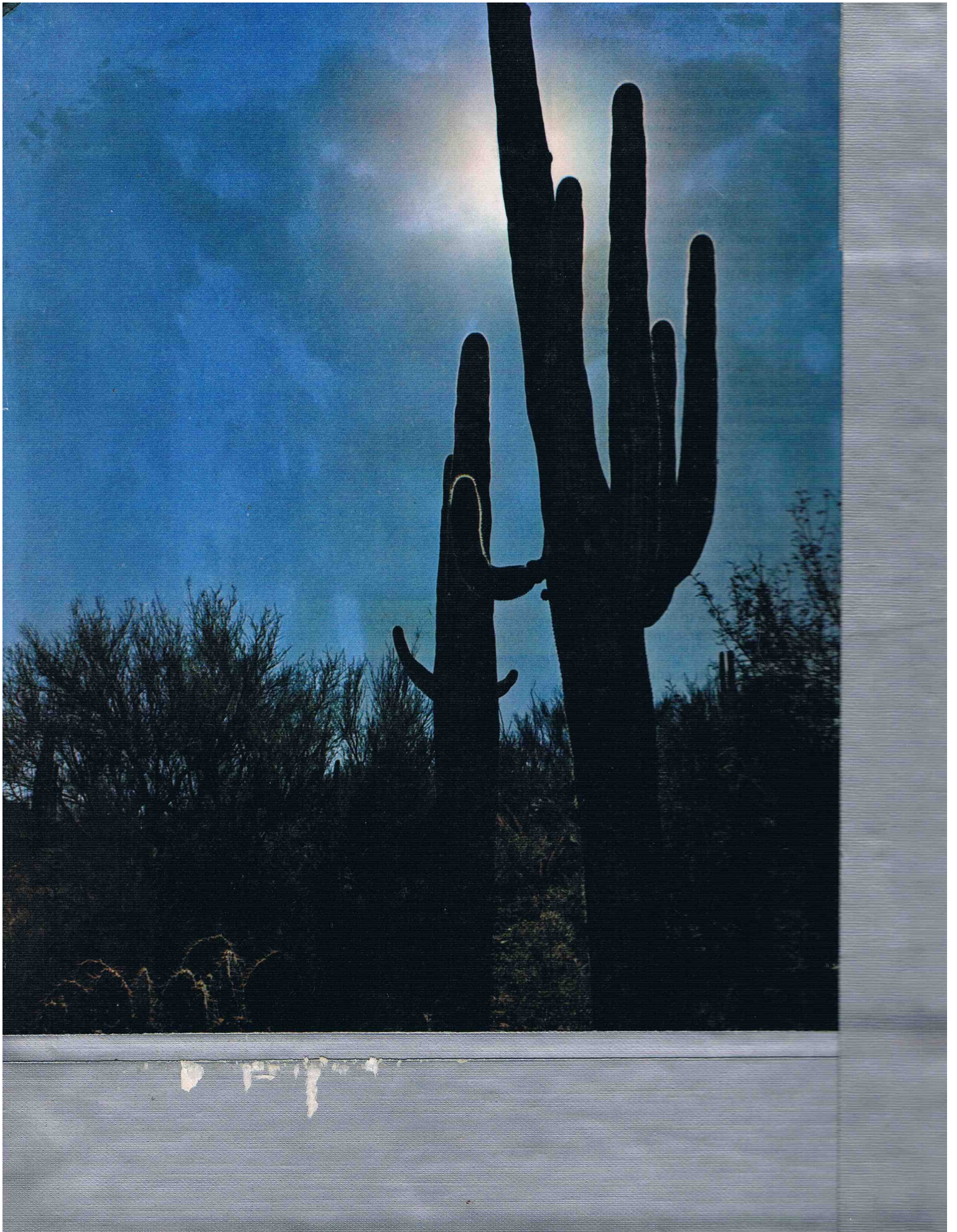


1971





SOUTHERN EXPOSURE

1971

It is difficult to determine which emotion takes precedence as the time approaches for us to leave on a vacation trip. There is always eager anticipation of new experiences to be had and new things to see. But on the other hand there is always the frustration of last-minute packing, shopping and list-checking. So the inevitable result is a sure case of mixed emotions.

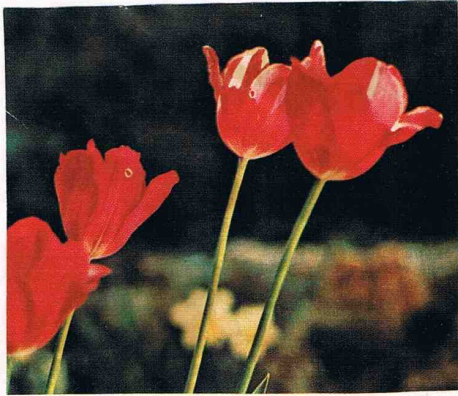


For me the former outweighed the latter. I had just finished a three-month stint with H & R Block Co., and it hadn't exactly turned out to be satisfactory. I thoroughly welcomed the opportunity to "get away from it all."

At first I was reluctant to be gone from Michigan for such a long period of time at this season of the year. Springtime in this state is so welcome and beautiful. Then, too, it would mean giving up enlarging my flower garden this summer for we would not be back in time to do the "spade work." Of course we realize that much of the territory through which we will pass will be at the peak of springtime glory.

The last-minute chores moved along pleasantly. I finished work at the tax office at 6:00 P. M. April 15. Stanley had done well with details so that the evening's work was not very difficult. By ten o'clock we had finished all of the packing and were ready to turn in, anticipating a good night's sleep. I did experience a little difficulty relaxing but finally dropped off. My nice dreams of distant scenes was interrupted by a strange commotion in our bedroom. Upon investigation I discovered a strange Siamese cat trying to get out of the house. Apparently he had sneaked into the house earlier in the evening. We recalled how we had left the door propped open while we were making so many trips back and forth to the car. As we locked the house for the night he had gotten locked in. He retreated under our bed and wouldn't budge so I went back to sleep. We routed him out in the morning with the broom.

By 7:45 A. M. April 16 we "hoisted the mainsail," only 3/4 hour behind schedule. Weather was gorgeous.

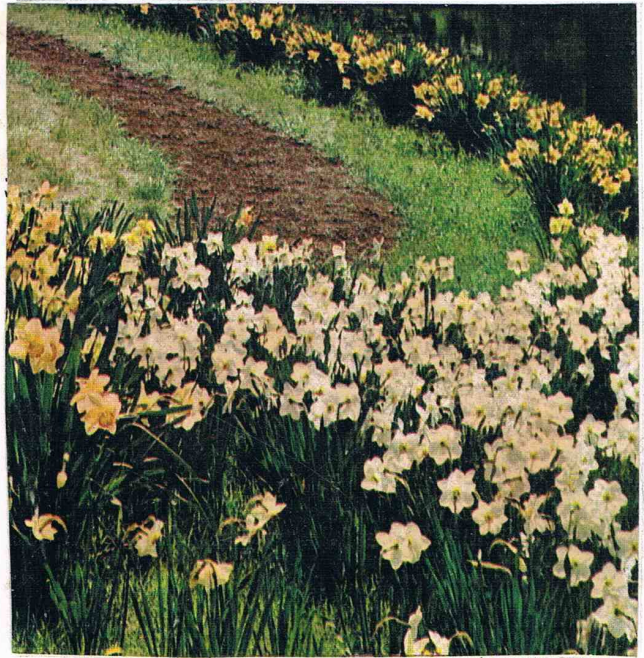


Motoring southward at this season of the year affords maximum opportunities to observe the various stages of Spring in all the different areas. Scarcely anything was blooming in Grand Rapids when we left.

It was fairly cool when we left home but found it quite warm, in fact uncomfortably so, in Indiana. As we skirted around Indianapolis on the splendid by-pass we saw the buds on

the trees swollen and ready to "pop." Particularly welcome was the display of daffodils, tulips, jonquils and hyacinths beautifully arranged on the attractive lawns along the way. The grass was so bright and green that it seemed they were about a month ahead of us.

We made only one stop as we traveled the length of Indiana. We ate our lunch in a restaurant in Fort Wayne and had the car serviced. I also purchased some yarn at a K-Mart so I could do some crocheting along the way.



Indiana has planted a great deal of Forsythia along the medians, especially about the culverts.

It is absolutely blazing at this time of year. I am sure other motorists enjoyed it equally as much as we.



We crossed the "Beautiful Ohio" at Louisville, although its murky waters at this point hardly qualify it for the title. It was 5:00 P. M. and we were caught at the peak of evening traffic.



Kentucky is always very beautiful in Spring. The grass is fresh and green and the thickly wooded hillsides are dotted with blossoming dogwood and redbud. Add to the scene the spirited horses and an occasional frisky colt and you have a picture of the kind of scenery we enjoyed through most of the state. To see the crude and rustic mountain cabins one must leave the free-ways and take the rough back roads "up the holler" or "over the ridge."

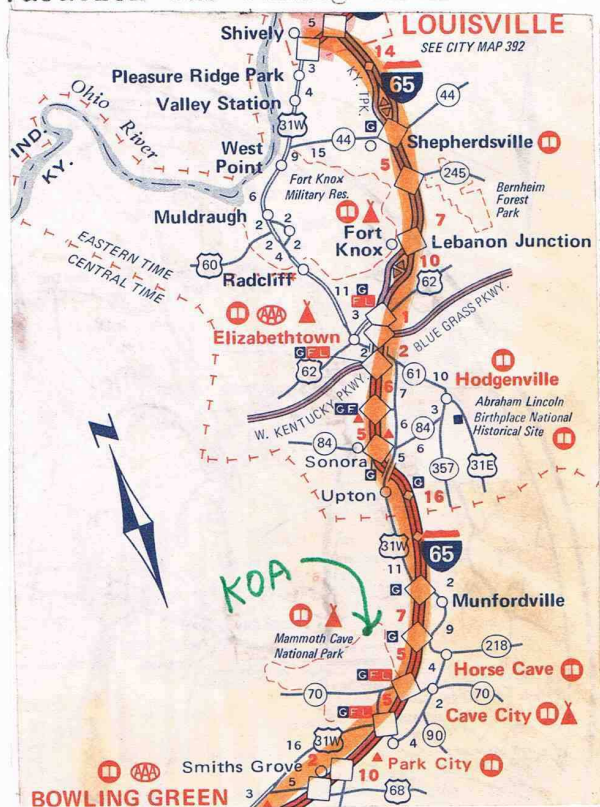
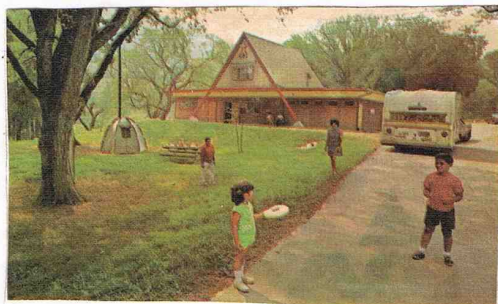
The KOA Campground at Horse Cave, Ky., is but a fraction of a mile from I65, clearly visible from the highway. (KOA stands for Kampgrounds Of America) Their main office and Utility Building is always the same, so they are easily and quickly recognizable.

It was a very welcome sight to us after 521 miles behind the wheel.

This campground is not very large but by bedtime about 40 "rigs" were settled in and three-fourths of them were from Michigan. We finally discovered this was because, for most of the state's schools, the Easter vacation was coming to a close and these families had been South.

A family named Waterhouse, from Niles, Michigan, recognized Stanley. They are members of our former E. U. B. Church there.

After sunset the air became very chilly and the electric blanket felt wonderful. Highway truck noises made getting to sleep difficult. Their roar is intensified by echoes from the opposite Mountainsides. But sleep we did.



Never, never as long as I live, will I forget the almost indescribable beauty as we drove through Kentucky and Tennessee. The Appalachians are always a delight to experience. True, they are not towering giants as are the Rockies, but in their unique way they provide a serene, quiet sort of grandeur that one would never tire of seeing. I had already repented of any reluctance I had felt about being away from home at this time of year. Certainly this opportunity to enjoy these days of watching Mother Earth awaken so gloriously from her winter nap more than makes up for missing the arrival of Spring in Michigan.



Today, Saturday, the free-ways were not as busy as yesterday so in a remarkably short time we were whirling around Nashville.

Two weeks previously, we had arranged by letter to visit two dear old friends in Manchester, Tenn. Bill and Mamie Houston were members of our Livonia Church and have retired here. They are getting well on in years, he is 80 and she is 74. Neither is in very good health. For two hours we renewed our friendship.

As we drove away they stood in front of their little home, waving as long as we were in sight. They are precious friends and we often wonder if we will ever see them both again.

CHATTANOOGA

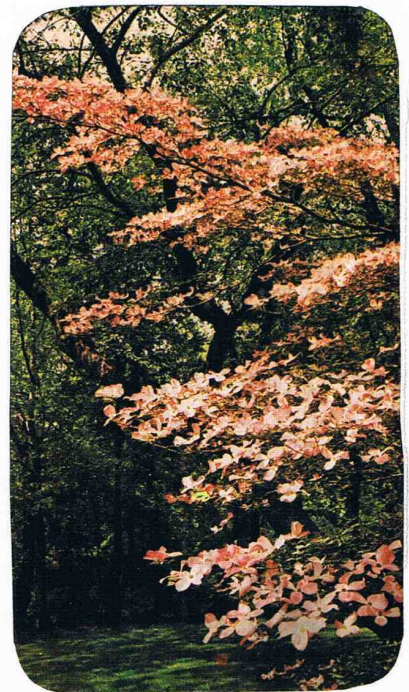
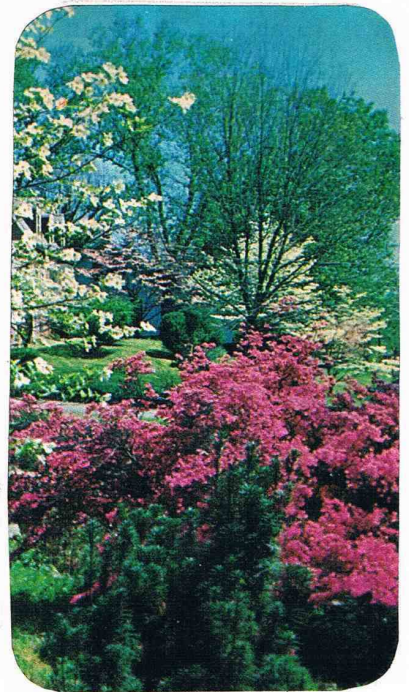
Each time we had traveled this direction in the past we had sped around Chattanooga on the Freeways. So we were glad to have a few days to pause here and see just a few of the attractions.

To our satisfaction we located a KOA Campground just 10 miles west of the city, in such a picturesque location that it seemed almost unreal. Far, far back from the highway, nestled among the mountains, with redbud and dogwood blooming all around. Evidently we were a little ahead of the season for the dry leaves had not yet been raked away from the grounds. However, it was nice and dry and the spots for parking were neatly spread with gravel.

While we stayed in this spot we found the days sunny and warm, often uncomfortably so. The midday sun seemed to bring out the delicious fragrance of the pines. We were surprised at the number of campers here. They continued to come until dark, some even later. Many are from Michigan but not as many as at Horse Cave.

We became acquainted with a couple from Wyandotte, Michigan, also United Methodists.

By now we had compiled a list of things which we had forgotten to bring so after we set up camp a trip to town was in order. Car trouble developed and we ended up buying a new battery. It was 10:00 before we got back to the campground.



UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
MORGANVILLE CIRCUIT
WILDWOOD, GEORGIA
R. O. Stoner, Pastor Phone 831-3059
April 18, 1971

Time of Worship	Morganville 11:00 A.M. Slygo 10:00 A.M.
Invocation	Pastor
Hymn	Standing
Affirmation of Faith	
Scripture Lesson	Psalms 8
Parish Greeting and News	
Psalter	336 587
Gloria Patri	
Pastoral Prayer	
Offering	
Doxology	
Hymn	
Sermon	"The Name of the Lord, and what it means to us"
Invitational Hymn	Standing
Benediction	
	# # # # # # # # # # # # # #

(Remember)

"You are your neighbor's Bible;
He reads you when you meet;
Today he reads you in your home;
Tomorrow in the street.
He may be relative or friend,
or slight acquaintance, too,
He may not even know your name -
Yet he is reading you".

If you have no joy in your
Christianity, you had better start
looking for a leak somewhere.

We had observed a very small, rural United Methodist Church quite near the camp when we arrived on Saturday. We decided to attend the worship service there on Sunday Morning rather than drive into the city and try to locate a larger Church. The people welcomed us warmly, giving us the idea that visitors were scarce.

Without a doubt the thing which impressed me most was the singing. Every person there sang with spirit and collectively there was plenty of rhythm. These people do not fulfil the image of "mountain folk" as many think of them. They are refined, educated persons. We remained for the Sunday School Class which followed and were interested and pleased with the Biblical insights of the woman who taught.

ROCK CITY

We had heard of Rock City for many years and observed the advertising along the highways in distant states. So we decided to go to Lookout Mountain today and find out about this place for ourselves.

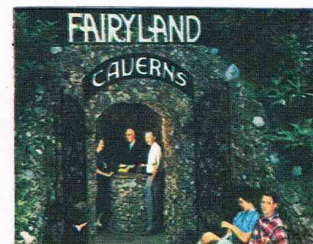
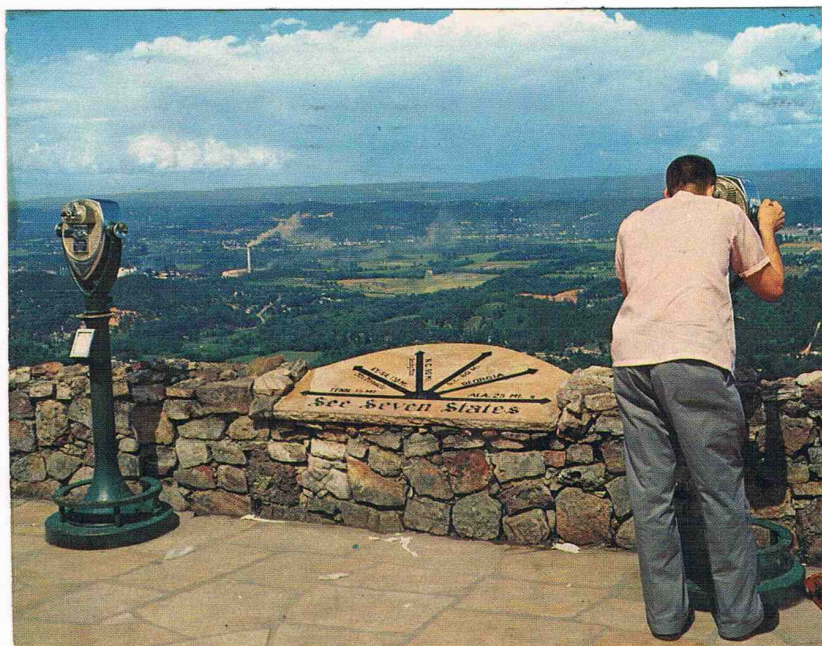
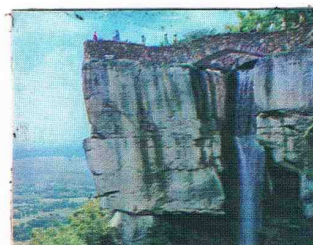
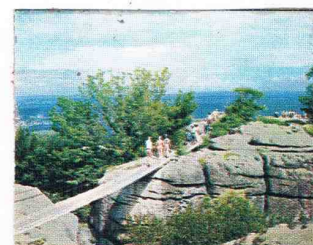
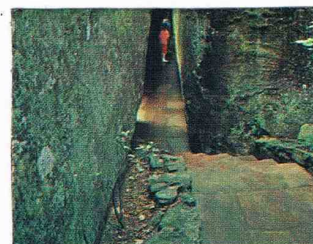
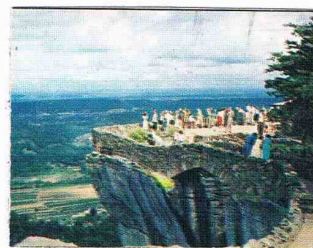
It was a surprise to learn that Lookout Mountain in an incorporated village, complete with Post Office, Fire Department, shopping center, etc. Many hundreds of homes cover the area, some of them quite exclusive.

Because we plan to spend but a short time in the area, we looked over the brochures advertising the attractions and chose two which seemed most interesting. Some of the features sounded too "commercial."

We thoroughly enjoyed Rock City and felt it well worth the \$2.50 admission fee. We learned it is most beautiful now and later when the rhododendrons bloom. The garden walk takes about an hour. There are chasms, waterfalls, swinging bridges and fascinating overlooks. Today a distant haze obscured the view of seven states. A narrator insists it is not smog but rather is similar to the "haze" over the Smoky Mountains.

Visitors with children should not by-pass the "Fairyland Caverns" and "Mother Goose Village." Nursery rhymes and fairy tales are illustrated and illuminated with black light.

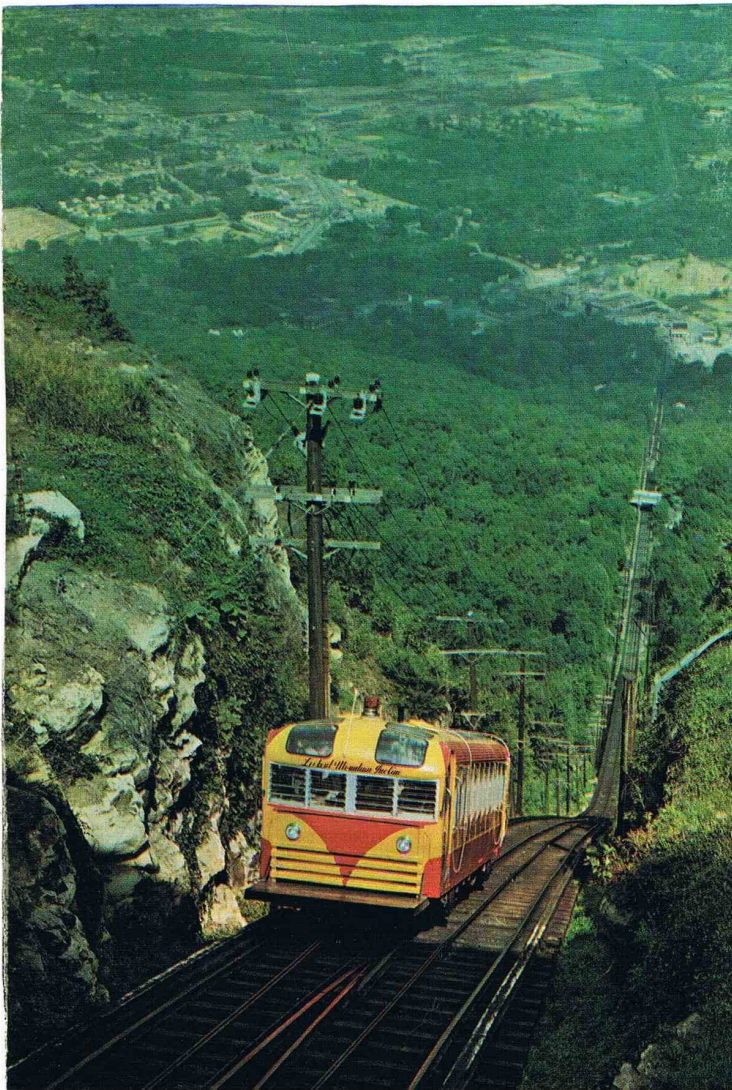
No one should visit Lookout Mountain and omit Rock City from the itinerary.



Another "must" in our opinion, is the Incline Railway trip. Our first thought was that here is another "tourist trap." Every scenic or historical spot in America has been capitalized upon with every kind of gimmick to entertain the tourist and extract his dollar that many of these places seem to be little more than an Amusement Park.

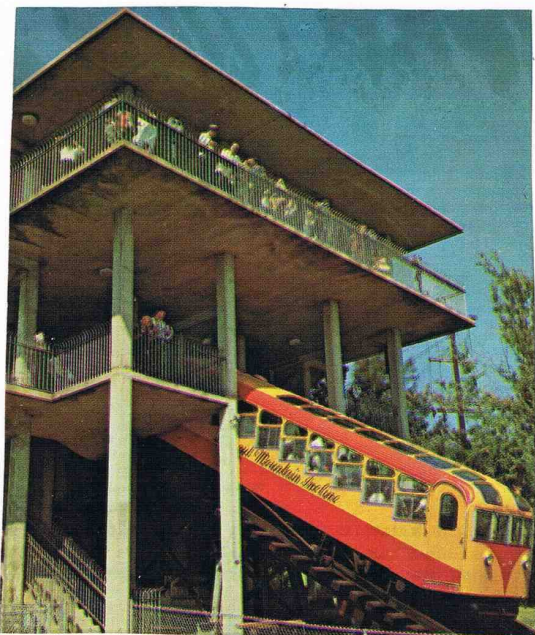
Therefore it was a surprise to us to learn that the Incline Railway was not constructed merely for the tourist trade. It has become the chief means of transportation for hundreds of school children and other local residents who live in the beautiful residential areas on top of Lookout Mountain.

These people lay claim to the steepest Incline Railway Slope in the world and we believe it! The tracks climb straight up the side of the mountain, reaching an altitude of over 2,100 feet above sea level.



It actually was a little frightening as we entered the car, a comfortable, all-steel model seating 40 passengers. Wide windows and a glass-enclosed astrodome roof afford a clear, unobstructed view of the city and valley below. The seats are installed at an angle so that, while the cars are descending or ascending, the passenger feels he is sitting upright. It's awkward at the bottom where the car sits in a normal position. Then one feels almost in a lying-down position!

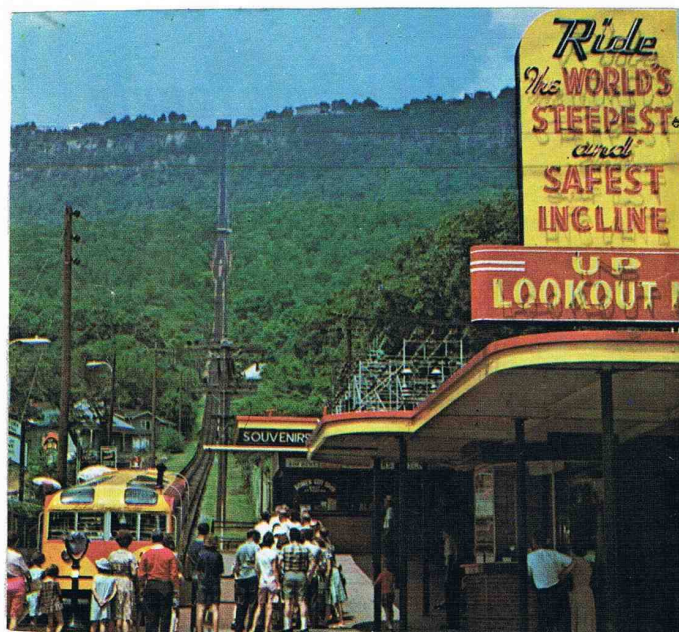
We boarded at the top of the mountain, passing down through the site of the famous Civil War "Battle of the Clouds," now a national park. The wooded areas on the mountainside were brilliant with dogwood and wisteria.



Upon our arrival at the foot of the mountain, true to our expectations we found the usual souvenir shop! A much larger crowd awaited to make the trip back up.

As we returned we really began to feel that we were beginning to climb straight up the side of the mountain! However they say that the grade at the steepest point is but 72.7%.

We were told that in the summer an Incline ride at night is a special treat. As the city lights wink on in the valley below you seem to move between "two skies."



This exciting side trip should be included on any sight-seeing tour of Chattanooga. We thought the round-trip price of \$1.25 per person was reasonable. Because we planned to move on southward in the morning, we passed up the evening ride and went on to see some historical sites on the mountain.

Point Park, on Lookout Mountain, became our third interest for the day. The student of American History can certainly have a field day here. Considering that history was the only subject which I ever thoroughly detested, shirked studying and practically failed, my knowledge about this spot was slightly lacking. However, I was not totally lacking in appreciation for what happened here but I soon regretted that I had not studied my history more. It is easy to read the brochures distributed by the National Park Rangers and listen to the recordings played for us at these historic sites and get that certain feeling about what went on here more than a hundred years ago.

Here at Point Park is an overlook spot where several Civil War Cannon have been firmly secured in the concrete. From here we could look out over the broad lowlands to Signal Mountain. In another place a thick wall had been constructed for our safety and on it markers pointed to other significant sites in history. A narrator described events which make these spots so important.

To the southeast lies the great Chickamauga Battlefield area, also a part of this National Park system. It is said that in the final show down at Chickamauga the Confederates lost more than 18,000 men and the Union loss was over 16,000! Evidently every generation has its Viet Nam.

It was nearly dusk by now so we did not drive to the Chickamauga area but returned to camp for an evening of relaxation.



M O B I L E

"Yes, it's true what they say about Dixie!"

This snatch of an old song came to our mind as we sped along highway I65 southward, around Montgomery, Alabama and on toward Mobile. Substituting "Azalias" for "Magnolias" we did indeed observe them blooming 'round everybody's door, at least in the northern part of Alabama. Even the crudest cottage or the shabbiest shack was enhanced with a brilliant splash of red or pink azalia. As we moved steadily south they became more and more scarce until hardly any were to be found by the time we reached Mobile.

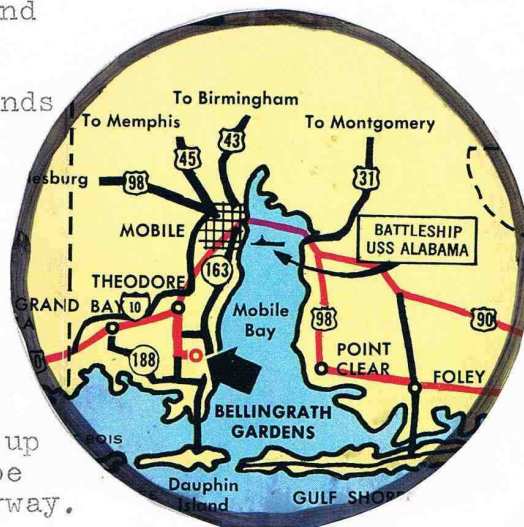


Much of the route on this lap of the trip was extra interesting because the roadsides and median was covered with a brilliant carpet of a kind of red clover. It was much deeper in color than the type of red clover which we see in the north. It was so profuse that for many miles ahead we could not see any green grass at all, just the red of this clover. It impressed me so that I paused and snapped a picture of it, but it was after five o'clock in the evening and the result was a more or less "washed-out" snapshot. I decided to include it here anyway.



We now found ourselves in a very warm climate and were thankful Stanley had taken the time that morning to take the car in to the Ford Garage at Chattanooga and have the air conditioned repaired.

There is a real lack of Camp Grounds in the Mobile Area. Most parks would take only self-contained units, no tents or tent trailers. We finally located a place by 'phone but the proprietor gave such poor directions it was difficult to locate. Consequently it was after 10:00 P. M. when we found it. It turned out to be a disappointment, dirty, smelly, untidy and crowded. But we decided "any old port in a storm," and signed up for two nights realizing we wouldn't be spending much time at the campsite anyway.





The highlight of our stop in Mobile was our visit to the famous Bellingrath Gardens and Home. Of course the ideal time to come here is about two or three weeks earlier when the azaleas are at their peak of beauty. However, even now the gardens are beautiful for the hydrangeas, Madonna Lilies, salvia, etc., was abundant and showy.

These gardens are the realization of the dream of the late Walter D. Bellingrath, CocaCola magnate and philanthropist. The story goes that this area was purchased by him while it was still but a swamp. Plants and trees were collected from all over the world to beautify the place. He stated that he believed in the importance of "the spiritual life as a fundamental part of the educational process." Thus he established the non-profit Bellingrath-Morse Foundation to administer the gardens in perpetuity. Admission charges go to the upkeep of the gardens and to endow three colleges and two churches.

We appreciated the fact that the temperature was not very high the day we chose to see these gardens. The stroll along the pleasant paths is not at all strenuous, but the humidity is always very high in these parts so one notices the heat more than in a dry climate.

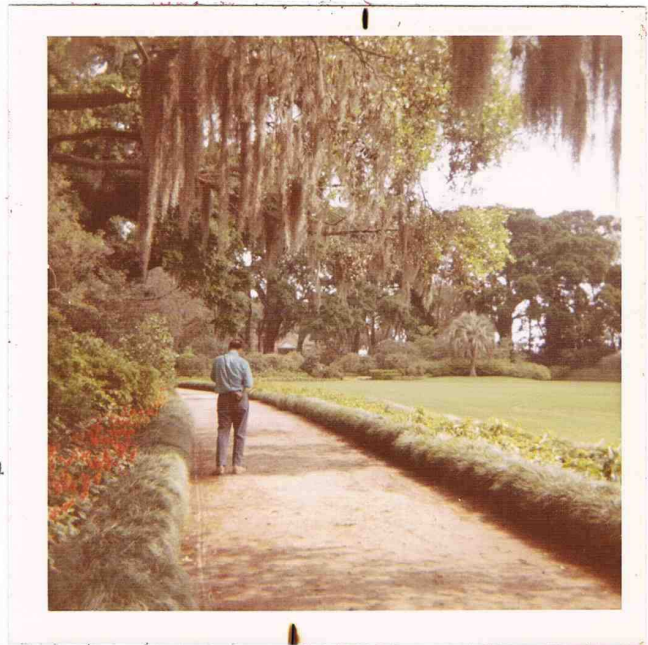
Most of the many varieties of plant life are plainly identified for the visitor. This is always helpful, especially for people like us. We always like to know what we are observing.

The overhanging Spanish Moss adds an exotic touch.

Many pleasant resting spots are scattered about the grounds and we took advantage of several of them.

We ate in a nice cafeteria here. And, it goes without saying, the usual gift and souvenir shop is located in the administration building.

The azalia display in the lower photograph was the only spot in the garden where they were still pretty.

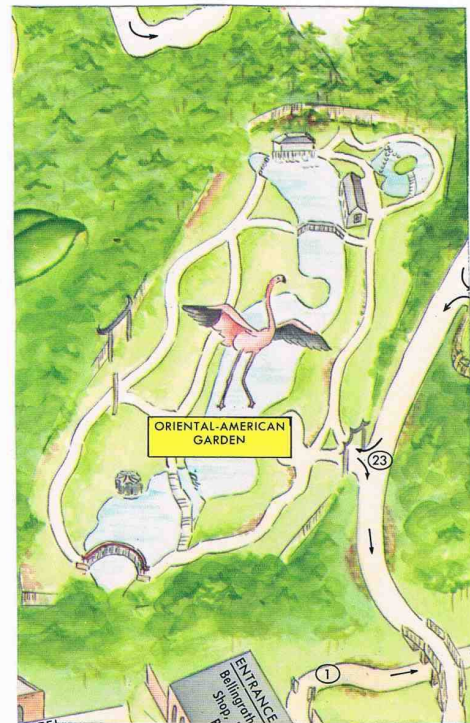
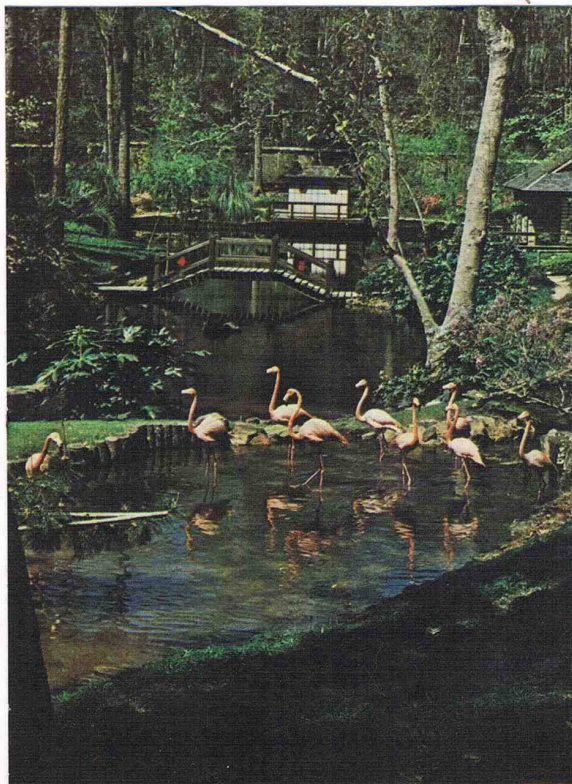


One section of this fabulous layout has been developed into the most beautiful Japanese Garden we have ever seen. It is quite large. There are many lovely bridges for the visitor to enjoy or he may cross many of the little ponds here on the round stepping stones. Little rest shelters constructed of Bamboo, tinkling brass wind chimes, graceful white swans gliding so fearlessly over the mirrow-like surface of the waters, shell-pink flamingos posing on one leg for the photographic public or fishing the shallow waters for only they know what.



It is difficult to say exactly what makes Japanese landscaping so different and so alluring. They have an eye for beauty quite unlike that of any other culture.

All of these things combined to make us wish to linger longer in this story-book spot. But we had to move on.





As we mentioned before, we were not there when most of the azaleas were in bloom. Some of the late varieties were still evident but not many. However, I did purchase a few post cards of such beautiful spring scenes that I am enclosing one here to remind me that we simply must come here some year in time to enjoy this spectacle!

The tourist here must by no means by-pass the Bellingrath home. At first we had little enthusiasm, believing it to merely be another museum of antiques. However it is altogether different from other museums. It is filled with objects of art collected by both Mr. and Mrs. Bellingrath although it would appear that she was responsible for more of the collection. Not only the amazing pieces of furniture but the accumulation of fine porcelain, figurines, silver, crystal, bottles, even doll heads will amaze and thrill you.

The visitor is guided through the house by a host or hostess, many of them former Bellingrath servants. They are able to describe each object and tell how and where they were acquired.

Oddly, Mrs. Bellingrath collected all of her articles within 200 miles of Mobile, although they originally came from all over the world.



Our jaunt from Mobile to New Orleans was filled with adventures! At Gulfport, Miss., I made the disastrous discovery that I had lost my glasses. We were parked in a large shopping center at the time. We tried to "organize our thinking" in an effort to recall where and when I had last used them, but came up with nothing. We drove back to Biloxi, some 18 miles, where I had purchased and written post cards. This too was wasted effort. We then opened the camper, right there in the parking lot and searched it thoroughly, all the while expecting the police to come rushing up telling us we couldn't camp there!

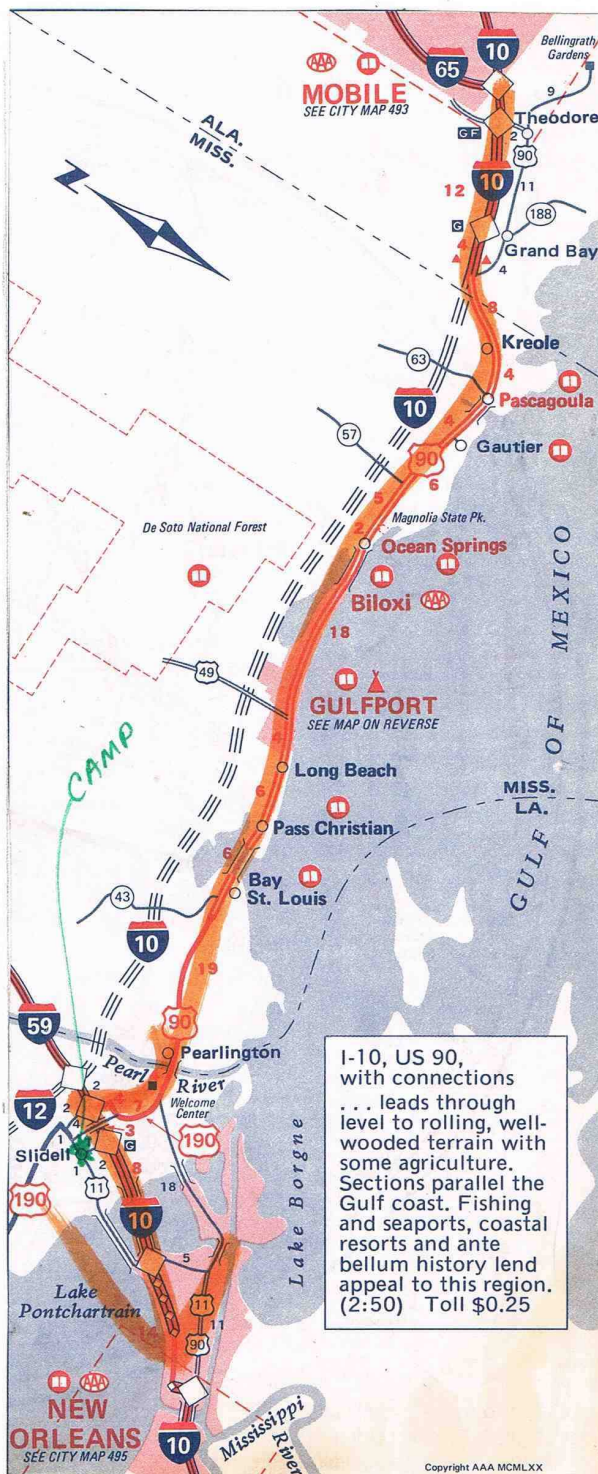
Finally we telephoned the Campground at Mobile which we had left that morning. They hadn't found them but promised to send them to our Grand Rapids address if they did.

Later that night, a neighboring tourist suggested that I purchase a pair at a dime store. I followed her tip and did locate an excellent pair which seemed to provide as much comfort and good vision as my own.

In Gulfport we visited a Mrs. Steele, the mother of a co-worker of Stanley's back home. She is a lovely, gracious lady.

Driving along the Gulf Coast we saw much remaining evidence of Hurricane Camiele, even though that catastrophe struck here more than two years ago. We recalled some fabulous motels and other resort areas along the beach when we had been through here several years ago. A few of them still stood, wrecked and abandoned, giving mute testimony that man indeed is not yet master of his environment.

The residents report the weather is unreasonably hot. It is also extremely humid. To us, the vegetation seems green enough but they report they have had no rain in more than two weeks.



We located the KOA Campground this time with ease. Of course it is a nice spot with the usual conveniences. It is the first KOA we have ever seen without the usual building to identify it. A large, old frame structure, slightly French in design, has been remodeled and supplemented. The large, familiar inverted "V" is superimposed over the front to conform to KOA specifications.

After a light supper and a chance to freshen up a bit, we decided to drive into the city, for we wanted to stroll on Bourbon Street at night. It is about twenty or twenty-five miles to downtown New Orleans, all good freeway.

Bourbon Street cannot be described nor explained, only experienced! The report had reached us that this old landmark had been "taken over" by the hippies. We found them there, to be sure, but many more are to be seen in Jackson Park sleeping on the grass at noon than we saw on Bourbon Street at night. The narrow sidewalks were thronged with people from every walk of life and every ethnic background. Young and old, tidy and disheveled, black and white, oriental and western, tourists and local residents, all strolling Bourbon Street hand in hand absorbing the sights and sounds. From the open door of a corner cafe comes the deafening beat of a Mod Band. In the next square a small vocal group breaks forth with "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot." The rhythm gets to the passersby and quickly the sidewalk is filled with chanting, swaying and handclapping. At least once in each block one passes large double doors, flung wide open to afford the public an inviting glimpse of the naked dancers. The public pours in and out all evening.

Souvenir shops, tiny hole-in-the-wall eating places, on-the-spot artists, burlesque movies, etc., all combine to keep Bourbon Street alive until the dawn.

The sidewalks are so narrow on this famous street in the old French Quarter that only one-way traffic and no-parking ordinances keep this alley-wide street safe. We saw only a few cabs and an occasional horse-drawn buggy.

A short stroll down St. Ann Street brought us out to Jackson Square across from St. Louis Bacillica, said to be one of the oldest and most photographed churches in the United States. The shops along the old French Market Place were closed, of course. A Corner Sidewalk Cafe was open and doing a thriving business but Stanley felt French Coffee was not for him at this late hour so we headed back for Camp.





We decided, on this second day of our stay in New Orleans, to drive into the city via the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway. It truly was an adventure. This is the world's longest bridge (28.83 miles) and connects New Orleans with the highlands to the North. It was constructed in 1956 at a cost of 51 million dollars. As one drives over this bridge, during the central eight miles he cannot see land.

Once again we drove down Canal Street which lays claim to being America's widest business thoroughfare, 171 feet across and separates the "old" from the "new" New Orleans.



Stanley remembered a very delightful restaurant where he had eaten delicious pecan pancakes other times. Lunch time was upon us so I wanted to discover for myself the merits of this specialty I'd heard so much about. Thin pancakes, a few pecans baked in them, served with powdered sugar, chopped pecans, fluffy whipped butter and a choice of syrups. Stanley ordered French coffee. The waitress asked if he wanted "pure coffee." Upon questioning she told us the other variety is a blend of coffee and chicory, Stanley chose the pure coffee which is mixed in your cup, half hot milk and half hot coffee. He thought it delicious but I stuck with tea.



On a trip like this, each day brings something to remember, an experience to treasure and think upon some wintry day when the snow is flying and vacation time seems so long in the past.

Many sidewalk artists ply their trade outside the fence along Jackson Park. They are very talented and do not lack customers.

A walk through the Park was only ordinary - we couldn't see the grass because of the hippies sleeping all over the place!

We had to decide what we most wanted to do with the remaining half day which we had allotted ourselves in this New Orleans area. We finally decided to take a ride out into the bayou country. It took a lot of doing to find our way out of the city but ere long we were on Route 23 driving along the main channel of "Old Muddy."



We drove about fifty miles out, all on good paved roads. A lot of people live out that way, mostly blacks, and all appeared in good economic condition. We were very surprised to find, for the most part, reasonably neat homes, lawns, flowers and gardens. We observed some small industries here and there in the villages. Along the road the children were hurrying home from school. They looked healthy, were well dressed and seemed happy and carefree. We know there must be many areas in the bayou country where such good conditions do not exist, but it it was good to see that this segment of the population is receiving some chance in life.

We observed the roadside ditches filled with a beautiful, white, fragrant blossom which we later learned is called the "Spider Lily."

There are no bridges across the river out this far but we came upon a free ferry and soon were on the other side.

On the return trip we spent some time observing a Japanese Boat being loaded with coal which had been transported to this spot from the coal fields of Virginia and Kentucky and stockpiled here.



The afternoon ride added up to 125 miles!

I 'phoned home to-night. It was very warm but Mary Ruth said frost is predicted for Michigan!

Telephone calls are still only a nickel here, the only place in USA where this is so.

A memory a day! And today's memory was the renewing of our acquaintance with a first cousin of Stanley, who lives a few miles beyond the North Shore of Lake Ponchartrain. It took some real work to find her since he could not remember her last name! (He thought it might be Peters; it was Perkins)

Hester seemed extremely glad to see us, evidently few of her relatives have ever visited her here. She owns a small restaurant outside of town along the highway. We had planned to stay only an hour or so but her hospitality won and we stayed for a delicious lunch of Lamb Shanks and all the trimmings.

We reluctantly waved goodbye. Hester is a year younger than Stanley but already looks much older. She has had a lifetime of hard work plus some major illness and recent surgery, all of which is commencing to take its toll.

These stops to visit old friends or relatives are valuable. Too often we all neglect this sort of thing and more's the pity.

We did not try to cover too many miles today. We finally located a Mobile Home Court in Lake Charles. This was a different kind of experience. Here the proprietor places the overnights on any vacant slabs which ordinarily would accommodate a large Mobile Home. It's easy to level the Camper on spots like this. We were directly across the drive from the rest room and didn't observe anyone else using it while we were there. This was the only occasion on the trip where we had the luxury of a private bath!

On any trip it is always interesting to observe the agricultural situation wherever we are. Through here we saw herds of Brahma cattle grazing. We also noted rice fields, water filled paddies. On westward the rice fields were dry.

All through this section the roses were gorgeous. It is hard to remember that when we left Michigan scarcely any Springtime greenery was in evidence. Each time we would park in a town, we would walk slowly to our destination, admiring all of the beautiful flowers in the dooryards.



The Lone Star State

No one can say, in a single statement, what Texas is like. Because of its size, different climates and even different cultures, exist in various areas. But the entire state is exciting and interesting and no one sees it all in a single visit.

The hostesses at the border Welcome Station were very kind and gracious. As we talked and received the brochures, we began to regret that we had only two or three days to spend in Texas on this end of our journey.



They constantly apologized for the fact that their flowers are not prettier this year. It does seem dry, but we still feel the landscape is very beautiful and especially the flowers. Through the section we traveled this morning the medians and roadside areas were carpeted with dainty pink primroses. In some sections the buttercups dominated. Again today we felt thankful we had chosen this season of the year to travel south.

Less prevalent along the roadside but seen more often in wooded surroundings is the brilliant Wild Phlox.





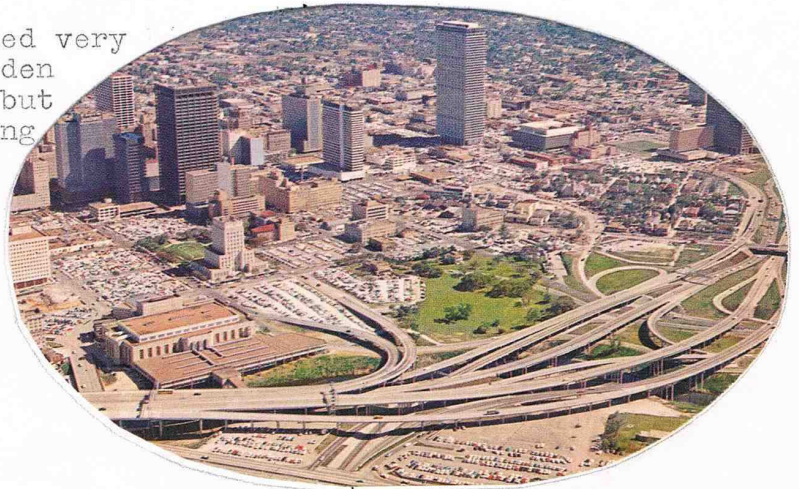
For sale in the store at the KOA Campground near Houston were these post cards with this splendid picture. We pitched our camp beneath a tree about half-way along the main drive on the left of center. The temperature was in the high nineties when we arrived and some hot weather clothes were in order. Everything about these grounds is sparkling, spacious and convenient.

On any camping trip an occasional day must be spent on housekeeping chores. By now some laundry had collected so while I attended to this Stanley wandered about the grounds, visiting with other campers and took a dip in the pool.

In the evening we drove in toward the city and strolled about in Farmer's Market. This is not what it sounds like - not a farmer was in sight! Architecturally, while it is not patterned after today's malls, this is about what it could be called. In the center are several produce markets. At one end is a restaurant; one buys the food from any of several snack bars and brings it to the tables to eat. One side has meat markets and exotic food shops. The other side includes gift shops from many foreign countries.

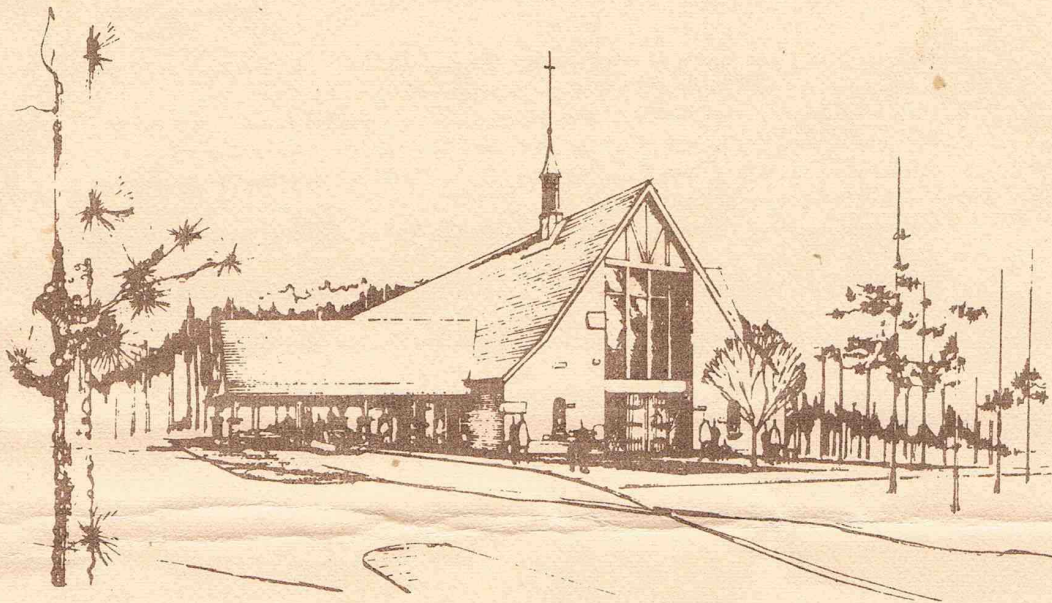
Food prices here seemed very high. we had expected garden produce to be lower here but found tomatoes to be selling for 69¢ per lb. Citrus fruits, besides looking terrible are most unreasonably priced. We purchased a two-pound catfish (\$2.40), went back to the Camp and ate it all for supper.

DELICIOUS!



Memorial Drive

United Methodist Church



12955 Memorial Drive

Houston, Texas 77024

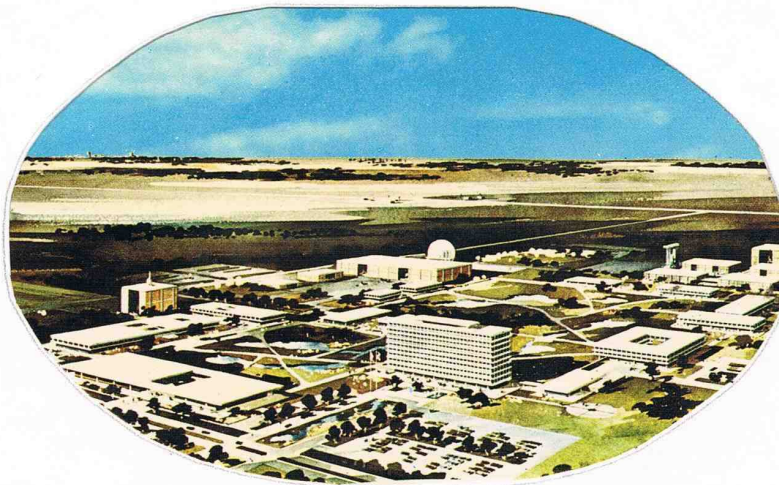
April 25, 1971

This may well be the largest Church which I have ever attended and it was a pleasant and inspiring experience. The unusual sermon was presented in a very dramatic way. The Pastor delivered it in "first person" fashion, using the parable of the Prodigal Son and the Forgiving Father as the background. He offered new concepts and interpretations and challenged us to deeper thinking. They have three worship services here each Sunday. If another one hadn't been about to begin I would have liked a guided tour of the building.

A Christian Day School is conducted here. We saw these church-related schools all through the south, confirming what we have been hearing and reading of this means of side-stepping governmental orders on school integration.



. It was impossible to get inside the Astrodome today, unless of course, you wanted to attend a baseball game. We felt we should forego this pleasure so had to be content with an outside view. It's truly enormous, in keeping with everything else in Texas!



About 45 miles south of Houston we strolled through the spacious grounds of NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration) Manned Spacecraft Center. The guided tours, offered only on week-days, provide opportunity to see several more buildings. Since we were there on a week-end we had to take the self-guided tour which allows the visitors to see but four buildings. A 20 minute film in the Auditorium, describes the most recent moon flight, that of Apollo 14, made in January 1971.

Several groups of boy scouts and a number of High School Senior classes appeared to be having a grand time here.

At NASA we were allowed to see the training center where the Astronauts practice the various routines connected with the Moon trips until they are so familiar with them that it all becomes second nature with them. The lunar module is identical to the one actually used. We saw the vehicle "Moon Rover," and the push cart used for collecting the rock and soil samples from the moon. We saw these contraptions in the place where the Astronauts actually train.

Also of particular interest was Building 29, the Flight Acceleration Facility. Here is the manrated centrifuge, designed to train crews, test equipment and evaluate the physiology of men under space-flight stresses. It has a 50 foot arm which swings a three-man gondola to create the G-forces astronauts will experience during lift-off and reentry conditions.

There is a great deal of area devoted to exhibitions of all sorts, but much of it was of such a scientific nature that it was completely beyond my understanding.

During the walk about the grounds we often could imagine what a busy and bustling atmosphere must prevail at the time of an actual Apollo flight!

Evidently the number of visitors is considerably lower now than it will be a couple of months hence. Even now an amazing amount of Kodak film is being shot up! As did all the others, we posed beside these vehicles which had apparently been especially "restored" and placed here to please the photographic public. The Airstream trailer is the one actually used to transport some of the Astronauts back from the rescue ship to Houston.

We recommend this trip to tourists but would suggest a week-day---you'd see more.



A drought is what they call it here;
For rain they wait and wait.
How sad the crops must suffer so;
For camping sure is great!

People keep reminding us that the flowers in Texas are not at all pretty this year. We constantly try to imagine how it must be in a more normal year for to us they seem very lovely.

Along the highway from Houston to San Antonio we beheld the first displays of the lovely Blue Bonnets. We remembered what a spectacular sight they were on our trip to Dallas in 1968. They grow on spikes, are usually deep blue with white tips, although there are white ones also. There are other varieties of blue, purple and lavender flowers, so many of them that it is very difficult to identify them.



Occasionally we saw displays of lavender verbena and yellow wild indigo. How these lovely roadside beauties can enhance a trip.

We begrudged the time we had to spend, of necessity, in a garage in San Antonio, having the bearings on the trailer wheels repacked with grease. (A few thousand miles later on we learned that this garage-man put the wheels on backward. When we tried to put air in the tires the valve was on the inside of the wheel!)

This evening, in San Antonio, we renewed acquaintance with a dear friend who had been a member of our Church in Drexel, near Dayton, Ohio. Opal Hefner, who has lived here for over 20 years, has been through a great sorrow but the evident victory which she has achieved is a great inspiration indeed to us.

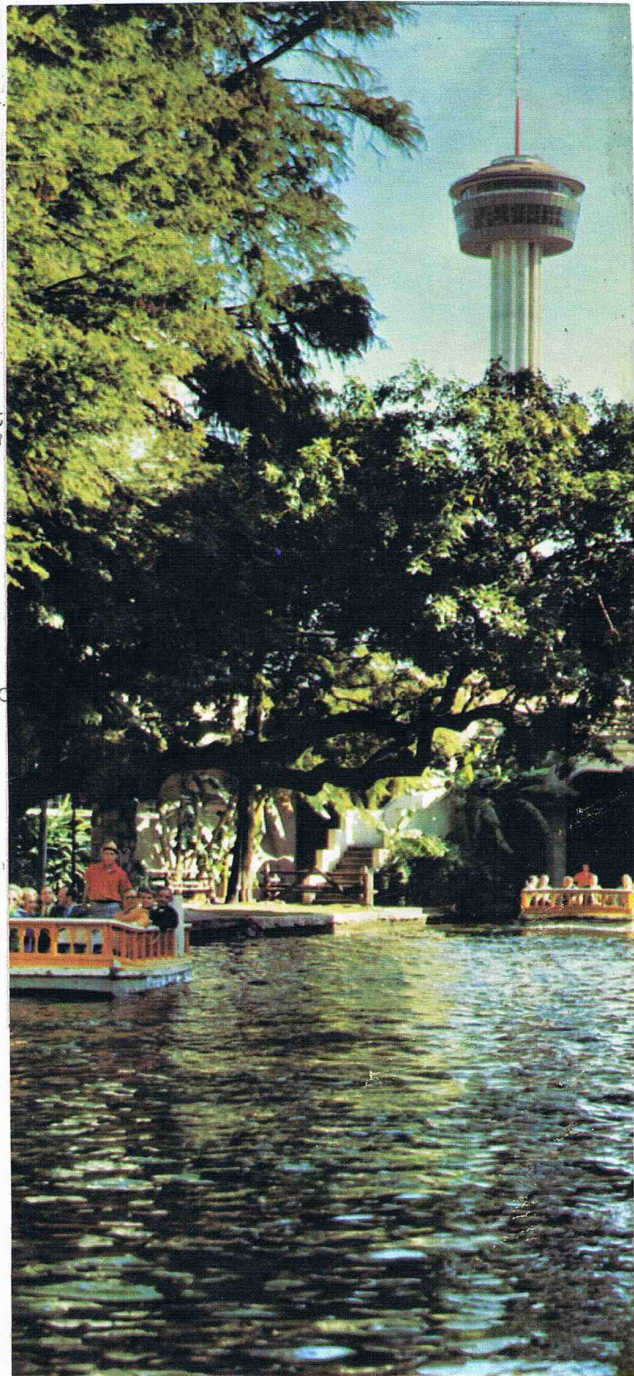
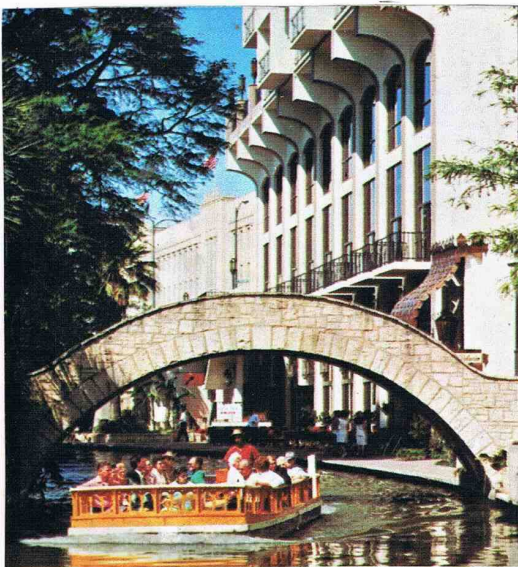


"PASEO DEL RIO"
"The Downtown River Walk"

After the three of us had eaten supper together at our Campsite, Opal accompanied us downtown where we enjoyed a stroll along the "Paseo Del Reo."

This is a very famous area. The river winds right through the heart of the city but, instead of allowing it to become an eyesore, they have developed and beautified it into an exotic spot. Artistic lighting, tropical plants, sidewalk cafes, picturesque arches and bridges all combine to make this a memorable sight. To add to our pleasure we took a ride in a small sight-seeing boat. We noticed that there also are "dinner boats" where a table is spread and the passengers enjoy their repast while gliding along smoothly down the stream.

It was difficult to say goodbye to this dear friend but it gave us satisfaction to know she chose to share her deep burden and personal problem with us.



Before breaking camp here at San Antonio we visited for a while with two women school teachers who had just returned from a two-month trip through Mexico. They gave us helpful ideas especially on how to prevent dysentery.

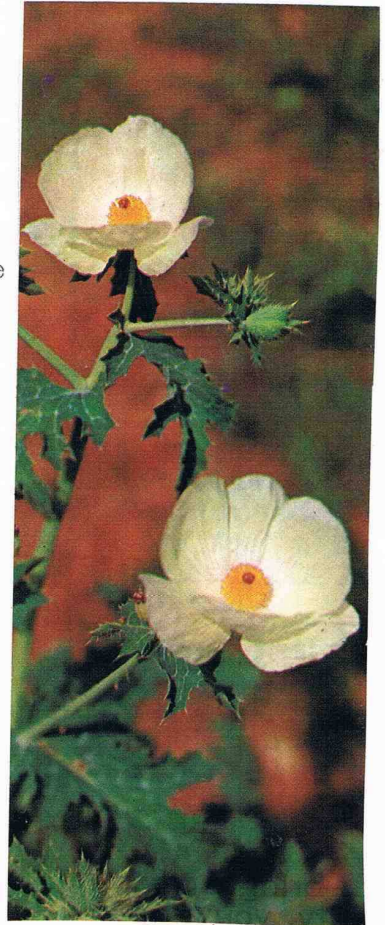
The farther south we traveled on the route between San Antonio and Laredo, the more bleak and desolate it looks. The AAA guide described this area as "fertile farm land" but as far as we could see it appeared quite barren. Oh, in occasional spots the landscape was a little bit greener. We saw lots of blooming cactus, some yellow, more of them red. The brilliant Indian Paintbrush flourishes almost anywhere and does not seem to need very much moisture. In some places the Prickly Poppy was abundant. They tell us this beautiful flower is actually a kind of nettle.

The only available camp site we could locate in Laredo was a spot right on the hot pavement in a Mobile Home Court. The temperature was well up in the nineties when we set up camp. A pleasant breeze blew and the climate is dry there. In a hot, dry atmosphere one does perspire heavily but it evaporates quickly, giving a cooling effect.

As I sat writing in my journal after 10:00 P. M. it was still around 80. I 'phoned home tonight and Mary Ruth said it was very cold and inclement in Grand Rapids. The very thought of a cool atmosphere didn't sound so bad to me!

A friendly little black and white cat made himself at home with us. For a moment I was a little homesick for my kitty.

Tomorrow we cross over into Mexico. I hear it takes a little red tape!



SOUTH OF THE BORDER



We got a real taste of soaring temperatures today. Other days have been uncomfortably hot but this one turned out to be- well, almost unbearable!

After breakfast and packing, first on the agenda was a trip to Dan Sanborn's office. This had been the best place, so we were told, to purchase Auto Insurance. (United States car insurance policies are not effective in Mexico)

Dan Sanborn has a Travel Guide Service for Mexican tourists which is simply great. After learning approximately what route we planned to take, the secretary assembled trip sheets, describing mile by mile, every highlight along the way. In addition they include many simple explanatory guidelines concerning money exchange, gasoline, foods and eating places, lodging, traffic signs and road hazards to watch for, language problems, ways to avoid getting cheated.....in general, how to have a good time in Mexico. He loves the country, the people, their way of life and his travel guides prove to be the very best.

All the materials were assembled in a convenient spiral binder and we kept this reference material handy every mile of the way throughout our Mexican trip.

We had some traveler's checks changed into Pesos there so we felt we were all ready to "cross the border" now. Each dollar represents so many pesos that one feels like a millionaire after looking at all the currency!

Si

**Este Automóvil
Está Asegurado en**

Mexico

Sanborn's

PRINCIPALES SEÑALES DE TRÁNSITO
MAIN TRAFFIC SIGNS

DOBLE CIRCULACIÓN TWO WAY	GLORETA TRAFFIC CIRCLE	TRANSICIÓN TRANSITION	TRAMO ANGOSTO NARROW ROAD	PUENTE ANGOSTO NARROW BRIDGE
ALTURA MÁXIMA VERTICAL CLEARANCE	CAMINO DERRAPANTE SUPERFICIAL ROAD OR LOOSE GRAVEL	BAJADO PRONUNCIADA STEEP HILL	VADO DIP	CRUCE DE F.F.C.C. RAILROAD CROSSING
TRABAJADORES WORKMEN	ESCUELA SCHOOL	ZONA DE DERRUMBES LANDSLIDE AREA	SEMAFORO SIGNAL	GANADO CATTLE
ALTO STOP	CEDA EL PASO YIELD RIGHT OF WAY	ADUANA CUSTOMS	100 MÁXIMA SPEED LIMIT (KM)	CIRCULACIÓN USE RIGHT LANE
NO PEDESTRANS	CONSERVE SU DERECHA KEEP RIGHT	NO U TURN	3m ANCHO LIBRE CLEARANCE BEGINS	NO LEFT TURN
NO REBASE DO NOT PASS	NO DO NOT ENTER	UNA HORA ONE HOUR PARKING	E LÍMITE PARKING LIMIT	NO NO PARKING



Toll Gate at Mexican Customs

Soon we were headed over the bridge, across the border and toward the Port of Entry.

First we needed to obtain our tourist card or pass. To get this Stanley presented his birth certificate but I had been unable to obtain mine before leaving home so they accepted my Voter Registration card instead.

Suddenly, in a matter of minutes, we found we had been transported into a different culture.

We had to get clearance on the Camper next, then came Customs. The officer followed us to the car and requested us to open up the camper, exactly what I had feared would happen. We unfastened all of the latches (had a lot of rope to untie on one loose latch) lifted one end of the camper about six inches, whereupon the same man said OK and motioned us to put it back down! For the life of me I'll never understand his logic if he had any for he never had a chance to look inside it.

The officer then looked inside our car trunk, lifted out our two large suitcases, bypassing my train case and numerous smaller sipped bags. When he started to carry them inside I was close on his heels to see what would happen. He flung them on a table, unsipped one corner of each a few inches, not bothering to look inside, reclosed them and slapped a huge seal, dripping with Elmer's glue, over the latch on each.

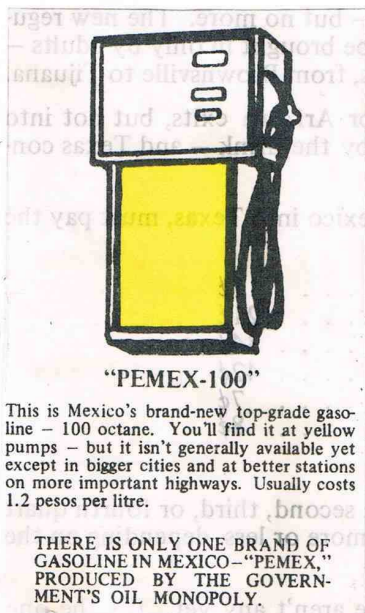
Somehow he made us understand there would be another check point farther down the highway - as indeed there was. As we neared that point, about a hundred miles farther, loafing lazily in a rocker, the officer carelessly waved us on before we even had a chance to slow down!

The expanse of road from Laredo to Monterey, Mexico, is barren, extremely dry and not particularly scenic. No one would dare judge Mexico by what he sees on this segment of the trip. A cloudless sky offered no respite from the blazing sun. Tiny adobe huts or clumsily thrown together board shacks with not even a twig for shade appeared to house a family although often the only visible sign of habitation was laundry on a line. Because this is the dry season and also a drought area there's lots of dust. Vegetation was sparse.



Lots of Joshua trees were all about, just beginning to bloom. Their huge blossoms hang like giant size, white clusters of grapes. One naturally assumes that these interesting plants are members of the cactus family, but somewhere in our reading we were quite surprised to discover that they are a member of the lily family!

Half-way to Monterey we made our first stop for gas. There is only one brand of gasoline in Mexico - PEMEX. Really it was very convenient. One brand, one price, no matter where one is. On this stop we were to learn one lesson which we remembered all through Mexico - when you use the public restrooms always take along your own tissue! Many of these facilities are not very tidy but they are usable. Occasionally we would come across a very clean one in the cities, but more often not.



We found that Dan Sanborn's mile-by-mile guide made this jaunt from Laredo to Monterey a little less dull. In his guides he explains the names of creeks (arrayos) which we cross even though they were dry as powder this time of year.

Whenever we would get out of the car the heat would be suffocating. Needless to say we were mighty glad we had the air conditioner functioning properly. We often remarked that we didn't see how anyone could endure this trip without it but I guess they could for they have survived without it for a good many centuries!

MONTEREY

We located a very acceptable spot to camp in Monterey. The Royal Courts have assigned an area at the rear of their property to overnight camping. They installed electrical outlets, water taps and some spots have sewers. When we arrived all sites were empty but by night eight were filled. There were clean rest rooms, showers for our use and we also had access to the Motel swimming pool. In the very center of the grounds was a lovely shaded area where we could relax and rest. We became acquainted with two or three other couples and each evening got into some interesting discussions here on the "green." We did not disclose to them that Stanley is a minister and believe we had more interesting talks that way.

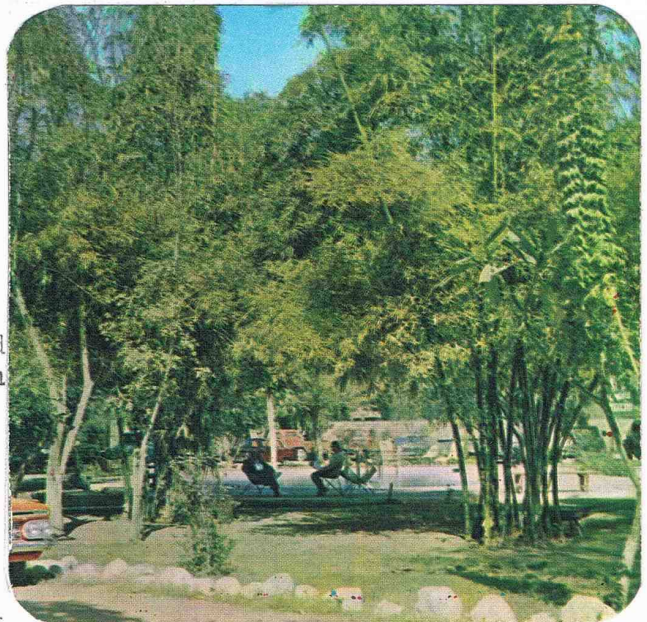
Whenever I think of Monterey I always think of the heat! It was 104 degrees when we arrived and all of the campsites were in the sun. No picnic tables are furnished in Mexico so we had to eat inside the Camper. Now it does sound as if this heat would make us miserable but it really didn't, partly because a constant breeze blew and also because our body cooling system worked so well in the dry atmosphere.

Following lunch we rested in the shade for a while, then took a drive about the city so we could be in the air-conditioned car.

Today the unpredictable driving habits of these people really hit us. They drive fast, darting in and out among other cars with wild abandon. Only main thoroughfares have street signs so woe to him who gets lost!

This is a big city. The population of Monterey is over a million. Cars are fewer than in United States. Not many streets are wide, most are more like alleys.

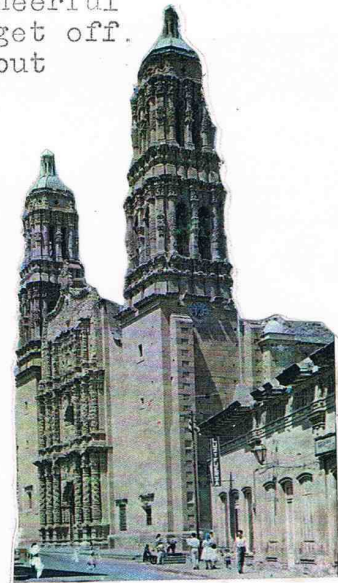
The temperature did not drop much but sleeping was pleasant. The open camper allowed all available air to circulate and it was quite a lot cooler by morning.



The second morning of our stay in Monterey we nearly decided to start on toward Guadalajara because we had heard that it was cooler there. We changed our mind for we really did want to see more of the sights in this city. (Later we were glad for the decision for when we finally did arrive in Guadalajara we found it equally as warm as here!)

The prospect of battling the downtown traffic did not appeal to us so we hit upon the idea of taking a bus. We waited at the PARADA (stopping place) directly across the street from the Motel. We were able to communicate sufficiently with a girl waiting there to learn which bus would take us to the ZONA CENTRO, or the Central area. We also learned the price or fare. The buses are old, battered and crowded, but everyone is cheerful and friendly. Not being very sure where to get off, we later had to do quite a bit of walking, but found window shopping very interesting.

Passing a huge cathedral we made a short pause. It is very ornate and highly decorative as are all of them in Mexico. A dozen or so people had stopped there, taking a few moments from their shopping or other duties to "rest their soul." They were quiet, some kneeling, some reading from a prayer book, others genuflecting before one of the many side altars. I may not share their insights nor their conception of God, the Bible, or the hereafter; nevertheless here are individuals who recognize a source of strength beyond their own and acknowledge their need of it. They are willing to take time for this simple act of praying - in their way - and I'd as soon say God doesn't hear my prayer as to think He doesn't hear theirs.



The Colon Market is fascinating. Fruits, Vegetables, fish, meats, birds in cages, jewelry, wrought iron, pottery, embroidery, tapestry, sombreros (millions of 'em) plus things we could not even identify. If you linger the vendor begins the dickering process.

The rest rooms in the market had torn squares of newspaper - not to be thrown into the toilets but into wastebaskets. Had a few flies here!!!



A Motor trip in Mexico will quickly make anyone deeply thankful for the anti-littering campaign in good old U. S. A. City streets and highways alike are strewn with cans, bottles, papers and every other kind of trash. We heard that the government has recently undertaken some steps to combat the problem but it will be a slow and tedious process.

Everywhere in Mexico, particularly in the cities, the pushcart vendors are at work. During this hot season these sidewalk salesmen carry large glass jars containing ice and fruit juices, large slabs of pineapple, watermelon and papaya. They do a great business but we did not patronize them because we did not think the ice was pure.

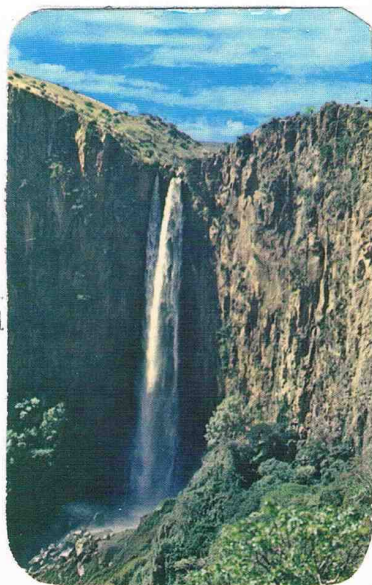
As we walked about downtown today we could not refrain from making a few observations. The young people looked so wholesome, friendly and happy. School was still in session and they were all carrying books. We did not see any young people smoking (and never a woman smoking). We observed no loiterers, all the kids were busy and the only people lounging in the parks were the very old, usually watching some one's toddlers. This was quite a contrast to the cities in our country where we could not enjoy the parks for the hippies stretched out all over the grass asleep.

The Mexican girls are all beautiful, almost without exception. Their dark hair is usually worn long, drawn together at the nape of the neck with ribbon, rope or barrett. They were stylishly dressed, lots of mini skirts, but hardly any women wore pantsuits. I don't recall seeing anyone on the street in shorts except on very small children. Never any shorts on men or boys.

Long sleeves seemed almost the rule and I concluded it was for protection against sunburn.

Our afternoon sightseeing trip took us to Horsetail Falls, a tourist attraction about 50 miles south of Monterey. Not very much water was coming over the falls during the dry season. One has to hike about a mile from the parking lot but it is a very easy hike.

On the way to the Falls we saw a cemetery so stopped and looked it over. It was cluttered with old faded paper flowers etc. If it was cleaned up it might be pretty.



In Monterey Stanley had a fine time with several children he met one evening near our camp. In this snapshot you can see their glee over a gift of a small plastic space man he gave them. One, who could speak a little English was the interpreter. Everywhere we enjoy children as we camp and this provided the inspiration for the following poem.



MEXICO'S CHILDREN

I love these sun-tanned children
Which we meet along the way.
Each time they smile and greet me
It brightens up my day.
They are all so very normal
And they make a lot of noise;
Always smiling, always friendly,
Just like other girls and boys.

All the girls are coy and giggly
And your heart will quickly win.
And the boys are keen and wiggly
With a happy, impish grin.

How they love to have "touristas"
Snap their picture as they pose;
One can find these willing subjects
Everywhere the traveler goes.
They may try to sell you something,
Guide you 'round or shine your shoes;
And of course they'll wash your auto -
(Sometimes when you do not choose!)

When we give them tiny tokens
They will show appreciation;
"Gracias! Gracias! Muchos Gracias!"
Always said with great elation.

So we try to know the children
Everywhere we chance to roam;
For no matter what their language
They're just like the kids back home!

-----Naomi Forkner
April 30, 1971

With reluctance we left Monterey for we knew there were other places of interest which we had not had time to see.

The route on this leg of the journey presented different scenery. It was two-lane highway most of the time. Sections would be straight as an arrow for 20 miles or more. Other times it would wind through mountainous territory, much of it waste land. It was very dry and much seemingly not arable. It's open range here for herds of goats, hundreds of them. Often a dozen or so cattly, bony and shriveled, would wander onto the road. Once a truck just in front of us slowed down and we discovered a burro was standing dumbly in the center of the road!



Today our car overheated. Stanley discovered the water low in the radiator so drew water from the camper tank and was filling it when a highway service truck appeared on the scene to help. The two men could speak little English. They removed the thermostat. I still can't understand the reason but they explained it to Stanley. They finished filling the radiator, gave us water to take along and wouldn't even take a tip for their help.

Later we learned that these men are called "Green Angels" here, referring partly to their green uniforms. We have found people very friendly and equally helpful. Neither did we ever feel that we were cheated money-wise at any time.

Often we found it difficult to locate a spot with a little shade where we could eat our light picnic lunch. Usually, after finding a place where we could escape the sun for a few minutes we would use the camper top as a table, eat as quickly as we possibly could and then get back into the air-conditioned car and be on our way.

As we drove along today, the many tiny adobe huts out in the barren fields reminded me of the hogans we saw in the Navajo Indian Territory in Western United States not far from Grand Canyon.





Everywhere in Mexico, one sees small crosses erected along the roadside. We learned that these are placed there in memory of some loved one who died at that spot. Some are large and impressive, which may indicate wealth or importance. Others are simple and less ornate, while some are but a plain metal cross held in place by a mound of stones. When new highways are built, these memorials are carefully moved back but are never destroyed.

The Wayside Cross

They plant a cross beside the way
So all who pass may share
Their grief and sorrow on the loss
Of one who perished there.

Now some who pass by scarcely note,
While others, on their way,
May check the safety of the spot.
A few may pause to pray.

Lord, let me share the pain of those
I meet along life's road.
Forbid that I should hasten on
And lighten not their load.

Let all thy earthly children bear
The burdens of each other;
Fulfilling thus the law of Christ,
And loving all as brother.

.....Naomi Forkner
May 1, 1971

ZACATECAS



We were surprised to find a city of 54,000 inhabitants for we were expecting a small village. It is the capital of this state.

As we arrived in town, we saw a group of 25 or 30 people moving along on foot very slowly. We discovered it was a funeral procession for a baby. A man leading the group carried a tiny white casket on his shoulders. A boy of about eight was carrying a large white cross, assisted by an older man. Two girls carried a big basket of wild flowers. We did not see any priest.

We quickly located a place to camp beside a Motel. As we wanted to see the city before dark we quickly returned down town. This proved to be quite a contrast to Monterey. The streets and sidewalks were swept very clean, not one bit of litter to be seen anywhere.

It was Friday night and all the local people seemed to be shopping. The folk seem to be middle-class or poor. Many of the streets in this very old city were so narrow that they could not accomodate even one lane of traffic so are used for pedestrians only.

We entered an old cathedral which had been built in 1762. It had been quite fancy but was badly "beaten", slightly dirty and in somewhat of a state of deterioration. It is still in use, of course, and a few came and went while we were there.

We purchased some bananas and eggs at the market place. In any city the market is always the most interesting spot. Here you can see what the folk use and eat. The boy who sold us the eggs made a bag out of half a sheet of newspaper and I actually got them safely back to the camper in it! The bakery here was self-serve; one took a pair of tongs and a tray and went about collective the goodies he wanted.

We have never camped in such a beautiful setting. The Motel proprietor had affixed a few electrical connections to a tree and assigned us a site in the midst of his rose garden!



We found it much cooler here. Stanley looked it up in the Tour Book to discover that the elevation is nearly 8000 ft! For this reason there is a heavy dew. Before morning we had the electric blanket on. What a contrast to Monterey!

The rose garden was even lovelier in the early morning sunlight. A gardener came to water the garden and we tried to express our appreciation to him for the beauty of the place. The smaller flowers are pansies.

As we arrived in the city the previous afternoon we had observed a church and several crosses atop a high peak overlooking the city. We decided we could not leave here without taking a trip up to this spot. A fine, paved road leads around the mountain. At the top we discovered a large layout of buildings including a huge courtyard where several teenage boys were playing with a big inflated ball.

The view is magnificent on such a clear day. It is Labor Day in Mexico. Somewhere in the midst of the city a band is playing, perhaps a parade is in progress.

Stanley climbed even higher up the mountain than I and found three small mauseleums. Another tourist who spoke some English indicated that persons of importance were interred there.

A small chapel was open and we ventured inside. A few had

made the long trek up the mountainside for prayer. One woman, so very shabbily clothed, barefooted, with a baby in her arms and a couple of toddlers, had come and as she departed, dropped a coin in the Poor Box.

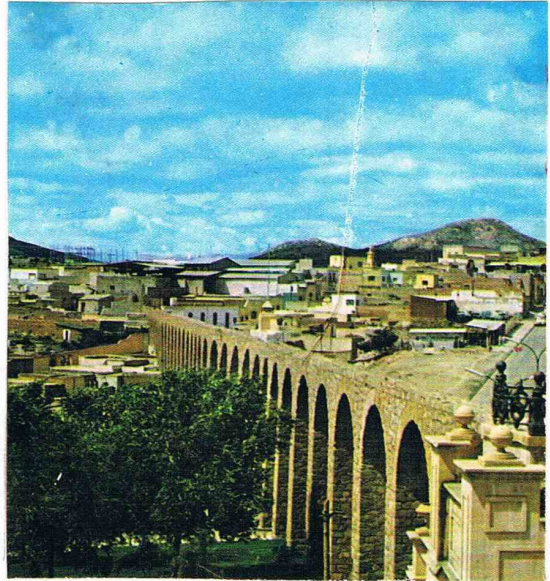
It was indeed a temptation to linger a little longer here.



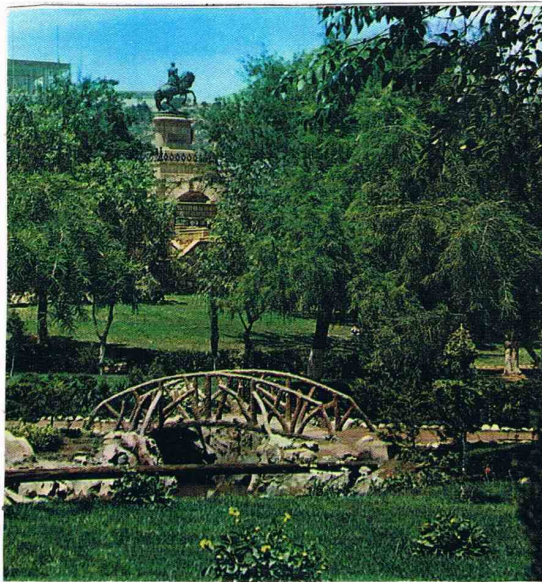
This city has an ancient Aquaduct running through the heart of it. We learned that at one time it was very long and it was constructed with a trough in the top of it to carry the city's water supply from the mountains.

It is thought-provoking to realize that the people of so long ago could construct some of these engineering marvels without any of the modern equipment or know-how.

We found a lovely green park near this sight. These people in all of the cities of Mexico make great use of their parks. Probably



because far fewer of them own cars, they spend holidays in the parks near home.



This park was getting plenty of use the day we were there. Many, many children were playing. Quite a few youngsters, some of them appearing to be no more than 6 or 7 years old, had brought their little wagons filled with cold drinks, fruits, etc., and were conducting business. A large bull ring was nearby but nothing was going on today.

On our way back to camp we saw this extraordinary display of flowers. After stopping we learned it is the grounds of a large Medical School. It was not in session now so we could walk freely about. Buildings were ultra-modern.

The flowers resembled geraniums. They were a climbing variety and covered hillsides, rocks and walls. It was a bit early in the day and the sun was not right to catch the beautiful pink but I am enclosing the picture anyway although it does not do them justice.



We will always cherish our memories of the delightful city of Zacatecas, but we anticipate new adventures as we set out for Guadalajara.

Each lap of the trip presents contrasts in scenery. The mountains today provided some breath-taking views while long stretches of the trip were on tableland between 3000 and 6600 feet elevation. Passing through numerous villages and one or two sizeable cities, we often found the main street but one lane wide and made of cobblestones. One could sometimes get the feeling he could reach out of the car window and touch the storefronts!

Rural areas were dotted with wee adobe huts, often alone on a barren hillside, under the blazing sun, but more often in little groups of half a dozen or so clustered together in a kind of community. There were burros, cattle, goats and horses all over the highway. Mexican drivers think nothing of it. The children also always walk in the center of the road.

We often couldn't resist the temptation to pause long enough to photograph some lovely flowers. This picture is of bougenvillia, especially showy just now.

The mountainous areas presented some challenging driving opportunities. We were often caught behind a slow-moving truck and it took some clever doing to pass and move along.

On the mesa we passed through some sections of fertile farm land. The fences were invariably one of two varieties. We saw hundreds of miles of rock fences. Small slabs of natural stone were carefully laid atop each other, without mortar, but they say these fences hold up for generations.

Rows of Century plants are used for another type of fence. They grow taller than humans and their needle-sharp points should effectively repel any high-jumper.





A BETTER WORLD

Lord of the mountains, the plains and the valleys,
Creator, sustainer of life day by day,
Endless our praises for beauty and order,
Joyfully lift we our hearts now and pray.

The mountains speak forth of your might and your power,
The springs in the valley attest to your love.
We see your great beauty in the low cactus flower
And we hear a night psalm from the heavens above.

Thank you, O God, for a world of such beauty
Where even the seasons bow low to your will.
How can your children, the crown of creation,
Make this which you gave us more beautiful still?

Let each of us strive to preserve and protect it,
Defile not the earth, the air or the sea,
Honor all life and regard it as sacred,
Think always of those who come later than we.

Let us lay down all our pride and our weapons,
Love one another in Christ's Holy Name.
Having done this, then we'll find O our Father,
The world much more lovely than it was when we came.

-----Naomi Forkner
May 2, 1971



A short side-trip of $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles took us to see the ruins of an ancient city called Chicomoztoc. History records that when the Spanish arrived here in 1535 they found a "depopulated city of sumptuous edifices built of stone and lime...well laid out and of imposing appearances.....in the center was a tower of great height....fronting it was a fountain pouring forth a stream of water pretty to behold....."

These ruins stand out starkly on the summit of a mountain. One can do a lot of dreaming and the imagination can work overtime trying to picture how it must have been those centuries ago.

Several people to whom we had talked at Monterey had led us to believe that it would be cooler at Guadalajara. So, when we pulled into the recommended Trailer Park about five o'clock and found the temperature was 100 I was disappointed. It remained this warm during the days all the time we were there.

The park is very nice although there are not many occupants at the time of the year. They tell us it is packed all winter. Many Americans spend the cold months here. We hardly felt we were in Mexico for nearly everyone at this place speaks English. There is a beautiful swimming pool. The laundry has an attendant at all times and the rest rooms are spacious. We met one man here who majored in mouthing off about the United States. His home had been in California, he got "fed up" with it all and lives here now.

It is very dry here, I washed out a few things soon after arriving and before bedtime they were dry!

It really cools down at night. Before morning we needed three blankets.





A Real Commitment

ST. PAUL METHODIST CHURCH
LA IGLESIA METODISTA DE MEXICO
Monte Cáucaso y Las Animas
Colonia Independencia
Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico

Pastors: Raúl Ruiz Avila
Robert H. Conerly

A new Church experience awaited us this morning. We had no difficulty locating the Methodist Church. The Pastor is acquainted with Dave Crawford.

The English Service is held at 10:00, followed by the Spanish Service at 11:00. It was a special treat today to hear a large Youth Choir which is on a concert tour. They are from a Christian Bible School somewhere in Mexico. They sang, accompanied by an instrumental group (guitars, drum and organ) two numbers which they had composed and two spirituals. Their rhythm was excellent and the entire congregation exhibited enthusiasm for their musical offering.

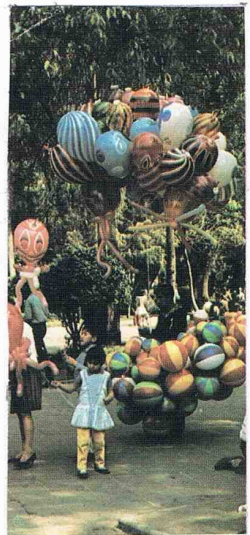
It is the beginning of Christian Family Week and the Pastor spoke about the need for strong Christian Homes in this present day.

We had heard it said that the Mexicans will have a "fiesta" at the drop of a sombrero! Now we felt a trip to this country would never be complete without an experience at a fiesta, so when we learned one was on today at the Agua Azul (Blue Water) Park, we headed for it.

It is a very large Park and had been converted almost in its entirety to a big Festival Atmosphere. "ESCOLARES," it was called and resembled a huge carnival. Many organizations had set up eating places, each gaily decorated and serving specialty foods. Small vendors lined the sidewalks by the hundreds. Professional musicians played at the eating spots. Loud speakers blared forth in a deafening roar but no one seemed to mind. Lotteries and gambling games or raffles seemed popular.

While sitting in the shade sipping a coke, a waitress began chatting with us in English. She lived for some time in Kansas but is now the wife of a doctor in Guadalajara. She told us that this is a charity benefit affair. A nation-wide organization, headed by the President's wife, raises large sums of money to provide free breakfasts for needy children. She said this area raised over 10,000 pesos last year, which sounded like a pitiful sum to me (\$800). But then money goes farther in Mexico and this does not look like a very affluent crowd.

It is always fun to sit and watch people, no matter where. All over Mexico one sees so many babies everywhere. And it often seemed to me that every other woman on the street is pregnant! We may be making some progress in the area of birth control in our country but contraception is evidently a no-no here. I actually wonder if, over the whole world, the problem can ever be solved.



Certain housekeeping chores won't wait, particularly the laundry, so I attacked it this morning.

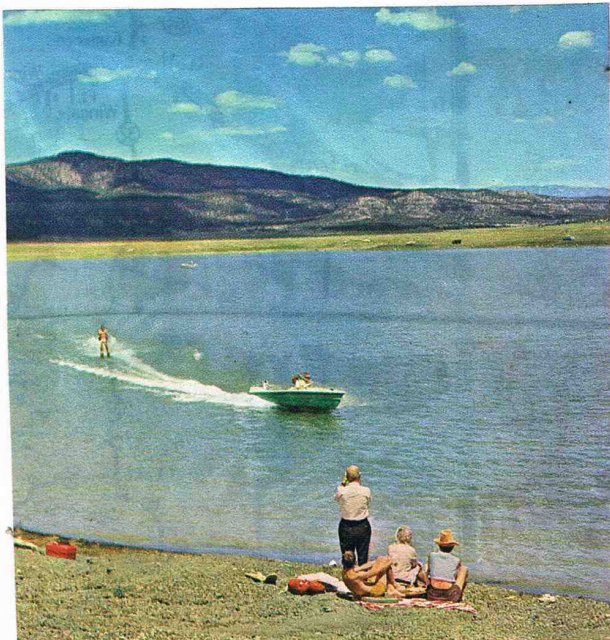
The machines at the laundry here are not coin-operated so a maid turns them on for you. Otherwise I did the laundry alone. However, she hovered about and tried to be helpful, but the language barrier made it difficult. When the job was done I gave her a peso as a tip (8¢) and she bowed, hugged me and said, "Gracias!" over and over again. Two large, walled-in areas on the roof are strung with wire lines for drying space. The sun beats down with such fury that things are bone dry very soon.

While in Mexico we did not use the water from the taps nor put their ice in our drinks. We had been warned of the dangers of dysentery so took no chances. Some persons at this park say the water is safe for drinking. Now that we are home I believe we were unnecessarily cautious. We continued to purchase bottled water to be on the safe side. It is inexpensive. I had brought along enough canned meats, etc. to last while we were in this country. The meats in the markets did not look at all attractive.

This afternoon we did not want to go on any sight-seeing trip which would take us into the hot city. We finally decided on a drive to the beautiful Lake Chappala, a large inland body of water about 30 miles south of the city. It is the largest lake in Mexico. It did seem cooler there.

There are some lovely homes in the town of Chappala. We learned that some of Mexico's "well-heeled" citizens have homes here. Several nice private boats are anchored here. At the western extreme of the city is a large cluster of modern residences. We understand that most of these are where many "well-heeled" Americans have retired.

We strolled through souvenir shops and visited a super-market



which stocked more things which north-of-the-border customers would want.

On the way back the highway passes through the town of Joco-tepec where we were forced to slow down to 5 mph or less. The main street is worse than cobblestones and the narrowest yet.

Back in Guadalajara we visited the Museum of Popular Arts. Here Mexico's craftsmen and artists display and offer their merchandise for sale. It is intensely interesting and we did some early Christmas shopping since the prices were so good.

While we were in the Museum of Popular Arts a violent storm came up and a very heavy rain fell. We immediately imagined our camper soaked all the way through for we had left it wide open. Later, when we arrived at the campground, we found no rain at all had fallen there!

This was the first time we drove at night in Mexico. I might add it was also the last! Whew! Day driving is bad enough. We will never cease to wonder why there are not more automobile accidents the way their drivers cut in front of each other. There are no lanes marked out on the streets and it is often nearly impossible to locate the position of the curbs. Local drivers go like the wind and it is very dangerous to drive slow. There are many more busses than in U. S. But because fewer people own cars than here, there are also a great many more pedestrians, bicycles, push-carts, etc. They never heard of a jay-walking law! They will make turns out of any lane they happen to be in. On every light post (or so it seemed) a sign warns the driver not to "use claxon" and that means no horn-blowing. Apparently they loved the horn and used it until it became absolute bedlam. One seldom hears a "claxon." The pedestrians, even the children, are adept and skillful in getting about. However we just aren't up to night driving, there's too much danger.

We'll remember many things about Guadalajara....like the delicious fresh pineapple we purchased. It was like no other pineapple I had ever eaten.

I'll always think of the many beautiful fountains everywhere. At nearly every traffic circle there was a monument and a fountain. Mexico is naturally very warm, but the sight of the clear, crystal water splashing about in the sunshine somehow had a cooling effect on one.

We left this city, feeling sure that, some day, we will return.

Traffic Tips I

Don't make a left hand turn on JUAREZ (main street). A kind word for safety and don't blow your horn (claxon) in Guadalajara. Now you know why driving can be so pleasant here. Direction of streets determined by little signs on buildings at corners: PREFERENCIA (red arrow) means just what you think . . . and you'd better be thinking right! CIRCULACION (green arrow) means you should stop for the PREFERENCIA.

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ON COMMUNICATION PROBLEMS

I only sought a block of ice
To cool the food we carry;
And I even looked the word up
In my Spanish Dictionary.

I sallied forth with confidence,
Found a nearby "mercado,"
And with a well-rehearsed accent,
Said, "One block of 'helado.'"

I don't know what I really said,
Nor how I made it sound,
But they all laughed so hard it seemed
They'd fall upon the ground.

I tried again; I dropped the "h,"
Was careful of my tone;
Her face lit up---she brought me then
A chocolate ice-cream cone!

Ah! Then thinks I, I'll act out "froze;"
I shivered hard and pronto---
She turned and reached upon the shelf
And handed me - a poncho!

Frustrated then I shouted "ICE!"
Her face began to glow
With the clearest understanding
As she said, "Si! Si! Heilo!"

I knew then as I traveled on
And counted off the miles,
The only common language
Is the one made up of smiles!

Naomi Forkner
---May 4, 1971



Leaving Guadalajara, heading northward toward Mazatlan brought new adventures and interesting sights. The mountain scenery was thrilling. The dangerous hairpin curves (no guard rails), dips and narrow bridges spells danger even in daylight. Once we paused at a pull-out spot to gaze down into a lush, green valley where nestled a tiny village. The steep cliff on which we stood seemed right over them. Using the binoculars we could observe routine activities. School children were playing in a walled-in yard. We could hear organ music coming from the church.

The burro is a highly respected animal in the rural areas. One sees them beside wells and water holes being loaded with large cans. It is hard to believe he could carry such a load. Often large bundles of firewood almost hide the animal. It is mainly a beast of burden but sometimes carries his owner as well.

We saw large herds of goats all about. It seems to be open range territory which meant that it was not uncommon to have to



stop the car while the goats were herded off the highway.

The Spanish word for cowboy is "gaucho." We saw a great many of them, more with goats I believe than with cattle.

In the picture at the left I always point out that the one with the hat is Stanley!

Today we drove for about a mile through the famous Lava Beds of CEBORUCA. The great heaps of cinder-like rock, hard as metal, are eerie to behold and makes one wonder what sort of a great upheaval must have taken place here in the past to produce such a spectacle.

Stanley walked out over it for several feet to take a picture, but it looked rough to me so I preferred to stay by the road.



The area covered with this lava is not as extensive as the "Valley of Fires" area in New Mexico but the "mountains" of it are much higher. We both pondered over the effort which must have gone into the building of a highway through this section.

We drove through an area today which is very famous for its Opal mining. We went into two shops but did not purchase anything.

As we were leaving these stores we were besieged by children, both girls and boys, trying to sell us different kinds of stones. They are very appealing but after a while very nearly became a nuisance. They easily spot the United States liscense tag and have learned a few words of English -- enough to hawk their wares. In some instances a firm "no" was sufficient but in other circumstances they hung on for some time.

At the majority of stops, before one is entirely out of the car, some lad (maybe several) will pounce upon you and it's a toss-up whether he says "Wash car, meester?" or "watch car." Usually he will have a filthy rag in his hand, already wet and I'll wager he could wash a car in a cup of water! Several times an adult asked to wax our car. Usually, because it was covered with quite a layer of fine, gritty dust, we knew it would ruin the finish on the car. It was very hard to convince them we didn't want their services, partly because of the language barrier but more often because the car looked desperately in need of a clean-up job. Once, as we were coming out of the Museum of Popular Arts, a lad informed us he had "watched" our car, and he hung around so tightly, not letting go of the car so that Stanley had to give him a coin to get rid of him.

Today we passed through "Tequila" country. Tequila is Mexico's No. 1. liquor and is made from the juice of the heart of the AGAVE cactus, better known as the "Maguey." The heart is cooked, the juice extracted, fermented, distilled and bottled.

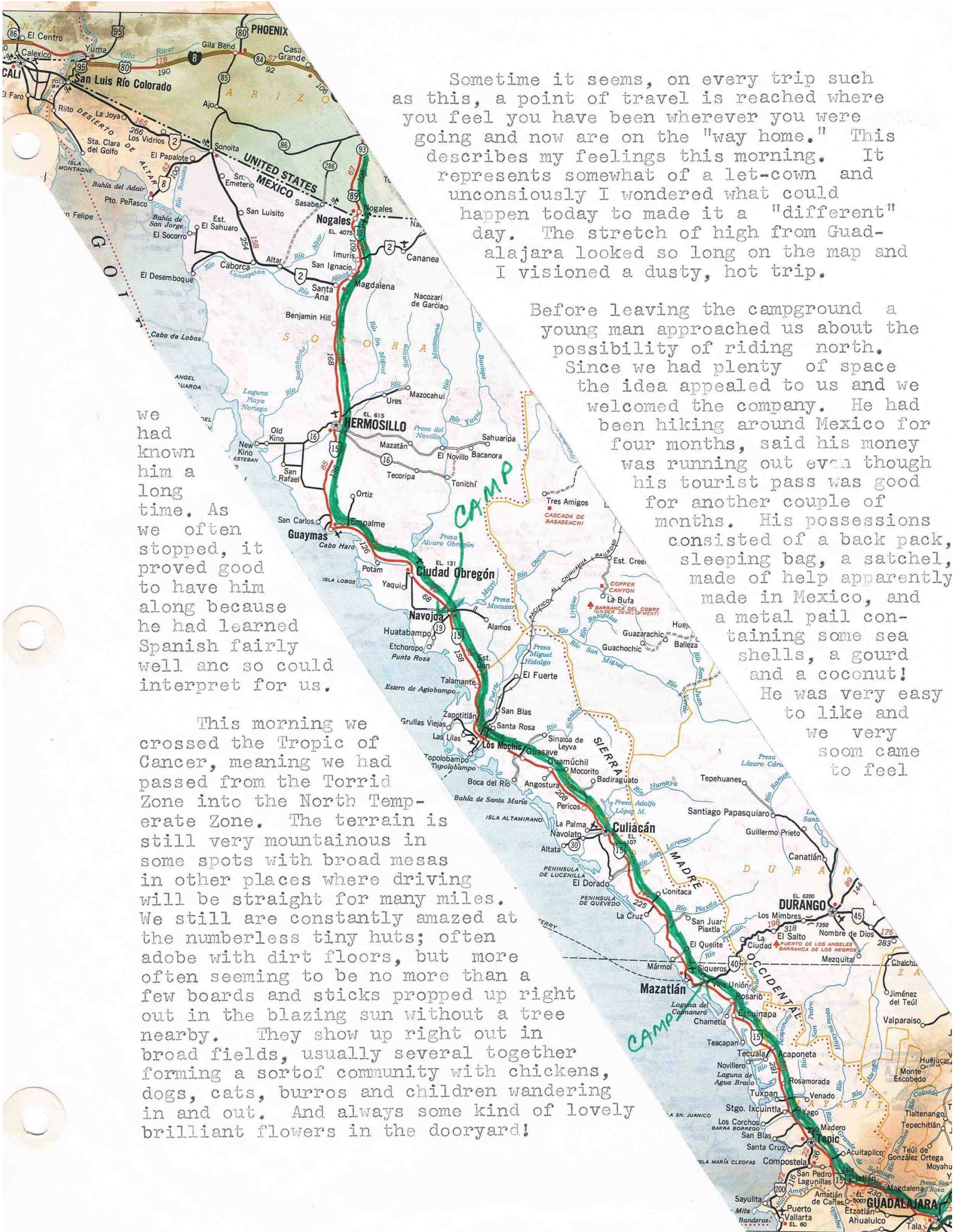
The town of Tequila is famous for its distilleries, 24 of them, they claim. Many of them are very small, but we understand that visitors are welcome at all times. We were not especially interested, in fact the smell was quite enough as we drove through this little town.

We bought our first restaurant meal in Mexico today as we passed through the village of Tepic. It hardly seemed like a Mexican meal because, on the recommendation of Dan Sanborn, we ordered Roast Chicken. It turned out to be a most delicious meal. The chicken was well-roasted on a spit, and a red sauce was served with it. We expected this sauce to be quite hot (peppery) but was pleasantly surprised. It was hard to identify the flavor, but it was certainly tasty and really enhanced the chicken. The crusty, hard rolls were especially good. In our opinion the only luxury which we would have appreciated here might have been air conditioning but we are learning to do without it nicely.

We settled for the night at a dusty camp ground along the ocean at Mazatlan. Well, not exactly on the water, rather about a quarter of a mile from the beach.

Without a doubt, during the "season" this place is quite nice but just now it appears to be sadly neglected. The tall palms are attractive but not a blade of grass is underfoot. Only a half dozen rigs were settled in, plus a few tents. A group of youths traveling together spent part of the evening shooting firecrackers. Apparently young folk come here to be near the beaches. About 10:30 when all had become fairly quiet, there came a sudden, loud "BANG" and all the electricity went off. They never came on the remainder of the night nor the next morning before we left.





Sometime it seems, on every trip such as this, a point of travel is reached where you feel you have been wherever you were going and now are on the "way home." This describes my feelings this morning. It represents somewhat of a let-down and unconsciously I wondered what could happen today to made it a "different" day. The stretch of high from Guadalajara looked so long on the map and I visioned a dusty, hot trip.

Before leaving the campground a young man approached us about the possibility of riding north. Since we had plenty of space the idea appealed to us and we welcomed the company. He had been hiking around Mexico for four months, said his money was running out even though his tourist pass was good for another couple of months. His possessions consisted of a back pack, sleeping bag, a satchel, made of help apparently made in Mexico, and a metal pail containing some sea shells, a gourd and a coconut! He was very easy to like and we very soon came to feel

we had known him a long time. As we often stopped, it proved good to have him along because he had learned Spanish fairly well and so could interpret for us.

This morning we crossed the Tropic of Cancer, meaning we had passed from the Torrid Zone into the North Temperate Zone. The terrain is still very mountainous in some spots with broad mesas in other places where driving will be straight for many miles. We still are constantly amazed at the numberless tiny huts; often adobe with dirt floors, but more often seeming to be no more than a few boards and sticks propped up right out in the blazing sun without a tree nearby. They show up right out in broad fields, usually several together forming a sort of community with chickens, dogs, cats, burros and children wandering in and out. And always some kind of lovely brilliant flowers in the dooryard!

I had prepared a box of food for eating along the way today but lacked any meat. We stopped in a sizeable town and located the "abarrotes" (grocery store). Ordinary meats or canned foods are very scarce in this area and the best we could do was a can of sardines.

Realizing we had not seen a tree in 50 miles, it seemed we should find a spot under one of the few trees in this town to pause for lunch. We did find one and had scarcely come to a halt when half a dozen cute little boys 8 or 9 years old gathered to watch this unusual spectacle. They were friendly and at ease and giggled a lot as we spread our tablecloth on the top of the camper. I got out our food as Mike (our hitch-hiker) talked with them in Spanish. We shared some cookies with the boys but they were reluctant to accept them.

After we had eaten Stanley was pouring water in the car radiator and jesting with the boys. He asked Mike to tell them that he was watering his horse. When they heard this they rolled on the ground in laughter.

About then two girls appeared, perhaps 13 or 14 years of age, also friendly and apparently acquaintances of the boys. They seemed much interested in the little plastic space men which Stanley had given each of the boys. We asked Mike to enquire if they, too, would like one. They giggled as they answered and Mike relayed to us that they had said they would prefer a real space man!

Although it was hot here, the shade was nice and we were enjoying the little boys, so we re reluctantly folded our tablecloth and got on our way. Stanley took this picture which I somehow wish we could share with those children. We finally pulled out amid much waving and shouting of "Adios Amigos!"

We found this same friendliness everywhere we went. We met some tourists who professed a dislike for the Mexican people but in our opinion they are a people with the same regard for feelings and human dignity as other folk.

The adults all love to shake hands. (Dan Sanborn had tipped us off on this one) So we discovered it a good way to show our appreciation of them and their kindness.

Of course the word "Gracias" (meaning "Thank You") is most invaluable.



The detours on today's route were simply impossible. At best, most of Mexico's highways are a little bumpy with a few exceptions. Nearly all are two-lane and many are inclined to be "dippy." In spots where they are being rebuilt, they simply bulldozed the thick cactus out of the ditch and this was our detour. This is about the only way they can do it for side roads are so scarce and then I understand they are sometimes wide enough for only a burro! On these detours we bounced over bumpy rocks; 5 mph was as good as we could do and often for miles the meter registered 0 mph. This really wreaks havoc on one's car. After arriving home considerable work had to be done on the T-bird, front end elignment and wheel balancing plus new tires. Lots of things got broken in the Camper on this leg of the trip.

We located a Motel which accepted campers. It turned out we were the only ones in the campground that night, a barren area under a huge tree behind the Motel proper.

Mike planned to travel on but was unable to get a ride after attempting it for half an hour. He took a swim in the Motel pool and ate supper with us. I cooked a larger than usual meal and he ate like it was going out of style, to my delight. It was good to have a young person around. He slept in our car that night.

We had some delightful conversations with this lad as we rode along. He is from Oja, California, a little northwest of Los Angeles. Has had one year of college and was a little restless and is trying to assemble his thoughts and find out what he wants to do with his life.

This town of Navajoa is a very different town, one where we commenced to feel closer to the United States. Definitely a northern influence is all about, in the layout and design of the stores, the wide paved streets and adequate parking space. It was Mike's speculation that the girls here were a bit prettier than usual, too.



Stanley and I went into the city and strolled around after supper but many of the shops were closed. However window shopping was good.

A drugstore was open. I bought a Spanish Mother's Day card to send to my Mother. It was a surprise to learn this holiday is observed in Mexico, for I supposed it to be strictly American.

Sleeping in Navajoa was cool and comfortable. Lots of birds proclaimed the dawn. It did warm up quite a bit in the morning but did not seem as unbearably hot as it was farther south.

We decided to pause for some restaurant food at noon. By then we had reached the town of Hermosillo. It took a while to locate a place where we could secure some simple Mexican food. The better restaurants featured American food! Finally we found a place which might be described as Mexico's answer to our MacDonal'd's. I ordered a taco with beans. The beans were not too bad but the Taco was like a limp rag and I was disappointed. I do not recall exactly what Stanley had but he said it was not at all palatable and apparently it didn't agree with him for he complained of stomach spasms all the remainder of the afternoon.

These tiny eating places are a wonder. Never a screen door; the cats or dogs (or both) wander in and out freely and often flop under your table, fleas and all. Even out in the country along the highway on the front porch of some squalid hut we saw a table and some rickety chairs, a cooler of Coke and a sign - "Restaurant." Very often, under a tree was a table, one or two large glass jars (5 gallon size) with ice and fruit juice. A woman or a small child was usually minding the store.

More detours today kept down the mileage and were a constant headache.

About 30 miles south of the border we left Mike at a railroad station at

a town called Benjamin Hill. Here he would later in the evening catch a train for Mexicalli where he would cross over into California and then home. A high wind was blowing here and it was actually cool as we said our "Adios" on the station platform and were on our way again.

As we rode along toward Nogales and the USA I thought a lot about all the people we had met and the friends we had made on this whole trip. We had met people from all parts of the country at the various campgrounds. The renewing of old friendships has been a real highlight of this vacation, and we anticipated seeing others in Arizona and California. True friendship cuts down all barriers of blood, culture, economic status, race, religion and age. My feelings on the thought were so deep that I composed a poem about it as we traveled on.



FRIENDS

When I sat down to list my wealth,
I thought I should begin with "health;"
For things seem better, loss or gain,
When one is free from ache and pain.

I pondered further on the thought
And then decided that I ought
To count my home my dearest treasure;
The joy it brings I cannot measure.

But then I thought of one I'd missed---
This must be FIRST upon my list!
My country, willed to me at birth,
Fairest on the face of the earth.

Just then the thought occurred to me--
If health, home, country ceased to be,
What then is mine? But in the end
I knew I'd always have - a friend!

For home is often from us torn,
And pain a burden to be borne.
Wars and woes my land assail,
But true friends never leave nor fail.

Each new friendship which I share
I count a treasure rich and rare;
And to each one I'll try to be
The kind of friend he is to me.

--Naomi Forkner
May 6, 1971

As we reached Nogales we discovered Stanley's billfold was missing. No amount of searching turned it up. Fortunately I had all of the credit cards, excepting the Telephone one, in my purse. He estimated that it contained only about \$15 in cash but of course it also contained his driver's liscense. It disturbed us for a while but we decided not to fret about it.


U. S. customs was easy. They did not ask us to open the camper as we had expected but did search the car thoroughly.

We decided to drive on into Tucson, about 90 miles. Stanley was still feeling so ill and dizzy that I drove all of the way. It is always difficult to find one's way about a strange city in the night hours. Even the freeway signs can be confusing when the territory is totally unfamiliar.

I managed to getoff the freeway but headed east, later to discover that the KOA Campground which we were heading for was west of Tucson. After getting turned about and heading the proper direction it was easy to locate the Campground.

By this time Stanley felt so bad that he went directly to bed as soon as the Camper was set up, but I read for a while before settling down to sleep.

Strangely, I am enjoying the feeling of being back on good old U. S. soil.

NAME <i>Stanley H. Forkner</i>		SITE NO		S M T W T F S		MO. <i>5</i> - DAY <i>6</i> 197 YR. <i>1</i>	
ADDRESS <i>770 3 mile Rd NE</i>		REGISTRATION C 0060800 KAMPGROUNDS of AMERICA <small>EXECUTIVE OFFICES BILLINGS, MONTANA 59103</small>  <i>Tucson Ariz</i> <small>LOCATION</small>					
CITY <i>Grand Rapids Mich</i>							
STATE <i>Mich</i> ZIP <i>49505</i>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <small>HAVE YOU REGISTERED AT ANOTHER KOA OR RKOA THIS YEAR</small>					
NO. IN PARTY <i>2</i>		<small>LICENSE NO. <i>DHL 480</i> STATE <i>Mich</i> Recom-mended By: _____</small>					
YR. & MAKE OF CAR <i>Ford</i>		<input type="checkbox"/> TENT <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TENT TRAILER <input type="checkbox"/> PICKUP CAMPER <input type="checkbox"/> TRAVEL TRAILER <input type="checkbox"/> BUS					
DATE	EXTRAS	CHARGE	DAILY REC.	CHARGE	PAID		
			SUNDAY				
			MONDAY				
			TUESDAY				
			WEDNESDAY				
			THURSDAY	<i>3 25</i>			
			FRIDAY	<i>3 25</i>			
			SATURDAY				

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ON VISITING MEXICO

Some day let us return again to that south-of-the-border land!

Let us visit her golden beaches, let us lie in the sun on the sand.
I want to travel the countryside, see the cactus everywhere;
I want to visit her cities and stroll through the markets there.

I like the fun and frolic of the holiday fiestas,
And I like the peace and quiet of the afternoon siestas.
I like the way of living there, the easy relaxation,
(I also like the prices, and the lack of high taxation!)

Somehow a friendly feeling seems to permeate the air;
And I gradually discover that I'm feeling free from care.
I think that there's a lesson here and one we well should heed,
A lesson of contentment with but the things we need.

So dear, some day when you retire and we're "turned out to pasture,"
And Michigan's pleasant summer breeze blows harder, colder, faster,
When the snow drifts high and we're too old to join the winter fun
Let's pack our bags and take right off to this land of eternal sun!

-----Naomi Forkner

May 7, 1971

TUCSON

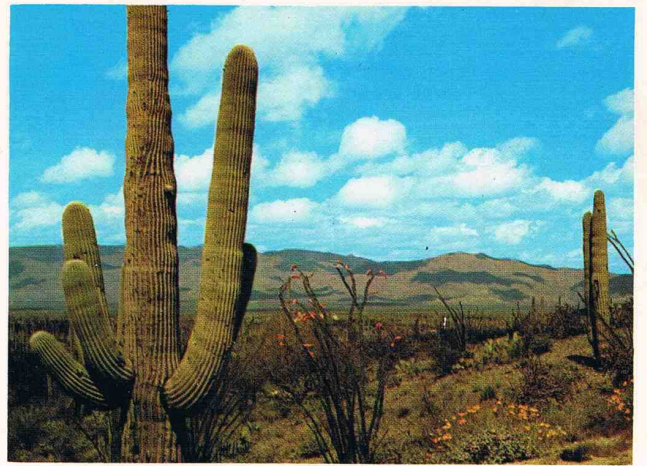
Two events got this day off to a good start. We found the billfold first (in the car). This was good for now Stanley has his driver's license. Secondly we located a doctor who saw Stanley and he could find nothing organically wrong with him other than fatigue.

Early in the afternoon we spent an hour or so at the Arizona State University Museum. Nearly all of the exhibits had to do with Indian History.

After this we drove over some gorgeous mountain scenery to the "Desert Museum." It's a fascinating garden of Saguaro Cactus and veritabily every known variety of cactus common to Southwest USA. The landscape is very unique. We learned that these giant desert plants do not grow the first "arm" until it is nearly 100 yrs old. This means that most of them which we see dotting the landscape must be several hundreds of years of age. Many of them were blooming but of course the blossoms were so high that we could not get a good look at them.

A small zoo of desert animals was interesting, as was the display of scientific weather instruments. A bird sanctuary was the nicest we had ever seen.

Don't miss this side trip if you are in the area of Tucson

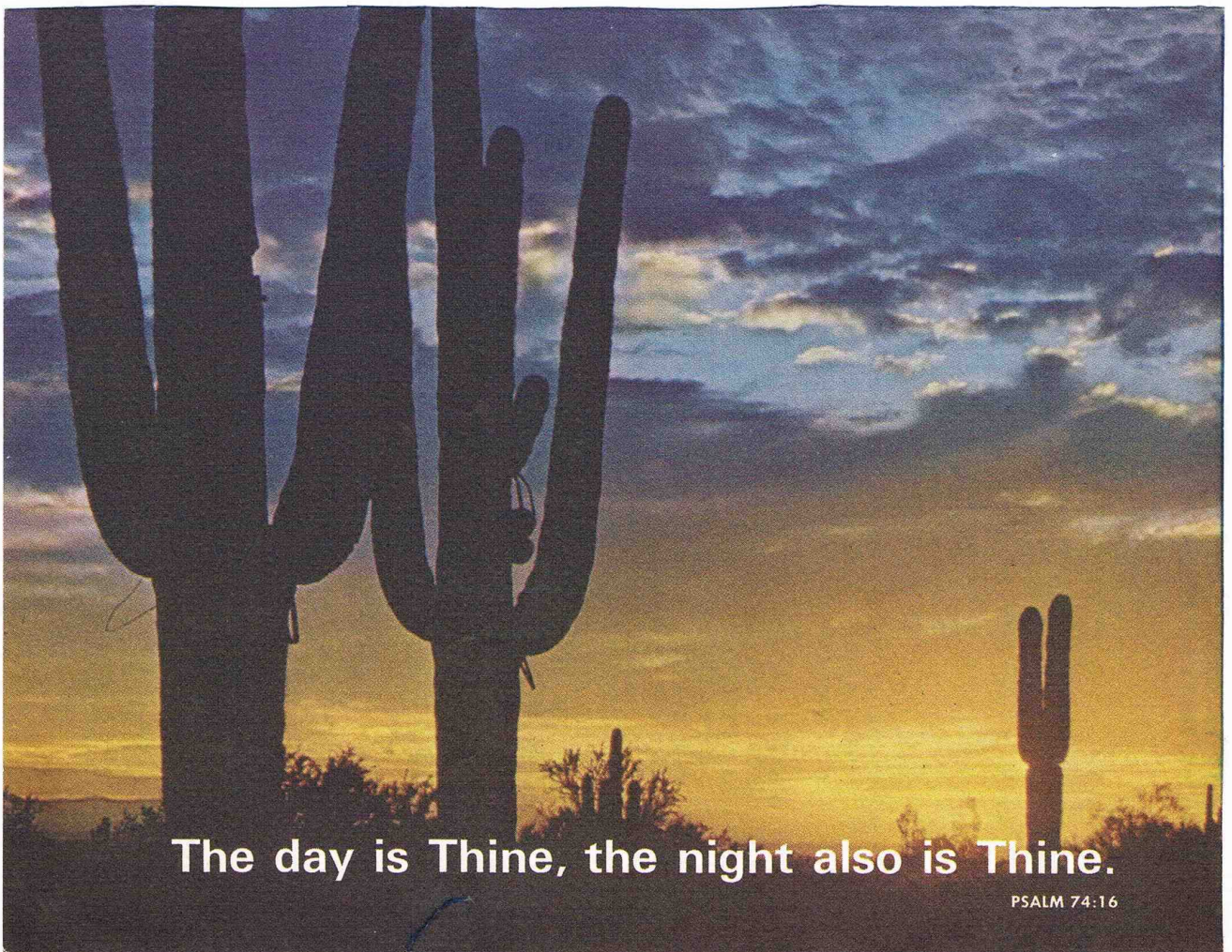


We like this climate in the Southwestern section of our country. While we were here the sunshine was true to reputation and the lack of humidity is pleasant. However we did miss the lush foliage, grass and tree-lined horizons of places where there is more humidity and rainfall.

In the evening we renewed acquaintance with Ray and Lucille Kretzschmer, formerly of Michigan Conference, EUB Church. They came here several years ago because of Lucille's severe arthritis. She is considerably better but says she still has occasional bad days. Corrective surgery has improved her hands which were badly crippled before they came.

We ate dinner with the Kretzschmers in a pleasant cafeteria. We then took a tour of the lovely church where Ray has been the assistant pastor since they moved out here. It's very beautiful. They also have a nice manse.

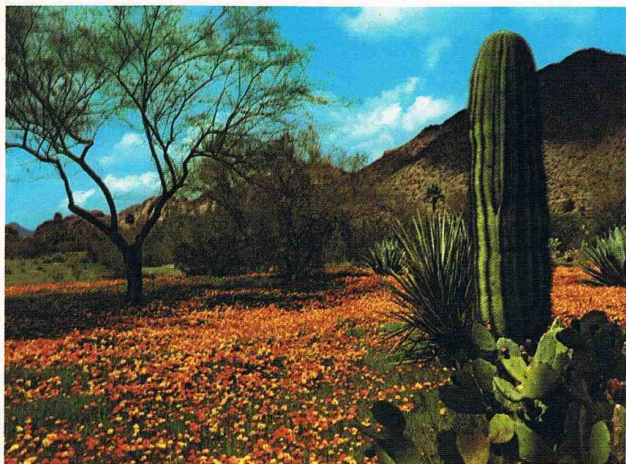
We chatted with them in their home for a couple of hours before saying goodbye. It was certainly good to see them again and they seemed genuinely glad to see us. It was a good evening.



The day is Thine, the night also is Thine.

PSALM 74:16

PHOENIX



The drive from Tucson to Phoenix seemed short, but it was a very beautiful drive and we appreciated it, that is I did, for we had made the trip from Nogales to Tucson after dark.

Stanley did not feel at all well again today. He finally took one of the "powerful pills" which we had brought from home. It made him sleepy so I drove. I was sorry that he missed the scenery.

Everywhere was the mountainous back-drop with the broad mesas in the foreground.

Except for a few irrigated farm areas, all was arid and dry. And always, always, there was the cactus!

The one other time we were in the southwest it was August and few cacti were in bloom. We are glad to see them for most of the cactus blooms are brilliant, delicate and beautiful in an unusual way.



Top: A carpet of desert poppies about Saguaro and prickly pear cactus.

Center: Red staghorn Chollo

Lower: Desert Verbena

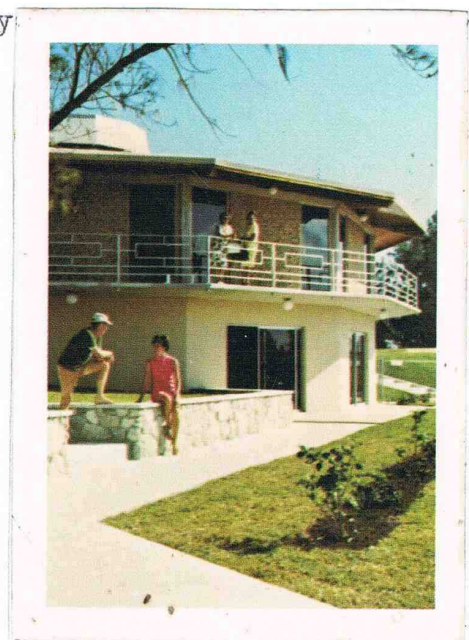
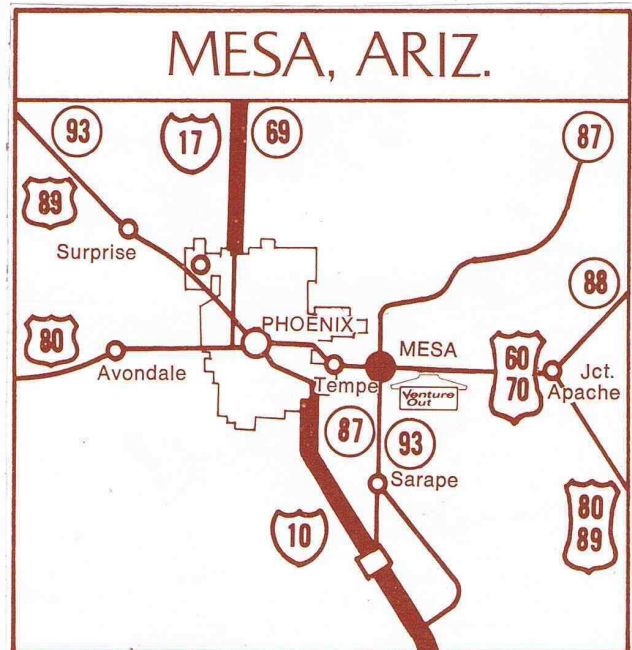
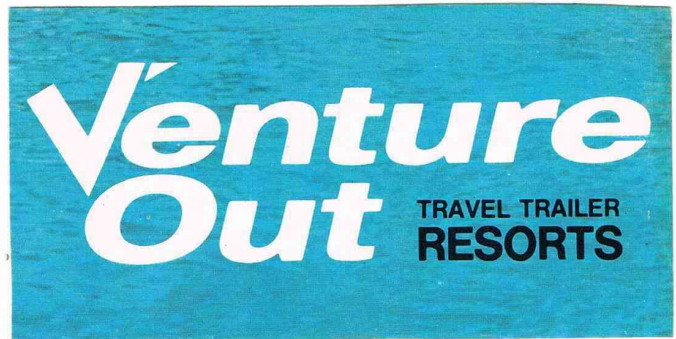
Our guides indicated that most of the campgrounds and trailer parks were east of Phoenix in the Mesa area. However we stopped at four or five places before we found one where we could camp. Nearly all of them are catering only to the travel-trailer clientele, that is, those who have self-contained vehicles.

Finally, we were accepted at VENTURE OUT, a new beautiful campground, one of a chain of half a dozen or so in their earlier stages of development. This one is about 1/3 finished and ready for occupancy. 600 sites are ready for use, there will be 1800 when completed.

It is very luxurious. The overnight spaces are all together adjacent to the spacious bath-house. The entire layout is wheel-shaped, with a large recreation building at the hub. Lots here may be purchased at \$4,895 up and it becomes a kind of living patterned after the condominium style. Lot rentals are \$85 monthly or \$5 per night, which is what we paid.

Walking about the grounds we observed many mobile homes were tightly closed, indicating the owners had gone back "north" for the summer. The little door-yard signs indicated where these folks called home: Vermont, Minnesota, Wisconsin, California, Oregon, etc.

This spot gleams in the bright sunshine. Instead of grass, all of the lots are landscaped with stone chips, allowing easy lawn care. Individuals have planted many kinds of shrubs, cactus and other flowers which do well with little water.

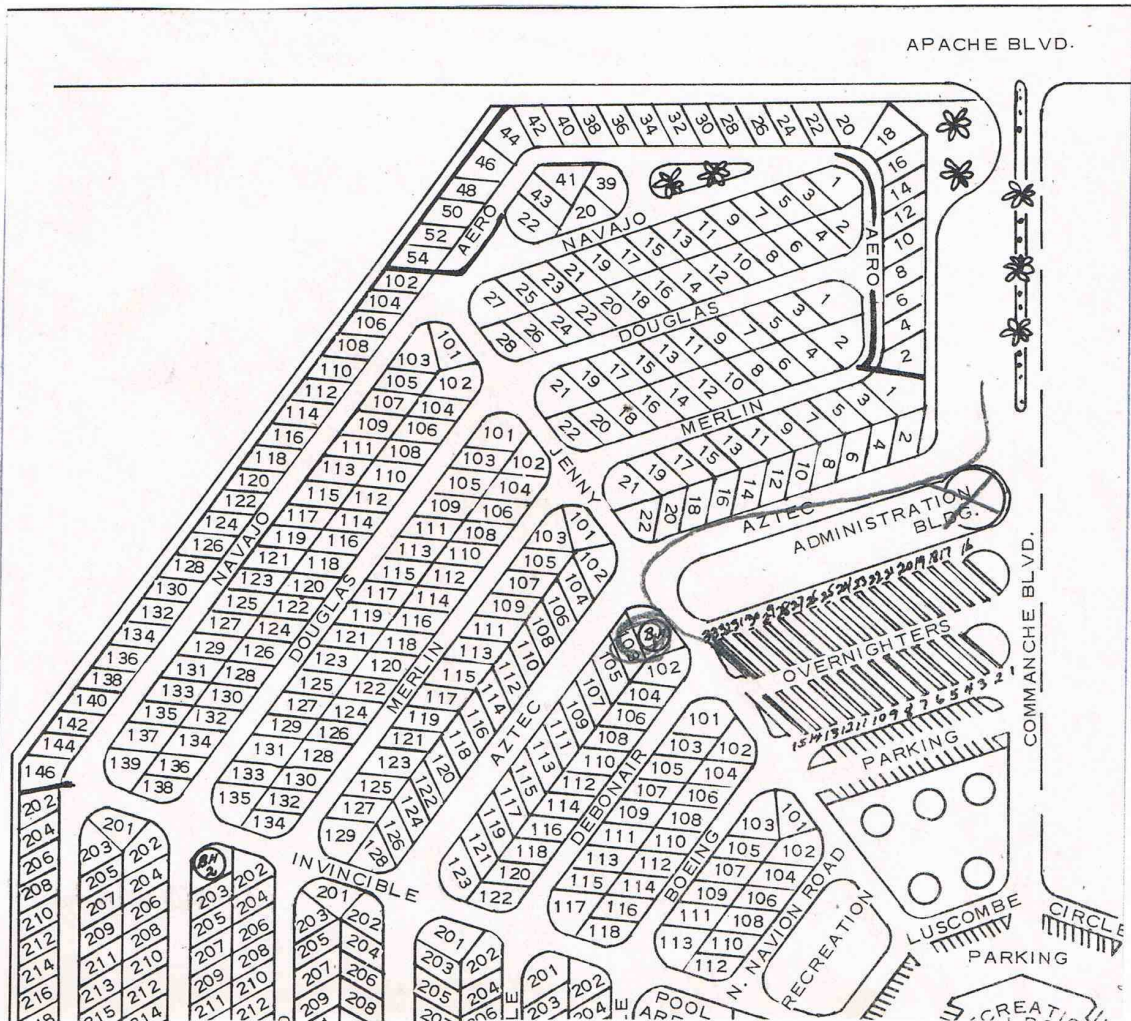


Mesa is in "The Valley of The Sun," an area which the U. S. weather bureau describes as "the driest, sunniest, clearest resort in the United States." From October through April, the main season at Mesa, temperatures average 75 degrees. The chamber of commerce didn't say anything about the summer temperatures which local residents tell us often exceed 110 degrees. Nearly all of the homes are refrigerated.

After setting up camp I prepared bacon, tomato and lettuce sandwiches plus iced tea for lunch. After we ate Stanley took a long rest.

This afternoon I telephoned home and Mary Ruth said they were having lovely, mild spring weather. For a moment I almost wished I was back there - in the cooler climate - working in my flower garden.

Later in the afternoon we visited the Earl Hoffman family, folk who had lived across the street from us in Livonia. They had moved to Mesa in 1953 because of Mr. Hoffman's health. Our children and their children were friends. Of course, like us, they are alone now as all of their children are grown. We looked at pictures of their children and showed pictures of ours.



As we were preparing to leave, Mr. Hoffman asked about our plans for the evening. It was then about 4:00 PM. When we remarked that we had intended to just drive around and look at the city, he immediately suggested that they drive and show us the sights. This was a welcome idea for of course they knew what would be most interesting to us.

They pointed out dozens of points of interest but probably the most scenic was the ride up Camel Back Mountain where we had a gorgeous view of the cities of Scottsdale and Phoenix. Even in the late afternoon the air was clear and one could see for miles.

The homes built in the sides of this mountain are unbelievable. They seem so anchored to the rocks as to appear to be a part of the mountain. They are ultra modern in design and certainly must be very expensive. I think the most delightful part of living up here would be the view. I suppose these steep drives would never do in Michigan except in summer for they could never be kept free of ice and snow in the winter. They say that one of these lovely

homes belongs to Barry Goldwater but they did not know which one it was.



Later we drove through a very exclusive section below the mountain called Paradise Valley. Not only were the houses simply dreamy, but there was displayed some of the most unusual landscaping around them which we have ever seen.

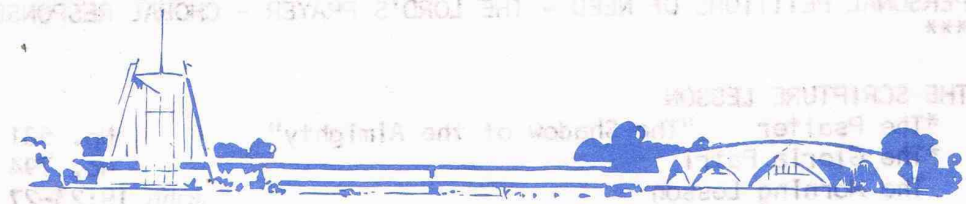
These very dramatic front-yard gardens are covered with gleaming white chips; the greenery is composed entirely of cactus and agaves and candlewoods brought in from the neighboring desert. By emphasizing and improving the natural landscape, they present a place of beauty typical of the area. We did wonder how these people acquired some of the plants. We had been told and read also of the extreme fines imposed for the indiscriminate gathering of certain wild cacti, especially the saguaro, which could be in danger of extinction.

As if all of this guided tour were not enough, they stopped and purchased a large bucket of fried chicken and insisted that we have supper with them.

Truly we counted this as one of the most pleasant days of the trip.

LOS ARCOS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

*"Raising the Cross
in the marketplace"*



7425 EAST CULVER

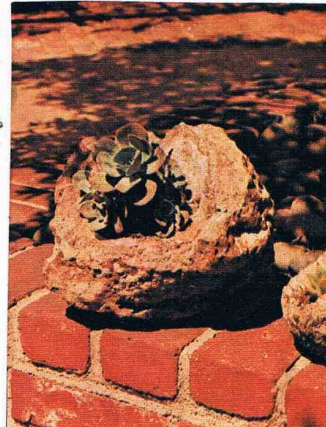
SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA 85257

945-5151 • 947-4933

This morning we searched out the Los Arcos United Methodist Church in Scottsdale where our friend Roger Stressman is the Pastor. These folk came here from Michigan several years ago because of Jane's health. She was nearly immobile at the time but is greatly improved now and has been able to go back to teaching. Roger has had a successful pastorate. The sermon was very inspiring.

After the service we went to Dinner with the Stressmans and their son and daughter-in-law who were home for Mother's Day. It was very good to talk over Church news both about Michigan and here.

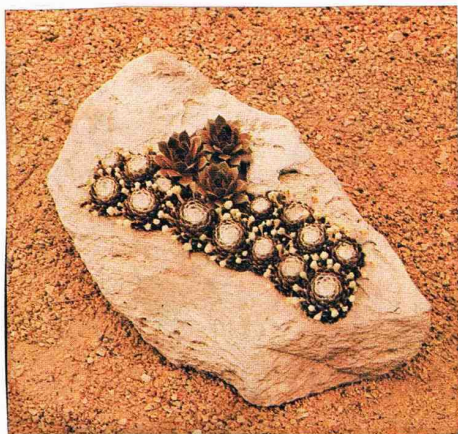
We had nothing especially planned for Sunday afternoon so we took a leisurely drive northwest of Phoenix to "Sun City," where there is a collection of mostly better class homes for retired people. While the houses were attractive and some of them were very unusual, we were more attracted to the lawns. Very few attempted to have any grass, mostly they used chips. Some very unusual artistry was displayed here. Flowers were most profuse and there was also a lot of cactus all about. Here again, most of the gardeners were enhancing the natural landscape and utilizing many easily obtainable articles to adorn the surroundings. Old wagonwheels, driftwood, antique tools, even sun-bleached cattle skulls seemed right in place in these settings.



Evening visitors back at the campground were Rev. & Mrs. Norman Crötser, also formerly from Michigan. Norman had been a pastor in the Michigan Conference, having come to Phoenix about two years ago. We had a splendid visit, discussing everything from Church problems to their present domestic difficulties. They have adopted a Korean daughter who has proved to be such a heartache that it is becoming necessary to have her removed from their home. As they went over the problem our hearts ached for them. I prepared a supper which we enjoyed, somehow there's a lot of therapeutic value to coffee and sandwiches! After they were gone we felt they had needed someone with whom to share this experience.

This was Mother's Day and I had never been so far from my Mother on this day before. I telephoned this afternoon. She seemed genuinely glad to hear my voice, and I was glad to hear hers, too.

We have certainly appreciated this section of the country. I only wish we had a few more days here. We both agreed that we have never seen (nor felt) such clear, brilliant and warm sunshine in all of our life.



We somehow know that here is a place to which we shall wish to return sometime.

I would love to spend a winter here.

CALIFORNIA, HERE WE COME!

Today we saw such contrasting scenery that I could scarcely believe it. Between Phoenix and Yuma, for the most part all was dry, dusty and hot. Only in rare irrigated spots did we see enough greenery to mention. We passed through "sand mountains" which were really huge dunes, much larger than any we had ever seen in Michigan.

Far out in an isolated place in the desert we stopped for a coffee break at "Papago Trading Post." Here was a nice, air-conditioned restaurant, small but complete, including a nice gift shop.

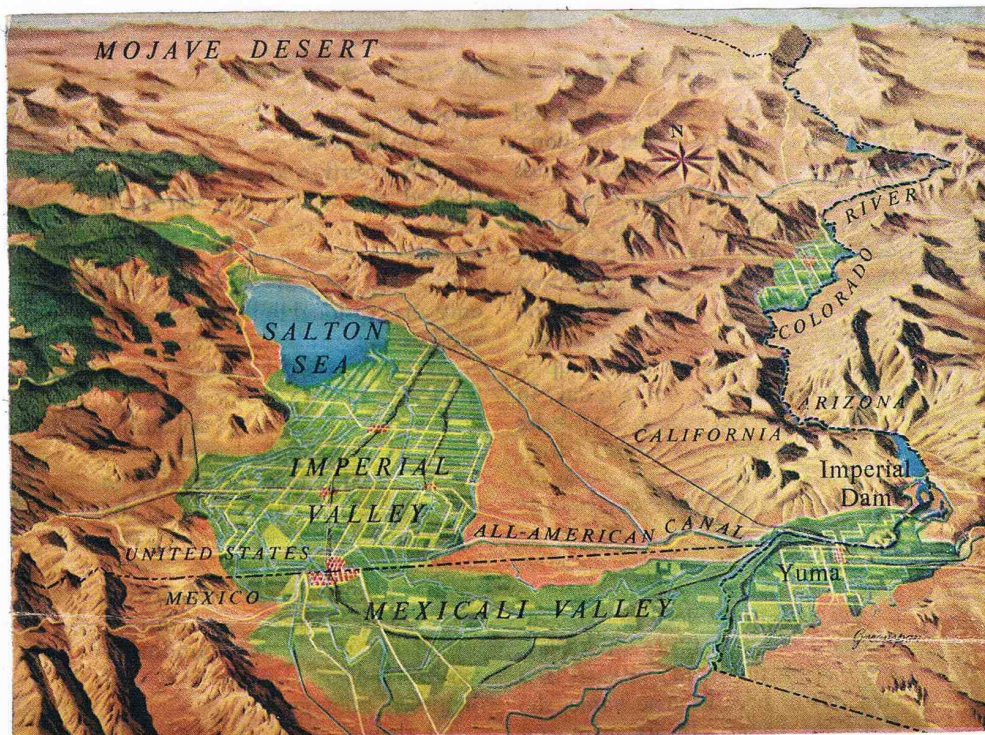


This specimen of desert wild life kept the drive from becoming dull!



I had often wondered about the words of one of our old patriotic songs which referred to "purple mountains." Out here in Arizona they are often exactly that color. Occasionally we would pass through a tiny area where, because of one reason or another, enough color was added to the stark mountainous backdrop to make it a spot of outstanding beauty.

West of Yuma it was another story. The route to San Diego from Phoenix passes through that vast agricultural area we know as the Imperial Valley. This proved to be quite a change of scenery.



IMPERIAL VALLEY - "MILLION ACRE GREENHOUSE"



Foreign agricultural experts flock to this obscure region of California, it is said, but many Americans can't even locate it on the map! It is proclaimed as one of the wonders of the modern world. Rich topsoil, brought in by the Colorado River over millions of years, went down layer by layer; they say some places it is two miles deep!

A scientific accomplishment which has made this all possible has been the method of leaching the salt in the water down into a vast network of drainage tiles beneath the topsoil. The great greenhouse is so designed that it can flush out its used water as effeciently as it brings in the new. This is the reason this particular desert has been engineered to produce when projects in other desert areas of the world have eventually failed.

Not only does the rest of the nation set it's tables from the produce of the gardens of this valley, but hundreds of thousands of steers grow fat in the many feed-lots through this part of the country.

One reporter claimed in 1967 that even then land here cost from \$1500 an acre on up.

The residents here acknowledge the fact that they can't change the climate. Some say that the summer heat is worse than it used to be. Temperatures of 160 degrees have been reported. On the other hand an occasional light frost has descended on the valley. One rancher, speaking of the heat, jested, "We don't fry eggs on the sidewalk like they do in New York.....We boil 'em in the swimming pool!"

There is little doubt that the Imperial Valley will continue to help feed the exploding population. The scientists and engineers have proved that wherever there are rivers, man can make the desert green and KEEP IT GREEN.

SAN DIEGO

As I searched the campground guide-books I could locate only one spot which would accept our "rig," at least near in to the city. At first we were a bit doubtful, but we needn't have been for it turned out to be one of the nicest spots to camp we had found on the entire trip.

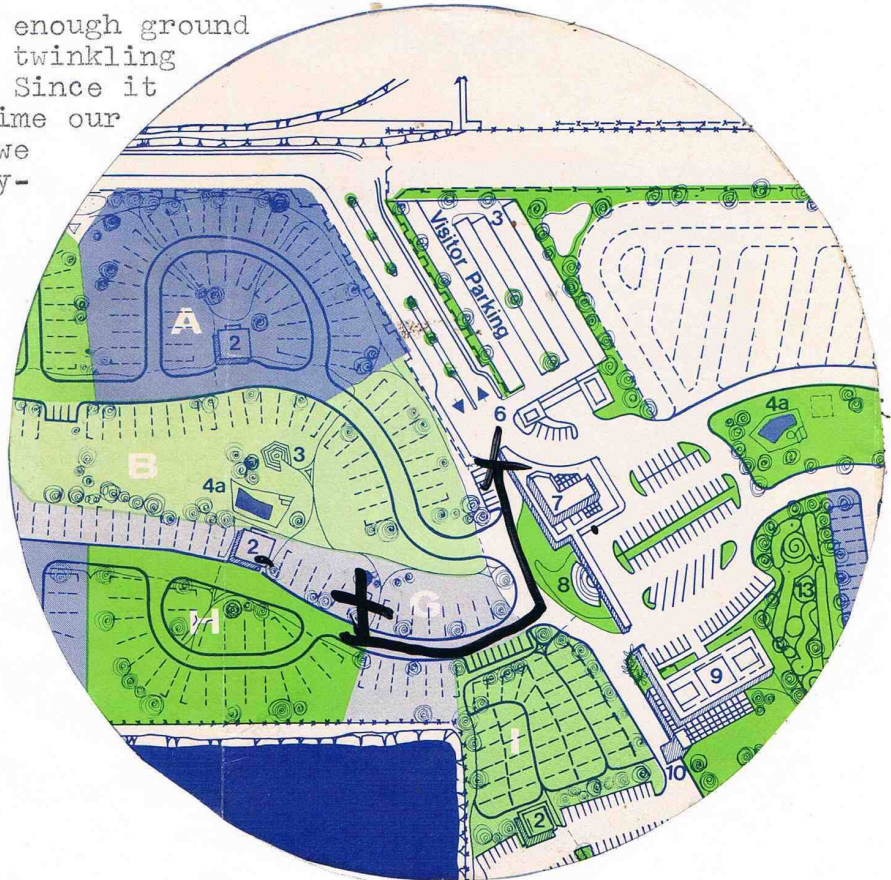
To my surprise I was able to guide Stanley quickly and easily through the freeway system to CAMPLAND MISSION BAY. It is beautiful, different and convenient to the sights we had planned to see. In addition, it is within a mile of the freeway to Los Angeles.

The Campground is on the San Diego Bay rather than the ocean. Obviously high winds are common here for each picnic table has a windbreak built around it.

It was a little cloudy the first evening we arrived. Already we notice the coolness and the humidity.

We were on high enough ground to see the beautiful twinkling lights of the city. Since it was so late by the time our supper was finished we decided not to go anywhere. We watched a little TV and turned in early, planning to get an early start on our sightseeing tomorrow morning.

At this point I am getting a little anxious to get to Los Angeles and see my sister, Mary. Because of this we will spend only one day in the San Diego area.





We found the San Diego Zoo all we had heard it to be. They claim the largest collection of animals in the world. Many groups of school children are here today, evidently many of them from Mexico. Although chilly in the morning, by noon it was very warm.

We agreed the artistic surroundings outshine any other zoo we had ever visited. We would not like to come here any later in the season for undoubtedly any more people would detract considerably from our enjoyment.

There is a very nice restaurant on the grounds where we bought a good lunch. Of course we didn't miss a tour of the gift shop either.

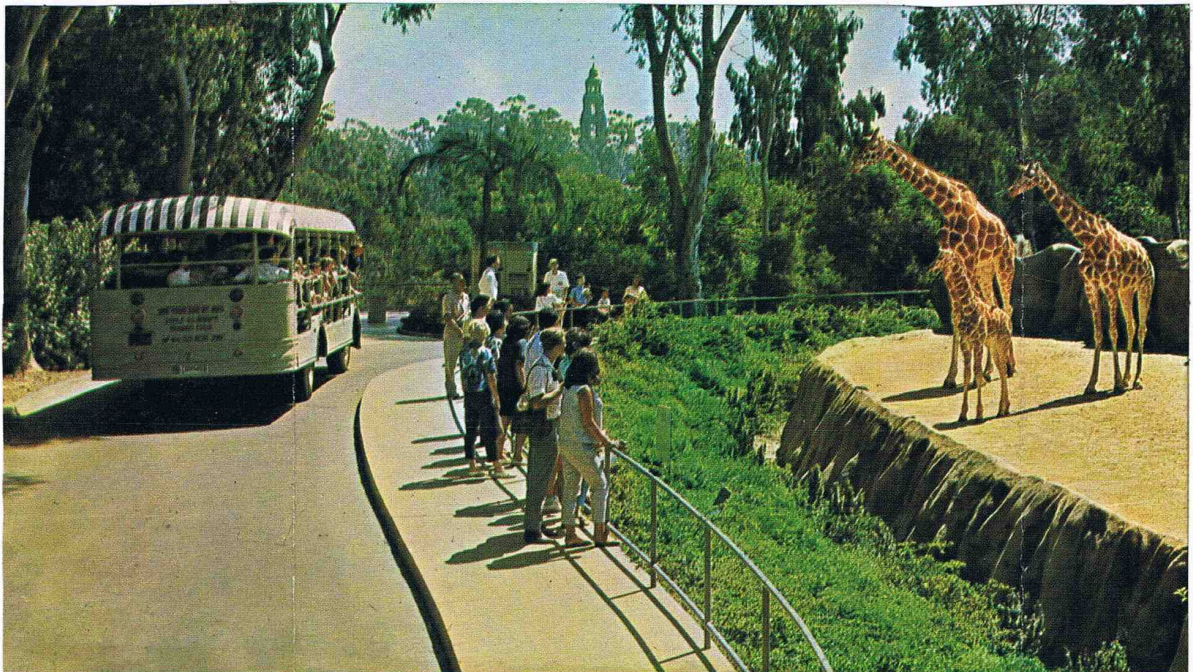
Guided bus tours of the grounds are available. It looked like a nice way to see everything but we preferred to "hoof it."

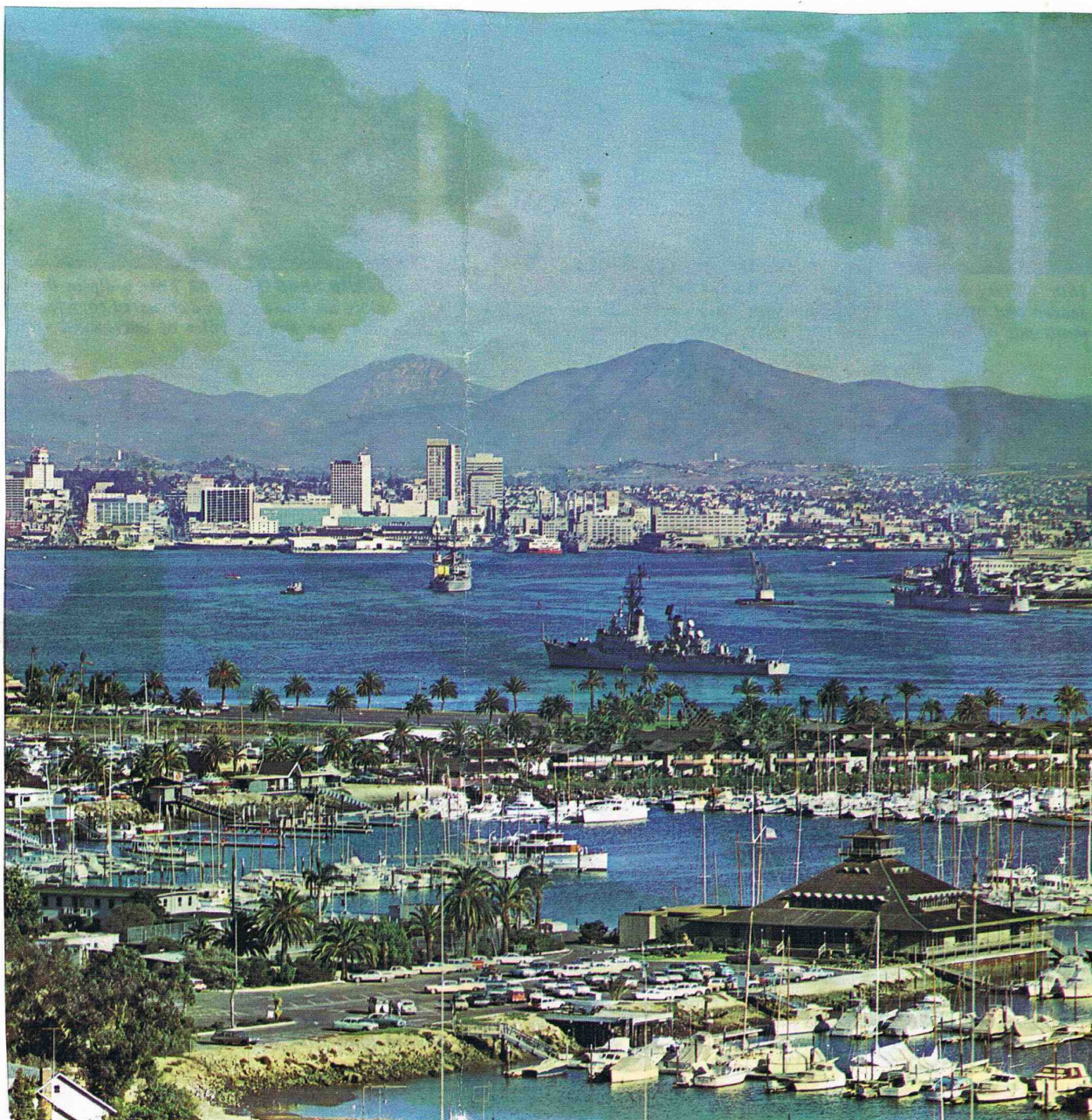
Of course we walked miles. We wanted to see as much as possible during the few hours we had allotted to the zoo.



By 3:00 P. M. our feet notified us that we had to let up. So we took a ride about Balboa Park before returning to camp.

In the evening we went to the movie "Song of Norway." While we thought the plot often lacking, yet the photography was superb. It was filmed in Norway, is a musical based on the life story of Edvard Greig. The music is very appealing, of course all of it is Greig's compositions. We would recommend it as a worthwhile picture.





Sometime we will welcome the opportunity to spend a little more time in this area.

While Arizona may lay claim to the most sunshine, some weather experts rate San Diego's climate as the most inviting in North America. Average high temperatures range from 64.6 in January to 78.0 in August.

LOS ANGELES

We didn't plan to spend much time in Los Angeles. When we first knew my sister, Mary, was planning to return east with us, we knew we could do our visiting en route home. So we spent only about half of Wednesday and all day Thursday with her.

It was so good to see her again and find her is so much better spirits than when we were here three years ago. Her mobile home is so very nice and seems to exactly meet her needs. While there we met her neighbors and she



took me to the hospital where she works so I could meet her friends there.

Our only visit was a call on a cousin, Robert Taylor and his wife, Helen, who live near Anaheim. They are always cordial and we feel at home when we go there. At that time Robert's Mother, our Aunt Florence, was still living so we talked of her, but scarcely three weeks later the dear soul had passed on.

We took several pictures to show the relatives back home. Robert is commencing to show his age but Helen continues to look young and is so vivacious.



Stanley spent one entire afternoon on his own, sightseeing. He said he went to Long Beach.

I hadn't much desire to see anything about the L. A. area so I stayed with Mary. We had many things to do preparing for the trip back across the country. We went to a Laundromat, she stocked the pantry shelves for Dennis's meals while she would be away and I tried to help her pack.

I needn't add here that a lot of visiting went on too!



HOMeward BOUND

It was pleasant to leave the fog or smog or whatever it is called - the haze which hangs over the Los Angeles area - and drive into the pleasant sunshine. Mary says it is likely to be severe for at least another month, then it will more or less disappear. As we moved farther inland the temperature soared. The air-conditioner kept the car comfortable.

Poncho, Mary's little chihuahua dog, was a good traveler. All he needed was a little back seat area to spread his blanket and a little exercise once in a while.

We located a delightful shady park in Needles, California, where we really enjoyed our picnic lunch and "stretched our legs" a bit.

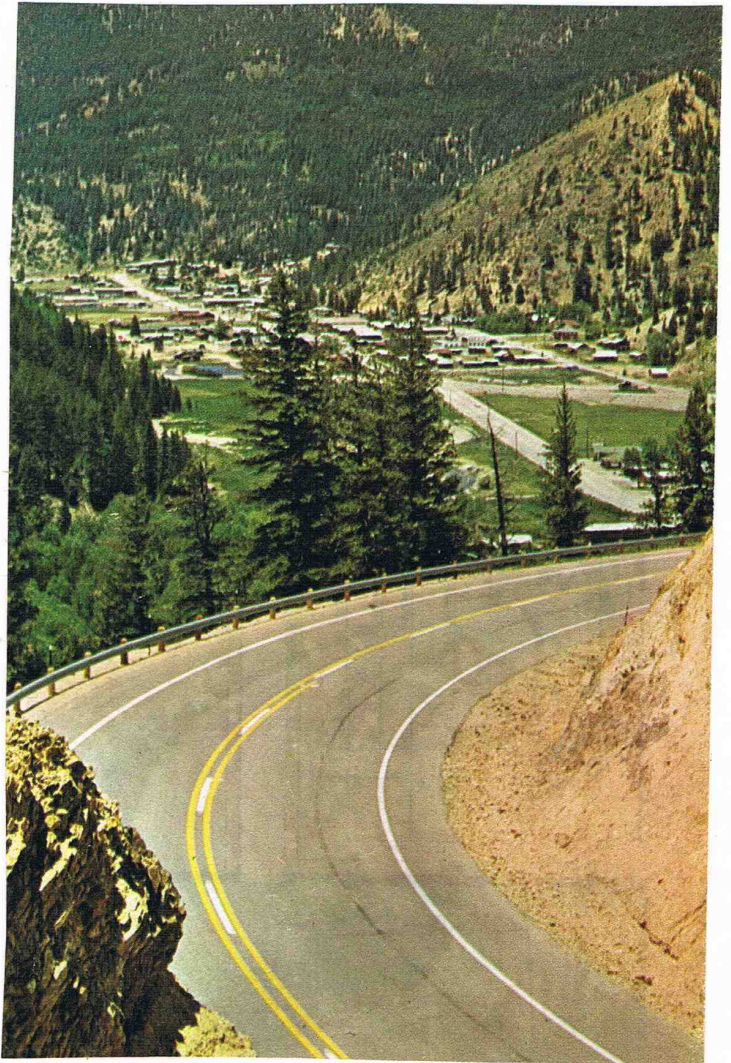
We enjoyed some superb scenery in northern Arizona. Of course some areas were very dry but most of the mountainous section was green and appealing.

It was very difficult to hasten past Williams and Flagstaff and not have the opportunity to drive up and see Grand Canyon. But the days are flying past and we want to spend a few hours with our Texas relatives.

We found an acceptable campground at Holbrook, Ariz. It was a welcome sight.

A large group of Girl Scouts are also camping here. The bathroom got pretty crowded and once we heard the proprietor make some remark about "a thousand girl scouts!"

We ate a bite, made up the beds, 'phoned Uncle Homer's in Texas. We talked with Aunt Bea and agreed to be there tomorrow night so we knew we had to cover the miles the next day!



THE PANHANDLE

The trek from Holbrook to Pampa was a "day full of miles." We watched the scenery change from the arid, mountainous regions of Arizona and New Mexico to the fertile farm lands of the Texas Panhandle. The climate was warm but not at all uncomfortable.

It was after 9:00 PM when we arrived at Uncle Homer's place. Aunt Bea had kept some supper warm for us, delicious pot roast. By now we were very hungry and appreciated her thoughtfulness.

Of course Aunt Bea is her usual charming self but Uncle Homer didn't seem too well.

After what seemed like a very short visit, we discovered it was past midnight and hurried off to bed. Stanley and I were assigned a bedroom at the rear of the house. A door from our room opened onto a back porch. We were pleasantly surprised to have my cousin Paul Bowers and his wife Janie slip in about 1:00 AM to renew acquaintance. They had been to a square dance and were on their way home. I am sorry we live so far from these folk for I am sure we would enjoy knowing them better.

After thinking it over we discovered we had not seen each other for over thirty years. Of course we had to learn all about their family and they ours.

We did not attend church anywhere on Sunday. Instead we visited the graves of our Aunt Flossie and Uncle Clarence. We also visited another cousin, Francis Bowers Walls. She's a teacher, he a farmer.

We regretted we could not visit longer in Pampa but there are still many miles to cover so we left shortly after lunch.



YUCCA
State Flower



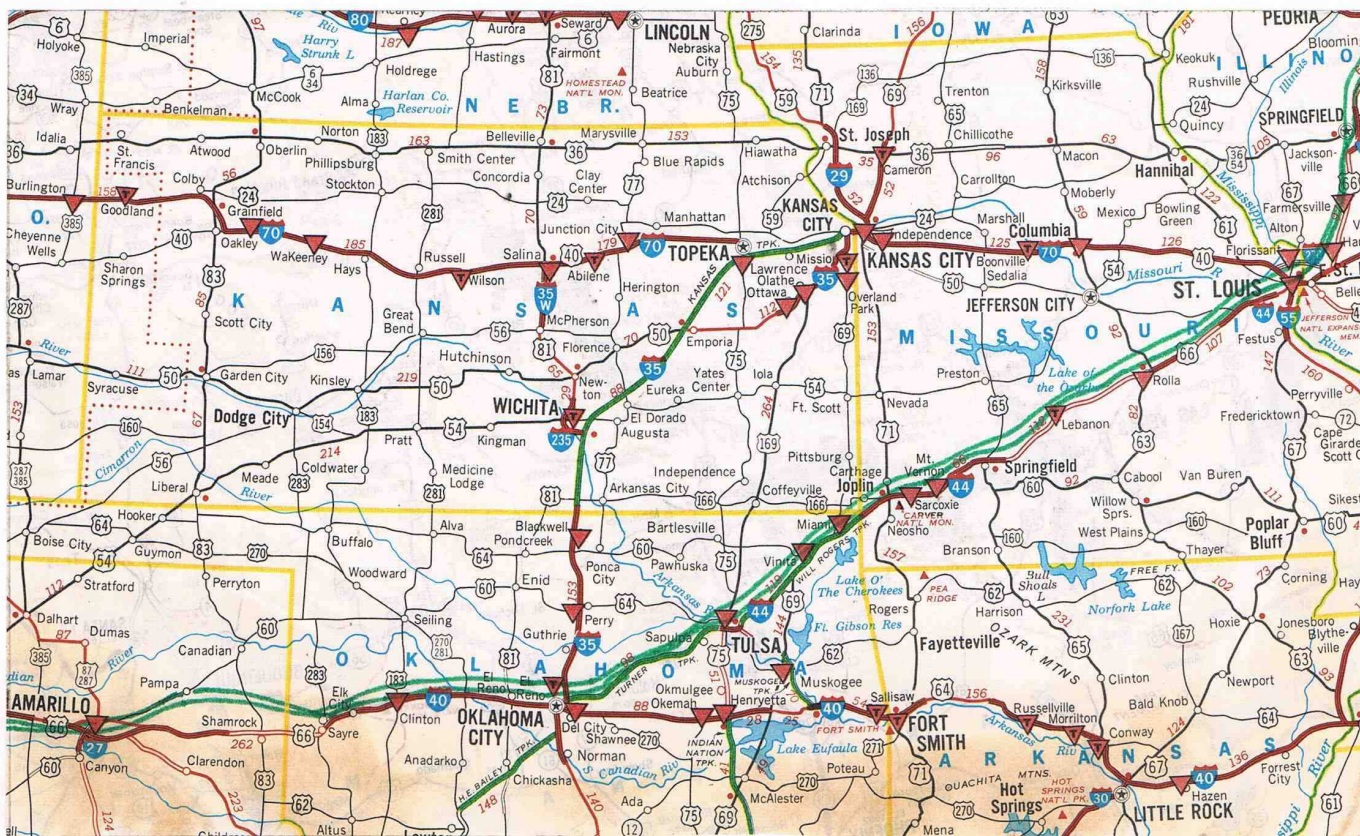
In almost every letter, my sister Mary mentions the pleasant trip we had together. If we ever get together with time to visit I'm sure there'll be lots of memories, lots of laughs, lots of sighs.

We'll certainly recall the day we lost a wheel from the Camper! It seemed like any ordinary blow-out but we learned every lug had lost off the wheel! While Mary, Poncho and I waited on the hillside along the road, Stanley drove to the nearest service station for help. A good breeze helped us to survive. We discovered all the lugs loose on the other wheel so felt fortunate that we didn't have a worse accident. I am sure someone could have purchased a camper cheap about then!

Naturally we'll talk about the morning we got up bright and early, folded the camper, skipped breakfast and drove on for an hour or so. This was the day we had "breakfast in the sky." We paused and ate (compliments of Mary) at one of those restaurants built right over the highway. It was lots of fun and we have a slide of it to revive the memory occasionally.

We'll never forget the spectacular fire. A large semi-truck rig had crashed into an over-pass abutment and burst into flames. We were among the first to arrive on the terrible scene. Firefighters and an ambulance stood by but we are sure the driver was burned up. We also have a slide of this scene.

Of course we'll laugh about the night, just outside of Tulsa, Oklahoma, when the high winds came up. We awakened to feel the camper about to take flight, or so we thought. We got up, but I'm not sure why for I can't imagine what we'd have done about it! A few drops of rain fell, but not enough to wet the canvas and this all dried off before morning, when all was bright and sunny and we were glad.



I guess we'll always wonder if they moved a campground somewhere in the St. Louis area. I had examined the list in the Guide Book and selected a suitable one right on the highway. Soon we discovered we had passed it. Turning around places on a freeway are often few and far between but we finally got headed in the opposite direction and searched again. No luck. To make a long story short, we were off and on that freeway about a dozen times, up the back roads and lanes, in the villages and out and finally settled for another place. This one was more or less under construction and it was the only night on the entire trip that we had a whole campground all to ourselves!

Neither of us will ever forget the good visits we had. With so many hours and nothing else to do we really got some good discussions going. Stanley and Mary teased me about drifting off to sleep as I inevitably do once in a while when traveling. They tried to make me believe they talked about me while I slept. I'll never know, for Poncho won't tell!

And there will be lots of other memories to ponder. On the final day, May 18th, the 33rd day out for Stanley and me, we had no car trouble, no emergency stops of any kind. When we crossed the state line into Michigan it never looked better.

The anticipation we felt as we left home those several weeks earlier was equaled now as we approached Grand Rapids.

We made one unscheduled stop in Buchanan so Mary could have the opportunity to see Paul and Karen.

It was about 8:30 PM when we finally turned into our driveway. We had driven a total of slightly over 8600 miles and were 2500 miles from Los Angeles.

And we thanked God for all the good experiences we had and for our safe return home.

