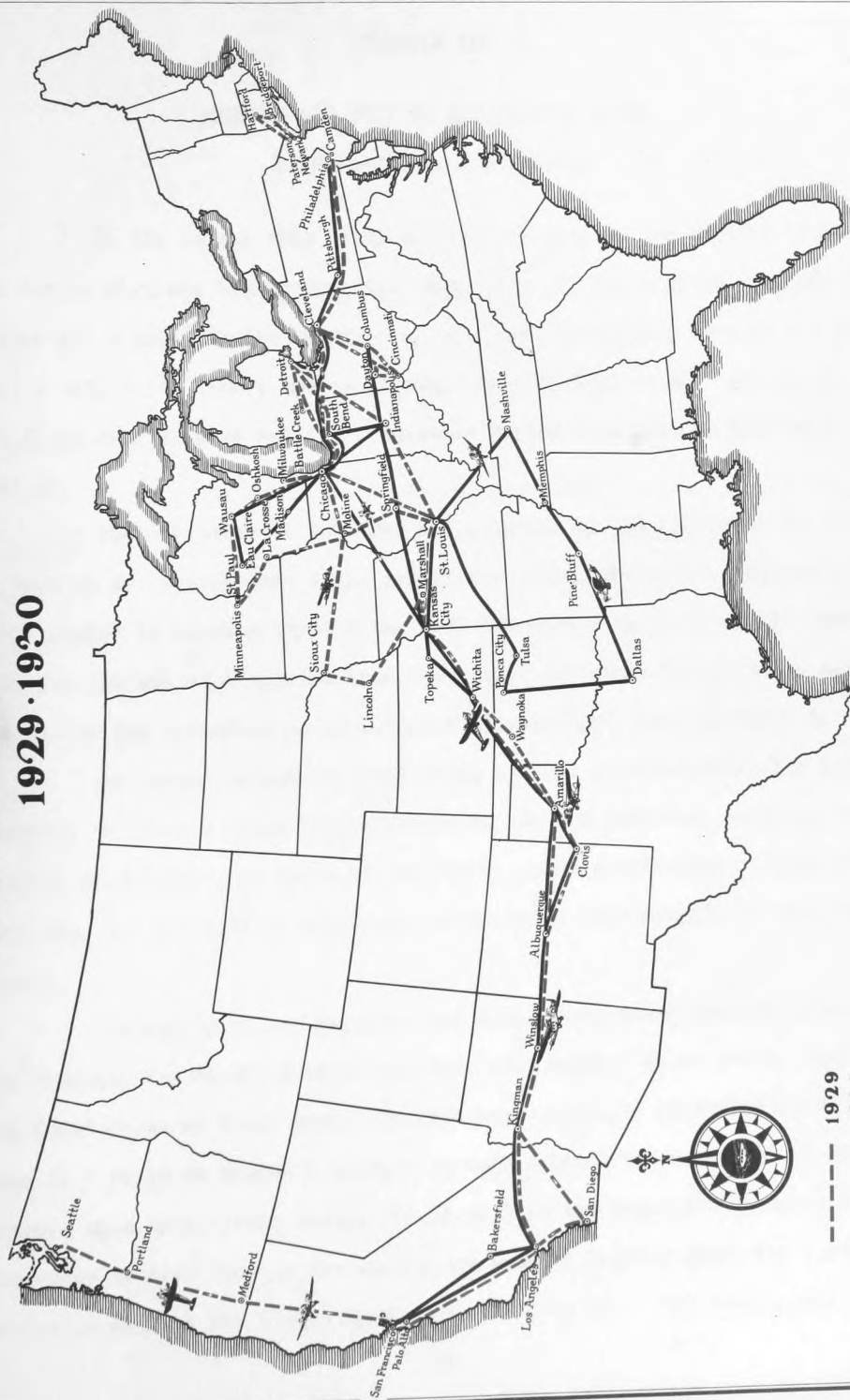


JOURNEYS BY AIR

1929-1930



--- 1929
— 1930

0 100 200 300 400 500 Miles

CHAPTER XLV

ANOTHER AIR TRIP TO THE PACIFIC COAST

By Grandfather and Dorothy

On the second trip which Grandfather made to the Pacific Coast in the Curtis airplane Grandmother went with him. It was a grand trip and Grandmother got a great thrill as we so quickly and comfortably crossed the country, a trip which before had meant many hours of train ride. Mrs. G. D. Jones and Ellen went with us and at Albuquerque Hester came down on the Santa Fe to meet us.

The adventure of the trip was enhanced by the fact that the services to back up air travel were still primitive. Jake, the pilot, trained in the Navy, wished to start every morning with the dawn - in fact, Grandfather took a moving picture of a sunrise from the plane. To start early it was necessary for all to get breakfast in some "one arm" all-night cheap restaurant.

En route, except in a few large cities, accommodations for persons arriving by private plane were inadequate. On one occasion, arriving at an airport unannounced, we found no one there, so we confiscated a truck and with Abe, the co-pilot as chauffeur, drove the ladies merrily to town for lunch.

In flying to Los Angeles, you cross three great mountain ranges - the Rockies, the Sierra Nevadas and the Coast Range. As we safely topped the Coast Range we found ourselves over huge masses of billowing white clouds. Once in a while we caught a glimpse through a break in the clouds of orange groves, then only clouds again. Could we find Los Angeles? It would be dangerous to drop through the clouds not knowing whether there was a hill below us or whether the clouds might extend to the sea. But fortunately right

over Los Angeles was a hole through the clouds and soon all were saying with joy "All's well that ends well."

The rainy season having already set in the Pacific Northwest, we went to Seattle by train, where we were joined by George and Dorothy, who were vacationing and had driven to Chicago and from there had taken train to Seattle. It had been agreed that if business acquaintances were found who would like to go east in the Curtis plane, they were to have the preference. But none such could be found, so George and Dorothy had a chance to return by air. Grandfather will let Dorothy tell the rest of the story.

Dorothy's Account of the Trip

Grandfather made it possible for George and Dorothy to see this much talked of west coast from the air! What a thrill for the two - one which might never come again.

Off to Chicago by way of Philadelphia, Gettysburg, Pittsburgh on a gorgeous day in October - a new Chevrolet to eat up the mileage - nothing to do but go. In Chicago a garageman stored the car and a train became the means of conveyance to Seattle. Flat country, corn-fields, then the Rocky Mountains. While spots of snow could be detected towards the peaks, the mountains disappointed Dorothy, who expected nothing less than a range of snow-covered peaks like Orizaba or Popo in Mexico.

At last Grandfather and Grandmother met the two travelers in Seattle. A day of sightseeing there; another at Portland and a night of San Francisco. Chinese holiday life, its parks, war memorials and shore gave us a hasty glimpse of those much talked-of cities. The weather allowed us a gorgeous view of snow-capped Mt. Shasta on the way down from Portland.

Another brilliant day, this one for taking off from the South San Francisco airport. The noise of engines, whirring of propellers, dust

flying made this occasion quite an adventure. The longest bridge in the world looked like a ribbon from the air. Hills began to break the flat appearance of the coast land. Tiny black tripods dotted the landscape. We had reached oil land with Bakersfield our immediate destination. Weather reports of storms ahead in Texas changed our plans to head for Amarillo and sent us to Los Angeles. George and Dorothy were glad of an opportunity to see this city which was to become the scene of the Olympic games two years later.

Hollywood, most talked of appendage of Los Angeles, presented a most uninteresting front to the tourist - an ordinary commercial center, with a main street and only a sparse showing of movie studios. A Chinese garden, one of the large show places to be visited on the shore, intrigued our eyes and Grandfather's camera. In the movies taken by Grandfather constantly you will find the best memorandum of our excursions - Will Rogers' home at Beverly Hills, an ever-working oil well standing in the middle of a busy thoroughfare, a miniature golf course decorated with extraordinary flowers. The cheapness of the delicious food served almost everywhere in the West astounded those of us accustomed to New York prices.

The best weather report ever received by the pilot started the day's flight of heaviest mileage on our trip. Lunch at a Harvey Hotel in Winslow, hours over the Painted Desert which showed strikingly in the brilliant sunshine, marked an uneventful flight to Albuquerque. Mrs. Jones and Ellen (who were to return to Chicago with us) and Hester, together with many curious folk, met the plane and did the honors for the evening.

Next morning we were off with the dawn, but soon encountered clouds and were forced to return to Albuquerque for weather reports. The reports were unfavorable - we could not proceed until tomorrow. So off by automobile to Santa Fe, a city which Grandmother had always wanted to see but never had.

What "atmosphere"! A somewhat sleepy town with its Indians and recuperating whites, artistic souls and otherwise. Hester Jones made a very interesting guide to the "Palacio", once home of the governors, now a museum of the state of New Mexico, and then out to an Indian pueblo said to have existed when Columbus discovered America. Here Teofalo, aged one hundred and four years by his own account, beat his drum. He cherished a picture of Kit Carson on the wall of his very sparsely furnished room.

Albuquerque doesn't offer much for small boys in the way of amusement, but calls itself capitol of the state and home of the state university.

Have you ever sailed over clouds or under clouds or in between clouds? We did! And what fearful and awful thoughts one can have! Sight of an emergency landing field would have tempted the rest of us to bring the plane down, but the pilot thought otherwise. On we went, catching glimpses of the earth only every once in a while. A sudden drive through a hole in the clouds brought the first feeling of real security we had had since leaving the ground. And Clovis, for which we had been steering, was only a few miles off!

Mountains, with their woods, tiny lakes, snow, became a scarcity, giving way to flat farm land. How gorgeous the shading of color - great blocks of brilliant green, small squares of brown, rectangles of yellow - all changing constantly with the shifting of clouds above us.

Then Wichita, whose inhabitants call it "the air capitol of the West," and truly its airport boasted more planes per acre than we had seen so far. At Kansas City Grandfather had to depart by train for an engagement near Chicago. He left behind a day of cloudy weather and bumpy air.

We landed in Chicago in the rain after traveling up into Wisconsin because we were lost, shooting down close to a town to read the name on a

railroad station, picking up location from a town name printed by some enterprising soul on the roof of a building. George insisted that the taxi ride into town from the landing field was much more hazardous than flying. Unfortunately this part of our trip had come to an end.

We became one of those automobiles on the road looking like small bugs from the air. But thrills are still to be gotten on the earth as well as above it - driving up to Madison, Grandfather's Alma Mater; down to Brodhead, his birthplace; seeing as much of Wisconsin as time allowed us. On to Detroit, Buffalo, Erie, across Pennsylvania on the newly opened Roosevelt Highway. But vacations must go!

An additional paragraph by Grandfather:

To Dorothy's paragraphs Grandfather wishes to add just a word to say that he took moving pictures of some of those clouds and in the pictures today you can see dogs and bears and giants, and what do you think we saw up there among the clouds? We saw Santa Claus himself - that's no whopper - Grandfather can prove it, for he took a picture, and when you see it, you will have to grant that we saw Santa Claus himself.

When we left the plane at the close of this trip, our adventures in the Curtis airplane were over. The aviation study and aviation speeches had all been executed per schedule and, shortly thereafter, the great depression of 1929-1932 setting in, the plane was sold.