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Seeing America . . .

Glenwood, Iowa

Sunny and bright, and warm. Nebraska has some bad roads, laid first of concrete and jumpy as concrete roads are. They are covering them with plant mix but have miles and miles to go. It is a long state.

Down the Platte, up which the pioneers of the 1840s and 1850s came to Oregon. It must have been a slow journey although the land is level. Nowadays a traveler goes as far in an hour as these hardy old souls could go in four days. But who is to say they were less happy in their journey?

The corn is being cut although the old hand work is gone and one man with a corn picker and a tractor goes up and down the rows where men used to travel with wagon and team and endurance. Better? Anyway easier.

Nebraska has a peculiar tax problem on its hands. The tax board, as an almost violent step toward a needed equalization, raised assessments in some counties on some classes of property. Some of the raises were substantial (over 100 %). Now representatives in the legislature (one house) are asking for a special session to enact a sales tax and get rid of the property tax. Nebraska gets its money from state taxes which raise from 15 to \$19,000,000. Pretty cheap to run a state like Nebraska.

Of course the complainers are those from counties where the assessments were raised and resenting those who have been getting by better than the rest of the state. It looks like a case that could be improved by a little publicity—and a lot would be better and probably that will be the end that will come of it.

Nebraska roads are straight, not very wide and not bothered by a lot of traffic. We came across the bridge into Iowa at Plattsmouth, presumably where the Platte enters the Missouri but it was too dark to see. A narrow, winding road leads to it making it the best hid bridge so far encountered—and a toll bridge at that.

Much ado hereabouts about Benson and the farm program. Papers supporting Benson and Wyoming Republicans think criticism of Benson may help them elect another senator. Nebraska not now a barley or oat state and farmers don't know what to plant although they have a much wider choice than Oregon farmers. Sorghum, alfalfa, soybeans, so the loss of wheat isn't so bad. They expect corn quotas also.

It is possible that the farm problem will be the factor that may decide whether this is to be a socialist nation or one of free citizens.

Des Moines, Iowa  
Marvelous, productive Iowa, the best in the nation for its size. Gently rolling hills, with little waste land and corn fields everywhere. They are not large because the farms are not large. There is no summerfallow and every acre produces every year.

It is the corn state, with 471,000,000 bushels of it, enough for the cattle, (mostly Angus), the hogs, (mostly Hampshires), the milk cows (mostly Holsteins) that run on its fields and plenty left over to sell for starch and syrup.

All over the state are grain bins, up to 100 in a group, with the mark of Commodity Credit corp. on them. Corn on which the government has loaned money and which has therefore gone into the limbo of half existence. It cannot be sold except at a price above everything else. It is in a sort of purgatory.

But Iowa doesn't raise wheat, or didn't in recent years. A report showed a little over 2,000,000 bushels for one year, less than half what Sherman county grows. Now maybe Iowa can grow wheat again if corn is reduced in acreage as was wheat. Everyone expects that to happen. In that case the rich black soil of Iowa can go to wheat, not over 15 acres per farm it is true, but that is lots of wheat.

and substantial and prosperous. Very likely they make use of all 56 cents in a dollar. Buildings are solid and square and brick or concrete that will be there indefinitely.

Iowa reched prosperity apparently in the 90's and nearly every farm has a big white house on a knoll—we mean big and we mean white. They are painted and kept up. There are few new farm houses and maybe never will be; grandpa built so well there is no need for replacement, just add a bathroom. And Iowa is a little like that, rich, hard working, prosperous, a bit sanctimonious, sure of its philosophy and tempted by new ideas only because they may yield a profit—and profits are sanctimonious, too.

The state house is old, with a high gilded dome and four smaller domes which gives an oriental touch somewhat out of keeping with the state which is solid and Anglo-Saxon. The only people who get out of date are those who build well.

East Aurora, Illinois  
Here Elbert Hubbard started his Roycrofters, a group of people who excelled at handiwork, and here he wrote "The Message to Garcia", a story of an army officer who carried a message through jungles and other difficulties. It was a story of accepted responsibilities and adherence to duty. Not read any more.

Iowa has one peculiarity in its highway markings. Instead of putting a white or yellow line in the middle to signify that it is dangerous to pass, it puts a yellow line in the center of the lane. Very confusing to the traveler who has to think about it to observe the law. It seems an odd deviation from the norm for Iowa.

More of the fat countryside from Des Moines to Davenport where the huge Mississippi must be crossed; more flat, fertile land with corn fields and hog herds, big farm homes and prosperity. There is really a drouth, though. The corn crop is cut and there is no green in the landscape. Things are dry. Hall came through part of the country and knocked off the top of the standing corn. Gad, what hail. Corn good for 100 bushels, said one farmer, stopped while husking corn. Worth about \$1.60 under loan, less on the market.

Convoys are so many as to defy counting. All cars must be hauled to market that way back here. There are lots of ammunition trucks, marked "Explosives" and one caught fire from a flat tire and blew up in Nebraska, making a 15 foot hole in the road. The driver unhooked and drove off. Omaha passed an ordinance on the streets which has had an injunction put against it. It is government ammunition, but dangerous nevertheless.

Some drivers must think they are riding a bicycle. They turn, right or left, with no hand signals. Look, ma, no hands.

The Iowa-Indiana game drew over 50,000 and most of them were on the road around Iowa City, miles and miles of them, all in good cars.

Franklin, Indiana  
Came through Chicago today and it being Sunday, traffic was not too bad. Miles and miles of drab, old brick buildings, populated by the poor. Saw more of the city than in a week of visiting in normal fashion. Lakeshore drive, the financial district where tall buildings hide the sun which the clouds were also doing. Dirty brick and concrete. It needs washing. Chicago is doing lots of building, tearing down old buildings and clearing a way for new ones it appears and the streets are torn up, too. Even Michigan Avenue is being re-paved in spots, making traffic difficult.

Found the very best road so far, highways 52 and 31 in Indiana. Both have double lanes with at least 30 feet separating them and wide enough and smooth enough that one could drive off the outside, too, if necessary and probably not tip over. Speed is marked 65 limit. Traffic moves at 60 and when it runs into a short two lane stretch it drops back to around 45.

Utah and Wyoming are doing much road work, and have already made wide four lane roads. Nebraska is starting but hasn't enough money for a lot of work. Iowa seems satisfied with its two lane concrete roads and so does Illinois although close to towns roads are wider. Indiana beats them all.

Iowa has to raise the edge on its concrete roads that are just wide enough that a dual-tired truck rides on it when it is entirely on its side. Looks expensive for truck tires. Apparently it is done to keep water from under cutting edge of road.

A service station man when asked if the farmers in his vicinity were all in favor of high price support said: "Not so very, it's get to stop sometime, ain't it?" He went on to say that a neighbor had \$10,000 in machinery to harvest 80 acres of corn and he didn't think that paid much. In other words, high prices are keeping up with, or beating high farm prices.

here. On a market window: Cat-sup 2 for 29; sugar 10 pounds 88 cents; oleo 15 cents. Meals are cheaper too. Beef is advertised at from 55 cents up for roasts and steaks.

Quality may not be good as mid-west cattle are pretty thin; they are in feed lots. Feeders are being hesitant about buying it seems because of prices of feeders and feed beef, and also because there is no fall pasture. Calves would have to go right into feed lots on corn and hay instead of getting started on alfalfa or clover for a while.

Omaha has had 14 inches of rain and is short 9 inches (some fractions involved also.) The rest of the mid-west is something like that. Lawns in towns are brown, fields are dry and one man said it was too dry to properly shuck corn. The husks come off better when a little damp. Lots of corn yet to harvest.

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(This portion of the travelog was omitted last week due to lack of space.)

Lights seem poorly adjusted to traffic, which may move at 30 MPH.

Out of the Mormon center up Parley canyon and past the city water supply onto a wide four lane road that leads eventually to Wyoming. Whenever Utah builds a road it is straight and wide, four big wide lanes. The trees and brush are beautiful in fall colors.

Wyoming roads not so well marked as those of Idaho and Utah but well enough in the daytime. Little is grown in Green River; no soil, no warmth, no rain and most years no time; elevation 6700, almost the top of the Rockies and Route 30.

On speaking of Green River. Who remembers a ribald old ditty that told of floating down the "old Green River on the good ship Rock and Rye?"

Sidney, Nebraska  
This town used to have 3000 inhabitants and now has 6-7,000 depending on whose answer is right. What a wheat country with an army ordnance base for economic aid. Then oil was discovered and the people have recovered. Now they're building motels and grocery stores and garages as fast as they can.

Wheat was good, say natives, but wheat farmers were always saying they were broke and complaining. This year's crop was better than 35 bushels, one report has it, which for Nebraska sand-hills is marvelous—and will probably put a halt to complaining.

This was only partly a sunny day and it was the sun's turn, too. Snow fell until about ten o'clock and piled up a bit of a ridge on the road, but we outran the storm or else it quit, probably the latter, for this section, 200 miles east of where we found snow, had a reported 2 1/2 inches of rain this morning. That is quite a bit better than good.

Many things are all the same; only a few are different. Among the same are the cars, the roads, the people, the clothes, the towns the food. For instance roast beef is worth \$1.10 or thereabouts anyplace when served by a bored

waitress with an apron on, on the eternal plastic topped table in a restaurant containing a juke box. In a more quiet place with a waitress in a uniform—and better looking—a bigger napkin, two forks and two spoons and soup it is worth \$1.65. If you want (and can get), a padded chair, a cloth napkin and tablecloth, soup and salad requiring at least three bites the roast beef price is \$2.00. The coffee gangs talk about hunting the same kind of animals in the same loud voices, the service station men say "thank you" in the same professional tone, the water is chlorinated to the same undrinkability.

Some things are different: brands of beer (and this area is not having any big beer promotion,) gas stations have some different names, some of the trees look like another variety.

In Rock Springs the traffic pace is slowed to 20 miles per hour and it must be enforced because that is the actual speed, despite the desire of motorists to get through the place.

It is more pleasant to get out of the rain and snow (if we are) and away from the constant sh-sh of the windshield wiper that puts a damper on conversation. Oddly it isn't cold, not that the wind isn't sharp, but the water along the road hasn't been frozen, nor the highway covered with ice. Reported temperatures are generally found above freezing.

We wonder what is going to happen to motel operators. The usual procedure for them is to greet a customer exuberantly, show him a cabin or room, get his name on the dotted line and abandon all interest in his welfare. He may sleep too hot or too cold (and often temperature is beyond the customer's control), the water may be hot or not, never quite hot enough, and the lighting good or bad. A motel man has no way to check on whether he is pleasing or not for he never asks and is sound asleep with his money under his pillow when the customer packs his own bags to his car and peepars.

Laramie is a nice town, site of the University of Wyoming, nice homes, lots of impressive churches, wide streets and good looking stores, high (7000) cold, but bright with much sun and surrounded by cattle ranches and strengthened by some industry. The much drabber capitol of Wyoming (as compared to Utah and Idaho) has a gilded dome. Tax collections from oil, coal and utilities is high in Wyoming and state taxes are low, 1 1/2 mills for the state and 6 for schools. It is bigger than Oregon and with less than 300,000 people. Cattle country except for oils and minerals.

The Technocracy signs are be-

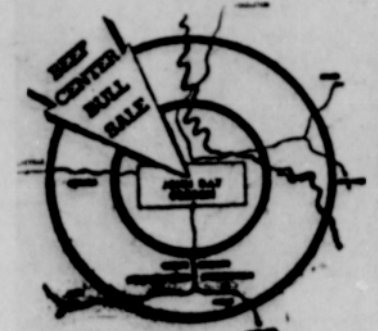
Sunbeam Waffle Baker, \$28.95, Barney's, Grass Valley

Ceresan - Copper Seed Treatment Baumgartner Hdwe & Elec Grass Valley, Oregon

ginning to fall down along the roads. Remember them? And the idea that we could live happily ever after with scientific development. That was before the atomic bomb discovery. Wonder if technocrats don't think we should have gone in for Christianity.

Toastmaster Toaster, \$27.50, Barney's, Grass Valley

WANT ADS



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FOR SALE—Alfalfa hay, \$18 a ton in the stack. Joe Hector, phone 90413, Goldendale, Wash. 52-1c

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