

Chapter XXII

The Great Western Adventure

May 18, 1929 – July 12, 1929

Geannie began making two detailed lists, one of things to do before leaving and the other was a more comprehensive list of things to take. The first list included: service the car, fix the flat tire, and place stops on the delivery of the mail, newspaper, ice, and milk.

The second list was topped with camera and film. The next several items included lessons learned from their ill fated camping trip. It included items such as an ax, firewood, can opener, bed mats, first aid kit, and so on. After working on the list for a few days, it had grown into a very long list. She added one more item to the things to do list; get a small trailer.

Curly's leave began on Friday, which was spent getting ready for the long anticipated western adventure. Geannie set about packing while Curly secured a trailer from the air station that had been surplussed. Once he had changed the oil and serviced the car, they began loading everything into the car and trailer. For this trip, they were loaded to the gills, even the back seat was packed full of things. By evening everything was ready, the car and trailer were packed with every item on the list. Geannie was sure that she had everything they possibly would need. They probably had more than they needed.

Early on a Saturday morning in mid June, they set out. After crossing the bay on the ferry, they headed north on US 395 and then onto Route 66. When it was just Curly and Geannie in the car, Geannie sat next to him. When the kids traveled with them, Sandy sat between them on the front seat and Geannie held Austin on her lap or vice versa if Geannie was driving . Most of the time they left the top down. They made it as far as Barstow the first day where they stayed at an inn.

The next day was a very long, hot day that took them across the Mojave Desert. The five gallon water jug came in handy that day. The desert heat was made more bearable by putting the top up for shade. Nevertheless, the heat made Sandy and Austin quite irritable. They normally got along well with each other; that day they found each other an annoyance. Sandy was jealous that Austin got to sit on Geannie's lap and began fussing. She tried to explain that she was big girl and could sit on the seat and Austin was too little. That didn't work and they both ended up on her lap for a while. That is until another tussle broke out when Austin wanted Sandy's picture book. Fortunately, the desert heat made them very sleepy too. Sandy curled up on the seat between them and Geannie put Austin down on the floorboard at her feet. When they woke up after a couple of hours, they were much more agreeable for the rest of the day. After a very tiring day, they arrived in Bullhead City, Arizona where they stayed at an lodge that night.

Anticipation mounted the third day as they neared the first major stop on their trip, the Grand Canyon. In mid afternoon they arrived at one of the seven natural wonders of the world. Determined to

have a positive camping experience, they set up camp in a campground at Grand Canyon Village on the south rim of the canyon.

Unlike their first camping trip, all alone in the middle of nowhere, Grand Canyon Village was a full service community with shops and places to eat. The rest of that afternoon was spent setting up camp and looking around town. Using their camp stove, they made supper. Later in the evening they built a campfire and made s'mores. With the mattress rolls they brought, they all actually slept well that night.

After a breakfast of bacon and eggs, toast, and orange juice they set out exploring. With two small children they couldn't take some of the more strenuous trails they would like to have taken, but they did drive out on the West Rim drive to Hermits' Rest and stopped at the several overlooks along the way, including Mohave Point and Hopi Point, as well as the Powell Memorial. Each stop and every bit of the way provided a spectacular view of the marvels of the canyon. About midday they stopped and spread out their picnic in the shade of some ponderosa pine.

At one place they saw some mule deer and at one of the lookouts they could see some big horn sheep on a ledge far below. At another lookout, they watched a bald eagle for several minutes as it soared over canyon, right out in front of them.

There was one trail that would accommodate Austin's stroller that took them out through a display of a variety of desert plants. The school teacher in Geannie had to learn as much as she could about the different plants and rocks.

After they had got back into the car and were on their way back to the campground, Geannie felt something bite her ankle. She brought her foot up onto seat of the car seat and rolled down her anklet to have a look. Geannie, who was not the kind to be faint of heart, screamed when she saw a tick embedded in her skin.

"What's the matter, Geannie?"

"I've been bitten by a tick!" she said as she went to squash it.

"Whatever you do, don't kill it. We have to get it out in one piece if possible. Do we have a pair of tweezers in the first aid kit?"

"Uh huh."

"Where is it?" He asked as he pulled off the road.

"Its right here under the seat." She said as she retrieved it.

Curly got out of the car and came around to her side of the car and opened her door. Geannie shifted around so he could get at it. Taking the tweezers he firmly grasped the tick as near its head as possible and gently pulled it back in opposite direction that it went in. With a good tug, it came out. "We better have that looked at." he said. "Let me have your hanky. We need to keep this little fellow to show to

the doctor. Curly found a bottle of Campho-Phenique in the first aid kit and dabbed a little onto a cotton ball and applied it to the bite.

“Make sure that you don't have any more crawling around on you. I'll check the kids.”

Geannie took off her shoes and socks and found nothing. After putting them back on she got out of the car she shook her dress good. Curly did find one in Sandy's hair and got rid of it before it could bite her. “Look through my hair.” Geannie asked. Curly parted her hair with his fingers so he could see her scalp. “I don't see anything.” he assured her.

Curly then shook his own clothes and Geannie looked through his hair. Satisfied that there weren't any more ticks crawling around, they drove back to the campground and went straight to the medical clinic and went in. After a bit of a wait, the doctor took a look. “I don't see any remnants of the tick. You did a good job of removing it. Where did you learn to do that?” the doctor asked.

“Oh it is just something I picked up in my desert survival training.”

“Did you happen to keep the offending critter?”

“Yeah. I have it right here.” Curly said as he retrieved the handkerchief from his pocket and handed it to the doctor.

Unwrapping the hanky the doctor commented, “Just as I suspected. What we have here is a Rocky Mountain wood tick. They can cause Rocky Mountain spotted fever. The first symptoms are fever, chills, muscle ache, and a headache. A spotted rash often develops two to five days later. I think you'll be okay but I'm going treat the bite with some antiseptic.” He paused and swabbed the area with a swab. “There, now if you notice any of the symptoms I mentioned, be sure to get to a doctor.”

“Thank you, doctor. I appreciate all you've done for me.”

“My pleasure, that's what I'm here for.” He opened the cupboard to put the antiseptic away and pulled down a bowl of suckers and offered them to Sandy and Austin.”

“Thank you.” Sandy said instinctively.

“Here, you take one too.” he offered Geannie. Winking he continued. “You have been a very brave girl.”

“Why, thank you. I don't mind if I do.” She selected a lemon one.

Offering the bowl to Curly, he selected a root beer one. “Thanks for everything, doctor.”

“Now, you folks have an enjoyable vacation.” At that he left the room.

On the way out, Geannie stopped at the receptionists desk to pay for the service.

After returning to the campsite in late afternoon, they spent the rest of the day in the visitors center and museum. Rather than fixing their own supper, they decided to get something to eat in town. After a long enjoyable day, they slept well again that night in their tent.

After breakfast the next morning, they loaded up and continued on their way. Their route took them out on the east rim drive to Desert View. There were many places to stop to take in breathtaking views.

Once they left the Grand Canyon, they set off across the Painted Desert on the Navajo Indian Reservation. The Painted Desert is a sparsely vegetated, arid expanse of badland hills, flat-topped mesas and buttes. The name refers to the rainbow of colorful sedimentary layers mother nature painted on the hills.

For the next two days they were on the reservation. That night they stayed at an inn in Kayenta, Arizona. Their journey the next day included a stop at Four Corners where Arizona, New Mexico, Colorado, and Utah all come together.

That evening, the sixth day of their trip, they arrived at the second major stop on their trip, Mesa Verde National Park, where they setup camp once again.

The entire next day was spent exploring the cliff dwellings. They took the trails that meandered through the ruins and climbed the ladders for a closer look at the deserted dwellings. Geannie found the visitors center very informative. Aside from the attractions they saw, they also enjoyed visiting with other tourists at all of the places they went. They met an interesting assortment of people from all over the country.

Day eight of their trip took them through the most beautiful and spectacular country either one of them had ever seen. They thought they had mountains back home in Roanoke. The Allegheny Mountains, as incredible as they are, were nothing compared to the jagged snow capped summits of the San Juan Mountains of Southwestern Colorado.

The scenic drive from Durango to Ouray took them over three incredible mountain passes; Coal Bank Pass at 10,640 feet, Molas Pass at 10,899 feet, and Red Mountain Pass at 11,075 feet. The highest point in the entire state of Virginia is only 5,729 feet. The San Juan Mountains consists of twenty six peaks over eleven thousand feet. They stopped off at Electra Lake for a picnic lunch. At one point on the winding mountain road, a deer ran out in front of them. Curly slammed on the brakes and narrowly avoided hitting the animal.

It was mid afternoon when they pulled into the town of Ouray, one of the several mining towns located in the San Juans. The plan had been to find a campsite for the night. They were not expecting to find a resort with a natural hot spring swimming pool. It was just too inviting. Geannie had included their bathing suits on her list of things to bring. After checking in and getting a room, they changed into their bathing suits and headed for the pool. The water was about eighty degrees and didn't have the sulfur smell associated with most hot springs. They learned that the pool had only opened two years earlier in 1927.

While in the pool, Geannie couldn't help but overhear a conversation between a man and a woman,

about their same age, and their children. The woman looked vaguely familiar. Finally her curiosity got the best of her she and approached them, "Pardon me, but what part of Virginia are y'all from?"

"Why, how did y'all know wer'all from Vuhginia?" the woman answered.

"Your accent betrays you. Hi, I'm Geannie Brason and thats my husband, Curly. We're from Roanoke."

"Well bless my soul." The woman exclaimed. "Wer'all from Lynchbuhg. I'm Hattie Mawtin, and that there's my husbun, Geohge, and those there awh awh young'ns, Betsy, Jun-yah, an Iris. Pleased to mee'cha. Do tell, why foh don't y'all talk like yur from Vuhginia?" Hattie wanted to know.

"Well you see, my mother is from upstate New York and my father lost his accent when he attended Princeton. They brought us up without a southern accent. My mother was particularly adamant about it. But a little did rub off on to us just by growin up there. It does come out a bit when I get excited. My husband's family are from Northern Virginia and never picked it up either."

"My, my. Ain't it a small wuhld? What brung y'all the way out here?" Hattie asked.

"My husband is a naval aviator and he's stationed in San Diego. Every year we usually go home, but this time we decided to explore the west. What about you?"

About that time, Curly and George and their kids joined Geannie and Hattie. After another round of introductions, Hattie continued, "Geohge, here is the branch manajuh for a branch of the Fuhst Rocky Mountin National Bank in Denvah. We'all moved out here three yeehs back. We'all come here evuh chance we get."

"My father is a banker." Geannie interjected. "He is the owner and president of the Roanoke Bank and Trust."

"I know of him and his institution." George replied. Then he continued. "My sisteh mahwied a fellah from Roanoke. By chance do y'all know Maggie and Bill Caspuh?"

"Why sure we do. Gennie and I went to school with Bill. They're members of my father's congregation."

"No kiddin? Why, we've attended there when each of Maggie and Bill's young'ns were baptized. When there second child was baptized, there were three babes that day. One of them done spit up all over the pastoh."

"Yes, we know all about that. That was Sandy, here."

"No foolin. The pastoh show handled that with real grace."

Curly and George went on to visit about other things while Geannie and Hattie carried on their own conversation. "I declare, I know you from somewhere. Did you attend Hollins by chance?"

"I've been trying to recollect where I know y'all from, too." Hattie puzzled. "No. I went to Lynchbuhg

College where I played baseball. We played against Hollins all the time.”

“I pitched for Hollins.” Geannie boasted.

“That's where I know y'all from. Y'all are the dreadful numbuh twenty three! I had a pretty darn good battin average, but I nairy could get a hit off'n y'all.”

Both women laughed. “My goodness gracious. Its a small wuhld ain't it?” Hattie mused.

Geannie and and Hattie continued their conversation. After a long soothing soak, a good conversation with their new friends, and a little swimming they all went to a restaurant for dinner. After dinner, they exchanged addresses and went their separate ways.

Since the pool was open until dark, they spent the rest of the evening enjoying the pool. When they returned to their room, Sandy and Austin were all tuckered out. Curly and Geannie got them out of their wet bathing suits and dried off. They were both practically sound asleep as they dressed them in their pajamas. With the kids sound asleep, Curly and Geannie slipped out of their bathing suits and took advantage of some time alone together, with the intent of increasing the size for their family. All relaxed from the soothing water and their romp under the covers, they slept exceptionally well that night.

Since it was Sunday, the plan was to take it easy that day. They attended the nine o'clock service at the St. James Methodist Church in Ouray. Before leaving Ouray, they had to go to the pool one more time before checking out and getting back on the road.

Their destination that day was Grand Junction. They stopped for lunch in Montrose where they learned about the Black Canyon of the Gunnison and had to take a look. Located fifteen east of Montrose, the Black Canyon, so named because the canyon walls are so steep that they never get any sunlight, causing the rocky walls to appear black. As the Gunnison River runs through the canyon it has one of the steepest descents of any river in North America. At Chasm View, the river drops two hundred and forty feet per mile. Since they didn't have all that far to travel that day, they stayed at the Black Canyon for quite a while and had a picnic lunch there. Late in the afternoon they arrived in Grand Junction.

Grand Junction wasn't a main stop on their route and they only intended to spend one night. The inn where they stayed offered a self service laundry so they decided to stay an extra night so they could wash their clothes and bedding and and restock their supplies. It was also nice to have a break from traveling.

There turned out to be a very interesting attraction that they had to take in, however. The Colorado National Monument a few miles west of Grand Junction has some spectacular canyons cut deep into sandstone with some unusual rock formations such as Independence Monument, the Kissing Couple, and the Coke Ovens.

The next day they headed north through what was known as the Book Cliffs. The name comes from

the sandstone cliffs that cap many south-facing buttes that appear similar to a shelf of books. There wasn't much to see as the landscape of the plateau was much different from the looming mountains they had just come through. They had stopped for a picnic lunch at Douglas Pass.

After they had been on the road for more than a half an hour, Sandy went to play with her doll but couldn't find. A quick search of the car proved futile. Sandy was frantic and expressed herself with a tantrum. Geannie remembered Sandy playing with it at lunch. Curly turned the car around and backtracked their route to Douglas pass. Sure enough, there was her doll. It was under the picnic table. Grateful to be reunited with her doll, Sandy clutched it all the way to their destination that day, Dinosaur National Monument located on the Colorado – Utah border. Once there, they set up camp for the night.

Day twelve was spent exploring the fossil beds. Again, the school teacher in Geannie came out as she was fascinated by all of the fossils. She wished she had seen it when she was teaching her fifth grade class back in Roanoke. The scenery was spectacular where the Green River cut a path through the canyon.

The drive the next day took them to Flaming Gorge on the Utah – Wyoming border. The area was given its name due to the spectacular red rock cliffs that surrounded the river in the area. That night they stayed in Rock Springs, Wyoming.

The next day they drove through the high desert plains of Western Wyoming, with the towering Wind River mountains off in the distance. That afternoon they arrived at the Grand Teton National Park, which had just been created in February of that year, and set up camp at Jenny's Lake. Jenny's Lake was a fairly small lake but what made it incredible was how the Tetons, with their glacial crags, jutted above it.

In the evening, Curly rented a rowboat and took Geannie, Sandy, and Austin out on the lake. From several yards out, they watched as a bull moose, three cows and several calves came out of a stand of trees and down to the water's edge. Curly stopped rowing and let the boat drift and they silently watched the magnificent creatures. Creatures was a good way to describe the gangly animals. Geannie got a couple of good pictures of them.

Dark clouds started rolling in over the majestic peaks and Curly made for the shore. By the time they returned to the boat, the wind was picking up and thunder could be heard not too far off. They made a mad dash for their tent, barely making it before a deluge broke loose. The wind lashed their tent but it held fast. In a few minutes, the fast moving thunderstorm had moved on.

Curly and Geannie were getting used to camping. Set up and take down went much smoother and quicker. They got the knack of camp cooking down pretty good too. All in all they found it quite enjoyable, despite their first experience.

The next morning they packed up and set out exploring the Tetons. Farther up the road, they got a

good look at Mount Moran. It looked particularly spectacular from Oxbow Bend on the Snake River.

They continued north along Jackson Lake with stops along the way, including one for a picnic lunch at Colter Bay. Eventually they put the lake behind them and in early afternoon found themselves in Yellowstone Park, their primary destination on this trip.

During the afternoon, they encountered some waterfalls that they stopped to see. Just past Lewis Falls, while driving along Lewis Lake they saw their first of Yellowstone's famous bears. They saw several more as they crossed the Continental Divide. Geannie had Curly take a picture of her and the kids standing in front of the sign marking the continental divide. That night they set up camp at Grant Village on the shore of West Thumb, an extension of Yellowstone Lake.

The next morning while making breakfast, a black bear caught the smell of bacon and came to investigate. Curly had just poured a batch of pancakes on the griddle when the bear wandered into their campsite. Geannie grabbed the kids and hurriedly got in the car. As the bear was sniffing at the pan full of bacon, Curly just stood frozen with the spatula in his hand. The bear moved closer and took a sniff at Curly. Even though the bear wasn't threatening, it was a little too close for comfort. Geannie took a picture of Curly's encounter with the bear just as he flipped it on the nose with the pancake turner. The bear heeled around and ran along the lake, crossed a creek, and disappeared up the hillside into the trees. With the bear gone, Geannie and the kids got out of the car and sat down to breakfast.

After breakfast they attended a non denominational service held in the campground. The Brasons spent the next three days exploring Yellowstone Park. That day they drove along Yellowstone Lake, with a stop at the Yellowstone Lake Geyser Basin and at Fishing Bridge where the Yellowstone River flows out of the lake. At Fishing Bridge, Curly broke out their fishing poles and they joined in with a couple hundred other people who were dangling a line from the bridge. The only ones who seemed to have any success were the pelicans. It was more fun watching them than fishing.

Further up the road they stopped at the Mud Volcano and the Sulfur Calderon. They pulled over along the Yellowstone River to watch a large heard of bison come down off the mountain on the other side of the river. The bison entered the water and forded the river, the young ones swimming alone side of their mothers. The heard emerged from the river right in front of them and meandered around the several parked cars that had stopped to watch. Sitting there surrounded by bison, they got very good look at the massive beasts. Geannie got some good pictures of the whole thing. Soon the last of the heard crossed the road and disappeared over a low hilltop.

Later they stopped for lunch at a picnic area on the Yellowstone River. After lunch they stopped to see the Upper and Lower Yellowstone Falls. There were several vantage points from which to see them. The best was right at the brink of the lower falls as the river plunged three hundred and eight feet into the

Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone. The canyon itself is nine hundred feet deep and a half a mile wide. The yellow rock slopes of the canyon is where Yellowstone gets its name from.

From the canyon, they cut across middle of the park. Once gain they had to stop for a small heard of bison coming up the road like they owned the place. At another place several cars were stopped to watch scores of bears along the side of the road. The bears came right up to the cars begging for food.

By the time they got to Norris Junction it was getting late in the afternoon. Wanting to get to the campground at Madison Junction, they passed up the attractions along the way, saving them for another time. Once at the campground they set up camp, fixed supper and got ready for bed.

The next day took them south to Old Faithful. Along the way they stopped at the mud pots and walked around the boardwalk. They got to Old Faithful a little before noon and had to wait about thirty five minutes for the next eruption. As the time drew near, hundreds of people poured into the observation area. Within two minutes of the posted time, the geyser spouted to life. First with a couple of small spurts, then a much larger one. Then all of a sudden, water and steam shot a hundred and fifty feet into the air which lasted for about three minutes. The spectacle certainly lived up to its promise.

After watching Old Faithful, they found a picnic area and had lunch. After lunch there was so much to see in the area. There was Castle Geyser which was just spurting. They saw Riverside Geyser shoot out over the river. Catching the afternoon sun, a rainbow appeared in the water as it fell into the river. There was also Beehive Geyser and at the end of the trail, the beautiful Morning Glory Pool that looked like a blue green morning glory blossom. Dozens of people crowded the trail. Grazing nearby were several lone bison and a couple small elk herds.

Aside from the natural attractions, there were the man made ones to look as well. They went in to take look at the Old Faithful Inn. The rustic lodge, with a log and wood shingle exterior was completed in 1904 and included an immense lobby with a huge stone fireplace. They spent time looking around in gift the visitors center where they learned the history of Yellowstone's volcanic origins. They bought a few souvenirs in the Hamilton Store and Gift Shop.

As they drove back up Madison Junction, they caught the attractions they passed up during the morning. Curly in his quirky sense of humor remarked. "Isn't interesting how God put all of these things so close to the road!" They stopped at a picnic area along the Firehole River for an afternoon snack. Geannie and Austin were facing the slow moving shallow river and soaking it all in.

"You know, I think this spot is one my most favorite places on earth. It doesn't get much better than this." Geannie commented as out of the corner of her eye her attention was drawn to a couple strolling down to the river.

Curly agreed. "We've seen some pretty incredible places on this trip, haven't we. I had no idea the

West had so much to offer.”

Geannie had just taken a sip of her ice cold Coco-Cola when all of a sudden she spewed it all over. She had just enough time to turn her head.

“Are you alright, sweetheart?”

After sputtering and coughing she whipped her chin off. “For goodness sakes. Don't look now, Curly, but there is a couple right behind you who just stripped down to their birthday suits.”

“What?” Curly gulped. He turned to look over his shoulder.

“Don't gawk!” Geannie scolded in hushed voice.

It was too late. He got an eye full. He turned back around and looked at Geannie. They both burst out laughing, trying not to laugh too loud. “I can understand doing it in a secluded place, but right here in front of all these people. Now, that's pretty bold.”

They weren't the only ones to notice. A family at a nearby table hurried and packed up and left.

“What are they doing now?” Curly asked.

“Their taking a bath.” Geannie whispered. “You know what? Why should we be the ones to be embarrassed?” Geannie asked. “I reckon they are the ones who should be.” She took another sip of her drink. “Now their just splashing around.”

Curly turned around to look again.

“I'm going to see if I can turn the tables.” Geannie announced boldly.

“What are you up to?”

“I'm going to see if I can embarrass them.” She took another sip and got up and nonchalantly walked down to the river bank. Stooping down she put her hand in the warm water. “How's the water?”

“It is good.” the woman who appeared to be in her early twenties answered with a French accent. They continued to frolic in the knee deep water without any attempt to conceal themselves. “You join us, no?”

“No, I don't think so. Where are y'all from?”

“We come here from France.” the woman answered. “My name Adriana. This my boy friend Jean. He doesn't speak zee English so good.”

“I'm Geannie. Do you do this in France?”

“Wee. In France everyone swim ... how do you say ... nude all zee time. We been walking in zee woods. We no bath for tree days.”

It was obvious that she wasn't going to embarrass them, so she continued to chat briefly. “How long have you been in America?”

“Tree weeks. We go home next month. America is so beautiful. We very much like it. The people

very nice here.”

“It was nice to meet you. Enjoy the rest of your vacation.”

“Au revoir.” Adriana said as she waved good bye before Gennie turned to leave. She snickered all the way back to their picnic table.

“How did it go?” Curly who watched the entire encounter, asked. “Did you embarrass them?”

“Not a chance. Their French.”

Curly raised his nearly empty bottle of Coca-cola and said, “Viva la France.” and finished it off.

Geannie sat down and took another sip from her bottle. She tried not to look in their direction, but couldn't help but watch. In contrast to Curly, she found the the hairless body of the strapping young Frenchman unusual. On the other hand, the petite woman wearing only a small crucifix on a chain around her neck obviously didn't shave her legs and underarms. She had heard that European women weren't accustomed to the practice. Geannie remembered the time when her mother took her and Sarah aside and presented them each with their own lady's razor and taught them how to shave their legs and underarms. After seeing the unsightly body hair on the Frenchwoman, Geannie vowed that she would never complain about having to shave again.

Her attention returned to the spectacle playing out right in front of them in the river. She said to Curly, “They told me that folks in France do that all the time.”

“That doesn't surprise me. Its obvious from their bronze bodies that this isn't their first time.”

“It does look inviting.” Geannie lamented. “If it was secluded like at the lake back home with nobody around, it would be fun.”

Before long Adriana and Jean came up out of the river, dried off, and got dressed. After they left. Geannie, Curly and the kids went down to river bank where they had been. They took off their shoes and sat on the bank to dangle their feet in the warm water of the Firehole River. The river gets its name because all of the geysers, fountains, and hot springs drained into it.

Geannie, always the adventuresome one, hiked up the skirt of her dress and wandered out into the river. “It's quite warm.” she called out from a few yards out in the river. When she was out to where the water was up past her knees, a bald eagle caught her attention as it swooped down and snatched a fish out of the river. As she whirled around to watch it fly away with the fish wiggling in the clutches of its talons, she lost her balance and fell into the water. She just sat there while Curly laughed at her from the river bank. After a moment, rather getting up, she swam further out into the river. When she stopped and stood up, the water was up to her waste. She waded back to where Curly and the kids were watching. She couldn't resist splashing some water in their direction. Curly, remembering how she had pulled him into the mud hole, was leery of extending his hand to help her out of the river. The thought did cross her mind but

refrained.

Soaking wet, she went to the car and retrieved a dry change of clothes from the suitcase. With Curly holding a blanket up to shield her, she stripped off her wet clothes while he watched. She paused for just a moment to give him a good eye-ful before putting on some dry clothes.

So in addition to all of the bears they saw, they added two bares to the list of wildlife that they had observed. Curly added a third bare to his list.

The last diversion of the day was the Firehole Canyon Drive. At one place there was a pull out over a designated swimming hole. There was a changing area where they changed into their bathing suits before descending the staircase to the swimming hole. The water there was much cooler than it was at the picnic area upstream.

By the time they got back to the campground, everyone was tired and hungry. They all just stayed in their bathing suits until bedtime. After putting the kids to bed, Curly and Geannie sat around the fire for a while. There was just something romantic about a fire and starlight. After the fire died out they went into the tent where the kids were sound asleep. Curly and Geannie slipped out of their bathing suits and into their bedding and each other's arms where the romance continued.

Their last full day in Yellowstone took them north to Mammoth Hot Springs. That day they also saw Gibbon Falls and the Norris Geyser Basin that they had passed up a couple of days earlier. Again that day they encountered countless bears, bison, elk, and tourists. It wasn't hard to tell where there was wildlife to see, as cars were pulled off the road.

Yellowstone had been a wonderful adventure, and now it was time to leave. They packed up their gear and their memories and headed out of the Park. They encountered a lot more wildlife on the way out, including a nesting bald eagle. Just outside of the west entrance they stopped in West Yellowstone, Montana to look around the gift shops for a while. Tired of eating out of their cooler, they found a place to have lunch.

After lunch, they continued on their way. From this point on they were heading home, but there was still a lot to see and do. Just a few miles out of West Yellowstone they crossed the continental divide into Idaho. The narrow highway cut through the towering lodgepole pine. From their open car, it appeared as if they were driving through a narrow canyon. The afternoon sun created a dazzling display of sunlight and shadows as it blazed through the treetops.

There was still enough time to make another detour. A roadside sign told of a place called Big Springs that they decided to check out. It was worth the time. The spring was the headwaters of the Henry's Fork of the Snake River producing over a hundred and twenty million gallons of water each day. The spring which was part of the Yellowstone geothermal system, so the water was a constant fifty two

degrees. The pool produced by the spring was the home to rainbow trout that grew quite large because fishing was prohibited. They were easy to see in the crystal clear water. As they hiked around the spring they met an interesting little hermit by the name of Johny Sack who was in the process of building a cabin at the far end of the spring.

They were considering setting up camp for the night, until someone told them of a lodge down the road thirty one miles at Upper Mesa Falls. After camping out for the last four nights, that sounded quite inviting.

They found the turn off and drove down a rather steep incline to get to the lodge. The rustic inn was a two-story log structure with a veranda, supported by pillars, that ran the length of the building. After getting checked in and their luggage taken to their room, there was just enough sunlight to walk down to the falls. Upper Mesa Falls was more spectacular as any of the falls that they had seen in Yellowstone. They held on tight to the kids as they stood on the brink of the one hundred and fourteen foot water fall.

The next morning, it wasn't long before they drove down out of the mountains and into the broad Snake River Plain. The highway was in good condition and they made good time. Every few miles they passed through small communities surrounded by farmland. That day happened to be the Fourth of July. About ten o'clock in the morning they were just coming into a little town called Rexburg. The police had just closed off the main street for the Fourth of July Parade, so they parked and found a good spot to watch the parade.

After the parade, they went to leave but were parked next to truck and couldn't see if anything was coming. Geannie was driving so Curly decided to get out and walk out into the street to stop traffic so they could back out. The next car just happened to be carrying the governor of Idaho who had been in town for the celebration. There was Curly standing in the middle of the street holding up his hand. The next thing he knew, the governor's body guard bailed out of the car and confronted Curly demanding to know of his intension. While Curly was explaining himself, Geannie backed out onto the street. Once they were satisfied that he posed no threat to the governor, they let him go.

Back on the road again they stopped in the much larger town of Idaho Falls where they had lunch. It was their intention of going to the Craters of the Moon, but the highway was closed because of a large range fire. As an alternative route, they followed the Snake River to their planned stop for the night.

The little towns and farms that they drove through were like an oasis among lava flows. As they neared the town of Burley, they were tired and hungry and decided to stop short of their planned destination of Twin Falls.

As they headed west, they found themselves on the Oregon Trail as they traveled on US Highway 30. The historical significance peaked Gerannie's interest. She had Curly pull of the highway a place called

Massacre Rocks, a formation of boulders along the south bank of the Snake River along the trail. A sign told of clash between emigrants and the Shoshoni Indians just east of the rocks on August 9–10, 1862. Ten emigrants died in the fight, which involved four wagon trains. In 1851 another battle occurred just west of Massacre Rocks, closer to Raft River in which thirty four emigrants were killed. Nearby was Register Rock, where travelers on the Oregon Trail paused to inscribe their names and often the date of their passage on the rock. It was fascinating to read the names some sixty to eighty years later.

It was late in the afternoon as they were approaching Burley from the east. They had been curious about the variety of crops they had seen in the fields they drove past. They saw a farmer with a team of horses next to road making adjustments to his equipment. Curly decided to stop and talk to him.

Approaching the fence, Curly said to the farmer, who had been distracted from what he was doing by the car that pulled off the highway, "Pardon me, sir. My name is Sheffield Brason." Curly extended his hand.

Wiping the grease on hand on the seat of his overalls, the farmer shook Curly's hand over the fence. "Ira Frost. What can I do for you?"

"We're just passing through and were wondering about all of the different crops we have seen."

"Well sir, these here are potatoes. Around these parts, we call'em spuds. I'm in the process of cultivating them and had to stop and adjust my equipment."

"I have eaten a lot of Idaho potatoes over the years but wasn't aware of how they grew."

Let me show you." Ira said as he reached down and pulled up a plant from the loose soil. "See here. They grow on the roots. They're not very big now, but this fall when I dig'em, they'll be a nice size."

"That's very interesting. I didn't know that. Do you have some that I can buy from you to take back to California with us?" Curly asked.

"No, I don't. But there are a number of packing houses in town where you could. There's one on the highway just as you go into town. Of course they'd be closed now."

With his curiosity of that field satisfied, Curly asked, "What about some of the other crops in the adjacent fields."

Ira pointed to a nearby field. "Those are sugar beets. They have a root that get about yeah big around." showing him by making a circle with his thumbs and index fingers. "They're processed into granulated sugar. Over there is field of pinto beans. They're a dry bean. The field across the highway is alfalfa. They'll be mowing it soon for feed for livestock. Next to it is a wheat field."

"That's very informative." Curly said. "Thanks, Mister Frost."

"Please, call me Ira. Mister Frost is my father."

Thanks, Ira. I haven't spent any time around a farm. I do know what hay is because I used to feed

my father-in-law's horses when I was a boy.”

About that time, Geannie with Austin in her arms and Sandy were at Curly's side. “This is my wife Geannie and our children, Sandy and Austin.”

“How do you do, ma'am? Pleased to meet you.”

“Like wise.” Geannie responded.

Ira reached over the fence and took Sandy's nose between his first two fingers. He pulled it back with his thumb pocking between them. “I've got your nose.”

Sandy gave him a look that would throw daggers. Then she rubbed her face with her hand. “Huh uh. Its right here on my face.” Ira, Curly, and Geannine laughed.

“So,” the farmer asked “what do you do there in California?”

“I'm a naval aviator stationed at San Diego.”

“Really now? When I joined the Army during the war, I wanted to be a pilot. I was disappointed when I learned that I had to have a college education first, so I went into the artillery instead. I was in the Eleventh Field Artillery Regiment. To commemorate the signing of the Armistice, we fired an eleven gun salute at eleven minutes after eleven on the eleventh day of the eleventh month.”

“I think that is the outfit my brother was attached to, he was a chaplain.”

Ira went on to explain, “Why just a few weeks ago I took my kiddies to see the first airplane that landed in Burley. It was a big deal around here. I've enjoyed the chat, but I need to get done here so I can do my chores and take the kiddies to see the fireworks tonight.”

Geannie interrupted, “Before we go, can I take a picture of the two of you next to your horses.”

“I don't see why not.” Ira agreed.

After Geannie took the picture, Curly extended his hand again. “Its been a pleasure visiting with you, Ira. Thanks for settling our curiosity.” Curly let the farmer get back to his work.

Curly and Geannie got back into their car and drove on into Burley and got a room at the National Hotel for the night. That night they joined the good people of Burley and the surrounding area to watch the Fourth of July fireworks over the Snake River.

The next morning before leaving town, he bought a sack of “spuds” as they called them in Idaho. A couple of miles east of Twin Falls, they took another detour to see what was called the “Niagara of the West”, Shoshone Falls. The falls were two hundred and twelve feet high — forty five feet higher than Niagara Falls — and flows over a rim a thousand feet wide. Even though water was being diverted for irrigation, there was still respectable amount going over the falls. The caretaker showed them a photograph of the falls during the peak runoff season. Geannie took her own picture of Shoshone Falls.

From Twin Falls they headed south, down into Nevada. The next two days the trip was as

uneventful as the scenery was uninteresting. Again, to shade themselves from the hot desert sun, they put the top up.

It was late afternoon when they stopped in Battle Mountain. There wasn't much there but they found a roadside inn that seemed suitable. The innkeeper told them of the rodeo at the fairgrounds that evening. The idea appealed to their sense of western adventure. They had never experienced one before and decided to go. They found that they really stood out like a sore thumb among all of those cowboys and cowgirls. They were the only ones not wearing cowboy hats and boots. The bronc riding was interesting. Sandy got a kick out of the rodeo clowns. Geannie was impressed with the rodeo queens and the barrel racing. But it was the bull riding that was the most interesting. Curly commented, "That looks about like being strapped into a plane that's spinning out of control."

After crossing the barren Nevada wilderness they rolled into the Biggest Little City in the World, otherwise known as Reno, Nevada and checked into a hotel.

Adjacent to the hotel and casino was a restaurant where they had dinner. Slot machines were everywhere and to Geannie's dismay, Curly dropped a nickel in one of those one armed bandits. To their amazement, he hit a five dollar jackpot from only one try. Back in their room, they gave the kids their baths and put them to bed. They would have liked to go downstairs to watch the evening entertainment, but there was no one to watch the kids. While traveling, there wasn't many opportunities to get cleaned up. Their hotel room featured an oversized bathtub. So instead of entertainment downstairs, they poured a nice hot bubble bath and entertained themselves.

Being Sunday, they planned for a more leisurely day. Geannie had inquired at the front desk and located a Methodist Church nearby with services at ten o'clock. After church they changed their clothes and had lunch before getting back on the road. From Reno, they drove a short distance to Lake Tahoe. Their route took them through the historic mining boomtown of Virginia City that was established in 1859. With a name like that, they just had to stop to have a look around. The most interesting attraction was the Silver Queen Saloon with the famous Silver Dollar Lady, a fifteen foot tall and eight foot wide painting of a lady in an evening gown decorated with 3,261 silver dollars. Her belt is fashioned from 28 twenty-dollar gold pieces, and her choker and bracelets are made from dimes.

It was interesting to learn about the history of the west and what was going on while their grandfathers were fighting in the Civil War. From Virginia City they went on their way that also took them through Carson City, the state capital. Later in the afternoon, they set up camp on the shore of beautiful Lake Tahoe and spent the rest of that day and half of the next enjoying the beauty of that setting.

Moving on, they drove through the Sierra Mountains, coming out at a little place called Jackson where they stayed the night before going on to the final destination of their western adventure, Yosemite

National Park. They arrived at Yosemite early in the afternoon and selected an ideal campsite in the Yosemite Valley. They had the rest of that day and all of the next to see places such as El Capitan, the prominent granite cliff that looms over the Yosemite Valley, the giant sequoia groves, and the numerous waterfalls, the most prominent of the Yosemite Valley waterfalls being Bridalveil Fall.

They decided to get an early start when they broke camp to leave. After such an incredible vacation they were ready to go home. Originally Curly had planned to take three days to get home from there. In there anxiousness, they decided to combine it into two longer days. The first day took them as far as Bakersfield, where they looked up Tomcat's family. Finally after twenty seven days on the road, they arrived home towards evening. That gave them enough time to unload the car. The trailer could wait until the next day.

* * * * *

I researched the US highways system to determine the routes as they were in 1929 to determine the route they took.

The range of the rocky mountain wood tick included the area around the Grand Canyon. Its habitat consists of brushy areas that provide food and protection for wild mammals, which serve as the tick's usual hosts.

To safely remove a tick:

1. Grasp the tick with tweezers as closely to the head of the tick as possible. (The tick's head can remain imbedded in the skin if the tick is not removed properly.)
2. Slowly turn the tick over, in a lifting and twisting motion. This will cause the mouth of the tick to release its hold.
3. Wash the area with soap and water.

After the tick has been removed from the patient, the wound should be examined to establish that head and mouth parts have been extracted with the tick body. If left embedded in the skin, these can cause infection. The wound should then be painted with an antiseptic.

If not treated, a tick bite can cause Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever and other diseases.

Many of the stories of their time in Yellowstone are based on my personal experiences. The story about the bear in the campground happened when I was two years old.

Another time we actually witnessed a herd of bison ford the Yellowstone River. As they came out of the river, we found ourselves surrounded by them as they made their way out of the river, across the road, and up and over a hill. Once we saw the Riverside Geyser go off when the sun was just right to cause a rainbow.

The story about the French couple bathing in the Firehole River is a compilation of two instances. Once we encountered a couple actually taking a bath in the Firehole River. The other part of the story occurred several years earlier when we encountered a naked couple on a pool at Warm Springs near Sun Valley. I decided that they should be the ones to be embarrassed so I approached them and tested the water and talked to them. They weren't embarrassed either. Neither of these couples were French.

Curly's experience with the Governor of Idaho is based on an experience I had as a young man at a parade in Oakley, Idaho. A little old man was parked next to a motorhome and couldn't see around it to get out. I walked out into the street to stop traffic so he could back out. The very first car in line happened to be the Governor of Idaho. Although no one confronted me, I could see concern on the face of the Governor and his driver.

Ira Frost, who they stopped to talk to along the highway just outside of Burley, Idaho is my Grandfather. At the time, his farm was a mile south of Highway 30. I took creative licence to move it next to the highway. The things Ira talked about are all from his life.