An Early View of the Southwest

I was born at the beginning of the century in a house my father built on a bluff overlooking Lake Michigan in the village of Winnetka. Events of those early years I can recall are hazy and fragmentary, random details with little emotional content: a toy sheep left out in the rain and ruined or at age four being pulled out from under the upstairs hall sofa where I was hiding from the family doctor; memories without fear or sorrow. There was one event I can place in time. I was standing by my mother's chair in the living room that we called the library. There were other women there for tea. One of them asked my age, and either I or my mother said I was six.

Six was the age when school began. My first school was
a one-room red house west of the tracks on the south side of North Avenue, the dividing line between the two districts of our village, Winnetka proper to the south and Hubbard Woods, where we lived, to the north. The school house at that time seemed quite far west of the tracks of the Northwestern Railway on which Father commuted every day to Chicago, but when I visited the site many years later it turned out to be, in the perspective of an adult, not far at all. The school house was not equipped with internal plumbing, which was provided by two outhouses in the back yard - one for girls and one for boys. A blackboard extended along one side wall of the school room, and at the back a raised platform for the teacher's desk and chair was used for recitations. These were terrifying experiences. We students were required to recite our pieces before the whole school, standing beside the teacher on the platform. I remember one notable occasion when a frightened little girl became speechless, and losing control of her functions, wet the floor with a large puddle that flowed under the teacher's chair. The child was excused, but except for that the teacher sat impassively, only raising her feet to the rungs of her chair away from the flood. It was an awesome sight that made a tremendous impression on me and my male schoolmates.
One other event that attracted worldwide attention and made a tremendous impression on me was the return of Halley's comet in 1910. I was eight years old then and remember being awakened out of bed and taken or carried to the back stairs hall window to see the comet. My father, who was scientifically inclined and took an interest in all astronomical events, made sure that his children witnessed this rare occurrence. I will never forget that sight which I may exaggerate in retrospect over the years. There it was, an enormous white plume low across the western sky above the black trees. From a glowing sphere spread away a long, widening, curving tail.

Inspired by my father's excitement about this astronomical spectacle, my parents gave a comet dinner party to celebrate Halley's return to which they invited many of their Winnetka friends. To dramatize especially the occasion father had a large rocket launched from the beach below the house to surprise his guests at the appropriate moment when they were gathered on the east porch overlooking the lake. They were all delighted by the show with the exception of a late arriving lady who was coming up the drive below the house just as the rocket soared skyward. She fainted. Mother was always very contrite about this episode because she felt that the guests should have been forewarned, that not to was too close to practical jokery.

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The educational standards of this school apparently were considered [by my parents] inadequate for their oldest son, so that after a year I was transferred to a private boys' school in the next suburb, pretentiously called The College School. Discipline was strict. Misbehavior, inattention, and stupidity were punished by slaps with a ruler or by standing the culprit in a corner with a dunce cap on his head. I was fortunately rescued from this purgatory by an attack of appendicitis which started with a stomachache one morning after breakfast. I must have become quite sick, because I was put in my mother's bed, where I eventually fell asleep, to be awakened by the application of an ether cone over my nose and mouth by our kindly old family physician, Dr. Hooper, who gently urged me to breathe deeply. I was operated on on the kitchen table and awoke in the guest room at night, desperately thirsty, which a night nurse was instructed to relieve, inadequately, by administering small lumps of ice. Following recovery my parents, having reconsidered my educational future and the relative merits of public versus private education, decided in favor of the former and sent me to the larger town school in Winnetka.

A short distance west of the little red school house, North Avenue ended at a strip of marshland that extended
north and south for many miles. It was called The Skokie, the Indian word for marshland. West of the marsh lay open farming country, cultivated fields and woodlots. Much of this area has since been built over by suburban development. The marsh has been drained and a strip along its western edge converted into a parkway that winds along rolling, filled land planted with hawthorn trees and ornamental shrubs. Not until one goes farther west beyond the north-bound interstate highway out of Chicago are farmlands still to be found.

The Skokie was a place of mystery and adventure for me and my friends that we frequently bicycled out to. We would wade out through the marsh grasses to the cattails in deeper water in search of birds' nests and turtles, frogs and snakes. There were birds aplenty: American bitterns, sora rails, redwinged blackbirds and marsh wrens. To find a bittern's nest was always the most exciting of discoveries. The large buff eggs on a mat of reeds from which the parent bird had silently and unseen crept away at our noisy approach was a sight that gave me intense and inexplicable pleasure. We never intended to do harm to any living thing, for we had been taught to respect the mystery and variety of life and would leave our discoveries untouched. Nevertheless, our eagerness and curiosity probably did cause
some disruption of life in the swamp. My interest in birds developed early and became a passion. As a child I collected birds' eggs, but never robbed a nest. I kept track of all the nests I found, and after the young had fledged there would sometimes remain an unhatched, infertile egg which was fair to take. My collection was not large, but it was my most cherished possession.

On the border of The Skokie for a number of years the wild grass was mown by a farmer who stacked it for sale or feed for his cows. This haystack was a wonderful place to play, much to the annoyance of the farmer, because our games pulled the stack apart and scattered the hay. Since he didn't live nearby, he was unable to prevent our innocent depredations until one day we were discovered, reprimanded and driven away.

A wooded knoll within the marsh called Crow Island, mysterious for its isolation in a sea of grass, was a haunt for a band of crows, frequented by occasional owls - anathema to the crows - and a pair of red-shoulder hawks. To enter the dense stand of oak and hickory in summertime from the openness of the marsh was to become enveloped by contrast in stygian gloom where unfocused muted sounds produced an atmosphere in which the prevailing sensation was that of an intruder in a forbidden sanctuary.
In those days, before I knew anything of the vast world beyond, that strip of marsh was the unexplored and untamed West. Not that I thought of it exactly in those terms, it was nevertheless open space devoid of habitations wherein one could escape for a while the restrictions and tribulations of family and school. I felt free there, alone with the marsh birds and the wide-open sky. A few years later the West acquired a more generous meaning — an almost unknowable measureless wilderness of infinite variety and beauty. About this time my sister, younger brother and I were taken on a camping trip to the Grand Canyon by our parents. We camped out by a spring about halfway to the bottom. Provisions and tents were packed down on mules, and we spent several days exploring the accessible beaches and hiking down to the river. One day we stayed in camp with the cook while Father and Mother went on a walk alone. We discovered a cave in a ledge that we were able to climb into; and hidden there found what we thought was some old rope and pieces of candles, all of which we threw down to show Father and Mother when they returned. Father was horrified and told us that what we had been playing with were pieces of fuse and sticks of dynamite cached there long ago by a prospector who never returned. Old dynamite has a tendency to become unstable.
and explode when roughly handled, which was the reason for his dismay.

In 1912 when I was ten years old, we were again taken on a camping trip, this time to the Yoho Valley in the Canadian Rockies. Father had camped in the Canadian Rockies before, first as a young man during his college years, and later on trips with Mother and their close friends. He was an enthusiastic amateur mountain climber of the conservative kind, attempting no difficult first ascents. He did, however, explore some remote regions of the Rockies and gave names to several unnamed peaks and lakes, names that were accepted by the Canadian Government. Photography was also a hobby of his, for which he used a large Eastman folding Kodak. His pictures taken on these camping trips have been preserved in several large photo albums. My interest in photography, encouraged by my father, began at about this time when I was given a box Brownie, superseded, as my interest in photography continued, by a Kodak.

When a few years later I was in high school, we were again taken west, this time first to southern Alaska, returning through British Columbia and Alberta, where we camping in Jasper Park. We went to Alaska by steamer from Seattle through the inner waterway along the Pacific Coast to Skagway, and by rail to Atlin in Yukon Territory where
Gold was discovered in 1898. Placer gold was still being recovered in marginal operations from river gravel by hydraulic mining. It was these trips that planted the seeds of my determination to go west on my own; to see the West of Lewis and Clark and the Oregon Trail, to see the West that the Forty-niners had seen, and to learn at first hand something of the appeal and romance of the vast wilderness lands and mountain ranges that lay beyond the plains and to experience the attraction of this region that exerted such a strong hold on the imagination of Americans. A boyhood friend became an inspiration to make seeing America an adventure. He dropped out of Cornell and took to the road, hitching rides with truckers and riding freight trains west. He joined the hoard of migratory workers that in the twenties followed the labor market from the wheat fields of the Dakotas to the lumber camps in Oregon. He worked on the harvests in the prairie states before the days when manual labor had been completely replaced by the great combines, and he got jobs as a swamper in the lumber camps of the Northwest. He worked with road crews and on the railroads, and he traveled wherever his fancy guided him all over the West. Eventually he completed his education and ultimately settled in Santa Fe as a building contractor.
I envied the freedom he had enjoyed, and resolved to experience at least a taste of it.

The opportunity to go west came in 1922 at the end of my sophomore year in college when sympathetic parents contributed to the purchase of a Model T Ford at a cost of less than three hundred dollars. In this machine my roommate, Nathaniel F., and I, with a mutual friend, John D., planned to spend the summer driving west. We had no definite destination, although we hoped to get jobs for a time in one of the national parks. The Ford was a touring car model with a fabric top that could be folded down and had removable isinglass side curtains. The engine was started by a crank that projected forward under the radiator, but before cranking the spark was retarded to avoid a kick-back that could break your arm. The most modern feature on the car, demountable rims, made changing tires, a frequent necessity, easier than having to pry them off the wheels in position on the vehicle. It had four doors, front and back seats, and running boards that extended between the front and rear fenders. Since Ford touring cars had no trunks, the running boards served as a storage place for most of the equipment needed for emergencies that one always carried on long trips. One running board held the spare tire, a tool box, jack and tire tools, a shovel and an ax.
On the other side three cans containing spare gasoline, oil and water were mounted in a frame attached to the running board, and held in place with straps. The cans were all the same rectangular shape, differing only in width; the gas can, painted red, held five gallons, the water can was white and held two gallons, and the third, for one-half gallon of oil, was blue. As I remember, a space behind the rear seat was where odds and ends were stashed away. We had a tent, sleeping bags, a cook stove and provisions as well as our personal baggage, which pretty well filled up the back of the vehicle.

A Model T Ford was a remarkably simple mechanism. The planetary transmission was operated by three foot pedals, one for low range, one for reverse, and a brake. The pedals tightened bands on drums; there were no gears as in modern automobiles. A hand brake lever was used for parking and emergencies. Another hand lever put the car in motion forward. A bar projecting from the right side of the steering column advanced or retarded the spark; a bar on the left side was the throttle for controlling the supply of gasoline. The gasoline tank was located under the front seat, from which fuel flowed by gravity into the carburetor. There was no fuel pump. A consequence of this system was that on very steep grades gasoline could not flow forward to
the engine; therefore, in order to negotiate steep hills the car had to be turned around and backed up, thus putting the gas tank above the level of the engine. Most repairs to a Model T engine were simple, made requiring a minimum of tools and spare parts. A spare distributor cap cost somewhat under $2.00. Other repairs could be taken care of with a screwdriver, monkey wrench, some wire, rubber bands and friction tape. Tires were, however, a more serious problem. All tires in those days required inner tubes, and the recommended pressure was 72 pounds. The treads, which were not as tough as on today's tires, were easily punctured by sharp objects such as broken glass; but a troublesome consequence of the high pressure was a tendency of tires to blow out on rocky roads. Tire repair became a frequent necessity for which we kept on hand a supply of inner tube patches and casing boots.

From Massachusetts I drove home alone day and night, stopping only to eat and buy gasoline. Somewhere in Indiana, in a state of exhaustion I pulled over to the side of a country road, climbed a fence into a field, crawled into my sleeping bag, and fell promptly asleep. I was awakened at dawn by heavy thumping sounds and strange gruntings. On opening my eyes I saw the huge shapes of a herd of Poland China hogs which out of curiosity had surrounded me during the night.
The expedition finally got under way from my home in Illinois. We drove north through Wisconsin into Minnesota and turned west to South Dakota. The roads were all unpaved except for short stretches out from the larger towns. The interstate highway system was then only in the early planning stage and the farther west one went the less it existed. Roads followed section lines in a rectangular north-south and east-west grid, and would end at a right angle junction, so that our route became a series of jogs to the north or south until another western road was encountered. Western Minnesota and South Dakota were part of the long-grass prairie, uncultivated and unfenced, green and lush with wildflowers everywhere in June. We pitched our tent one evening in tall grass on beautiful rolling country, and were immediately attacked by swarms of giant, voracious mosquitoes. Without lingering over supper we sealed ourselves in the tent, and before we could sleep had to kill every mosquito inside.

Our route took us through the Black Hills of South Dakota, which I remember particularly for a vein of rose quartz we discovered in an outcrop by a road cut. From the Black Hills we continued on west into Wyoming. As we approached a town somewhere in eastern Wyoming we picked up a cowboy who was thumbing rides. Recognizing us as eastern
tenderfeet, he regaled us with stories about rattlesnakes and how they would crawl into your sleeping bag at night for warmth. When this happened, he told us, you should get out quickly first because he can't strike inside the bag and then you have him. Our destination now was Yellowstone National Park, which we entered from the east. After seeing the sights for a day or two, we enquired about getting jobs, and were told to apply at park headquarters. There we were signed up and sent to separate locations.

I was assigned to road work on the Cook City road. The Model T was parked in the care of the Park Service. Besides the boss the road crew consisted of four, two brothers about my age, me, and an older, more worldly whose conversation was mostly about whores. The boss was a much older man who probably operated under contract with the Park Service. His wife was the cook, and a young son did the chores about camp. We slept in Park Service tents, but provided our own bedrolls. Meals were served at a wooden table with attached benches set up under a tarpaulin. The road was being graded by horse-drawn scrapers, and since I had no experience with horses I was set to work digging out rocks and filling ruts and potholes. After breakfast I would be driven in the boss's pickup with shovel and pickax to places where the rocks were too large for the
scraper, left until lunch time, and returned again in the afternoon. One day the boss commended me for my diligence, which my colleagues took as an indication of treachery; I was betraying them by working hard even when the boss was not watching. It was lonely work on a road seldom traveled by tourists, but I enjoyed the solitude. A herd of buffalo had moved into the valley below our camp, causing the boss considerable anxiety, not on our account or that of the camp, but rather for the safety of the horses that might stray too close to the herd at night and, being hobbled, could not escape if charged by a bull. A horse can be knocked down by a buffalo and severely injured.

One evening the boss came up to me and asked if I were being treated well. I said I was. Then he told me that his son had told him that the other boys were planning to put cactus in my sleeping bag as a trick to put me, the eastern tenderfoot, in my place. He had intervened and warned them that he would have none of this sort of thing going on in his camp. I never let on that I knew about it. Thus forewarned, I was prepared for a possible confrontation, which occurred one afternoon as we were all returning to camp in the pickup, the four of us in back. I got into a scuffle over some trivial disagreement with the older brother, who grabbed me by my shirt. In the process he
fell over the side of the truck and I came over on top of him. He was very mad because he was humiliated by his failure to get the better of me. At this point the boss intervened. "Boys," he said, "fight it out right now and get it over with." But fortunately neither of us wanted to fight, and we climbed back into the truck. Later my opponent admitted he was trying to tear my shirt off. That evening after supper the older boy challenged me to a wrestling match. It was a fortunate choice for me, since I knew something about wrestling. I put him down, much to his surprise, and I believe the surprise of the boss too. After that I was treated with more respect.

After three weeks on the road gang I decided to see more of the West and asked the boss for my time. He asked me why I was quitting and tried to dissuade me, but I was determined, and explained that I wanted to go on to the Coast. So I returned to headquarters with the next supply truck. When I found Nathaniel, he refused to quit; he liked his job and preferred to stay on through the summer. He would return by train. John, however, partly from a sense of obligation but also to be a good sport about it, elected to go on with me.

We drove west into Montana to Butte, and from there followed a route which has become Interstate 90. In the
evening about 60 miles from Butte we encountered extensive
road repairs where all traffic was diverted through the town
of Drummond, and since the construction was a major operation
that closed the road, and not soon to be completed, the diver-
sion became known throughout the region as the Drummond
detour, a bottleneck for all east-west traffic. It was
a bonanza, however, for the people of Drummond who provided
lodging for travelers like us, held up at night with no
place to camp. We were taken in by a family in town for bed
and breakfast.

From Drummond we drove north to Glacier National Park,
entering the park from the west, and spent two days walking
across the Continental Divide and back from Lake McDonald.
We slept in a camp site where tents had been pitched for
hikers. That night we were disturbed by an animal making
a racket and poking around outside the tent looking for food.
John thought it was a bear, but it turned out to be a
raccoon. We didn't get back to the ranger station at Lake
McDonald the next day until well after sunset. There was a
new moon, and the forest was so dark that we couldn't see the
trail without the flashlight we had forgotten to bring; but
we managed to keep from straying off into the woods by
following the gaps between the trees overhead. When finally
we got back tired and hungry, the ranger took pity on us
and let us sleep in a vacant bunk house.

In camp one night in the Cascade Range in Washington I cut my wrist with a hatchet while trimming branches from a spruce sapling for a bow bed. The wound didn't bleed very much, so I tied it up and the next day went to a hospital in Tacoma to be sewed up. The surgeon told me I was lucky that I hadn't severed the radial artery, that the blade had struck the end of the radius, severing a tendon to my thumb. He sewed the ends together, put my forearm in a cast, and sent us on our way, advising me to seek medical aid should my arm become painful. The wound healed without complications except that the tendon healed to the bone, somewhat limiting the motion of my thumb.

After visiting for a day some friends of John in Tacoma who tried to persuade me to see another doctor, we drove south along the coast of Oregon and northern California to the Golden Gate. In California we chose a primitive road south from Eureka that hugged the coast through primeval redwood forests. The narrow dirt track, barely wide enough in places for one vehicle, wound between the trunks of the big trees in a sinuous course that led from high ocean vistas, across damp, fern-shrouded ravines, and back again into the dark depths of the virgin forest. The way was seldom traveled, but would some day become the coastal route
after the trees were all cut down.

We crossed the Golden Gate - the suspension bridge had not yet been built - from Marin County to San Francisco on a ferry, and without spending any time in the city headed east to the Sierra Nevadas and Yosemite National Park. From there we took the road over Tioga Pass into Nevada. We were following the Lincoln Highway that had been staked out across the most uninhabited parts of the country with red, white and blue posts. In places the highway was essentially nonexistent. One of these we came upon in Nevada was a dry lake bed which stretched off for miles before us, a flat and featureless plain of pale hard clay, to a distant low horizon. The tracks that had entered this lake bed faded and dispersed as we advanced onto it. There were no markers, no Lincoln Highway posts to follow, no need to steer the car. So we pulled down the hand throttle on the steering post and both of us climbed out onto the engine hood and sat on the radiator with our legs hanging down in front, assigning all responsibility to the mechanical whims of the automobile in a carefree, exhilarating spirit of utter freedom. The car continued on at its top speed of 45 miles per hour in a more or less straight line towards the far shore, which loomed ever higher as we approached until, when we were close to it, it revealed its barren desert scrub character. We found no exit, no car tracks, no
Lincoln Highway posts until we had followed the lake bank for some distance south. At the first sign of civilization we came to, a trading post and gasoline pump, we filled up with gasoline at the then unheard of price of 75¢ a gallon. From then on until we reached Salt Lake City on a Sunday, the trip was uneventful. It changed abruptly as we were driving down the wide main street in the center of the city when a plain-clothes detective displaying his badge jumped on the running board and ordered us to pull over. He asked us where we were from and where we were going, and for our drivers' licenses, and then directed us to the police station. In the police station we were questioned again, and John when asked his age replied with considerable asperity, "The same as it was ten minutes ago."

We were suspected of having stolen the car because it carried Massachusetts plates, and we couldn't produce a bill of sale. To that we replied with irritation, that in Massachusetts one is not required to carry around with him the bill of sale for his car, that we did have the registration certificate for the car, and furthermore that reciprocity agreements between states covering motor vehicle regulations assured motorists of reasonable and courteous treatment.

The officer, realizing the ridiculousness of his suspicion that we were automobile thieves, but to save his face by
referring to higher authority ordered us to drive him out to the home of the chief of police, whom we found in his back yard repairing fishing tackle. After listening to our protestations against the harassment we had been subjected to, and lecturing us on the duties of his officers, he dismissed the case against us. The officer then rather sheepishly asked us to drive him back to the police station.

I remember little about the remainder of the drive back to Chicago except for an encounter with a rattlesnake in Nebraska. From Chicago John returned to his home in Connecticut by train. He had had enough of driving, and I, after a few days alone in the empty Winnetka house - the rest of the family was in Maine - drove back to Cambridge.

The opportunity came two years later after I graduated from Harvard to realize my desire to see the American West as my boyhood friend had done, by going on the bum. Father and Mother had planned a tour of England and Norway on which they wanted to take the whole family. I told them I wanted to go west instead, but did not say how I planned to do it, knowing that Father would very much disapprove on the moral ground that to ride freight trains would be cheating the railroads. They tried hard to persuade me to go to Europe, but Needless to say without success. I had persuaded a classmate, Francis B., who became a famous geophysicist, to
participate in the adventure. For the journey I had made two waterproof canvas sleeping bags with straps for back packing that held blankets, extra clothing and personal effects. With this minimum baggage, a small sum of money each, and a twenty dollar bill for emergencies sewed into the fly of our trousers, we set out from Winnetka after my family had departed for Europe. The first stage of the trip was quite conventional; we paid our fares to Milwaukee on the Chicago and Northwestern. From Milwaukee we went to Oshkosh, but by what means I do not remember, although possibly also legitimately by passenger train. Starting in Oshkosh our mode of travel became surreptitious and extra-legal. I seem to remember that we inquired at the railroad station about trains for Minneapolis and St. Paul and were told that a local would be coming through in the evening. Our plan was to catch a Great Northern freight west from Minneapolis because this railroad was reputed to be more lenient towards tramps and migratory workers riding its freights than were the other lines of the northwest, the Milwaukee and St. Paul or the Northern Pacific. The reason given for the tolerance was that many of the Great Northern employees belonged to the I.W.W., the union of the Socialist workers, dedicated, in theory at least, to overthrowing capitalism. Our train for St. Paul consisted of coaches and a
baggage car for express and mail. We waited for it on
the dimly lighted side of the tracks opposite the station
platform. We did not board a coach, but when the conductor
gave the engineer the all clear signal, who gave a short
blast on the whistle and started the locomotive, we climbed
onto the front of the baggage car immediately behind the
engineer’s tender. A narrow recessed vestibule outside
the locked front door provided a place for two people to
stand or sit without being conspicuous. This was the tra-
ditional way to hitch a ride on a passenger train, and was
called riding blind baggage. The train rumbled and clattered
through the night, puffing smoke and steam. In the early
morning the train stopped at a water tower to refill the
tender’s tanks, and the fireman, who had climbed up on top
to connect the water spout, saw us and remarked more to
himself than to us, “Well, just see all our passengers.”
He didn’t, however, tell us to get off, and soon the train
was underway again. The next stop was La Crosse, Wisconsin.
By that time we were shivering with cold, and to warm up
had climbed down on the side away from the station and were
warming our hands on the cylinder of the locomotive when a
railroad detective discovered us and led us into the station
where we were told we would be put in jail unless we paid
our fare. We said we had got on at the last stop back, which
we happened to remember, and it cost us about a dollar each. The detective then ordered us to ride no more passenger trains, but said that we could catch a freight in the yards about a mile down the tracks. There we found a group of switchmen sitting in the sun in front of a freight shed. We told them our story and asked when the next freight train would be coming through. No train would be coming through that day, they said, because it was Sunday, and they advised us to pick up a ride on the highway. They were sympathetic about our predicament, commenting that the railroad dick would get hurt if he treated others as he had us.

On the highway we were very lucky. Before we had walked far a Pierce Arrow touring car we flagged stopped and the driver asked where we were going. Minneapolis, we said, and we were invited in; he was headed there too. His wife was with him in the front seat, so we rode in back. During the ride we learned that he was an architect, and we told him what we were doing and how we planned to proceed west from Minneapolis. He dropped us off at the Great Northern Railway Station, wishing us good luck.

When one sets out to travel by freight train, he does not ordinarily start at the main passenger terminal of a railroad in a major city; he goes to the freight yards where the cars are assembled on the outskirts of the city. What
we did, however, was done out of innocence and inexperience. We walked into the station through the main entrance, crossed the lobby to the platform gates and out onto a platform. No one accosted us. There were no trains in the station. We went on down to the end of the platform and out onto the tracks, continuing on for some distance until we reached what appeared to be freight yards. Eventually we came across a switchman whom we asked where we could find a freight train going west. He didn't seem particularly surprised by our question, and told us that a freight would be going out that afternoon, that we could recognize it because it would be a long one, and that it would slow down at the last switch. We waited for a long time until finally what appeared to be the right train came by, and climbed into an empty box car. After a short distance the train stopped, then backed up a way and was still. We were puzzled, but waited until we heard a knocking sound down the line of cars. On looking out we saw a man sealing the doors of the box cars. He told us the train was going nowhere that night. By then it was dark, but pretty soon we heard the rumble of another train approaching and saw as it got near that it was pulled by a huge locomotive - not a switch engine - and was made up of many kinds of cars - box cars, cattle cars, gondola cars,
and flat cars. We managed to get into an empty cattle car, not perhaps the best choice, but in the dark we couldn't be choosy. The floor was thickly covered with mostly dried cow dung. We had hoped to find an empty box car in which we could spread out our sleeping bags, but in this car that was out of the question, and we realized we were in for another sleepless night. The best solution we hit upon was to sit on our packs placed against one end of the car where the dung was dry, and try to sleep sitting up.

The through freights that haul between the Middle West and the Pacific Coast, for reasons of economy, were made up of approximately one hundred cars, usually of many types with box cars predominating, but intermixed with gondolas, refrigerators, tank and flat cars, and always a caboose at the end. Freight trains were never hauled straight through, but stopped at all the division points along the main line, which were spaced about every 200 miles, for a change of crews and engines, and where the grades are steep in the mountains, to couple on another locomotive or even two, one to pull and one to push. Every long freight is made up of cars from many lines, the Santa Fe, Union Pacific, Great Northern, Rock Island, New York Central, Pennsylvania, Southern Lines, and many others, arranged through reciprocity agreements between the lines to obviate transloading
from one line to another. At the division points changes were sometimes made in the makeup of the train, a few cars with local freight being dropped off or added. In these days before the advent of the diesel engine one of the special distinctions of the railroads was the sound of their locomotive whistles. The Great Northern engines let out a blast, a half rumbling roar, half vibrating screech, audible for many miles, that echoed and reechoed from canyon walls.

At the first division point we left the cattle car, found a cafe near the railway station and ate a hearty breakfast that cost twenty-five cents. Then we walked out to the end of the yards where all the sidings converge into the main line and waited for our train. At many of these yard ends nondescript bushy thickets border the main line on either side, and sometimes the railroad embankment bridge a stream bed or are penetrated by a wide culvert. Here migratory workers, hobos, tramps and bums hang out while waiting for a freight.

Within these thickets one often finds the remains of camp fires, rusty tin cans, battered cooking utensils, and other signs of occupation. These places are the wobbly jungles named after the International Workers of the World, the I.W.W., romanticized in hobo literature. In addition to a socialist union established under Marxist influence at the turn of the century to overthrow capitalism. Many of the migratory workers belonged to this union together with the
It was in one of these wobbly jungles that we first learned about union solidarity. A fellow traveler, recognizing that we were not cast from the same mold as the majority of our companions, and perhaps motivated by compassion to save us from the dire consequences of our innocence, asked if we had red cards. Red cards, we learned, were certificates of membership in the I.W.W., necessary passports for riding the freights. Without a card one ran the risk of being rolled by a brakeman, meaning thrown off the train. We were also informed that at the next division point a delegate of the union would sign us up, which in fact is precisely what took place when our kindly advisor introduced us to a more prosperously dressed older man who sold us our membership cards. The membership card is a small red booklet measuring \(2 \frac{3}{4} \times 4\frac{1}{2}\) inches containing the preamble to the constitution of the International Workers of the World, which begins: THE WORKING CLASS AND THE EMPLOYING CLASS HAVE NOTHING IN COMMON. On the next page is written the name of the worker and a code for the member who inducted him into the union, followed by date of membership and the industrial department to which the worker is assigned. My card was dated July 1, 1924, my work class agriculture and farming, and my inductor A4/191. The final pages of the booklet were given over to spaces for
monthly dues stamps and assessments. I paid dues at 50¢ a month for July, August and September and 50¢ for an assessment stamp for imprisoned workers. Membership in the I.W.W. was advantageous, however, only on the northwestern lines where the union was especially strong, but not on the central and southwestern or eastern lines where it might get you into trouble.

At Cut Bank, a division point on the Milk River, a tributary of the Missouri, we were all driven off the train by an irate, hard-nosed yard detective who prevented us from re-boarding when the train pulled out. In steady rain we holed up in the wobbly jungle, taking to our sleeping bags to keep dry. After dark the officer went off duty, and we were then able to get on the next freight. We had heard from our traveling companions a rumor that a lumber camp south of Glacier National Park was looking for workers, and we decided to try our luck there. So we left the train at Belton, west of the Continental Divide, and the first thing we did after finding a secluded place on a creek bank was to give ourselves a long overdue bath and wash our clothes. The next day, a Sunday, we found the camp and were immediately hired. The foreman told us he would put us to work right away, to which we agreed, and he set us to digging a garbage pit. After excavating what we thought was an enormous hole, we were
scornfully told it wasn't nearly big enough, and to enlarge it several times.

The camp had only recently opened and was engaged in constructing a logging road to reach more valuable timber through low land forested in cedar and worthless trees.

Early the next morning we were assigned as swampers (those who clear brush and trim the branches from felled trees) to two Swedish lumber jacks. They were cutting down the largest cedars, trees at least three feet in diameter, and sawing them into 16 foot lengths to be used for the construction of a corduroy road. Our job was to split the logs in half. We were provided with axes, wedges and mauls. Before we could begin the splitting a tangle of brush and branches had to be cleared, and even though the logs were rotten at the core and easy to split, we were hard pressed to keep up with the tree felling.

The camp consisted of a bunkhouse equipped with steel beds, mattresses and blankets, a cook house with attached eating shed, a commissary and stalls for horses. As soon as we were installed in the bunkhouse one of the workers, spotting our packs, advised us not to use our sleeping bags and to stash them under our bunks out of sight because the union, which had long opposed the custom of hiring workers who could provide their own blankets - blanket stiffs - as discrimination
against those who couldn't, had recently won an agreement from the logging camps to provide all bedding. The food at the camp was plentiful and very good, a victory also for the union. For breakfast, the most important meal, you could have as much as you could eat. We had a choice of hot or cold cereal, eggs with ham or bacon, fresh bread and butter, hashed potatoes, steak and coffee.

After a week or more of splitting cedar for the corduroy road, which by then had been laid down for a considerable distance into the forest, the next step was to cover the logs with dirt, and we were given new jobs. I was assigned to handling a fresno, a scoop attached to a U-shaped bridle drawn by a horse for moving dirt and gravel. The scoop is controlled with two wooden handles like a wheelbarrow by the operator following along behind. To fill the scoop the handles are lifted, causing the lip to dig into the ground, and when filled the handles are lowered. It is then pulled along the ground to the place where the dirt is to be delivered, and dumped by throwing the handles forward, upsetting it.

One of the loggers, a tough character with strikingly mongoloid features—a belligerent disposition and a propensity for picking fights at the slightest provocation, had justifiably acquired the reputation of camp bully. And, although he had his coterie of sycophants, he was avoided by most of-
the men because, due to bravado, he was constantly challenging them to put on the gloves with him. Blacky, the nickname for one of the skinners who owned his team of horses, was a huge man whose face was mostly concealed beneath a full, bushy black beard. Despite his size he was a man of mild and peaceful disposition, but probably because of it he was regarded by the bully as a threat to his dominant position, who therefore had to be challenged. Blacky, however, who had no boxing experience or desire to fight, refused to be coerced into conflict. Unfairly, many of the men who urged him to act as their surrogate to avenge their humiliation, misjudging his pacific nature, accused him of cowardice.

Since no one was willing to take on the belligerent logger, my friend came forward and offered to box with him. I did not witness the fight, but since it apparently ended in a draw, Francis's standing in the camp, and mine by association, was considerably enhanced. People came up to me after the fight to ask in awe where my friend learned to box.

We had been in camp a little more than two weeks, while I was still working behind the scoop, when we got fired. The excuse for letting us go was an accident I had with the scoop, which I was dumping at the edge of the corduroy road as directed. As I tripped it, one of the handles caught between two logs and snapped off. By bad luck, the boss
happened to be watching. I was sent back to camp for a new handle, and that evening we were given our time. We were paid a little over two dollars a day.

The next morning we walked out of camp to Columbia Falls, about 18 miles, where we got a freight on the Great Northern to Spokane, Washington and on to Pasco on the Columbia River. We were thrown off the train at Pasco and warned not to ride any freight out of that city. Pasco had a reputation among hobos as a bad town, so we walked across on a railroad bridge to the west side of the Columbia River and were able to get on a Union Pacific freight to Auburn, south of Seattle. In Auburn we managed at some risk to board a rather fast-moving train going south, probably a Southern Pacific freight, which we stayed with all the way to Eugene, Oregon, where we were again bumped off. It was probably then that we decided we had gone far enough, and turned back. We worked our way north-east by rail to The Dalles on the Columbia River, which was free-flowing then before Grand Coulee or any other dam had yet been built. While scouting around in the freight yards for a made-up eastbound freight ready to pull out, we were accosted by a plain-clothes policeman and questioned at length asked our names, where we were from, whether we had been in Portland, and where we were going. When we appeared to be innocent of any criminal act, we were informed that the police
were looking for two men from Portland wanted for murder.

Then we were ordered out of the yards and told not to come back unless we knew what was good for us. Night overtook us on the highway, and since the chance of hitching a ride was remote, we searched for a sheltered place to hit the sack. The road was bordered by chaparral in which we found a small space of clear ground surrounded by bushes large enough for our sleeping bags. The next morning we discovered we had camped in a thicket of poison ivy, but luckily were not affected by it.

The rest of the journey is vague and dreamlike, in which only a few episodes stand out clearly in retrospect. We ate in railroad cafes and traveled on the Northern Pacific across Idaho, all of Montana and on into the wheatbelt where the harvest was in full progress, for which many of our fellow travelers were headed. Somewhere in Oregon everyone on the train, two dozen or more of us, were driven off by a brakeman with a club. One train we rode in Idaho was made up almost entirely of tank cars. There was no safe place to sit, it was night and we were very tired; and to guard against going to sleep and falling off, we strapped ourselves to the hand rail on the side of a tank car with our belts. I discovered also that I could stand on the cat walk, squeeze both arms between the hand rail and the tank so that it was under my armpits, hang there and sleep.
One evening, as we came into Montana, the freight we were riding stopped for crew and engine changes at a division point near the small town of Paradise northwest of Missoula.

Coming into Montana one evening the long freight we were riding made up of box and gondola cars stopped for crew and engine change at the division point near the small town of Paradise northwest of Missoula. With the other riders, maybe twenty or more, we all went into the railroad station cafe for coffee and doughnuts, and then returned to the yards to await the trains departure.
coming into Montana one evening on a long freight made up of box and gondola cars, it stopped for crew and engine change at the division point near the small town of Paradise northwest of Missoula. A large number of riders, maybe twenty or more, got off and all of us went into the railroad station cafe for coffee and doughnuts, and then returned to the yards to await the train's departure. We hadn't been waiting long before we were rounded up by railroad detectives and herded back to the station because someone had skipped out without paying for his coffee. No one admitted to the crime, and we were warned that none of us would be allowed to get back on again unless the culprit confessed or was caught. In the meantime while the police searched the yards, we were advised to stay on the platform and were told the train would slow down for us as it came through. It was not long before the detectives returned with a shabby, meek man who confessed he had not paid because he had no money. Someone paid for him, and he was let go. He was then bawled out by some of the men for not asking for help, getting them all in trouble and giving migratory workers a bad name. As promised, the train did slow down at the station.

I remember little about the rest of the journey except that most of the men left the train in the plains states for the wheat harvest, while Francis and I went on towards
Chicago.

How we finally got home I don't recall, only that baths and clean clothes were luxuries we had been looking forward to for a long time. Francis returned to Chevy Chase by passenger train, and I stayed in Winnetka until my parents returned from Europe. When I told them what I had been doing, they were astonished and interested. Father did not reproach me for cheating the railroads.

This adventure ended for fifteen years all further exploration of the West. I had graduated from Harvard with a degree in chemical engineering, but my interest had turned away from engineering to the more exciting and stimulating organic and biochemical fields. I entered the Harvard Medical School in the fall, where in my second year I became acquainted with and greatly influenced by Dr. Hans Zinsser who headed the Bacteriology Department. My intention had never been to practice medicine, but to use medical education as a step towards a career in biochemical research. After graduation I obtained a position in the Bacteriology Department as a teaching assistant with time for research, which I pursued for several years until I received an appointment as a tutor in biochemistry at Harvard. During that period until 1939 I was a research assistant to Dr. Wyman. My interest in photography, which I had almost completely set aside during Medical School
years, revived after graduation to become an increasingly important avocation. I began to photograph more on weekends and intensively during summer vacations, gradually accumulating a large number of prints which were first seen and criticized by Ansel Adams at a dinner party near Boston, and later by Alfred Stieglitz, after I had been introduced to him by my painter brother Fairfield Porter. Stieglitz was unsparing, but also encouraging. Once a year thereafter I would go down to New York with a box of photographs to show to Stieglitz, who continued to give me kindly advice until one unforgettable day in October, 1938, when after twice looking through what I had brought, he said, "I want to show these."

My photographs were exhibited by Alfred Stieglitz at his gallery, An American Place, for three weeks from December, 1938 to January, 1939. This event changed the course of my life. My research had not been going well; I had made no contributions to scientific knowledge, and my prospects for an academic career were fading. It seemed obvious to me that I was a better photographer than scientist, and so I resolved to give up teaching and research for photography, and at the end of the academic year in June, did not seek reappointment.

Since I had freed myself from institutional connections, there was no need to stay in Cambridge. I could live wherever my fancy dictated. My wife's brother had moved to Santa Fe,
and suggested we come there. This was the West again, a part of the West I did not know. My wife Aline and I decided to try it. We drove out to Santa Fe in the fall for the winter, but Aline didn't share my enthusiasm for New Mexico, so after a year we moved back to my birthplace in Illinois. But the Southwest had a romantic attraction for me that began with the childhood camping trip to the Grand Canyon. This was a young land of sharp outlines, of denuded and eroded badlands, of tall buttes and deep canyons, of exotic desert plants, of wide skies and bright sun. I returned alone several times to photograph the landscape, the adobe buildings and churches, and the desert birds.

Then World War II changed everything. We moved back to Cambridge where I had a job at the Radiation Laboratory at M.I.T., helping to develop radar. After the war, Aline became more reconciled to living in the West, and in 1946 we moved back permanently to Santa Fe.

The Southwest, from the mid-nineteenth century when the great western migration over the Santa Fe Trail began, until World War I, was a place of high adventure and romance. Roads were non-existent and communications difficult. The whole area that now compromises much of the four-corner states was known as the Great American Desert. It is high country, and formidable still, although much of it has become accessible by road, to visitors who seek the lonely places and inspiration from nature, or a temporary escape from the exigencies of civilization. The attractiveness of the Southwest, geologically a young land, lies in its revelation of the on-going process of change which one can almost see taking place before his eyes; it lies in its sparse beauty, sharp outlines.
denuded and eroded badlands, tall buttes and deep canyons, exotic desert plants, wide skies and bright sun, cleanliness and clarity, and, if it is permissible to speak of nature in these terms, its unaffected honesty.

The Rocky Mountains, that wall off the prairie lands of the midwest, extend south into northern New Mexico where they end in the Sangre de Cristo Mountains which turn red in the evening after sunset, giving them their name. La Villa Real de la Santa Fe de San Francisco de Assisi, Santa Fe, disputes with St. Augustine, Florida, for the distinction of being the oldest European city in the United States. It was founded by Pedro de Peralta in 1610 in the foothills on the western end of the Sangre de Cristos at 7000 feet. It is here that the Great American Desert begins, becoming increasingly arid as it extends westward across the Rio Grande Valley into Arizona and Utah. Here lie the rainbow-hued Badlands, Canyon de Chelly, Monument Valley, and all the canyon lands of the Colorado River basin. They stretch from the Green River into Cataract Canyon, Glen Canyon, and the mile-deep Grand Canyon.

The Southwest is big, wide land, and by eastern standards sparsely inhabited; but people are streaming in because word has gotten around that the conditions of life are more agreeable here than in the densely populated, polluted districts east of the Mississippi. The people who came to the Southwest settled in Santa Fe not only for these reasons but also because of the appeal of the Spanish-Indian culture with its adobe architecture of flat-roofed, one-story buildings that unobtrusively occupy the semi-arid landscape. And the harmony is enhanced by the whitewashed columned portals, panelled doors, and ornate lintels that are common features of many of the houses. Each village and Indian
pueblo has its own church, frequently painted white, with its bell
cupola, surmounted by a cross, presiding over a graveyard of carved
wooden crosses. Though many of the adobe buildings, old crosses and
other subjects I photographed are now lost, unmatched
So beautiful is the Southwest, so remarkable for its geological
features, unexcelled -- unmatched, even -- anywhere in the world, that its fame is world-wide. The stimulation by thin air; the intense
blueness of the sky; the towering thunderheads of summer that rumble
and flash and produce sheets of rain with a sudden rush of water that
soon passes leaving only a wet arroyo to dry within an hour; the quick
change of climate from burning dry heat that allows no sweat to wet
one's clothing to a shivering cold during the rainfall, these are the
attributes of this country that get into one's blood and bones.