

TELLURIDE TO PORTLAND - 1913

This tape is about our family's journey by automobile from Telluride to Portland, Oregon in 1913. It is taken from a diary my mother kept of our trip.

The family consisted of my father, Dr. Charles A. Ramsey, a dentist in Telluride for many years, my mother, Eva Holbrook Ramsey, my older brother Erle, Sister Hazel and younger brother Charles and myself, Howard.

Our trip really started in 1912 when my father and brother Erle went to Denver and purchased a 7-passenger Winton Six Automobile and drove it back to Telluride.

Now a few words of explanation before the diary. Since there would be few places to stay and of course no such thing as motels, it required that we take entire camping equipment, cooking, eating, sleeping, etc., but no tent. There is a picture in the museum in Telluride of us having breakfast on the desert.

There would be very few, if any, service stations as we know of them today. Gasoline was purchased in 5 gallon tin can containers. No tubeless tires. In case of a puncture or flat tire, the tire had to be removed from the wheel, the inner tube patched, usually vulcanized. No road signs but occasionally one marked Lincoln Highway. The usual procedure was to follow the most traveled route or ask for information.

The diary actually starts from Salt Lake. I may interrupt occasionally if I feel an explanation is due, otherwise the diary is as written.

The diary from Telluride to Salt Lake consisted mostly of the towns we went through with the mileage and an occasional comment. Now for that part of the diary of Telluride to Salt Lake.

Left Telluride Sunday, August 10, 1913 at 6:00 AM. Placerville at 7:45, Dallas Divide 9:45. Ridgeway 10:40 and 41 miles. Nowon I will only list some of the larger places although the diary listed most all towns regardless of size.

Arrived at Grand Junction Sunday at 7:30. Left Grand Junction Monday at 7:30. Camped all night after crossing into Utah. Roads are bad. Arrived Green River Tuesday at 12:10 PM. Roads improving. Stayed all night at Big Springs Ranch Tuesday. Arrived in Price Wednesday at 9:00 AM. Arrived in Thistle Wednesday at 6:00 PM - 270 miles. Didn't stay in Thistle. Now roads are in fine shape so we went on to Provo. Arrived in Provo Wednesday at 9:00 PM and 292 miles. Left Provo at 7:15 AM. Arrived in Salt Lake City Thursday at 2:30 after 356 miles.

Comment: 4½ days Telluride to Salt Lake, a distance of 356 miles.

Had numerous washouts, stuck in mud twice, used chains once. Lots of chuck holes, hard rains, etc.

Now the diary----

Left Salt Lake City Saturday afternoon at 3:00 on August 16th and made Brigham that night - 8:10 PM - a distance of sixty miles. Beautiful roads. Had our first tire blow-out a few miles out of Salt Lake City which delayed us about an hour. Stayed all night at Brigham and got an early start next morning about 6:00 AM - Monday.

Drove about an hour and stopped and cooked breakfast. At this place through my carelessness an inner tube was lost and the loss not discovered until we had gone about 4 miles. Went back to look for it but of course couldn't find it. Someone else had picked it up as this was on the main traveled road.

This seemed to be a day of mishaps. Came to a river where the bridge was washed out and had to go back six miles and take another road. More round about. Had 3 tire blow-outs today and just at dark got in a mud hole but were not delayed very long as a man came along with a team just as we got the car jacked up and pulled us out. We stopped at a ranch house and slept on the shady side of a hay stack. Had a good sleep.

After traveling all day long only made about 60 miles and had the finest kind of roads with the exception of this mud hole which was caused by water seepage under the rail road. This is a beautiful country all the way from Ogden. Road runs between fine ranches and fruit farms. I like Ogden and the surrounding country so much better than I do Salt Lake City and vicinity.

Monday AM got up early and had breakfast at daylight. Patched a tire, pumped up tires and did numerous other things and got on the road at 7:50 AM and reached Pocatello at 10:30 about 30 miles. Idaho roads are certainly fine but terribly dusty. In some places the car just plows through the dust, in other places it is like a boulevard.

About 6 miles from Pocatello we stopped at an Indian ranch and cooked and ate our dinner under their shade trees. There are some fine ranches along here owned by the Indians and some of them own four or five ranches. Our host wanted to ride to Blackfoot with us so of course we let him. Blackfoot is quite a good sized town with lots of Indians in blankets and Indian finery.

Here we got directions for the trip across the desert to Arco. Took on a supply of water and gasoline and started at 4:20 but had only gone a little ways when two tires blew out and we were delayed an hour. Vulcanized five patches. Finally got started at 5:30. Drove 27 miles and stopped at 7:30 at a dry farming ranch. They gave us ^{the} loan of a tent which was not in use and Hazel and I slept in there and the rest of them in a hay stack.

Tuesday got on the road at 5:20 AM without waiting to get breakfast and it was cold riding. There are a few ranches or claims across the desert but they have to haul their water. We stopped for breakfast at Little Lost River 16 miles from our night camp. Reached Arco at 11:00 AM - 60 miles from Blackfoot and this river the only water in that distance. This desert isn't as desolate looking as the Utah

desert and the road is better. This being a good road on which we made very good time.

Drove out from Arco about 2 miles and stopped at the Big Lost River to fish. They say there is the best fishing in the state in this river. We were here about 24 hours and had all the fish we could eat and cooked a lot to take with us and enough to cook for supper. Caught 65 in all.

Left this place at 1:55 and had gone but a few miles when our troubles commenced. Had a tire blow out every few miles. One casing was all shot to pieces. Changed and put on another one and hadn't gone but a few rods when that one went up. It was then nearly 10:00 P.M. and we had made only 27 miles. There was nothing to do now but pull out by the side of the road and go to bed.

We were now in the hills and lava rocks. We made our bed down by the car and were soon asleep but were soon awakened by a car passing. This is a well traveled road for one where the towns are so far apart. These men said they would phone from Arco to Pocatello for a tire casing for us and the mail carrier could bring it out to his last stop, 11 miles back. They left us a little water and went on their way.

In the morning (Thursday) we filled the tire case with sand to try to make a ranch at Cottonwood Creek about 3 miles farther on. We finally made it, most of us walking. Had to stay until Monday afternoon, a pretty good place to camp but rather monotonous. Had grouse, rabbits and plenty of sarvice berries.

Sunday afternoon Todd and Erle got a horse and buggy from some people living here and went to Arco to see about the tire. It had come at last from Salt Lake and they got back Monday afternoon. It didn't take us long to get ready and we left about four o'clock. Had a long hard ride of 60 miles to Hailey, most of it over rough hilly roads covered with lava rock which makes hard riding and is very hard on the car.

Arrived in Hailey about nine o'clock. Had supper and rooms but were getting so used to sleeping out of doors that we didn't enjoy being shut in the rooms. This isn't much of a town - about 2,000 but looks seedy. Had to wait for the bank to open Tuesday morning so got a late start about 9:40. Made Boise that night, about one o'clock, another long hard ride through desert and sage brush and hills and mountains. Had two blow-outs and had to vulcanize tires which delayed us three hours or more on the desert. Stayed in Boise till nearly six o'clock Wednesday evening. This is a pretty good sized town and has some nice big buildings but is most awfully hot.

We drove out about 30 miles and camped at a ranch and slept in the new hay. It made a fine bed. Got a good start Thursday morning and it was real cool driving - was quite cloudy and we thought it would rain but it soon cleared off and was a hot day, the hottest we have had yet.

There were some fine ranches and young orchards between Boise and the State line. Crossed the Snake River bridge at nine o'clock and were

then in Oregon at a little town called Nyssa. From there over, more desert to Vale, 24 miles. Then we followed the stage road to Westfall 30 miles - camped at a ranch and as it looked very much like rain we slept in the barn in the hay mow.

Arrived in Beulah Friday noon, a little town consisting of store and post office combined, a little hotel and blacksmith shop. Here we found we had broken the oil pump. Sent a telephoned telegram to Seattle for a new one and Erle went on to Drewsy, the next town on the stage to get the broken one mended.

We camped on the North Fork of the Malheur River. This is nice water and would be a nice camping place if there was some shade, but it is awfully hot and sunny. No fish in the river except some white fish and they are not much good.

Erle returned Saturday evening with the mended pump and some groceries so we left Sunday morning, August 31st and after a good deal of trouble arrived at Drewsey. Had dinner, laid in a good supply of groceries, did some work on the oil pump and left for Burns about a distance of 50 miles. Arrived there without further mishaps, roads good.

Left Burns at 6:00 AM Monday and reached Bend about 7:00 PM the same evening. A good run of 150 miles without trouble of any kind except that it was very cold in the morning. Near Bend we came into a forest or heavy growth of trees - cedar, fir and pine which was a relief after traveling so many miles through sage brush and desert land.

Bend is rather an odd town, being built in the midst of the forest. This is a railrowd town, the first since leaving Vale. We stayed all night here and started north Tuesday morning. Expected to reach Shaniko that evening but as we got a late start in the morning (9:30 AM) it became too dark to travel as the road was rather bad being along the hills and rocky.

We stopped at a farm house sixteen miles from Shaniko. It had rained a little nearly all day but not enough to hurt the roads which were in good condition, but as it continued to rain all night we found the roads pretty sticky.

The next morning while they were not yet more than a quarter of an inch, it was enough to make the wheels slip and we had to get out several times to lighten the load or give a push up a hill and finally had to put the chains on, however by the time we reached Shaniko at 9:30 the sun was shining and we were out of the mud.

From here on the road was like a boulevard and it was a delightful ride through immense wheat fields north to the Columbia River. We took the wrong road and went down a very steep sandy hill to Biggs on the Columbia. It is doubtful if we could have gotten up the hill again but we had a man who was hauling wheat with a six horse team hitch onto the car and pull it up. We went back a couple of miles, got on the right road which winds down a steep canyon - the rocks and scenery are grand but rather a dangerous drive - so steep and so many sharp turns.

We soon reached Millers Bridge, a toll bridge across the Deschutes River. We were now only a few miles from The Dalles. Shortly after crossing the river we stopped at a farm house and cooked our supper and had a big feed of peaches and watermelons.

We reached The Dalles at 7:00 having traveled about 110 miles. Here we got rooms - took a good clean up and cleaned up the car and in the morning Thursday at 6:30 we boarded the steamboat Tahoma bound for Portland. This trip was interesting to us every minute of the time. First watching them load the boat and stow away the freight which consisted of everything from boxes of fruit and tons and tons of baled hay to livestock, pigs in crates, sheep, cattle and horses. Lastly a farm wagon was put on the prow as close to the end as possible. The wheels taken off a smaller wagon and it was put on top of the other one. Then our car was run on to the boat by the side of the wagon without much room to spare at either end and only room enough to load and unload at the side. This was a slow boat and stopped at all landings where they were flagged or had passengers or freight to land. Sometimes they would take on a little freight at one landing, go across the river and unload it at the next.

It rained nearly all day or until we were within a few miles of Portland. The captain invited us up in the pilot house and we rode there nearly all the afternoon, which we enjoyed very much. The pilot is a very pleasant man and told us so many interesting things. The officials were all so nice to us and we met some very nice people on board. We had breakfast, dinner and supper and they set a fine table.

It was half past eight when we got to Portland, about three hours late. As we did not like Portland very well we did not stay long but put in our time to good advantage, sightseeing, which included a visit to the city park which is a beautiful place. The park policeman took charge of us (but merely because we were strangers) and piloted us around showing us the points of interest and telling us many interesting tales and traditions. We also visited the docks and went on one of the ships of Deweys fleet, the Boston.

Later - Howard has since joined the crew of the Boston on February 8, 1916.