

Barbara's Diary

A short hour and 10 minutes flight took us to Christchurch on the south island. It was the weekend and all businesses were closed. We hired a car and driver and took a tour of the city, the twin volcano peaks, and Lyttelton harbor. We had lunch at a small inn in Oharou, a small village that was originally settled by the French. We visited a station (ranch) that had been in the same family for three generations. The house and other buildings were built of lumber sawed from trees that were cut on the ranch in 1904.

We went to Sunday church services at Church of England (cathedral). The service is almost identical to that of Episcopal. Afterward we visited the museum where we learned some of the Maori history and way of life before European settlement. There were some very interesting exhibits and maps of Captain Cook and his explorations of the Pacific, the South Sea Islands and New Zealand. The botanical gardens here are unique in that they have trees, plants and shrubs from nearly every country in the world. There was an excellent display of the native plants and shrubs, also.

On the way back to our motel we went by a street that had won first place for landscaping and yard grooming. Every yard was a mass of flowers in full bloom. This was in an average wage earners section. We then went to a more exclusive section where the home owners hire gardeners and landscapers to plan and groom their yards. This street had also won a first prize for their yards. Most of them were much more formal and exotic and very beautiful. As we went by the 500 acre park in the center of the city we passed the Totem pole that was given to the Christchurch by the State of Oregon in gratitude for the assistance rendered by New Zealand in the preparation of Operation Deep Freeze. The barracks and camp for Operation Deep Freeze were across the street from our motel.

We flew to Te Auna over the Canterbury plains. These are flat and level for 40 miles wide and 90 miles long. It is farmed very intensively with much of it irrigated. From the air it looked much like a patchwork quilt with a million (more or less) sheep dotting the landscape. We passed on over rolling pastoral foothills with

beautiful views of the many lakes and rivers. Mt. Cook and the many other higher peaks in the background were gorgeous in their new coat of white from the first early snow. It was a lovely flight and the pilot flew at altitudes to give us the very best view of the beautiful scenery.

At Te Auna we rented a 185 Cessna and pilot guide to fly over the Milford track to Milford Sound and Sutherland falls. Milford track is the trail used by the trampers (hikers) (hence tramp the track) to go from the south end of Lake Te Auna to Milford Sound on foot. It is a three day trip on foot and the park association has built hostels for use by the hikers at the end of each day's march.

The trip by plane is absolutely breath taking. The mountains are very rugged and solid granite. There are many small falls and rivulets down over sheer vertical faces of the mountains from glaciers high on the north slopes to disappear in a mist far below. Words cannot express the beauty and grandeur of these mountains known as the southern Alps. Sutherland falls drops in 3 stages for almost 2000 feet from Lake Quill, a small lake in a box canyon at the top, to another slightly larger box canyon at the bottom to become the head of the Arthur river. The trip was very thrilling and exhilarating. A trip we will always remember.

We had another woman guide and driver to take us to Milford Sound. (Much to the delight of Orville and Phil). It was a lovely drive up to Eglinton River, passed Mirror lake over the pass to Hollyford river and on through Homen tunnel to the town of Milford. We took the cruise launch there for a delightful trip down the sound toward the Tasman Sea. We saw Bowen Falls, 540 feet high, and Sterling Falls, 650 feet high. We went by Mire Peak which rises from the water to 6500 feet. While at Te Auna we also took the evening cruise to the glow worm caves which is a 45 minute trip by boat up the lake. It was very interesting and exciting trip by foot and small boat in the dark up the underground stream to where the glow worms were clinging to the walls and ceiling of the caves.

Te Auna was such a quiet and restful place we decided to stay an extra day to give Hazel and I a chance to do some repacking, laundry and have our hair done. Orville and Phil went with our driver out to visit some farms. They also had the opportunity to do some stream fishing but had no luck. No fish for dinner tonight.

On the 100 mile trip to Irvan Cargill, we traveled through some beautiful farming country. There were sheep and cattle everywhere. The government is doing some extensive land reclamation in this area. It buys the land from the large land grant farmers, cleans the brush, sprays and fertilizes the ground. It builds houses and other out buildings and sells the land back to farmers on a drawing basis much the same as the first G.I.'s drew for Grand Coulee irrigated plots.

Most all the homes and yards were a mass of flowers and well groomed small gardens.

In Irvan Cargill we went out to the docks to see a refrigerator ship that was loading with 500,000 frozen lambs for shipment to England. We were disappointed as there was a strike in progress and everything was at a standstill. We did go aboard the ship to visit the refrigerator room, passenger quarters and the bridge. We went on to a freezing plant where they kill, dress, skin and cut and freeze over 6000 head of lambs a day when they are going full production. The plant had slowed to 4500 per day when we were there doing 5 lambs per minute. They also treat the pelts, pull and grade the wool, and crate the sheep skins. The average weight of Grade A lambs is 28 pounds dressed.

We drove to the southern most point on the south island where we could cross Faveaux Strait and see Stewart Island, the smallest and southernmost of the chain of islands. On Stewart island there are wingless birds called Mutton birds that have migrated there to nest. At one time each year there are certain members of certain tribes of Maori that have permission to go Mutton birding. These birds nest in burrows and one bird from each burrow may be taken to preserve for meat. Our driver told us it is a great delicacy and highly prized by the Maori.

We rode with Jim Barbour, who is with the New Zealand meat board, north past Dunedin to Temura, his home town. We passed through the south end of Canterbury plains along the coast line. It was a lovely drive and gave us a very different view than we had flying over. On this trip we stopped to view the very first freeze plant that slaughtered and froze the first lamb for shipment to England in 1832. The sailing ship took 90 days to carry 130 ton of frozen lamb around Cape of Good Hope to its destination.

The next morning we drove on north to Christchurch through the rest of the Canterbury plains along the coast line. They have some of the most beautiful sand beaches here than anywhere in New Zealand. We crossed the wide mouths of the great rivers we had flown over on our way to Te Auna. The ground is rich and level. It is farmed and grazed intensively. Here they raise potatoes, corn, sugar beets, and other row crops.

Left Christchurch for a four hour flight via Air New Zealand to Sidney, Australia. We arrived in Sidney without visas for that country. The tourist bureau issued the four of us 14 day visas. It was again a weekend and all the businesses closed so we decided to do what the natives do — we went to the zoo. It is classed as one of the best, if not the best zoo in the world. All of the animals and birds have natural settings for their pens or cages. They have numerous giraffes from very young ones that look all legs and necks to one old male that was over 18 feet tall. It is amazing that anything so large can travel so gracefully.

We walked down to the ferry and rode it across Athol Bay, past Cremorne Point, through Neutral Bay to the subway station and took a taxi back to our hotel, the Crest in the center of Kings Cross. At Kings Cross five streets come together to form an intersection. There are no street lights and the heavy traffic flows easily. During one particularly heavy traffic hour there was a policeman directing traffic. It was very interesting to watch as his movements might best be described as poetry in motion.

We left Sidney with a car and driver for a lovely drive through the Blue Mountains past Portland, where they make cement,

to Bathurst. We could have taken the commuter train had we known about it. The trees are mostly gum or eucalyptus and some evergreen needle pine similar to our black pine. At Katoomba, we stopped at a view point which had a beautiful view of the ruggedness of the terrain. After we left Bathurst we came to miles of orchard area where they raise all kinds of seed and pit fruit. The varieties are the same as ours in the apples, pears, cherries and peaches.

At Orange in the center of the fruit growing district Orville went to the bank. Here we met Jim Willis, a clerk who offered to take us out to see some of the area. On our way out of the city he stopped by his home for us to meet his wife. She reacted the same as we would, caught at 10:00 a.m. with our hair in rollers and the morning chores still undone. After she regained her composure she invited us back for tea when we finished our tea. We went to Mt. Conobalis, which is a 4576 foot hill in the center of a very low land area. There is a 360 degree view of the country surrounding the mountain and it is all in orchards as far as the eye can see. We went back to Mr. Willis house and Mrs. Willis was a very gracious hostess over tea and cookies. We had a lovely visit with she and Mr. Willis.

As we drove on to Cootamundra we left the fruit growing area to enter livestock grazing and farming land. At 6:00 a.m. and without breakfast we met our pilot who flew us west toward the outback country. We went from grain farming to grazing and to Leeton where we saw the first irrigation from Murrumbidgee river. Here they raise many crops that need water but mostly rice and cotton. From here we flew northwesterly out of the irrigated land to the desert where they talk of sections per cow and acres per sheep. We went on to Pooncarie where there is another irrigation project. We had a dust storm ahead of us so the pilot turned north easterly. We landed at a sheep station owned by Mr. and Mrs. J. A. Schneider. They own 82,000 acres and rent from the government 40,000 more. Mr. Schneider was away from home fighting fire about 70 miles away. Mrs. Schneider was very gracious and charm-

ing. She met us at their private air strip and escorted us to the house where she served tea and cookies. She is district representative from Australia for the Associated Country Women. She is a grandmother with four grandchildren and flies her own 170 Cessna. When asked how far to town she said, "Thirty-five minutes by plane to Hillston and three hours to Sidney." They had had two fires on their place around Christmas. One had burned all the standing grain that was left to cut and the other killed a but 400 head of sheep. They had 43 cattle left out of a herd of 400. They lost 10 of their eleven horses. Although, the fire burned right to the buildings they were able to save most of them. Mrs. Schneider said her worst problem was the mice that had invaded the buildings since the fire, but that they would leave as soon as they had a good rain.

We flew back to Cootamundra for lunch then went to visit another ranch at Harden. This ranch had been in the same family for three generations.

The grandfather had settled about 4000 acres. His two sons had inherited it and now was being farmed by his grandsons. It is more productive land and they speak of cattle and sheep per acre. The original house was much like our early American style, large, spacious and with many rooms. The new house was built in the early 1950's and was of the same style and architecture as ours of the same period.

To Lutheran Convention

Pastor and Mrs. Rudy Mensch and Mrs. Bill Rawlins will leave next Sunday afternoon for Tacoma to attend North Pacific District Convention of the American Lutheran Church. The Convention will be held on the Pacific Lutheran University campus.

Pastor and Mrs. Mensch will also visit their son and family, Mr. and Mrs. Ray Mensch.

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