

June 15, 1952

From here on the good roads ended. We didn't bother to get breakfast in Dickinson; but hurried on westward to Montana and through the Badlands, which are well named; but very pretty in a desolate way and wear a coat of Joseph's colors. There are miles of canyons and cliffs; but seem to be forage for horses and cattle. Near Medora we crossed the Little Missouri. So little for notes in this barren country, it would be monotonous if it weren't for the Burma Shave signs; and I think the advertiser recognized this fact. From the village of Sentinel Butte we came out into the flat wheat lands. How anyone could live in this neck of the woods is a mystery to me?

In the town of Belfield near Dickinson a kitten sat beside the road bulldozing a hole for his morning duties--keeping in order with all the other out-of-door plumbing in this country.

Some town! Is the words I noted for Blach, bleak and dirty and I can imagine how hot and how cold and not much protection from either. At 6:30 a.m. we entered Montana and the first village was Wibaux--another range settlement. 13.4 miles of construction dust and rough going with a ridge between two lanes. 20,000 miles registered on the car speedometer. True to Montana, many horses were on range and all looked well nourished.

I have heard of Glendive, Montana through names on rodeo programs and visiting this town of 5,000 learned it surely is a western cattle town; but it was surprisingly neat with a lovely modern new hotel where we ate the best breakfast we had had in ages.

It would of been a very hot day, if it hadn't been for the rain showers. Across the Big Yellowstone River and into a country of scattering oil wells and irrigated farms. This is quite a pretty valley and lots of saddle horses. Across the river lies a rugged country much like the Badlands. At Forsyth the last hanging or lynching for horse thievery was in 1911.

This is Montana's historical country--the Yellowstone, the Powder, and Little Big Horn Rivers--all famous for Indian wars and the Custer massacre. Through Custer and into an open green valley of acres and acres of sugar beets. Billings is a busy city with big fair grounds and neat brick buildings. The Great Northern Hotel is new and modern and the meeting place of the oil, cattle, and mining barons. With midday the hunger pains gave us warning to stop and I was in the mood for good food; and suggested we dine at this hotel and have a Sunday dinner.

Perhaps this was about the "ritziest" dining room we had been in and Haysel felt embarrassed because she was wearing peddle pushers and all the ladies were well dressed in stylish summer clothes; but nonetheless we were well served and enjoyed one of the finest dinners I have ever eaten in a restaurant. At the finish of the meal, the waitress brought finger bowls with warm water--some contrast to the Dickinson food and service; and the cost wasn't anymore.

Leaving Billings we spoke of the huge railroad yards and this city being the center of Montana's huge activities, would call for a vast transportation system. At Laurel there

were impressive oil refineries. Snow covered mountains begin to appear on the distant scene. The wind blew so hard, it was a job to drive and no one wanted to stop.

Columbus is a small town along the highway and soon we crossed the Stillwater River which betrays its name by being very swift. Through Reedpoint we came into the greenhilled sheep country and saw thousands of the sheared rascals. Into a valley surrounded by mountains and the fat cattle country. In Montana the traveler swings from one to the other according to the elevation. Through Big Timber (where is the timber?) and soon into Livingston a railroad town of 7,000 and in the foothills of the mining country. Here we stopped at a souvenir shop and asked about the highway through Butte to Helena.

This proved to be good strategy and we were advised to turn back to 89 and go to Townsend, which we did and followed the Shields River and through a series of western villages like we see in the movies and surrounded by a wide open cattle and sheep country with fringes of sagebrush and herds of antelope everywhere.

The little old Flivver came in for many compliments especially when we saw one like it being used to herd a group of fat cattle. At the price of beef steak, we had surely seen a fortune on hooves.

Again we entered mountains much like in Colorado with small streams and beaver dams. With the beautiful backdrop of rugged Rockies, a colorful sunset, and the wide open valley, we were treated to a panorama of unsurpassed beauty. Out of the mountains and into a wide valley and into Townsend, which has a mill and lumber trucks parked everywhere, too. We crossed a somewhat smaller Missouri than in the morning--it's a long old river.

In the outskirts of Helena is a smelter and one can see the huge chimneys for miles. I was surprised, with all the flat land surrounding it, that Helena is built in a gully and on a hill. We stayed at the Capitol City Motel and enjoyed the quietest night of the trip. The capitol is above the town and is of the same architecture as so many of the state's capitols. We are still guessing why a 30 foot boat is displayed near this building. It could not be used in this arid country and swift rivers. The municipal building is of Persian design and quite outstanding.

Chet's diary:

June 15-Sunday-We drove from Dickinson North Dakota to Miles City and Billings Montana-stayed all nite in Helena. Cloudy windy and rain showers.

Note: *Helena is now off the beaten path of the I90 freeway, so they saw parts of Montana that travelers passing through today would probably miss. - Virginia Vandehey, Marjorie's niece*

June 16, 1952

We ate our breakfast in a little “dive” outside of Helena; and with the soggy pancakes to hold us in our seats, we took off for the mountains and soon were across the Continental Divide at 6,225 feet, which seems like sea level after the Berthoud Pass of over 13,000. The road is almost a continuous path of construction and from here on it is purely a mining country except for Missoula which is surrounded by a wide green valley of acres of sugar beets.

Some of the mines are of white rock and are high on the hillsides and the whole countryside is pock marked with holes. On the Little Blackfoot River the first gold was discovered in Montana and one wonders how anyone got here in the first place. The Milwaukee electric railroad follows this course and the trains slip by without any noise; but aren't as interesting as the steam trains of the Northern Pacific whose tracks sometimes run side by side with the electric. At Drummond was a pine mill and we always felt at home where there were mills and trucks.

We looked for tunnels and only noted those for the railroads. Bonner had a huge mill by the Big Blackfoot River. Missoula is quite a city with modern buildings and wide streets and supported by many industries: mining, sugar refineries, and lumbering. The soil is very black and the rock cliffs are a mauve color. The last towns in Montana were Superior and St. Regis with lumber and mining industries.

Over Lookout Pass (4,728 ft.) and we were into Idaho and the state of narrow roads. At the foot of the mountain is Mullen a mining town by the dirty Coeur d'Alene River. Down the river canyon all the villages are for miners and the whole valley is dug up and left a barren mess with tree stumps and roots exposed. It is easy to tell they are looking for something lost here. We noted several smelters around Wallace and Kellogg and one we know is a zinc. After leaving Smelterville and Cataldo, we headed for the lake country and went through the first tunnel on the trip. I wouldn't make a good inhabitant for the mining country--doesn't appeal to me and I was glad to see the lake and different scenery.

Lake Coeur d'Alene is large and beautiful--such as its name. We enjoyed a tasty lunch near the town of the same name and recalled landmarks of a previous visit two years ago. This is a big pine country and boasts many mills and a factory of the Ohio Match Co.

Post Falls is the last village noted in Idaho and we were in Washington and onto the super highway into Spokane. Following the Spokane River we slowed down for a series of small towns: Veradale, Opportunity, Dishman and through the corner of Spokane, the largest city of the inland empire.

Cheney is a typical small college town and from here on we left the pine trees and were into a level sage brush prairie; thence into the wheat belt, which spreads for miles and miles across Eastern Washington and at this time of the year is a checkerboard of green and brown of ripening grain and summer fallow. I would call this about as wide open a country as we had been in. Sprague is but a desert town; and at Ritzville there are wheat elevators and from here we went directly West and I drove the 114 miles to Ellensburg.

At Moses Lake the wind and the dust were having a howling good time and the city is torn up with road construction. Much building is going on in this newly irrigated desert; but it didn't appeal to me as a place I would like; but I imagine in a few years it will be quite a country.

This is a road one can certainly make time and gives a feeling of being on top of the world. From the high desert the route drops suddenly into a dry gulch of high bluffs and a sheer drop-off from the roadway. The beauty was breathless; but my passengers reminded me, "You do the driving and we'll do the looking." Across the canyon we noted a herd of presumable wild horses and it looked very Western. Soon we had crossed the Columbia River and were climbing again onto another plateau.

Suddenly the Ellensburg valley was spread before us and a welcome sight of miles and miles of greenery. The highway leads through the outskirts of the town and by the Normal school, which has an attractive campus of green inviting lawns and many shade trees.

We followed the Yakima River through its canyon and a second tunnel of the trip. We thought we would never reach the end of the canyon route; but we were all weary from a long day's ride and time was dragging. Out of this narrow pass and we were into the beautiful wide Yakima Valley and the confluence of the Naches and Yakima Rivers.

Here we welcomed the best motel of the trip, Maywood Park, and rested in the luxury of wonderful accommodations. Tomorrow would take us home and it seemed very close after traveling so far.

Chet's diary:

June 16-We drove from Helena to Missoula, across to Spokane-stayed all night in Yakima, Wash-cloudy-light rain near Spokane.

Note: After reading this, it's clear that the newer routes through Washington that now exist make the trip from Spokane down into Oregon much easier. Also I could not find, on my maps of Montana, any mention of a Little and Big Blackfoot River. There is just the Blackfoot River. So many highway improvements have been made in recent years that it is difficult to tell exactly on which roads they traveled in the areas where Marj does not mention the cities and towns by name. -Virginia Vandehey, Marjorie's niece

June 17, 1952

"Oh What a Beautiful Morning" for the last leg of our journey and before the day ended we would be home. Irrigated gardens and orchards lined the highway until we climbed into the high country of Satus Pass. Up and down along sagebrush hills and then into the canyon and pine trees and over the 3,149 ft. pass.

Goldendale, a farming town, lies in a wide valley of wheat farms and cattle ranches and so much prettier than I had ever pictured it. We caught a glimpse of Mt. Hood. We appreciated the courtesy of the Western truck drivers in this up and down country. The air

seemed so very fresh and breathable in these high, wide open spaces. The courthouse at Goldendale is very neat and the town is of the same pattern.

For years I have viewed the Maryhill Museum across the Columbia above The Dalles; and this was the first time I had been by it; so we stopped and visited this impressive artifact; and I am glad we did as I have never seen such beautiful pieces of art or such a complete collection of Indian relics and royal gifts. The view from the grounds is worth the stop and all the more exciting from the roof and one gets a broad panorama of the mighty Columbia—nowhere did we see scenery like this.

The North Bank highway has a series of tunnels and I soon lost count; just too much other scenery to catch the eye. Through Lyle and White Salmon and onward to Camas and Vancouver and a familiar route so often traveled. In a lagoon near the Little White Salmon River lies the carcass of the old Rogue ferry which carried cars across the Alsea before the bridge was completed. We recognized it before we saw the faded name. What a story it could tell.

By noon we were having lunch in Portland and did a little last minute shopping before heading for Yachats. This was the nicest day of the whole 19 day trip—neither too hot nor too cold and the sun shone all the way down the coast. Late afternoon we drove into our driveway and were greeted by the cat just as though we had been gone only a few hours; but the growth of the weeds in the garden told a different story.

Now it was back to work for the weary travelers and several days getting into a normal pace again. We were very thankful for a trouble free trip and one of a thousand new scenes and a chance to appreciate the good U.S.A. and all the more a deeper love for our own Oregon.

Chet's diary:

June 17-Drove from Yakima to Goldendale down north bank to Vancouver-Portland... Stopped at Mary Hill Museum. Nice day-hot-rained 3 1/2 in. while we were gone.

June 18, 1952

Yesterday we returned safely from our vacation of nineteen days and 5,597 miles of a variety of roads from gravel to pavement and saw the going on in fifteen states counting our own.

Everyone said they had enough motoring for awhile and were glad to be home; but by the time summer is over, home will become tiresome and we shall be ready for new places again. One good thing can be said of travel: home always looks better than ever and it is well to go away for awhile to appreciate this fact.

When I close my eyes I am still watching the passing scenery. I slept very little the entire journey for fear I would miss something. One does not go that far from home very often in their life; so it is a pity to waste any good scenery by sleeping.

It is very true that travel broadens. It happened to me because I didn't lose a meal and didn't do much exercise except sitting. For the housewife, it is a rare treat to have a vacation from the kitchen and your own concoctions; so naturally food held an extra attraction.

The first night home in our own beds meant deep slumber and probably a good chorus of satisfying snores. No other bed can offer the relaxation the one at home affords.

It is surprising how the weeds have grown in such a short time and it looks as if we had been gone a year; so now I will have to use some vacationed muscles and get this place out of the jungle.

That is the sad side of a vacation--the work waiting at home; soon it is so involving, all you have left of the wonderful freedom, is the memories. And to take another trip the next time, everyone will have to work hard again and save for that day. But it was sure wonderful while it lasts!

Chet's diary:

June 18-I logged part of day for Wilson saw mill up north fork of Yachats. Changed oil in cat. Foggy-cloudy all day.

June 19, 1952

You never know how other people eat until you leave home. It is interesting to study food habits across the nation. I had never given this much thought until we went traveling.

As soon as we crossed the divide into the Midwest, we noted a change in the menus; and I do mean a change! The cornbelt peoples eat more starchy foods; probably because they grow these staples and are farther from the fresh fruit and vegetable markets. The menus were not what we call balanced and contained meat, dry beans, and corn.

When it comes to frying chicken, the Easterners have a big jump on us. These cooks can really make a fryer something to crow about. I think I learned the secret. Where we use mostly shortening they employ pure lard--there is an abundance of pork raised in the corn states--and the chicken is fried in deep hot lard. I can see where I have been too stingy with the grease.

In Kansas we ordered a vegetable plate lunch and it contained navy beans, canned tomatoes soaked in bread, corn, soggy potatoes, and dry toast. You can imagine what an appeal this would have to an overfed vegetarian from Oregon?

We eat so much fresh fruit here in the West, we have absorbed its freshness and vitality; but fruit is luxury in some state's diets and the people seem sluggish from having too much bulky foods in their diet. Very little fruit is eaten for breakfast and sometimes we could not find any on the menu; and felt our morning meal was incomplete.

In Ohio--it is closer to the southern fruit market--there were the largest watermelons I have ever seen and the meatiest bananas (the ones we get here are midgets). I love watermelon but it would take me some time to surround one of those Eastern monsters.

So if you get tired of the home menu; you can get a change by visiting the neighbors across the mountains.

June 20, 1952

Traveling twenty years ago was quite a chore in comparison to 1952. If we had to return to "the good old days" after tasting today's luxury of going places, there would be few tourists.

I can remember when cars were only made to house people and not luggage and any excess beyond humans was tied on the running boards, the sagging cloth top, the fenders, or the rear; presenting quite a gruesome picture. The sleek streamline models provide no space for such; except in carriers on the top (who wants to ruin a shiny paint job with top heavy luggage; so the trunks are made roomy enough to hold the average traveler's needs.

It is a fearful thing to glimpse a section of old road and realize that this narrow, steep thing was actually used by cars. One wonders what progress will be made in the next twenty years. I admit some of the highways now are little better than at the birth of roads. Where an effort has been made to widen, often doesn't help--the newer strip being at a lower or higher level than the original roadway and can give the driver a case of "straddle nerves".

It isn't much effort now to make five or six hundred miles a day in good weather and still have ample time to sight see, stops for this and that and the other. It was when two hundred miles per day was considered quite an accomplishment and the driver was considered in the same class with "daredevils".

When I think how fast everyone and everything travels, I do believe the world is turning at a faster pace, too. In traveling too fast, in the automobile or in life, we miss many of the things about us; especially the little things that mean so much.

The tourist twenty years ago probably didn't cover as much territory as we do now; but he probably remembered more of what he saw; whereas, we can brag of more places we have been; so it is a toss up.

Daughter Haysel now sends her thoughts on the rest of the trip to Ohio:

June 10th - Loved the roller coaster "The Cyclone" and remember the park and lake as a great place where we had lots of fun. Wonder if it's still there. At that point of my life I wasn't quite as interested in the food and too bad that has changed over the years.

June 11th - Don't remember the Meadowbrook swimming. Too bad the folks never got back there again, but the Willseys did come out here and know they enjoyed the West. They were really great people and were almost like another set of parents for Dad as they kind of took him

in when he was a young man and went back East to work in the automobile industry.

June 12th - I don't have any memories of this day other than arriving in Ludington for the evening. Kind of remember the Stearns Hotel as just a square two or three story cement building. Nothing very impressive. Boy, Dad really took the back roads, didn't he? Kind of remember him saying he wanted to avoid the big cities as much as possible. He definitely would want to avoid them now!!

June 13th - Definitely remember the ferry ride. Surprised Mom didn't mention how a lady with a silver tray full of candy bars came around and asked me if I would like one. When I said that I would she informed me of the cost. Don't remember what the cost was, but I was very embarrassed as I thought they were free. Funny how one remembers some silly thing like that and forgets the important things. And, of course, I remember all about the lost cat and all the commotion accompanying that. We all wondered for a long time if the cat was ever found. Lake Michigan seemed as large as an ocean to me as I couldn't see land anywhere. Fog and rainy weather probably didn't help. Also, couldn't believe that an entire railroad could be loaded on that ship. Mom didn't seem to think it seemed any bigger than the Puget Sound ferries, but it definitely did to me. I also remember that wonderful Wisconsin cheese. Even though I like Tillamook cheese, I do think that good Wisconsin cheddar is better and still really like it, but don't have it very often. It's really fun to follow our route in the atlas and would really love to repeat the trip exactly the same routes as they took.

June 14th - I can remember not being very impressed by the Mississippi River at Little Falls, just an ordinary looking little river or small stream there. Guess all great rivers probably start out somewhere very small. I could find Hawley on my map, but not Lester and that was where another Oregon car tooted at them. Do you suppose Lester no longer exists? Have located all the other little towns she has mentioned. I know I was not very impressed with North Dakota and Dad still talked about the terrible meals there right until his last days. If we go that same route now it would be on Interstate 94.

June 15th - Have a strong memory of the Sunday dinner in Billings, Montana, and the finger bowls. The only time in my life I have ever had those.

June 16th - Mom talked about Idaho's narrow roads. Well, she would be in for a nice surprise now as the route we took then is now Interstate 90 and a great freeway with beautiful scenery. Funny how every time I have been to Moses Lake, WA since then the wind has still been blowing and howling. There must be times though that it is nice or why would people live there?

June 17th - Am sure I was the happiest of all to get home and see my friends and find out all the latest gossip. I think we're all the same. It's fun to travel, but wonderful to return home. Sometimes I think that's the best part of the entire trip! Makes us appreciate what we have. Regarding the June 19th entry, I also remember that horrible vegetable plate lunch in Kansas. However, have been back to Kansas twice since then and haven't encountered that since.

- Haysel Pankey

June 21, 1952

Living out in the wide open spaces of the West and breathing fresh, clean air from the mountains and the ocean; has been so long a part of my life I haven't realized how fortunate I am.

In driving through city and more cities in the Middle West and East, and seeing how crowded people live, I wonder how they enjoy life. The air is filled with coal smoke and factory smells and few know the freshness of sea breezes or pine scented forests.

There is never any communion with nature except in a crowded city park or a rare drive to the country; and always people are mingled with more people. The city folk know not the babble of a brook; but hear constantly the grinding of traffic and human noises.

People of the larger cities live together in crowded apartments like ants in a hill and know very little privacy. The hot summer months are beyond endurance with very little means of relief. Some sleep in the park trying to find a few hours rest; other lay upon fire escapes to seek every breath of air.

Those of us who are fortunate to live in the cool western climate, do not half appreciate the luxury afforded us until we visit our Eastern cousins. The pure air of the Western slopes is reason enough for me to stay where I am.
