

# DIARY OF TWO BOYS AND A BUG

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This is the story about a Model T and a trip made in 1929 by two young men who set out to see the USA in a 1918 Model T bug. One was my father, Raymond Everett, age 20 and his brother, Earl Everett age 23. They grew up in Seattle, Washington and Mountain Home, Idaho and then moved to Boise.

Some will ask, "what is a bug?" Well, the building of custom cars started a long time ago. These cars had hopped-up engines and custom bodies, which could be homemade or built by a manufacturer such as Ames or Faultless. Known as a "bug" in the twenties, they are more commonly known as speedsters today.

This Model T bug in this story was built as a dirt track racer by Frank Jackson of Mountain Home, Idaho. He owned the first gas station and garage in town, called Oregon Trail Service. Dad's first job was working for Frank Jackson.



Oregon Trail Service Station, Mountain Home, Idaho

The bug raced dirt tracks in the West including Hailey, Idaho and Salt Lake City, Utah. When the car was "retired" from racing, my dad purchased it.

The Model T bug which was built from a 1918 Ford. The frame was lengthened; it had a Maxwell steering gear; shock absorbers; and a Stewart Warner vacuum tank to draw gasoline from the rear mounted gas tank.

My dad and Uncle Earl decided to take a trip to see the country and packed the bug with camping gear and supplies. They started off on May 16, 1929 from Boise on their adventure. Selected excerpts from my dad's diary follows:

MAY 16: FIRST DAY OUT. BAD LUCK RIGHT FROM THE START. LIMPED INTO MOUNTAIN HOME WITH A BROKEN ENGINE HANGER. WITH THAT FIXED, WE WENT ON TO BRUNEAU. WE CROSSED 35 MILES OF REAL BAD-LANDS. THE ROAD WAS VERY ROCKY. TOOK ABOUT 3 HOURS TO CROSS. THE NEXT 30 MILES WAS BETTER, WITH TWO OR THREE CREEKS, BUT WHERE WE STOPPED WE HAD TO MAKE A DRY CAMP.

MAY 17: BETTER LUCK TODAY. WE STOPPED AT OWYHEE STORE IN DUCK VALLEY AND STAYED 3 HOURS AS THE MAN THERE WANTED HIS DELCO FIXED. VERY HILLY COUNTRY BETWEEN DUCK VALLEY AND ELKO, NEVADA. WE DIDN'T GET QUITE TO ELKO TONIGHT.

My dad and Uncle Earl had different interests as young men. While dad was fascinated with automobiles, Earl's interest was in radios. As a young boy growing up on a farm in rural Idaho, Earl studied books about radios and eventually was able to build his own ham receiver and transmitter. Converting a chicken house to a radio shack, he was able to talk to ham operators around the world. Earl's hobby led him to a career in radio and television repair. Dad's interest in automobiles led to his career in auto repair and automobile restoration.

I want to explain the three-hour stay in Duck Valley. The "Delco" was a radio and Earl was able to repair it for the storeowner in Owyhee. This was pretty good for a self-taught young man of 23 years old. (I hope the store owner filled their gas tank for them.)

MAY 18: TEN MINUTE DRIVE TO ELKO. WE TOOK IN THE TOWN FOR A COUPLE OF HOURS, THEN DROVE TO WITHIN FORTY MILES OF SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH. WE CROSSED THE GREAT SALT LAKE



On the road somewhere between Bruneau, Idaho and Elko, Nevada

DESERT WHICH WAS 48 MILES LONG OF SOLID SALT, FOUR FEET THICK. AFTER LEAVING THE FLAT SALT BED IT WAS STILL 35 MILES TO THE FIRST WATER, MAKING 83 MILES BETWEEN WATER.

Driving this stretch between Elko and Salt Lake City, Earl ran off the road and made dad so upset he wouldn't let Earl drive the rest of the trip.

MAY 19: JUST DROVE TO SALT LAKE CITY TODAY. HAD TO PUT NEW BANDS IN AND FIX A TIRE.

By the time they reached Salt Lake they had burned up the transmission bands. Dad relined them with Johns-Mannville brake lining. They chattered a little but lasted their entire trip.

MAY 20: VISITED SALT LAKE CITY ALL DAY TODAY. VISITED THE AIRPORT AND HAD OUR FIRST GLIMPSE OF A 12-PASSENGER FOKKER PLANE AND SAW HER TAKE OFF FOR LOS ANGELES. WE NEXT VISITED SALT AIR PAVILLION, WHICH WAS NOT YET OPEN. RETURNING TO TOWN WE WENT TO THE ROYAL CRYSTAL SALT CO. AND WERE SHOWN THROUGH AND THEY MADE US A PRESENT OF TWO CARTONS OF SALT. EARL VISITED KSL (RADIO STATION), AFTER SOME DIFFICULTY FINDING IT. WHILE IN SALT LAKE WE ALSO VISITED SOME OF EARL'S HAM RADIO FRIENDS.

MAY 21: LEFT SALT LAKE TODAY AND SAW TWO OF EARL'S AMATEUR RADIO FRIENDS, WHERE WE SPENT CONSIDERABLE TIME AND WERE INVITED TO DINNER. IN PROVO THERE WEREN'T ANY HAMS AT HOME, SO WE WENT ON AND CAMPED AT RICH-FIELD.

MAY 22: MADE BRYCE CANYON ABOUT NOON TODAY. WE WERE IN SOME RAIN ON THE WAY AND IT IS STILL CLOUDY. BRYCE CANYON IS A MASS OF PINNACLES FORMING CASTLES AND CHURCHES AND CATHEDRALS AND ANYTHING YOU WISH TO PICTURE.

MAY 23 & 24: SPENT THESE TWO DAYS EXPLORING THE TRAILS AND TODAY I WALKED TO TROPICS, A LITTLE TOWN 14 MILES BY ROAD BUT ONLY 5 MILES BY TRAIL THROUGH THE CANYON.

MAY 25 & 26: VERY WINDY THESE TWO DAYS BUT WE HAD FUN ANYWAY. WE GOT ACQUAINTED WITH THE RANGER, R. B. MCALISTER AND COOKED SEVERAL MEALS TOGETHER. TODAY WE HELPED HIM DE-HORN A BUNCH OF STEERS.

How about that? The National Park Ranger was running his own herd of cows on park land. Today this might be viewed as a conflict of interest!

MAY 27: WE LEFT BRYCE LATE THIS MONDAY MORNING AND DELIVERED A LETTER FOR THE RANGER'S WIFE IN KANAB, WHERE THEY HAVE A STORE AND GAS STATION. WE ARE VERY CLOSE TO ZION NATIONAL PARK TODAY AND ARE CAMPED IN A DEEP CANYON. ALMOST FORGOT TO STATE THAT WE PASSED AN OLD HISTORIC PLACE OF THE INDIAN

DAYS, PIPE SPRINGS NATIONAL MONUMENT, AN OASIS IN THE DESERT. THE ROAD WAS VERY ROUGH FROM FREDONIA TO WHERE WE ARE. I THINK IT WILL BE BETTER THE REST OF THE WAY. THE OLD FORT AT PIPE SPRINGS STILL STANDS AND SURELY HAS ENOUGH LOOP HOLES IN IT.

MAY 28: FOUND ZION PARK VERY NICE INDEED. IT IS A LARGER CANYON WITH SOME OF THE WALLS TOWERING 2,500 FEET HIGH. WE WALKED UP TO CANYON TRAIL AS FAR AS WE COULD GO. THE EAST WALL OF THE CANYON SEEPS WATER ALL OVER AND THEY CALL THEM WEEPING ROCKS.



Ray Everett in Zion National Park

MAY 29: CLIMBED LADY MOUNTAIN TODAY - 2,800 FT. ABOVE THE CANYON FLOOR; TWO MILES OF TRAIL. TWO THOUSAND FEET OF CABLE TO HELP THE CLIMBERS AND 1,400 STEPS CARVED IN SOLID ROCK.

MAY 30. LEFT ZION THIS MORNING AND BACK-TRACKED THE DISTANCE TO WHERE WE LEFT THE 89 HIGHWAY. CAMPED TONIGHT VERY NEAR GRAND CANYON.

MAY 31: HAD OUR FIRST GLIMPSE OF GRAND CANYON TODAY FROM THE NORTH RIM. DIDN'T THINK SO MUCH OF IT, BUT PEOPLE SAY THE SOUTH RIM VIEW IS FINE.

JUNE 1: WORKED ON THE CAR A LITTLE TODAY AND LAID AROUND CAMP.

JUNE 2: LEFT THIS MORNING FOR THE SOUTH RIM, WHICH IS 13 MILES BY AIR, 23 MILES BY TRAIL AND 250 MILES BY ROAD. CAME WITHIN 35 MILES OF CAMERON TODAY. THE ROADS ON THE NORTH SIDE OF THE RIVER WERE TERRIBLE. CAMPED ABOUT 35 MILES THIS SIDE OF CAMERON TONIGHT.

JUNE 3: WENT ON TO THE CAMP GROUNDS ON THE SOUTH RIM OF THE CANYON AND ARRIVED HERE AT 6:30 P.M.

JUNE 4: SPENT THE DAY LOOKING AT THE GRAND CANYON FROM THE SOUTH RIM TODAY AND MAKING THE DRIVES TO THE DIFFERENT VIEW POINTS. WE WERE ACCOMPANIED BY SOME PEOPLE FROM NEBRASKA WHOM WE MET LAST NIGHT.



JUNE 5: OUR NEBRASKA FRIENDS AND MYSELF MADE THE TRIP DOWN BRIGHT ANGEL TRAIL TO THE RIVER TODAY. IT IS SOME MAD RIVER. THERE WAS A NATURAL SWIMMING POOL AT THE MOUTH OF A CREEK, JUST AT THE RIVER'S EDGE, WHERE WE BOTH TOOK A GOOD SWIM.

JUNE 6: LEFT GRAND CANYON PARK BEHIND AND ARE TRAVELING WITH "NEBRASKA." WE REACHED PHOENIX THIS EVENING.

JUNE 7: LOOKED PHOENIX OVER THIS MORNING AND TRAVELED ABOUT HALFWAY TO YUMA THIS AFTERNOON. PROPOSED TOWN SIGHTS ARE LAID OUT ALL ALONG THE WAY TO BE WATERED BY BOULDER DAM.



Earl Everett and the bug in the Painted Desert in Arizona

JUNE 8: PASSED THROUGH YUMA AND HAD TO OPEN UP ALL OUR STUFF AS THEY DO NOT WANT TO CARRY COTTON BOWLWEEVIL AND OTHER THINGS TO CALIFORNIA. THE COLORADO RIVER IS THE BOUNDARY OF CALIFORNIA AND ARIZONA - CLEAR TO THE SOUTHERN POINT OF NEVADA. WENT CLEAR TO SAN DIEGO TODAY.

JUNE 9: DROVE ALL AROUND TOWN TODAY AND TOOK A LONG LOOK AT THE WATERFRONT. TOOK A SIGHTSEEING TRIP ALONG THE BAY TODAY, VISITING BATTLESHIPS AND SUBMARINES. WE WERE MADE A PRESENT OF A HALIBUT AND ANOTHER BIG BARRACUDA FISH, WHICH WE HAD FOR SUPPER AND BREAKFAST.

JUNE 10: WENT TO TIJUANA, MEXICO TODAY WHERE WE STAYED TWO OR THREE HOURS, THEN WE DROVE ON TO ABOUT HALFWAY TO LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA.

JUNE 11: DROVE TO LONG BEACH TODAY AND FOUND QUITE AN AMUSEMENT RESORT. ALSO WENT SWIMMING. STAYED QUITE AWHILE THEN DROVE TO A TOURIST PARK BETWEEN L.A. AND LONG BEACH.

JUNE 12: DROVE IN NEBRASKA'S CAR TO WILMINGTON WHERE WE TOOK THE BOAT TO CATALINA ISLAND. HAD A WONDERFUL TIME AND SAW FLYING FISH ON THE WAY.

JUNE 13. DROVE TO LOS ANGELES AND LOST OUR NEBRASKA FRIENDS IN THE TRAFFIC, WHICH WAS THE LAST WE SAW OF THEM. WENT TO SEE OUR FRIENDS, MYERS, IN L.A. WHICH IS OUR DESTINATION FOR THE TIME BEING.

Dad told me they arrived in Los Angeles with 10¢ and a banana! It's a good thing they had some friends to stay with.

Needing money for the rest of the trip, they looked for work. Earl, being the oldest, thought he would have no trouble finding a job. As luck would have it, Dad got a job first. He got a job as an electrician's helper on a new hotel being built at Fifth and Figueroa streets. He was cutting and threading water pipe, which is what was used for electrical conduit. He also wheeled concrete on a catwalk several stories up. Earl got a job at Westinghouse Electric.

The two stayed with friends and worked about five weeks; then hit the road again.

JULY 22: MADE THE CAMPGROUND IN THE PARK ABOUT 11:30 A.M. AND MET TWO BOYS FROM L.A. WHO JUST CAME IN WHEN WE DID. THEY ARE ON THEIR VACATION. WE CAMPED TOGETHER AND HAD A REAL SWIM THIS EVENING. THEIR NAMES WERE LAWRENCE (ALIAS "RED") AND GEORGE ANDERSON.

JULY 23: THE GIANT SEQUOIAS ARE SURELY NICE TO SEE. WE WENT SWIMMING TWICE TODAY AND WENT FOR A HIKE.



Deep in the Redwoods, Ray and Bug

JULY 24: WENT SWIMMING AND HIKING THIS MORNING. THEN DROVE DOWN TO ANOTHER SWIMMING HOLE ABOUT 25 MILES OUT OF THE PARK AND CAMPED IN THE FOOTHILLS TONIGHT.

JULY 25: TODAY WE LEFT OUR FRIENDS AND MADE YOSEMITE PARK ABOUT 4:30 P.M. HAD A BLOWOUT TODAY AND TORE A GOOD TUBE ALL UP. WE PUT A TIRE ON THAT WE JUST BOUGHT IN FRESNO.

JULY 26: MADE ALL THE DRIVES IN THE PARK TODAY AND SAW YOSEMITE FALLS, BRIDAL VAIL FALLS, MIRROR LAKE AND ALL POINTS OF INTEREST.

JULY 27: LEFT YOSEMITE PARK TODAY AND TRAVELED TO SAN FRANCISCO AND OAKLAND. WE CROSSED THE SAN FRANCISCO BAY BRIDGE JUST RECENTLY COMPLETED AND IT IS OVER 7 MILES LONG. LONGEST IN THE WORLD. CROSSED BACK TO OAKLAND ON THE FERRY BOAT FROM SAN FRANCISCO AND DROVE FIVE MILES TO A TOURIST CAMP.

JULY 27: FIXED A TIRE TODAY AND LOOKED OAKLAND OVER, THEN FERRIED BACK TO FRISCO AND LOOKED IT OVER. THIS IS SUNDAY. THEN WE FERRIED NORTH ACROSS THE GOLDEN GATE AND TOOK THE REDWOOD HIGHWAY MAKING ABOUT 30 MILES ON IT. HAD TOUGH LUCK TODAY. WE PUT A HEAVY BOOT LAST NIGHT IN ONE OF FRONT TIRES AND OUR CAR WOULD SHIMMY IF WE WENT OVER 20 MILES PER HOUR. FINALLY HIT UPON THE TROUBLE.

JULY 28: TRAVELED THROUGH THE REDWOODS TODAY AND CAMPED TONIGHT IN A STATE PARK ABOUT 10 MILES NORTH OF EUREKA, CALIFORNIA. HAVE SEEN THE OCEAN MOST OF THE TIME TODAY.

JULY 29: HAD TOUGH LUCK TODAY. LOTS OF FLAT TIRES ALL CAUSED BY PUNCTURE IN THE RIM SIDE OF THE TUBE. WE FOUND A PATCH WON'T HOLD THERE. STOPPED IN GRANTS PASS AND GOT A PERMIT FOR OREGON. CAMPED ABOUT 30 MILES THIS SIDE OF PORTLAND.

JULY 30: REACHED PORTLAND EARLY THIS MORNING AND GOT SEVERAL LETTERS WHICH WE WERE VERY GLAD TO RECEIVE. DROVE CLEAR TO MOUNT RANIER TODAY. GOT A WASHINGTON PERMIT IN VANCOUVER.

JULY 31. LOTS OF SNOW UP HERE. SAW SOME BEARS AND GOT SOME PICTURES OF THEM. GOT SOME FINE PICTURES OF A CHIPMUNK WHO GOT IN OUR

HAVE SOME TROUBLE WITH THE FRONT VALVE NOT WORKING. GOT TO SEATTLE OK AND STAYED AT OUR FRIENDS, MR. AND MRS. RIGSBY, IN ONE OF THEIR HOUSES.

AUGUST 2: FIXED OUR CAR THIS MORNING. WASN'T MUCH TROUBLE AS THE FRONT CAMSHAFT BEARING HAD TURNED, NOT LETTING THE TAPPET COME DOWN. WENT TO A PICNIC TODAY.

AUGUST 3: WENT TO BREMERTON NAVY YARD TODAY AND VISITED THE BATTLE SHIPS.

AUGUST 4 TO 8: HAD MANY FINE PICNICS AND LOOKED AROUND SEATTLE. SPENT ONE DAY IN BALLARD AND THE LOCKS.

AUGUST 9: STARTED BACK FOR BOISE AFTER BUYING A COUPLE OF TIRES. MADE PORTLAND OK AND CAMPED AT THE DALLES TONIGHT.

AUGUST 10. TRAVELED TODAY WITHOUT FURTHER INCIDENT AND ARRIVED BACK IN BOISE, IDAHO. OUR STARTING PLACE ABOUT 11:00 P.M. MADE THE WHOLE TRIP OK AND HOPE TO MAKE ANOTHER THIS NEXT SUMMER.

Dad and Earl must have been anxious to get home as the last day's drive was 359 miles, which included crossing the Blue Mountains in Oregon.

I would say 359 miles in one day was pretty good for a 1918 Model T Ford. This car was equipped with magneto lights and they drove at night in order to get home.

The following summer Dad and Earl continued their trip, going east. Dad didn't keep a diary on the trip east but told about their adventure. They travelled through Yellowstone National Park to points in Nebraska and Minnesota. They camped each night along the road and even found a gravel pit in New York City. From New York they followed the Atlantic coast all the way to the tips of the Florida Keys.

While crossing Florida they drove off the road and set up camp in the swamps. That night they could hear animals slithering about and decided to break camp and leave in the dark.



Camping in the snow, Earl and Bug

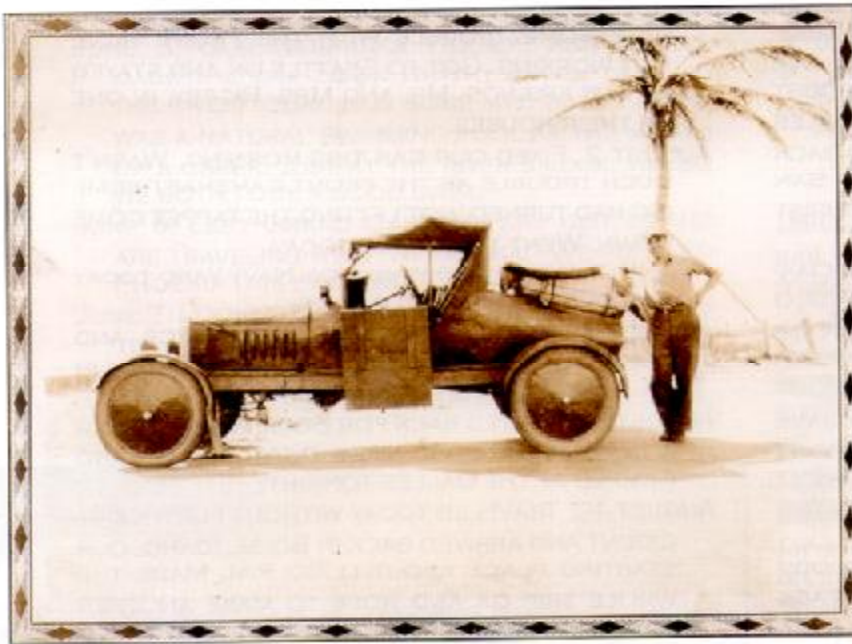
RICE AND HE GOT TAME ENOUGH FOR US TO PET HIM. TOOK SOME LONG HIKES IN THE SNOW.

AUGUST 1: STARTED FOR SEATTLE THIS MORNING BUT COULDN'T MAKE MUCH HEADWAY AS WE



East Coast trip, 1930





Earl and Bug in Palm Beach, Florida, 1930

In Georgia they were victimized by a gas station owner who sold them more gas than their tank could hold. It was a gravity type clear vision pump and the station owner had a secret lever which directed part of the fuel back into the underground tank. Rather than get into an argument they paid for the gas and left.

Earl built a portable ham radio set to take on this trip. When in the eastern U.S. he talked to many hams in the area. From his call letters they thought he was in the western U.S. His ham radio friends were very congenial, wanting to meet Ray and Earl and inviting them to dinner. They finally quit using the radio because it was taking too much of their travel time.

A modification they made on the bug was to paint the metal wheel discs black. The spiral red, white and blue barber pole stripped wheel covers caused too much attention.

In 1931 Dad traded his Model T bug to the local Ford dealer in Boise, Idaho. He bought a new 1931 Ford Model A and received a \$50.55 credit for Bug.

The Ford bug was purchased by a man who used it to haul boot-leg whiskey from Nevada to Boise.

As time went on, dad lost track of Bug but proudly hung two pictures of it in his auto shop.

In 1956 a man came into his shop and noticed the pictures. He said he had been surveying grain fields for the government and had seen a car body that looked like Bug.

Out to the farm they went and there in the sage brush was the remains of dad's Bug! All that was left was the body and the two rear

fenders. The farmer said he could have it, so Dad hauled it home. He spent the next 22 years gathering parts and restoring Bug to her original condition as she appeared on that trip in 1929. The engine block, counter balanced crankshaft, and 8-valve Rajo head were found in Everett, Washington. A Maxwell steering gear and spring type shock absorbers were located in Texas through an ad in *Hemmings Motor News*.

Dad made the patterns for the spiral wheel disc and restored them in their original red, white and blue colors.

This trip was truly one of the highlights of Dad's life and a great adventure for two boys and a 1918 Model T bug. □

*Ed. Note: Ray Everett passed away in 1989 and his son Francis inherited his dad's prized possession at that time. While Francis hasn't put the miles on it that his dad and uncle did, he does get it out from time to time. Like his dad, Francis treasures this bug — just the way it was when it toured the country in the late twenties and early thirties. The pictures below are as it appears today.*

