulled off for the night on a gorgeous unnamed lake, California followed us in and stayed too. It was a wonderful place to camp with that outstanding lake, all the mountains ringing it in, and of course pine trees everywhere. G. and the boys washed the camper with lake water while it was handy—just a few feet from the m. home. Margaret got supper—sloppy Joes. I baked a cake for tomorrow and also made a layered lettuce salad that has to be refrigerated overnight.

**11,292      --      Tuesday, July 19**

It's Macky's birthday, and we hope she has a happy one. I most thoughtfully brought a card along to mail at the proper time, but I couldn't put my hand on it when

the time came. I wrote her a postcard, and I guess she'll know that our wishes are just as sincere as on a regular card.

It was an unusually pretty morning and drive before breakfast. I know I keep going on and on about the lovely lakes and mountains and forests, but that's just what we're seeing. This morning there were lots of fast moving, rocky creeks and rivers. It all looks so much like our Rockies just now. We even had 22 miles of pavement, much enjoyed by all. We stopped for breakfast at the only civilization in 100 miles, a ratty looking place called Dease Junction. There was one gas pump, and several of us lined up by the time the place opened at 9. Gas was \$1.20 a gallon. While we were waiting, we talked with a man from Tuscaloosa, Alabama who teaches at the university there in the geology department. Turned out he knows Don Snow, husband of our niece, Donna, who also teaches there. There's that small world again.

As you can tell from various references, we drive for a couple hours before stopping for breakfast, and no, we don't have coffee before we start out. I don't know how many people have asked me how we can leave without coffee. Usually Steve and Paul sleep until we stop, and then we make up the beds, George shaves, and we all have breakfast, brush teeth, and finish the morning routine. It works for us anyway.

I just glanced at my notes to see what to add to this, and I'd written "scenery all afternoon". You color in your own mountains and lakes and pine forests. Include a lake with the name of Eddontenajon. How's that for a moniker? We also drove by miles of a burned over area with all the burned trees standing like ghosts. About 4:30 we detoured to see a glacier "within spitting distance of the road". It was too, and it's probably the closest we'll ever come to one. We parked right across the river from it, and there was this enormous mountain of ice—lots of blue ice—and it was absolutely beautiful. Some of it broke off while we were there so we saw little icebergs form. It was truly magnificent. We also saw smaller glaciers, and also some icefalls. "Our" glacier was Bear Glacier.

Then it was back to our original road and it was worse than usual for a hundred miles or more. It's slated for reconstruction this summer, and you could see where lots of work is being done. I was glad that it was after five and the big machines were just along the side of the road. There was fireweed everywhere, big fields of it as well as along the roadside. I suppose it's just what the name implies, a weed, but it's beautiful to look at.

We had to keep on driving because all the road work had wiped out the pull-offs, and there were no campgrounds. We finally got off the road at a wide spot, where it was fairly level. There was a camper from Sask. with a flat tire, and he didn't have the proper tools to get the work done. Luckily G. did, so it was good we did stop there. I had baked potatoes as we drove—bumped—along the road, so I fried fish and finished up supper by the time the tire was fixed.

MILEPOST says about this Cassiar Hwy. that we're on: Recently completed roads and briges in N.E. Br. Col. now make it possible for visitors to drive approximately 500 miles. Most of the Cassiar is still graveled and it is often 100 miles between gas stops. Unless you travel with your own meals and bed, you may get hungry between restaurants, and you may have problems finding empty motel rooms. (We didn't even SEE motels!) Be sure your vehicle is mechanically sound (it won't be when you get off the darned road), with good tires, and be sure to carry a spare tire and an extra fuel supply. The Cassiar is not a superhighway, but with proper planning, this can be a most enjoyable adventure drive. (Ha!) The scenery is magnificent, you can get within spitting distance of a real, live, colorful glacier (that, at least, is true), the people are friendly (what people?), and the traffic is light. The route runs more than 500 miles through untouched wilderness, mountains and rivers. The road is at its best condition during the summer and fall." Heaven deliver me from driving it in winter!

11,638      --      Wednesday, July 20

It was foggy when we started out about 6:30, but it soon burned off to a nice day. The road continued to be one of the worst we've had. It was just like a path with the

forest close on either side. We went for miles and miles with always a curve in sight. We always followed the Nass River, sometimes right beside the road and sometimes down below us.

We came to a group of Indian villages and drove through Kittwancool to see one of the best collections of totem poles still in their original locations. These were almost 100 years old, mostly without paint, and all weathered beautifully. Then miles on, in Kitwanga, we stopped to have breakfast, and there were more totem poles there. Kitwanga means "the place of the rabbit people."

Totems aren't religiously connected, as many people think. They're sculptured columns, often 60 feet high, with birds, animals, and strange unrecognizable creatures on them. Evidently they're unique to the Indians of S.E. Alaska and western B.C. According to the MILEPOST: "Totems illustrate legends and serve as lineage crests. Interpreting them isn't simple, and it can be done only by those who know the native legends and myths. The figures symbolize both characters and events of the mythological age and also the exploits and adventures of known ancestors and living persons. Legendary catastrophic world floods are recorded, migrations, wars, etc. and are put into carvings."

The Indians also illustrate their legends and actual history by carving chests, rattles, head dresses, staffs, and posts that supported homes. The top figure on a totem symbolizes the lineage of the group or clan that owns the pole, a heraldic emblem or crest. The lineage is traced through the mother. Totems were seldom kept in repair by the nomadic Indians, and now the carving is pretty much a lost art. Many were destroyed by vandals or by weather, but now they're being protected by the Canadian and U.S. forest services.

PAVEMENT!! What a beautiful word! And what a smooth ride! You simply can't appreciate what this means unless you've spent all the hours driving the hundreds of miles of gravel that we've done. We're now on the PAVED Yellowhead Hwy., named for an Iroquois Indian trapper and guide who worked for the Hudson's Bay Co. in the early 1800s. Because of his white blood, his hair had a lighter tinge, and he was dubbed Tete Jaune or "Yellow Head" by the French voyageurs.

About noon we came to the METROPOLIS of Smithers, pop. 4,500. After our days of seeing only tiny Indian villages, with maybe a shabby log store and a sagging gas pump, this seemed like civilization indeed. And it really was a nice town. I felt as if I'd been out in the wilderness so long that I ought to look around and see what the well-dressed female is wearing this summer. Our first stop was a gas station since Pete had come in on fumes (we do carry an extra five gallons which he hadn't touched.) Next came the laundromat, grocery store, post office, telephone office, etc. Lots to do when you return from far away parts. G. called the media center only to find that it's been 100 - 110 for days. We called the folks too, and they mentioned the heat and lack of rain.

We camped at Beaumont Park on "beautiful Fraser Lake". Peg cooked-goulash, etc.

**11,936      --      Thursday, July 21**

It rained gently all night, but it had stopped by the time we left about 6:45--at which time we had already dumped and filled up with drinking water. I wonder why we can't bottle some of this moisture and take it back to Iowa?

We had a good road and not much traffic for our early morning run into Prince George, a BIG city and a nice one, it seems. After breakfast there, at the Visitor Center, we turned south and for most of the day went down the vast, long plateau of interior British Columbia. The scenery varied a great deal during the day, but all was beautiful. I think I preferred the northern part which is called Caribou Country from the Caribou Mts. on the east. This was another gold rush area. There are lots of derelict log cabins, barns, and roadhouses, most picturesque and speaking of days gone by. The Caribou Trail was carved through the wilderness nearly 100 years ago. There is a lot of parklike land in this area, also lakes, and a motto says: "A lake a day for as

long as you stay." This is rather rolling country, with mountains around, and I liked it.

Later we came to an area with a lot of sagebrush, and it was reminiscent of Arizona and other parts of our west. Tumbleweed was there too. And in the early afternoon we came to the magnificent Fraser River Canyon Country—no other word for it, unless it's awesome. We followed it for probably 50 - 60 miles—very deep gorges, terrifically high mountains, a winding, twisting road with the river always below. I love this kind of scenery, but I can't say that I especially like the steep grades and many curves. We couldn't slow down much because of the heavy amount of traffic, and I know George was glad when we stopped for the night. We went through eight of nine tunnels, cut through mountains, so at least we didn't have to climb up and then come down that many of them.

We stopped for the night at a private campground just after we got into lower land. By the way, we're back to where it gets night and where it gets dark. We've noticed it ever since we turned southward again, and I must say that it seems more normal to me to have it get dark. Over 20 hours of daylight is a novelty, but it doesn't make for good sleeping for outlanders.

**12,420            --            Friday, July 22**

We didn't leave until about 7—a beautiful summer day, and more lovely scenery although not as awesome as yesterday. In about 10 miles we stopped at the little town of Hope, found a public phone and called Alaire before she left for work. Then we soon picked up a four lane highway, and we drove for a long time through a beautiful wide valley, hemmed in with mountains. They raised a lot of fruit there and did truck farming.

We went through Customs at Sumas—no trouble at all. The officer didn't even come into the m. home. You're allowed to bring \$100 worth of goods back every 30 days, duty-free. Maybe we looked too poor to afford \$600 worth of items. We do have quite a bit, but not that much.

For a long ways, it was VERY flat with more fruit and truck farming. There were small farms, neat and well-kept. They all laughed because I kept pointing out all the herds of dairy cows, but we're very conscious of the price of milk. All of us are milk drinkers for every meal, but we severely rationed ourselves in Alaska and northern Canada. One time we paid \$1.20 a quart—guess it was a liter, not that much difference. At home we pay \$1.34 a gallon, and we buy four or five gallons at a time. Anyway, the dairy herds looked good to me. I might mention the other prices too. We also paid \$1.20 a loaf of bread in Alaska—just regular grocery store bread. I think the most we paid for gas was \$1.26 for the imperial gallon. It was about 58¢ for the U.S. gallon when we left home, and seems to be about 60¢ around here.

We got to Alaire's shortly after noon, and Archie Wilcox, my cousin Lillian's husband, let us into Alaire's house. There was mail there for us, mostly for me, and we all got so absorbed in it that we forgot to call Alaire at work to let her know that we had arrived. We also forgot lunch for a bit, but then settled down to some sandwiches and delicious blackberry pies that Lillian sent over with Archie.

The mail that was there really did mean a lot to me, and thanks to you all. We read the folks' letter first, then Lola's and Dorothy Hite's, to get the hometown news, and then we branched out abroad. I had three pieces from Chick—a long letter from the end of June, and then a shorter letter and postcard from the Isle of Man where they're on holiday. Maureen from Australia wrote of her trip to N.Z., and now I want to go there! Not that the thought of going is anything new! I also heard from Faeria, Peg Rollins, and Gwen Skewes, all good, long, meaty letters, and all greatly appreciated. I'll answer them all, once I'm home again.

Alaire came home shortly after five, and we talked, cooked a chicken supper and talked some more. And some more, and some more. George and I finally broke it up and went to bed—slept in the house, although the kids stayed in the m. home. Alaire has moved since we were in Seattle before, and she has a very nice home—nice, big, paneled

living room, good-sized bedroom with all the furniture built in, bath off of it, lots and lots of closets and storage, a good-sized kitchen, full basement, and a big back porch where her washer and dryer are—also an extra bed there. There is also a full basement and a bedroom and bath down there.

Alaire likes to garden, unlike me, and she has some very pretty flowers, a nice vegetable garden, and a pretty lawn.

**NO MILEAGE -- Saturday, July 23**

We got up, got all our VAST amount of laundry together, but we were still sitting over coffee and more talk when Lillian came and joined us in both. She offered to let us do our laundry at her house, and after a little polite demurring we let ourselves be persuaded. Much nicer than a laundromat, especially for me since G. did the laundry. Lillian and Archie live around the corner from Alaire (they own Alaire's house), but you can cut through the back yards and driveways to save "squaring the corner" when going between the two houses. G. came and went many times that day, keeping the washer and dryer going, but he said it gave him something to do besides sleep. He did some of that too.

Alaire baked two enormous salmon for lunch—they covered a big cookie sheet—and then the whole gang came to help eat them. The rest of the gang are Glen, Lillian, and Archie's son, and his wife, Karen, and their five months old baby, Alaynia. They live next door to Alaire, toward the corner. On the corner is still another house that L. and A. own. It was my Uncle Glen and Aunt Beulah's home, then Lillian's sister, Thelma, lived there until she died. Now L. and A. rent it out.

Most of the family kept to the "salmon theme" that afternoon and went down on the water somewhere to see the salmon going up ladders to spawning grounds and such. I begged off, partly because of my very sore knee and hip, but also because the camper needed a good cleaning. I scoured the kitchen sink, bathroom one, tub, toilet, wiped out the oven, cleaned the top of the stove and burners, washed the insides of the windows, vacuumed, dusted, etc. It was hot work on a rather steamy afternoon, but it surely needed doing. Speaking of heat, I might mention that all of the letters from Iowa spoke of temperatures up to 105 degrees for many days, and NO rain.

The same "gang" assembled at Lillian and Archie's for a roast beef supper—scaloped potatoes, a sort of scalloped green bean dish, salads, sourdough rolls, and excellent chocolate pies. Lillian is a very good cook and hostess, and I thoroughly enjoy going there. Her dad used to say "She's a good cook if you can afford her." Guess she tends towards the expensive. She and Archie had been on a trip to Europe since we'd last seen them, so we got to see pictures and hear about their trip. Their son, Brent, and his wife, Valerie, live in Italy, so the four of them toured around. L. & A. have also redecorated a lot of their home since we were there last, and that's something that I'm always interested in. It's a pretty and comfortable home.

**NO MILEAGE -- Sunday, July 24**

We were up and off shortly after 9, our six, Alaire and L. & A., to the Seattle Center to have brunch at the famous Space Needle. We had been there for lunch two years ago, and Alaire says that she takes out-of-town guests only once. Her excuse this time was that Paul hadn't been along the last time, but whatever her excuse, we had a good meal and a good time. It's costly to eat there. Not only do you have your meal expense—five dollars and up for breakfast, but you must pay to go up in the elevator, an outside one that gives you a good view all over the city. That costs \$1.50 apiece. When you get up to the restaurant, the outside part where the tables are revolves slowly so that you get a 360 degree view of the whole area. They provide you with a little map that shows what you are seeing, and it's really breath-taking on a lovely day like this one was. Mt. Rainier is as fractious as Mt. McKinley, but we did glimpse it dimly this time, and we also could see it from Alaire's back porch.

Our impressive menus stated: "In an effort to conserve energy and our natural resources, we are serving champagne. Water will be served upon request." And champagne

we had, right down the line except for David. Steve too is under the drinking age in Washington, but he looks older. Our family isn't fond of it, so mostly L. & A. and Alaire drank ours, which were refilled two or three times.

Once we were done there, we all walked up to the observation deck a floor above with again fantastic views over the city and Puget Sound and all the other "waters" around Seattle. Alaire and our kids stayed on through a good part of the afternoon, going over to the Food Circus where the kids ate again—each the food of a different country—and shopped at the International Bazaar. Margaret got a lovely Moroccan caftan affair to wear to parties this winter, and Steve had a Moroccan shirt. Paul got some wood pieces from Thailand—a huge goblet that I would like to "pinch" and also a wooden bowl. Oh yes, and a "boina" which is the flat black hat that Spanish men wear.

Lillian and Archie, G. and I left after the observation deck, drove around the city for a bit and then went on home. G. had a nap, I did a salad for supper, and we were generally lazy. G. loaded up boxes and boxes of candles that Alaire was sending back to Iowa with us so that was ready to leave on Monday. When the others got home, we set up a buffet supper for the "gang". Alaire baked two big hams, Lillian brought potato salad and custard, and we had salads, relishes, and ice cream with the custard for dessert. And coffee and more coffee.

Alaire's friend, Elizabeth Betty, came bringing more candles, stayed for supper and lots of talk afterwards. Glen and Karen left when Alaynia fussed. She's such a nice baby and a very good one.

Lillian and Archie are coming back to Iowa for the first two weeks of October, including their driving time, so we'll get to see them again. Archie's sister lives in Sioux City, and they are coming back primarily to see her niece since she's not too well. Lillian is hoping to see her mother's family at a family reunion, and then we're planning a Miller family get-together at our house.

**12,600 (technically it said 12,6000)      --      Monday, July 25**

Alaire had to go to work shortly before nine, so I got up, had a shower and shampoo and then sat and talked to her over coffee for a long time. Margaret came in soon to put the finishing touches on a sampler that is an overdue Christmas gift for Alaire. It's quite large, and it's the Miller family-tree done in needlepoint. It's a spreading tree with red "apples" for the women and green ones for the men. Alaire keeps insisting that it needs a rotten apple—hers—on the ground. It says "MILLER" in big black letters under the tree, and then in smaller ones "Willard Merril" and "Edna May Pratt", my dad and mother. My brother, Dale, and his wife Lois, are grouped with their three kids, Harvey and Maxine and their two, and G. & I with our five. It's really very nice and a lot of work. I'd like to see it framed and hung.

As always, I hated to say good-bye to Alaire, but she had to go off to work. She's very easy to visit, doesn't fuss unduly, and we always have a good time there. Steve took some pictures of her house and garden, in addition to all the snapping we'd done while the gang was together. By the way, Seattle building lots seem very small to us, but they seem to do the most with little space. Not such an expanse of grass as we have at home. The flowers were lovely everywhere, and I noticed some that are white at home go to lovely blues and purples here. Our around-the-yard hydrangeas are almost always white—we call them snowballs—but in Seattle they ranged from light blue to almost purple.

We got onto the interstate highway easily enough, but we missed our turnoff to go east and so got right into downtown Seattle. It wasn't too bad though, and we got ourselves situated and back where we belonged. It was good to get away from the city traffic, not that the scenery is so beautiful through eastern Washington—lots of sage, some cultivation with irrigation. We stopped briefly at the top of the mountains to look out over the magnificent Columbia River and its valley, but mostly we just drove all day. Paul drove through Spokane just at rush hour, and then it was into Idaho. You don't see much of it, up there in the Panhandle, but we do go through the Coeur d'Alene area which is beautiful with huge lakes and mountains. We stopped for the night at the little town of Osburn, Idaho at a private campground. George changed the oil in the m. home,



Margaret and David did some laundry, and I cooked round steak and such for supper. We've decided to detour south to go through Yellowstone National Park since Paul has never been there. When will all these side trips end?

**12,976**      --      **Tuesday, July 26**

A partly cloudy day to start off, but it turned into a beautiful summer day. We set our clocks ahead an hour as we crossed over into Montana. It was a long day of driving, but mostly it was on interstate roads with the divided highway. I like the Montana scenery, but some of the others don't. There are some purple-y looking higher mountains in the background, and the lower ones all around are rounded and barren except for a few trees and sage and such. Some are buttes. I enjoy the interesting play of light and shadow from the high cumulus clouds. I see signs along saying "Chain up areas ahead," and these speak tellingly of winter conditions here.

We stopped in Butte to buy a few groceries, and I spotted a copper shop. You guessed it—I looked, and I bought. They had some lovely and very expensive things. I have been wanting a copper and brass candleholder ever since I was in England, got them for others and didn't get myself one. But in the end, in Butte, I got a gift for a friend's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary and got myself a shallow solid copper bowl. It's lovely, and I do like copper very much.

We stopped for the night at a very flat campground about 40 miles from Yellowstone. We didn't like to go closer for fear we couldn't find a place to camp.

**13,347**      --      **Wednesday, July 27**

It was 46 degrees this morning when we left shortly after six. It was such a pretty early morning ride on into Yellowstone, with the sun coming up over the mountains. The road is greatly improved over two years ago too. We got to Mammoth Hot Springs and had breakfast and then went to see the terraces. These are striking and fantastic and much more beautiful to see than before when we had to see them through a heavy rain. The literature says that they change measurably from day to day with unpredictable shifts. The mineral deposits are made rapidly, and an area that has been inactive may suddenly rejuvenate.

To build these terraces there has to be hot water, and much of it is close to boiling. The white terraces are the hottest, but there are blues, red, green, brown, etc. The inactive ones weather to grey and blackish. There also has to be basic building material, and in Yellowstone it's calcium carbonate, limestone. Geologists estimate that Mammoth Hot Springs water carries more than two tons of dissolved limestone to the surface each day. The various colors come from the great number of tiny living bacteria and algae. These thermal algae are extremely primitive and have changed little, if at all, from those growing in the hot springs at the very dawn of life on earth. This was all volcanic in long ago times.

We passed a lone phone booth along one of the park roads so G. called the media center. They reported various problems developing—time we got home maybe? Nothing too serious though. They also said that it has cooled off some back there.

Steve just told me that we crossed the Continental Divide twice yesterday and will again twice today.

Yellowstone has little signs now and then telling you to tune your radio to 1606, and when you do there is a little talk, giving the history or special features of that spot. It's a nice addition. There are THOUSANDS of vehicles in this park, most being driven carefully and all. Still I wonder if the time isn't ripe to start bus systems such as McKinley and Yosemite have. There are so many m. homes and other big vehicles that finding a parking space is really hard. Still, no one has asked my opinion on running national parks, and as I said, most motorists are careful drivers.

It's usually quite a ways between the major attractions in Yellowstone, but the drives from one to another are beautiful with a variety of scenery, bare mountains,

forested mountains, lakes, rivers, glens, canyons, sagebrush, parkland. The early explorers found it a wonderful and mysterious land, and somehow the powers that be then were inspired to a new sort of land use and the first national park in the world was set aside. It's still very wild, so we're told, once you get away from the hotels and campgrounds and other enclaves of civilization.

Yellowstone was sculptured by fire and water. There are thousands of hot springs, geysers, fumeeroles, steam vents, mud pots, and all the other remnants of volcanic action. The glaciers came over the area then, smoothing it off. You can still see thermal activity right along the roads. Much of the land is unstable, and you're warned again and again not to venture off of the boardwalks in the hottest spots.

Steve is having a field day with getting license plates after a dull time in the Yukon and other spots. G. is very obliging about slowing down so that Steve can see a plate or stepping on the gas a bit to catch up with someone who has passed us but whose license plate Steve didn't get, or driving through various parking "loops" with us all calling out the names of the various states to Steve. He got 60 different ones today, but not Maine or Rhode Island. He also keeps a separate list of the Iowa plates. They're easily distinguished because the numbers of our 99 counties are on. For instance our county, Henry, is number 44.

We can tell that we're high in the mountains again. Whenever anyone gets out a new packet of film, it's all puffed up and very pregnant.

We ate lunch in the Old Faithful parking lot, and I think that everyone else had the same idea. We had pizza before O. Faithful erupted for our benefit, and then the others went walking on some of the trails. I baked a couple pans of brownies, peeled potatoes for supper, deboned a canned chicken to cook noodles, boiled eggs for tomorrow's potato salad, etc. And also watched the various people coming and going in the parking lot. One of my favorite occupations, by the way! One family had a car problem, right in the middle of the parking lot driveway. A park ranger came zooming up after a while, conferred under the hood of the car with the owner, and then went away. Pretty soon a tow truck came, but I never did see what happened after that.

Most of the time that I was cooking, a pickup camper was parked right beside me, and how they were fighting in there! It was a young couple with four children from about seven on down. I couldn't hear much from the man, but the woman yelled at the kids, argued with him, and fed them lunch, all at the same time. I didn't know who to be sorrier for, the mother or the children. It was almost three o'clock, and the kids were undoubtedly hungry, and it was blazing hot. It's not easy to travel with small children, as I know, but I hope I didn't sound off that way to ours. Maybe when they're home again they'll only remember the good times and talk of when the children saw their first bear and how excited they were, etc. I hope so anyway.

We did the usual sightseeing the rest of the day—the mud pots and the falls and all the rest. Going out of the park we crossed the Continental Divide twice, 8200 feet and 8391. Lake Isa straddles the divide so that its waters go to both the Atlantic and Pacific. Kamchatka also does. I'm afraid that I'm just not "up" on the geography of those parts! We camped in a national forest not too far from Yellowstone, and I cooked noodles for supper in my deboned canned chicken.

**13,568      --      Thursday, July 28**

Sorry that I messed up the bottom of this paper, but somehow I got these NCR sheets in wrong. [She had put them in backwards, so the impressed typing appeared as a mirror image.] I'm getting short on paper so I thought it behooved me to use them—hope they're right now.

We started in climbing immediately this morning and climbed for 36 miles before reaching the top of Beartooth Pass at 10,942 feet. Now that really was a "Top of the World Highway!" It was also incredibly scenic, with all the high mountains, lakes, and rivers. There was snow by us, ice on some ponds, and frost on fields of grass. We forgot to check the temperature before we left camp, but part way out David got out to see what the thermometer said, and it was 40 degrees then. We got way up above the tree

line and could see for miles in all directions—until another switchback would hide things from view, and open up other views. We also found out, again, just why these are called the "Rocky" Mountains. Rock everywhere! Eventually we did get to the top, and then we came down the other side in 15 miles. One mile we did four times, switching back and forth, each time a little lower down. We came down to the forests again and eventually into flat land for a while. We were talking of one thing we missed in the Canadian forests, and that's juniper—the smell more than the tree itself.

We stopped in Billings, Montana just long enough to get groceries, and then turned to go down to Custer's battlefield on the Little Big Horn. Steve has been there before and has wanted us to see it, and we were glad to go. We ate lunch in the parking lot there—parking lots, rest stops, pull-offs, and occasionally a shopping center lot—these seem to be our places to eat lunch.

The site of Custer's last stand was interesting, and I'm glad to have been there. Battlefields aren't my thing, nor do I have much of a fellow feeling for Custer. He seems to have been a stupid man in so many ways. Nor have I ever been much of a student or follower of the Indian wars, and what I do know is highly colored by books and TV. The whole management of Indian affairs is a bad blot on U.S. history. I'm not proud of it, but neither am I much of a believer in carrying the guilt for acts of my forefathers. Manhattan can't be given back to the Indians, nor Iowa either, for that matter. On the other hand, I do believe in giving them a good education and helping them to find their place in the world of today. That's needed too. I remember some years back when oil was found on an Indian reservation in Colorado. They "blew" the money that each family got, and it was a lot. They bought all kinds of electrical appliances when no electricity was available at their homes and got big cars when not all could get driver's licenses, etc. And the white people urged them to buy and blow their money!

The Little Big Horn battlefield was very peaceful when we were there with the white markers of the military cemetery beautiful on the hot summer's day. Originally the fallen soldiers were buried where they lay, but later most were reburied in a common grave, marked now by a big monument that lists the names of all the dead.

From the battlefield it was a LONG afternoon of hot driving. Most of this was through Montana, "The Big Sky Country," and I liked the scenery. It was mainly rather barren mountains and buttes, mostly brown colored but with shadows of other colors. Early in the day, we'd wound back and forth—Wyoming, Montana, Wyoming, Montana. Late in the afternoon we crossed a small corner of Wyoming and then came into South Dakota. We had a nice campground near Deadwood, S.D. called the Petrified Forest Campground. Margaret had been cooking barbecued ribs in the oven as we traveled, so it didn't take long to finish up supper.

**14,015            --            Friday, July 29**

I'm tempted to write—another long, HOT day of driving and leave it go at that. Early this morning though it was cool and pretty as we drove on to Wall Drug, had breakfast in their parking lot (where else?) and then "did" the famous place. We had been there before several times, but it's still fun to go through. It's so blatantly a tourist trip, and the stuff they have in there is mainly junk, but we spent half an hour in there and got on our way. You see Wall Drug signs for hundreds of miles in any direction from there. Somewhere I read that there is one at McMurdo in the Antarctic. We saw one in Watson Lake, Yukon, on the big signpost there. I'm sure that the Wall Drug owners know that ADVERTISING DOES PAY.

I was going to cook rice for lunch this noon, but it was so darned hot. Margaret was driving, and I told her to pull off at a little town, and we bought a gallon of ice cream—went through a lot of it, but we'll have a snack about five o'clock. I've got ham and beans simmering in the oven as we drive, so that will be ready for supper. I'm sure we'll drive a bit later than we usually do. We want to get to Margaret's tomorrow and then on to the folks'.

[For some reason the next-to-last page of this travelogue was not on blurry NCR paper, though the final page was. The penultimate page was in much clearer black type. In this age before photocopies were common, it most likely

was duplicated at the media center using either offset or a carved stencil mimeograph. George Burrow got many perks from his job.]

It was hot, very HOT, driving all afternoon—at least it was hot when we stopped. The kids sang the afternoon away, or did some quizzes from books that we have along. I threw in an answer or two, but mainly I sat and typed on the Christmas travelogue from my English trip. I never did get around to writing that up, and several people have asked me for it—again and again! I had a good half of it written once, but whatever happened to that, I don't know. At least I've gotten going again.

The kids all wanted to go on to Margaret's yet today, but it was a good 200 miles, and G. & I vetoed that. We stopped instead at a pleasant city campground in Adrian, Minnesota. Steve was happy because he got the license plate for Maine—that makes all 50 states plus all the extra countries [she may mean counties here].

**14,434      --      Saturday, July 30**

It was a pleasant summer day when we left at 7:45, and cool then. I must say that it felt good to be back to familiar countryside—not that I knew this particular area, but it was the old corn, beans farming country. It was nice and green too, so at least they've had enough rain around here.

Thoughts at random as the trip draws to a close-----

TOGETHERNESS - There was a time or two on the trip when I'd have liked to bang all six of our heads together and said, "Now, everyone is to pout and gripe for half an hour, and none will be allowed after that." It couldn't be done, of course, and most of us had a down period at least once during the trip. In some ways, it's easier to take four smaller children along, where mom and dad are still boss and can control the situation. It's harder when you bring the family together after they are grown up and some have been away and have been independent as long as Margaret and Paul have been. They're used to their own schedules and ways of doing things and to their own homes and such. 99% of the time though, I had no complaints. Each did his share and things went well. For togetherness in a 25 foot motorhome for six weeks, things went VERY well.

MOTORHOME - We'd never had more than a short shake-down trip in it before this long trip, but there's not much that I would change after living in it steadily for six weeks. This amount of space worked well for the six of us. Usually three or four would sit right up at the front. One would drive, and another in the opposite seat there, one on the carpeted cover to the engine which is between the two seats, and one on a folding chair just behind that. Sometimes David would sprawl out on the floor there in front, and most of the tribe had a nap on the floor one time or another. I usually sat on the right side of the m. home facing the front—this is where the small table and two seats are. There is a large square table way at the back with seats around it in a U-shape. When a meal was finished, we'd take down the gable, and that left us with the U-shaped sofas for sprawling. Margaret often rode there for a part of the day, and I would too. Paul read there quite a bit, and G. got a nap or two there during the days. We had small blankets and pillows that could be gotten at easily, so there were all the comforts of home.

One thing I would change, and probably will, would be the curtains. These are pretty—a silky fiberglass material in a cream color, banded with the tweed upholstery material of the couches and seats. They were fastened top and bottom and to open or close them, you have to slide from both top and bottom. It works, but it's a nuisance. Before another major trip, I'm going to try them on plain old curtain rings.

Storage space was good, even for six of us and would be outstanding for a smaller group. There was a big closet that had all our hanging clothes, a smaller closet that held all the coats, plus extra stuff, and then each of us had a good-sized drawer or cupboard space for underclothes and special stuff. The seats on either side of the small dinette held boxes of food and canned goods when we started out, but we emptied one quite soon and put souvenirs etc. in there, as we started collecting those. Alaire sent back all the candles—some went inside the seats, but some had to go on the floor under the smaller table.

I've griped about my poor typing as we go down the bumpy roads, but it's worked out quite well. It gave me something to do that would still allow me to enjoy the scenery, and of course there were many days when I didn't do any typing. Some have asked about the electricity that let me use an electric typewriter. We have four batteries for the m. home. One is strictly for starting the m. home and the others store up electricity to run lights, fridge, water pump, etc. It let us use my small hand mixer, the typewriter, fans, let M. boil her eyes (contacts), etc. The stove and oven are propane gas-run, as is the water heater. That would blow out during the day as we drove down the road, and G. would light it again each evening as we camped to let us have water for the evening and early morning.

In order to use the battery electricity for our regular electric appliances, we have what is called an "inverter." I don't know how it works, but it changes the battery electricity so that these other appliances can be used. There was only one place to plug in for the inverter, and the directions say not to leave it on and unused for more than five hours. I'd have a heating pad, which takes very little electricity, plugged in at all times when the inverter was on, and then if the typewriter wasn't going, it didn't damage the inverter. At least it worked for me.

Margaret made out a list of jobs at the first of the trip, and we rotated them weekly, and that worked out quite well too. The overall cleaning wasn't the greatest, but the individual jobs got done.

Some, mostly men, have asked about the gas mileage and all. We have two big tanks, one holds 35 gallons and the other 45, and that means a whopping amount of money when you fill both tanks! We got about 7.5 to 8 miles per U.S. gallon. The fresh water tank holds 36 gallons. It has regular taps, just like a sink in a house—I mean the sinks and bath tub in the m. home have regular taps. Trying to write too fast here! The holding tank for the toilet wastes, wastewater and all holds 40 gallons. The propane tank is 67 pounds, and it went through the whole trip and is still going strong.

The whole m. home is paneled in a warm wood color, and I like that. There are pretty pulls and such on the drawers, and not the kinds that will tarnish and get ugly looking. The carpet is shag in browns and white—very comfortable and pretty. Also hard to keep clean. You can't sweep it, and the tiny vacuum cleaner that we have that plugs into the cigarette holder did a very slow job. Better than nothing, though!

BATHROOM - This is a tiny spot, but believe me, it was a BIG addition to our camping life. It's only 27 inches wide and 48 inches long, including the 21 x 26 tub and shower. There's a marine type toilet, a teeny-tiny lavatory, medicine chest with mirror front over the toilet, shelves to hold towels over the lavatory, and good storage for shampoo, cleanser, extra toilet tissue, etc. under the lavatory.

There are things that MUST be remembered. The toilet lid HAS to be shut each time since the towels tended to fall off the shelves on the bumpy roads. We'll do something to remedy that before another trip! Also the medicine chest had to be opened carefully each time because the stuff joggled around in there and would fall out when the door was first opened. Again, CLOSE THE TOILET LID since it was right under the medicine chest.

Using the toilet as you go down the road is quite an experience! For a person of ample proportions, it means positioning oneself carefully and that means arms at side, toes nudging the edge of the tub. A big mirror on the inside of the bathroom door, right at the right side of anyone sitting there, doesn't give the most flattering view! Anyway, sitting on the throne, bumping and joggling down the road is quite an experience!

Trying to dress in two square feet presents problems too, but we all managed. We would use the campground showers if such were clean and available, but we also used the tiny camper shower a lot too, and it worked just fine.

Another detour—this time into Rochester, Minnesota, to buy some clothes for George. We then went on to eat at the Cake and Steak. Then it was on to Margaret's where we got her unloaded (forgot all her clothes on hangers) and called the folks to tell them that

we would be down around 6:30. We stopped at Jin and Arn's since we hadn't seen them in a long time, nor had we seen the house that they moved to. They gave us all the news, including the BIG news that John has a teaching job for the coming year. Then it was on to the folks' for a good visit—and a good supper, including our first sweet corn of the season.

**NO MILEAGE -- Sunday, July 31**

Mom Burrow wanted us to go to church with them, so we all had breakfast and then went into Frederika to hear a special gospel singing family from Waterloo. It's a four hour trip on down to Mt. Pleasant then. We stopped at Dale's, but he and Lois are vacationing in Nevada, so Larry and Barbara told us. Harv and Max are out west too, so Iowa City didn't keep us long. We got to Mt. Pleasant about 6:30, and it seemed good to be here. It was a wonderful trip, over 11,000 miles—I must get the exact mileage. Things are greener here than I had thought they might be, but we've been told there have been recent rains. Lola has kept the house going for us, and it IS good to be here.

[It's unclear who the final comments are addressed to:]

*Sept. 10*

*Had your letter yesterday & will answer soon. We're just leaving Maquoketa—brought John's desk up. We're on our way to the folks' for Dad's birthday weekend. Peg will meet us there. Mom B. isn't at all well.*