

CHAPTER LXX

VACATIONING TO WISCONSIN

By Ruth

But we must leave this fascinating subject of children a moment and tell about the wonderful trip that Howard and Ruth took back to the old Homestead, as it were. Howard, of course, had never seen Wausau or any part of Wisconsin, which is so dear to all the hearts of the Parlin family, so the summer of 1930 we took our vacation by driving out there in our little green Tudor Ford sedan. We left August 8th and returned August 23rd, having driven a total of 3,411 miles, and, we might add, at a total expense of \$168, thanks to overnight cabins. We could have done Chicago in two days, but as Ruth's friend was not expecting us until the following day, we laid off and did the remaining one hundred miles the following day.

From Chicago we headed for Wausau, going by way of Brodhead, Wisconsin, (birthplace of Grandfather Parlin). Grandfather has always told "whopping" tales about the watermelons in Brodhead, but as they were out of season, we had no opportunity to check up on his story, but - the blueberry pie we had we will never forget!

Having somewhat recovered from the shock of being greeted by this sign as we entered Brodhead - "The Sportiest Golf Course by a Dam Site" - we went over to the Green County Bank and asked for Ed Cole. When he found out that we were "Charlie Parlin's youngsters" we were given a royal welcome and, among other things, invited to spend the summer! He hurriedly called in his sister Frank to see us and she stopped everyone she saw who had known Charlie Parlin and introduced us. He drove us about the town, showing us the house where Grandfather was born, the barn where he played as a boy and

the elm trees which Grandfather says he helped to water as a boy. They certainly are a worthy monument to his efforts for they are handsome trees towering far, far above the good-sized white house. Everyone urged us most cordially to stay, but Mrs. Youker was expecting us in Madison that night so we had to drive on.

We stayed one night in Madison, drove around the campus grounds of the University, viewed the beautiful city in its odd arrangement, and the following morning stayed long enough to go up into the Capitol. Then left for Wausau.

Our three days in Wausau were full to the brim with entertainment. It seemed as if everybody in town went out of his way to be good to us. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Gilbert entertained us in their beautiful home and we made that our headquarters. They had a dinner party for us the first night with Agnes Leut and her father. Agnes had a luncheon for us at Essex Lodge and a De Luxe picnic at High Banks. One day Howard went fishing with Mr. Crocker while Ruth went to Mrs. Mathie's luncheon at Hotel Wausau and Mrs. Crocker's picnic at Rothchild's Park. It was a huge affair and such good baked beans! Howard and Mr. Crocker appeared decidedly late with an excuse - forget what it was, but it wasn't very good.

Thanks to the Crocker's suggestion, we took the three fish which the men had caught and stopped at Essex Lodge where they cleaned and cooked them for us for our lunch. Howard was very proud of those fish until he happened to overhear the men talking as they cleaned them. One laughed and said, "Look at this one. It must have jumped through the bottom of the boat." We stayed that night at Plum Lake and the next day headed for Canada.

Those narrow country roads were such a maze that we had a hard time trying to find the road out but by a process of trial and error (no

signs around) we finally got started on the right road. We drove north through the beautiful lake region and into the desolate, deserted section of Northern Wisconsin and Michigan, where the road was frequently only the width of one car and to have met another coming from the opposite direction would have been a serious affair. We arrived in Sault Ste. Marie in the early evening and spent the night on the Canadian side.

From there to North Bay and on to Ottawa was a desolate ride, but interesting. For forty miles at a stretch we would not pass another car or a habitation of any kind. Most of the mining villages through which we went were boarded up and we saw only two or three people about the whole town. The country was dotted here and there with beautiful lakes and waterfalls so we felt that we were well repaid for the effort involved. And it was effort at times as the roads were only dirt and their idea of repairing them was to dump carloads of dirt on them and let the traffic do the leveling. For a stretch of twenty-five miles, one day, we went through dirt up to the hubs of the car. However, we reached Ottawa without mishap.

From Ottawa we went to Montreal and because we had been making such good time we decided to run up to Quebec as Howard had never seen it. It was a warm day and the brewery odors were nearly overwhelming, so we left precipitantly.

Howard had heard many tales about the beauty and grandeur of Lake Parlin House and Lake (in Maine) so we decided to make that our one big extravagance. Up to this time we had been patronizing tourist camps each night, which were comfortable, inexpensive and airy but not luxurious, so Lake Parlin House at five dollars a night was a "splurge" for us. We had a grand time - swam, played the piano, played croquet and astonished the natives by our prowess at Ping Pong!

Just before we left in the morning I interrupted the reverie of two old codgers sitting before the fireplace to inquire if many Parlins visited Lake Parlin. "Oh, no," he said, "there is only one man left by that name." We did not wait to elucidate him.

We stopped at Skowhegan, Maine, to see the Parlin ancestral home which Grandfather has written about in Volume I and then headed for the White Mountains to catch a glimpse of the country that Howard had known as a boy.

The last day of our trip was the only rain which we encountered the entire trip, but our motto was "Franklin to Franklin or bust." (That is, New Hampshire to New Jersey) We stopped long enough, however, for dinner at our favorite Sweetheart Inn on the Mohawk Trail and arrived home in the early evening.