

# MOUNT RAINIER NATIONAL PARK NOW IN ITS GRANDEST MOOD

Run From Portland to Park Made Easily in One Day via Pacific Highway and Onalaska-Morton Cut-off Route Through Mountains, Total Mileage 178.5, in a Chevrolet Baby Grand Car.



BY L. H. GREGORY.

**M**OUNT RAINIER National Park is always different. You may visit it twice or a dozen times, and no two of those times will it be quite alike. Its beautiful forests, its glaciers, its titanic chasms, its hills, its torrents, its alpine wild flowers in profusion, its jagged peaks, even the white dome of Mount Rainier—ever the visitor sees them with new and wondering eyes.

But this is not to be descriptive of Mount Rainier National Park. You will find its attractions catalogued in the guide books, if you thirst for printed description; the only way to realize the wonders of the park is to see them for yourself. This is rather an account of how to get there and, incidentally, a killing of two birds with the one stone: including both an account of how to reach Mount Rainier National Park from Portland and of conditions on the Pacific highway north from Portland as far as Chehalis, Wash.

Why do so few Oregonians visit Mount Rainier National Park? It must be that they do not know how to get there, that it never has been brought home strongly enough to them that from Portland to the park entrance is only 178.5 miles, under present road conditions and that the trip can be made in a day. Most drivers would prefer to take two days to it, but by pressing forward from an early start, it can be made easily in one day.

**Atmosphere Crystal Clear.**

The writer made his third trip to Mount Rainier National Park a week ago to log road conditions en route for the benefit of Oregonians desiring to make the tour. Never was the park more beautiful, the air was spectacularly clear, with not the slightest haze. Mount Rainier glistening white and blue against the sky. Every hill and peak in the great park clear in

the crystal atmosphere. Mile on mile of forest down the vast canyons. Every plunging stream, every waterfall in dress parade under the bright sun. And on the way up to Paradise valley, alpine flowers pressing up through the melting snow.

There were hundreds of cars in the park that day, which was July 4. So many that the usual rules for traveling the one-way road above Nisqually glacier could not be enforced, so that cars were parked along the canyon for a mile below Narada falls, present terminus of automobile travel until the snow can be removed from the four-mile stretch up to Paradise Inn.

Washington cars were almost beyond counting. But there were scores from California, many from Idaho, some from Montana, even from New York, Iowa, Indiana, Michigan and other eastern states. Yet in all that line, not half a dozen, seemingly, from Oregon. Gasoline shortage explains it only partly, for it was the same last year and the year before. It is the strangest of things that the Oregon motorist has not yet, as a body, discovered Mount Rainier National Park. Well, he has that much in store for him.

**All Aboard by Chevrolet.**

This tour to the park was made in a Chevrolet PB (baby grand) touring car, sent by the Fields Motor Car company, Chevrolet distributors in Portland, with Bill Groat at the helm. W. F. Dallam, of San Francisco, more often called "California" by his trip-mates, went along as passenger. It was a great trip for California.

We left Portland at 9:30 o'clock Saturday morning, July 4, and were in the park at 8:10 that evening, 19 hours and 40 minutes all told. And with just one exception, which was memorable enough, all leisurely, safe and sane driving. Of that exception, more to come.

Motorists bound for Rainier, or for Tacoma and Seattle, might just as well save themselves the bother of

There are few more beautiful places in this world than Rainier national park, which is within one day's run by automobile from Portland, only 178.5 miles by the shortest route. These views in the park were taken last Sunday, July 4, on a trip there in a Chevrolet Baby Grand touring car, sent by the Fields Motor Car company of Portland. The picture shows: 1—Mount Rainier from the Silver Forest, between Nisqually glacier checking station and Narada falls, present terminus of automobile travel, four miles by road from Paradise Inn. 2—Near Hickeyeek Point, between Nisqually glacier and Narada falls. The canyon to the left drops a little more than 2000 feet straight down—that's all! 3—Looking down the automobile road from half a mile above Nisqually glacier checking station. The snout of the glacier is distinctly to be seen in the background, with the Nisqually river issuing from its base. Behind and above the glacier rises the lower slope of Mount Rainier. 4—Showing how thickly cars were parked on the road below Narada falls Sunday, July 4, when thousands of persons visited the park. There wasn't room for them at Narada, and the line of cars extended back nearly a mile down the road. The jagged peaks of the Tatoosh range in the far background. 5—Taking the elevator from Narada falls up to Paradise Inn. 6—Among the great trees of Rainier national park. 7—Snow at Paradise Inn, reached by trail from Narada falls, is still several feet deep. 8—Why the road between Narada falls and Paradise isn't yet open to automobile travel—the snow ranges from two to ten feet deep. 9—One of the courteous rangers who handle traffic through the park—Ranger George Adair, in charge at Nisqually checking station, beyond which one-way travel only is allowed.

ferrying the Columbia river at Goble and take the main Pacific highway route to Kalama via Vancouver, Wash. The Washington road, taken all in all, is better now than the Oregon road, with its execrable 12-mile rough stretch between Scappoose and Deer Island. There is no place between Vancouver and Kalama that can compare in roughness to that stretch.

There is one detour between Vancouver and Kalama, due to new paving construction work on the highway beyond Salmon Creek. But the remarkable thing about this detour is that it is actually better than the main highway for which it substitutes.

**Detour Mostly Paved.**

The detour leaves the highway just beyond Salmon Creek, at mileage 14.3 from Portland, and goes around by way of Ridgefield. The detour is an even 15 miles long, but of this 15 miles, 10.7 miles is paved, and the other 4.3 miles is good macadam. This pavement on a detour road was one of the pleasant surprises it has been our humble lot to meet in some years of road touring.

The detour adds approximately six miles to the distance to Kalama. It rejoins the main highway at the point where, a couple of years ago, it was necessary to detour around toward La Center. From this point, there is now good gravel to La Center, then macadam only slightly rough to Woodland.

Between Woodland and Martin's bluff, approximately five miles, used to be the worst place on the whole Pacific highway to Seattle. This is no longer. The old grade has been entirely eliminated and the new grade, well packed, is in excellent condition. Beyond Martin's bluff there is a 40-mile macadam road into Kalama.

From Kalama to Kelso the road is first class. But here the motorist's troubles begin. The main highway is now closed for new construction work, so it is necessary to detour left across a bridge to the west side of the Cowlitz river. Then turn right and for 18.4 miles follow the detour road where so many cars were stuck in the mud as late as Shriners' week in Portland.

**Still One Mudhole Left.**

There has been dry weather almost continuously since then, so this road has dried up and is now passable enough, even good in places. But along one five-mile stretch of it to the north of the Castle Rock bridge it is rough and rutty. So much so that 10 to 15 miles an hour is about the best speed to be made over it. Along here, and particularly in the vicinity of mileage 77.5 from Portland,

are still abundant evidences of the miserable condition of this road in wet weather. As late as last Saturday there was one mudhole left. However, the road to one side of it is now dry. But one day's rain would put this road in poor condition again and a three-day rain would make it almost impassable, a good point for motorists to bear in mind. If you make the Seattle trip this season and there is rain, or rain in prospect, take along chains for this stretch and be on the safe side.

That part of the detour on the west side of the Cowlitz between Kelso and the Castle Rock bridge was used last year at times, motorists crossing back to the north of the Castle Rock bridge at Castle Rock. This is not done at present, owing to new construction work on the highway north of Castle Rock. So, just at the west end of the bridge, tourists should take the road to the left and continue on their way up the west side.

**Auto Club Signs Detour.**

It must be said for this detour that there is no danger of getting off it, due to the good work of the Automobile club of Western Washington, which has large, unmistakable detour signs at every fork or cross-road, with arrows pointing the way to take. This club, also, at its own expense, when Cowlitz county did not take the initiative, sent a road crew down there when conditions were at their worst, and put the detour road in passable condition.

There are many sharp, steep hills and pitches on this detour road, but no grade requiring more than second gear. Steep enough, however, to make it awkward for drivers of Ford cars with less than four or five gallons in the tank.

On one hill we passed a Ford sedan being shoved laboriously to the summit by six or seven persons. It had only a gallon in the tank, due to gasoline shortage along the Pacific highway. Pretty tough luck.

At mileage 80.6 from Portland, the detour road comes into the main Okequa ferry-Vader-Winlock-Chehalis road, instead of turning right and crossing back to the highway over the Okequa ferry, turn left for Chehalis via Vader, Winlock and Napavine, as between Toledo and Chehalis there is another patch of construction work on the Pacific highway.

This Vader-Winlock-Napavine road is excellent macadam all the way to Chehalis, rejoining paved highway a mile out of that town. Once on the Vader road, the motorist's worries are over.

**Three Routes to Rainier Park.**

From Chehalis, the motorist bound for Mount Rainier national park can take his choice of three routes to the park, as he will find by consulting the Automobile club of Western Washington's obliging representative at the St. Helens hotel, Mrs. June Sloper.

The long route, but the one to take if leisurely pavement driving and a two-day journey is desired, is that by Pacific highway from Chehalis via Centralia and Olympia to Tacoma, and thence by the Tacoma-Mount Rainier Park highway to the park. This park highway is paved for 20 miles out of Tacoma, and on the Pacific highway there is pavement all the way from Olympia into Tacoma, and for a few miles this side of Olympia. More pavement is under construction between Tonho and Olympia, necessitating a detour that is good enough in dry weather.

From Chehalis to Tacoma via Pacific highway is an even 69 miles. From Tacoma to the park entrance is 27 miles, and from Portland to Chehalis, counting present detours, 105 miles, making the total mileage by this route 222 miles to the park entrance. Longview Springs is 6 miles further, Nisqually glacier 12 miles from the entrance, Narada Falls 16, and Paradise Inn 20 miles, a grand total to Paradise Inn of 242 miles via Tacoma.

The second route, which is somewhat shorter than the other, but with little paved road, is probably the favorite, all things considered. It leads from Chehalis to Tenino, thence

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