

LOG OF THE GARDNER SCHOOL TRIP TO CARLSBAD

By

BETTY LOU PERKINS

Monday ... May 27, 1940

On Monday May 27, there was an unusual bustle of excitement in the town of Gardner. It was very early, before the sun had come up. A group of sleepy but excited boys and girls were congregating at the Gardner High School building. It was a big day for them, for today marked the beginning of a 2,000 mile trip to Carlsbad, New Mexico, to visit the Carlsbad Caverns. After dreaming of it and planning for it for nine long months, the time was here when they could start on their trip. I know there was more than one of them who couldn't believe that they were really starting. However, it was true, for there was the bus waiting to be loaded. Each student carried a sack with his clothes carefully packed in it. The students carried their lunches for the first day. Coats were taken, also, to wear in the caverns, which are at a temperature of 56 degrees all year round.

Finally the word to depart was given and hasty goodbyes were said to friends and relatives who had come in great number to see us off. Just before we got on the bus, two Kansas City Star men, who had come all the way from Kansas City, had us pose for picture. We felt very honored by the attention the Star had given us, for the day before they had taken a picture of a few of us grouped around one of the sacks and their contents.

Now as the bus pulled out of town it was exactly 5:10 and the day was bright and sunny, as were the spirits of the group. There were 37 pupils and faculty members, after we had picked Miss Howell up at Emporia, Kansas. We grew very tired the first day because riding for such a distance was new to us. We sang songs and played games and did everything to help us forget the weariness. We ate dinner about 25 miles south and west of Wichita. At Wichita we took pictures of Wichita North, a beautiful high school situated there. We all loved posing for the pictures and we were very anxious to find out how good they were. By courtesy of the Cramer Chemical Company we were loaned their moving picture camera, and were able to take pictures which we will always preserve.

The day passed rather slowly and we were all glad to be in Enid, Oklahoma. We reached there about 2:30 and were in our cabins at 3:00. Mr. Murphy, our superintendent, took pictures of our arrival. We tumbled out of the bus and did our best "mugging".

Our cabins were very nice, although all of them did not have showers and bathrooms. There were about two or four of us to each cabin. Our cabins were situated quite a little distance from the main part of town, but we didn't mind that in the least. We prepared our own supper, as we did every night. And it turned out to be delicious. Miss Stagg and Mrs. Murphy were our chief cooks and we can thank them for our fine meals.

That night we decided to go to the show and under the supervision of Miss Howell and Miss Dimon, we saw a double feature, which was fairly entertaining. We were ready to jump into bed by ten o'clock.

Tuesday ... May 28, 1940

It was another nice day when we awoke the following morning at about five o'clock. We hurriedly packed our belongings and found that breakfast had been prepared for us by the cooks for that morning. Each day, three people had to get breakfast, three prepared our lunches and three others were assigned to the task of getting supper. Each of us did our own dishes and the kitchen police made up of boys did the pot and pans. Under this management, things went very smoothly. We left Enid about 6:50.

At Kingfisher, Oklahoma, we saw an old covered wagon, and we all regretted later that we hadn't stopped and taken pictures of it. The corn her was about one foot high, while at Gardner it was about six inches high. We also saw the United States Southwestern Reformatory. It was a large place and surrounded by a strong wire fence. Every once in a while we would notice a wooden tower about twenty feet above the ground that we decided contained the prison guards. The boys were working in the fields and building small buildings. There was a large barn and pig pens and other evidences of the boys working at farm life.

We saw also, at about the same place, a army post, which our navigator said was a military reserve fort. It was called Fort Reno. We could see very little of it as it was too far from the road.

We were surprised to see that they were shocking oats near the Texas line. We ate our lunch at a roadside park, which were found all through Texas.

We gave three cheers as we passed into Texas. While Victor Vervynck entertained us on a French harp, we spent the afternoon sleeping. We sighted quite a few oil wells, which were new to some of us.

Around two o'clock we were getting very tired of the straight road we were traveling on. We figured it went about fifty miles without a curve. At 2:55 we sighted Amarillo, and drove in about 3:15. On the outskirts of Amarillo, we saw a large airport, and were very interested in the planes there. Amarillo is a nice sized town and we were bowled over by the number of auto courts on the edge of the town.

Our cabins were nicer than the night before and there was a general store nearby, so we were satisfied. After supper we went to town and divided into two groups, those who wanted to go sightseeing and those who wanted to dance. Both groups had a lovely time.

One of the girls lost her ring that night, and the whole camp looked for it. It was a valuable ring, and she hated to lose it. It was finally recovered, and we all felt better. Got to bed about 9:00.

Wednesday ... May 29, 1940

Today was the first bad day we had. It was rainy and cool. We got up early for we had a big day ahead of us. We ate and left about 6:20. We passed the West Texas State Flying field, which of course interested the boys.

At Canyon, Texas, we drove about twenty miles out of our way to see the little Grand Canyon, one of the sights we had been waiting to see. It is called the Palo Duro State Park and it cost us each twenty cents to get in. It was worth it, however, even if it

was almost raining. We saw deep valleys that must have been 250 feet deep. We saw beautifully colored rocks of red, pink, gold, gray, and deep orange. The canyon must have gone on for several miles, but we felt we must continue our trip so we left rather reluctantly. We got out of the bus and walked to the top of a hill and looked down into the canyon. It was beautiful, and several of the group took pictures but it was too dark and rainy to hope they would be very good.

Back in the bus, the girl's glee club sang the mock opera they had presented to the public, a few weeks before. The boys stuffed their ears, supposedly, but I think they really enjoyed it.

At 10:30 we crossed into New Mexico and set our watches back one hour. That made dinner time farther away than ever and depressed us a little. It seemed that the scenery was nothing but plowed fields.

We ate dinner at Elida, New Mexico. We ate next to a filling station, so were able to get something to drink with our meal. We ate a 11:00 o'clock Rocky Mountain time, because we were so hungry we couldn't wait.

The afternoon was tiresome, for the scenery was sage brush and sand. It looked dry and very flat. Saw a little alkali or what we thought was alkali. The country was at least different down here if a little tiresome. We saw some small hills, at least that's what the people who had seen real mountains called them, but the rest of us thought they were regular mountains.

We reached Carlsbad about 3:00 and found our cabins were beautiful. Some of them were regular apartments. That evening we rode bicycles, and saw the town. Later, some of us rollerskated, and some of us danced and went shopping for souvenirs. We got to bed about 10:00.

Thursday... May 30, 1940

At last, this was the day we'd been waiting for! Today we were to view the Caverns.

Got up about 7:00, had a quick breakfast and left for the caverns. Drove about 26 miles southwest of Carlsbad where the entrance to the caverns was located. We entered the park and wound around in some large hills. [Some] Some of us expected to come on the entrance out in the middle of the flat land, but we went through tall hills and wound up and up to the entrance. We took many pictures of this lovely country and we hope they will be good. We were there quite early and had to wait about an hour. There was a refreshment stand and a curio shop combined in one of the large stone buildings there, and we spent a great [great] deal of our time looking around there. About fifteen minutes before time to enter the caves we sauntered down to the entrance and lined up, two by twos. There were 700 people, including ourselves, who visited the caverns that day. It was Memorial day and a holiday for most people, so that probably accounted for the large number of sightseers. They said, however, that the escorted about 7,000 people last Labor Day.

Their rules were very strict, we were not to touch or handle anything for fear we would deform or retard the growth of the stalagmites. We were taken into the first big room called the auditorium, and told the rules. The people were conducted through by Ranger and not guides.

As we entered we could feel the change in temperature, and many of the party who had not brought coats began to regret it. From the auditorium we went into the tunnel and then into the room where the ceiling towered 300 feet above us. It made you feel so small and so inconspicuous, and as Mr. Murphy said, it made you feel like your troubles were nothing at all. We saw the Green Lake room, where there was a small lake as green as emerald. If I could really describe the beauty I would need a vocabulary larger than any dictionary, and even then I wouldn't do justice to this beautiful cave. I just suggest you see it yourself. All through these caves were the Stalacites [Stalactites], large columns which grow from the floor and the Stalagmites, columns which extend down from the ceiling. These stalagmites looked like so many little needles at times yet sometimes they were very large and looked like a large sheet hanging from the wall.

The Queen's Room was next and it looked like a Queen's room in that it had stalagmites that looked like tapestry and there was a rock in the center that resembles a throne. The king's palace was a great deal like the Queen's room, except it was bigger and more wonderful. The Papoose Room was smaller than any other room, so it was named that. It was not small by any means, for it was about the size of a large house.

We had walked about three miles by this time, so we were glad to see the lunch room ahead. This was a lovely room, large and clean. We had our own lunches and were glad for they charged quite a bit for the lunches they prepared. We spent about an hour in here then continued on to the Big Room. This is the room that the Normandie could be put in. It is certainly very large and awe-inspiring. In the Big room is the Hall of the Giants, where the large stalagmites are giant in size. We passed through the Temple of the Sun, Fairyland, and the Chinese Temple. We also looked in the Mumping Off place, which indeed looked like a jumping off place. At last after finishing our tour of the Big Room, we came to the Rock of Ages, which is the oldest rock there, computed to be sixty million years old. There we sat down and rested and the lights were turned off for thirty seconds. That was the darkest dark I have ever known. Then from the distance, a quartet of Ranger snag Rock of Ages, and gradually the lights came on all over the cave. This was by far the most impressive sight of the day. We were reluctant to go on, for that was a beautiful place there, and it was very nice getting to sit down for awhile. We walked seven miles from beginning to end of the cave.

We returned to the lunchroom, and a great many of the group rode up on the elevator there, but not us! We walked every inch of the way back to the entrance, although we took a short cut, which helped a little. It was worth the effort however, to see the sunlight as it came into the mouth of the cave in the afternoon. It was in one long, blue shaft and it was completely blinding as you walked through it. Several people took pictures of it. Someone said, "It's like coming out of a tomb." I guess it was.

On our way home we stopped at a filling station out on the desert and saw some native animals on display there. We saw a den of rattlesnakes, some owls, jackals, a coyote, fox, monkeyfaced owl, deer, tame wild cat, and two lynx. This was a lot of fun and very interesting.

Back at our cabins, we went swimming at a nearby pool. This was fun even though it was rather cold.

That night we walked around town and danced. Got to bed about nine.

Friday ... May 31, 1940

We were all ready to get home now, and so we eagerly got up and started at 6:45. We lost an hour at 9:20. We went through Pecos, Texas, the typical cowboy town, and saw not one cowboy.

The country was sandy and covered with sage brush. We went through Odessa and wished we could see the fallen meteor about a mile away. We didn't want to spare the time however, so we rolled on.

We saw an air terminal near Midland, Texas, and saw a small bomber. We ate lunch at Midland in a small park. It was getting hotter and hotter all the time. On our way down, the weather was mostly cool, but now it got hot. The country that afternoon was fields and pasture land. It was very monotonous.

We reached Abilene at 4:30. These courts were very nice, but not quite as nice as Carlsbad. We ate supper at 6:30. That night we had a wonderful time. We found an outdoor pavilion up the street and danced there until rather late. Mr. Murphy permitted us to stay out a little later because we were almost home. He was certainly a swell sport all during the trip. We got to bed about 10:00 or after. We took some pictures at night under the lights of the auto court, and hope they'll be good.

Saturday... June 1, 1940

Arose at 5:30 and started about 6:45. The country today was cattle country and covered with mesquite. We saw amny [many] wild flowers and oil wells. Near Abilene the country was hilly and pretty but as we got closer to Oklahoma, it grew flat and dry. We saw so many small poor towns, and one thing that impressed us was the way the women worked in the fields right along with the men.

We ate dinner near Wichita Falls, Texas. In the afternoon we passed a group of army cars and trucks and we waved and waved at them. We tried to figure where they were from, but we failed to find any satisfactory answer.

We reached Oklahoma City about 4:00. We were surprised at the number of oil wells and how they were placed. They were in everybody's back yard and one was even in the yard of the capitol grounds.

Our cabins were swell that night, and we spent the evening dancing at the restuarant [sic] there, and playing cards in the rooms. We were allowed to stay out until 11:00 and had a swell time.

Sunday... June 2, 1940

Boy, today was the day! I think everyone was glad we were about home, although we did hate to stop our trip. We had such a good time. We arose at 4:30 and left about 6:00. We had a little trouble on the way home, as one of the girls had the nose bleed and we had to stop for her.

We saw a large fish hatchery near Tulsa, Oklahoma. We thought at first it was irrigation business, but we found out it wasn't.

STUDENTS WHO MADE THE TRIP

Brown, Delbert

Calder, Earl

Clark, Richard

Cramer, John

Cramer, Marian

Cramer, Peggy

Donovan, William

Ebberts, Robert

Ebberts, Wayne

Evans, Dorcas

Eyerly, Betty

Fuller, Lorraine

Gordon, Marjorie

Gunn, Maie Belle

Keegan, Robert

Kramer, Melba

Moore, Dean

Moore, Gene

McIntire, Nadine

Patterson, Junior

Perkins, Betty Lou

Potts, Virginia

Pyle, Jack

Rankin, Merle

Reid, Jane

Ricahrdson, John

Rhoades, John

Sharon, Dorothy

Schulz, Mildred

Turner, Marguerite

Vervynck, Victor

Wolf, Dorothy

TOTAL COST OF TRIP

| | | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---------------|
| Groceries | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | -\$ 56.73 |
| Travelers Check Charge | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | .90 |
| Treasurers Book | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | .10 |
| Log Keeper's Book | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | .10 |
| Telegrams To Gardner | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 2.11 |
| Ice | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | .93 |
| Bus Admission, Palo Duro | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | .35 |
| Cabin Camp Lodgings | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | 138.24 |
| Bus Transportation | - | - | - | - | - | - | - | <u>280.00</u> |
| TOTAL COST | | | | | | | | \$479.46 |