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Luggage

In 1968, we had complicated plans for a vacation. Like most of our vacations during those years, this one was built around Paul's need to attend a professional meeting. This time, however, three meetings were involved. First, he had a paper to give at a meeting of the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics at Trinity University in San Antonio. Immediately afterward he had to be at the Summer Research Conference in Statistics at Montreat, North Carolina. The final leg of our journey would be the American Statistical Association meetings in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Timing was interesting, for with less than a day between his appearance in San Antonio and his need to be in North Carolina, he would have to fly. We needed the car for the trip to Pittsburgh. We decided we would all go to San Antonio, and the boys and I would drive in a leisurely fashion from San Antonio back to Dallas and across to North Carolina for the conference there. Then, all four of us would have several days to reach Pittsburgh for the American Statistical Association meetings.

George and Roland, at fifteen and twelve, were eager about visiting Oak Ridge, Tennessee, where we'd lived a short time the year before. We could make a slight detour across Tennessee to satisfy that wish. That helped them feel better about Montreat, a part of the trip they were sure would be dull. Mountain retreats are not high on the list of flat-land adolescents. The trip would be made in our 1968 yellow Ford station. Although I had driven across country alone, I'd never had a journey with two boys along.

We had a good deal of fun planning our driving trip, with George and Roland happily entering into the logistics of our travel. They were particularly eager to spend the night at a Holiday Inn in Memphis because they remembered its prominent location overlooking the Mississippi River. We requested rooms facing the river. Then they wanted to detour to Oak Ridge to spend the night in a motel where some of the rooms overlooked the drive-in movie and reputedly had speakers in the room. We reserved such a room. They also looked forward to visiting friends in Oak Ridge before we drove on to Montreat, but the motel/drive-in experience was high on their list. Later they were anticipating some side trips on the way home from Pittsburgh.

San Antonio, with its Alamo, Brackenridge Park, River Walk, and vestiges of the previous year's Hemisfair was a delightful start to our vacation. We spent the night in a dormitory suite at Trinity University, with the boys enjoying their own bedroom. That night we had the first of a number of surprises on our trip when the boys woke us up, wide-eyed. They had been awakened by a flashlight shining in their eyes. A nightwatchman, who had not been told that both rooms of the suite were occupied, had entered their room to investigate. He apparently decided they were legitimate for he apologized and left quietly without disturbing Paul and me next door.

Next morning, we parted with Paul after breakfast and left for our two-hundred-mile ride back to Dallas. All of our luggage, minus what Paul needed at Montreat, had been packed before we left for San Antonio, an extensive operation since our journey would involve

several nights on the road, with informal clothing for the visits in San Antonio, Oak Ridge, and Montreat, and more formal wear for Pittsburgh. Before we went to bed, the boys got their assignments for packing the wagon the next morning when we left Dallas.

The driving went without incident. At lunch in Little Rock, I commented that we were making excellent time. However, later as we crossed the Mississippi River into Memphis, with our Holiday Inn in sight, I was stunned to realize that I had left all of *my* clothes in a hanging suitcase in the closet at home. George's helpful suggestion was that, since we were ahead of schedule, we should drive the five hundred miles back to Dallas and get the bag. I hoped there was a less arduous solution, such as replacing all my clothes. However, there was no place to shop, nor any time, and anyway such an idea was too expensive. As we registered at the motel, the solution came to me. When we spent the previous year in Oak Ridge, Paul had flown back to Dallas several times, changing planes in Memphis. Why not get my sister Martha to collect the bag and put it on a Braniff plane in Dallas? We could then pick it up the following morning as we left Memphis. The airport was actually on our way. Martha was obliging, got the bag, put it in a cardboard carton, and took it to the airport in a driving rain. I really owe her. We got the bag the next morning at the Braniff freight terminal - for seven dollars!

The drive across Tennessee to Oak Ridge was uneventful, except that the reservation we had for a room facing the drive-in theater was denied us because of the X-rated movie then showing. We were housed in comfortable but mundane rooms away from the drive-in. George and Roland enjoyed driving around Oak Ridge to visit some of the friends they had made the previous year. We left early the next morning for the Blue Ridge Mountain drive on state highways, bound for Montreat. I was more than happy to reach Montreat in mid-afternoon. I love the mountains, but I found that driving with two youngsters allowed little time for sightseeing.



Montreat is a summer retreat for the Presbyterian Church in a lovely mountain setting. The accommodations there were not as informal as the boys would have wished - they had to dress for dinner every evening, and they were far from happy about the prospect. We did have large, comfortable rooms overlooking a delightful stream and swimming pool. They had brought their golf clubs because there was a golf course nearby at Black Mountain – as it happens, close to Billy Graham's home. They were able to get reservations at the club, and we delivered them to the first tee. They called us from there much earlier than we expected, asking to be picked up. It seems that the seventh hole of the course was a par seven hole, with the green far up the mountain, supposedly. After they lost all their golf balls, they still hadn't been able to see the flagstick. "There's no such thing as a par seven hole!" George grumbled indignantly and swore off golf forever. Indeed, he didn't play for a year. We had burgers on the way back to Montreat, mitigating some of their disgust over the golf, and having to dress for dinner at the lodge.

(Ed note: George and I made it to the 17th hole of the golf course, which was a par 6. Lots of little hills on the right, and we had been told that the green was just on the other side of one of them. Hitting to just the other side of the wrong hill was more than a little frustrating and accelerated our no-more-golf-balls emergency.)



When Paul's conference was over, we drove on to Pittsburgh, stopping in Roanoke, Virginia, for lobster, a first for the boys. Once they got over being embarrassed by the waitress, who called them both "Sugah" and tied bibs around their necks, they found the lobsters well worth waiting and suffering a bib for. They did have a momentary confusion with their first experience with fingerbowls.

We enjoyed the ride across Pennsylvania, especially the neat countryside and the attractive barns. It was a first for all of us. In Pittsburgh we had reservations on the outskirts of town at a motel with miniature golf and other recreational activities to keep George and Roland happy when I attended some of the meetings with Paul. Most of the time, Paul went alone to the Golden Triangle conference headquarters for his meetings while the boys and I explored Pittsburgh, especially enjoying the river area. In downtown

Pittsburgh a friendly policeman pulled me over to tell me that my right rear tire was low and directing me to the closest gas station. Unfortunately, the Pirates were not playing while we were there, but we found plenty to do. Our only disappointment came when we were refused admission to a penthouse restaurant because the boys weren't wearing ties.

The night before we were to leave, I joined Paul for dinner and the ceremony making him a Fellow of the American Statistical Association. Next morning, I took him in to his early breakfast meeting and returned to get the car ready to pick him up at noon to start the long drive home. However, about ten o'clock I got a call from one of his colleagues to come pick him up. He had become ill - but that's a whole separate story. By early afternoon, he felt fine, and we began a somewhat twisting journey home. Stops included the Football Hall of Fame in Canton, Ohio, and a visit to the Indianapolis Speedway, where the boys were excited to see Mario Andretti running a Formula I racecar about the course, testing tires. The noise of even one car on that track was almost as good for them as seeing the Memorial Day race.



We met friends in St. Louis and watched the Cardinals play. Roland was especially amused when our friend Carl Marshall sought to alleviate a dull game by predicting that the next batter, not known as a power hitter, would hit a homerun. He actually did homer on the first pitch, and shy Roland announced in an amazingly loud voice to everyone around us, "We have a prophet in our midst!"

From St. Louis to Dallas was mercifully an uneventful journey, back to flat country and straight highways. Home at last - with luggage full of dirty clothes.