



RUTH AND CALVIN

CLIMBING A RAINBOW

A Family Journey of Discovery

BY CALVIN HORN

*with sixteen
color photographs*

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TO
THE CHILDREN
WHO MADE
OUR PECOS SUMMER
MEANINGFUL

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Preface

EACH OF US has one very special place, if not physical, at least in the mind and heart. It is not always easy to reach this country of the spirit — this emotional landscape — but all of us can find it if we take the time and effort, or perhaps find the honesty to see our own values clearly.

For myself and my family there was an actual, geographical area of land which made us discover the undiscovered country within ourselves. That place is in New Mexico, in the high, north section — the Pecos.

This book, which was written about my children and my wife, is an attempt to describe our personal journey of discovery through the length of one long sweet summer in the mountains and woods. It was both an external and an internal journey; we found out a great deal about the land itself, rich and full of New Mexico's great heritage of history, but more important, we discovered truths about nature, unlimited to any one particular place, and most important of all, truths about ourselves.

The Pecos is a state of mind and an affirmation of love; its counterpart can be found anywhere, not physically perhaps, but

from within. This story could have taken place in the dreaming lake country of Wisconsin; in the beaches of Florida; the majesty of the American Northwest. Or it could have taken place on the streets of New York, in Central Park.

One summer in the Pecos taught us many things, many truths we had not known or had forgotten in the turmoil of modern city life. It was a summer of renewal and re-establishment of belief. I found my family in a way I had not known before, in a deeper and truer way, and I found myself.

All of us, no matter what the circumstances or conditions of our lives, can have a Pecos Summer of our own. All it takes is the desire to seek it out. This is the story of one family's journey through one summer, back to the basic truths and honesties. It meant a great deal to us. I hope it will have meaning for those who read it.

Climbing a Rainbow

Family Strangers

"SOMETHING'S BOTHERING ME." Ruth, my wife, said this so firmly, with such conviction, that I put aside the book I had been reading and looked at her with concern. My wife had only that week returned from the hospital with our seventh child, a little daughter we named Brenda.

We were sitting in the sunroom of our Albuquerque home, reading. "Bothering you? What is it, honey? Aren't you feeling well?"

Ruth put her book down abruptly, her face unhappy, thoughtful. "No . . . yes. That is, I feel all right physically. But something's wrong, Calvin. I had a lot of time to think in the hospital."

I walked over, put my arm around her. "What is it, Ruth . . . tell me, what's the matter?" In our long years of married life and close, loving companionship, I had deep concern when Ruth was troubled or unhappy. When we had problems, we shared them.

"I don't know exactly how to phrase it, Calvin," Ruth said, hunching up her knees and frowning more than ever. "It's just that we've lost something. Something's missing."

"That's ridiculous, honey. We have a wonderful life. Look at the kids, all seven of them. We're all right financially, the business

is doing well, and we all have each other. What could possibly be missing?"

I said this quite confidently; certainly it was true. But somewhere within myself I felt an answering twinge. We were a very close family and our life together was good, but there never seemed to be enough time to be together in these later years. There were the thriving business ventures in which my brother and I were engaged, the involvement in state politics which had taken up much of my time of late, and the constant unrelenting small demands of life in metropolitan Albuquerque which kept all of us a little harried and running off in different directions. It dawned on me that we were living a life where we met only briefly, waving to one another in passing — shouting assurances of love and concern and hearing our words trailing away in the winds as we went our separate ways.

"We have to do something about it," Ruth said. My wife was a lovely girl — she is now a lovely woman — and her face is full of a gentle sweetness, her eyes filled with merriment and understanding. She is a most compassionate and tender person, but there are times when her finely curved jaw will set in lines of firmness and determination — this was one of those times.

"Too many families let themselves become strangers," she said. "That's not going to happen to us. What we need is to get away from this city for awhile. We need to be together, all alone, without that telephone ringing off the hook every ten minutes. Think of something, Calvin!"

My mind was temporarily blank, but definitely troubled. Ruth had put into words a vague feeling which had been bothering me, unconsciously, for quite awhile; I couldn't think of a solution on the spur of the moment. We had been drifting apart, all of us, through the pressures and concerns of daily life. My children were becoming strangers to me; Ruth and I spoke mostly of the affairs of running a household. By night, I was usually so tired and

drained from the battle of business and politics that we scarcely communicated in the way we always had in the past.

"I don't know what to suggest, Ruth," I told her, quite honestly.

"We have to think of something. I won't let bridge games and business and school and all the rest of it separate us," Ruth said. Her tone of voice meant strict business. "We have to get away together, just the family. I don't care where it is — but we've got to do it."

"I can't just leave the business, honey. I've got to be here on hand, to take care of the routine, the decisions . . ."

"Will the world end? Don't you have competent employees?"

It was an uncomfortable moment. Ruth's words had an edge of truth to them that through habit, or perhaps vanity, I had seldom considered.

It *was* time we all had a short vacation. Summer was coming on us soon and the children would be out of school. I was temporarily freed of political concern, and the business was functioning smoothly.

"Well . . . I guess I could take a few days off. We could go on a camping trip somewhere. They tell me there are lots of beautiful areas not far off. It might be fun."

Ruth listened dubiously. I knew that a simple little week end in the woods was less than a thorough answer to the problem, but it was the best I could come up with at the moment.

"The children would enjoy it," she said, thoughtfully. The children. Let me tell you about the children before we go any farther, since they were the very essence of our summer in the Pecos — the life blood of it, the joy of it, the meaning of it. Let me tell you of them as they were then . . . during that precious time when we found ourselves and drew permanently closer to one another . . . five years after Ruth's first concern.

Ruth and I have seven offspring and, like most parents, we have always considered them rather special. But in our case we had,

perhaps, a little more reason for this feeling than do most, since we had passed through ten years of married life without the blessing of children. During those ten years we constantly hoped and prayed for little ones; consequently we viewed each new addition to the family as a small miracle of wonder. Ranging in age from five to sixteen, they were our greatest joy and pleasure. But as I mentioned, we have seven of them, and living with seven children can be, at times, like living in the eye of a lovable hurricane.

First there is Brenda, our youngest. She was five years old at that time. Brenda had blue eyes and yellow hair and a deceptively angelic smile. You could tell her by her trademark — shoes or cowboy boots worn on the wrong feet.

The other children told her: "Brenda! You have your feet on backwards again!" But she only smiled and ignored this fact, perfectly content as long as she was included in all activities despite the tenderness of her years. Brenda flew as high as any of the others on our long rope swing. She rode a horse without any help, and she did her share of drying dishes.

A most intelligent little girl, she was like most bright children and tended to be completely independent — and sometimes a little dictatorial. During a heavy snowstorm, for example, at our home in Albuquerque, Brenda noticed with an outraged sense of justice that our dog, Lassie, was outside in the bitter weather. Without hesitation, she turned to her older brother Pat and announced: "If you don't let Lassie in the garage, I'm going to put you outside in the snow with her."

Knowing his baby sister pretty well by then and being somewhat of a philosopher, Pat let the dog into the garage. If he hadn't he might have found himself out in the snow. Yet, in the evening when she was tired and sleepy, Brenda would come to her mother, crawl on her lap and plead, like the sweetest of angels: "Mommy, please rock me." She was a bundle of mischief and an adorable sprite rolled into one.

After a few moments of rocking, the child would be sound asleep. Eyes, nose, and mouth all received kisses, then she was carried to bed.

One of her occupations, during the summer which this book attempts to describe, was digging fishing worms — a chore she seemed to enjoy — much to Mother's distaste. She spent hours diligently looking under rocks and other choice locations. One day she came into our cabin after hunting worms, looking a little downcast.

"How many did you find, honey?" my wife asked the child.

"Just six, Mommy," Brenda said. Then her face brightened.

"Look, Mommy, I can make two worms out of each one!" She proceeded to pull the worm she held in half, carefully placing one portion in her shirt pocket and holding the other half tightly in her hand. Mother shuddered.

Brenda raced off to fish, and soon was back with a wriggling trout in her hands. She put the fish in a small pond fed by the stream, and there kept him captive. The fish, we were informed, was named Slim. But I'm getting ahead of my story.

Working upward on the distaff side, we come to Melinda, then aged seven. Melinda was blonde and pretty too, a dreamer of romantic dreams who spent much of her time in her own private, magical world. Allowed into this private domain were her family, home, school, vacations, and friends. Melinda laughed more than any of the rest of us, finding delight in almost any small activity. And, highly sensitive, she also cried the most. Since she was more or less sandwiched in between the youngest and the oldest of our three little girls, Melinda had a special need to be loved, and to know she was loved, by Mother and Father.

Her mouth was usually wide with a smile, unless engaged with a gigantic wad of gum. Melinda's delights were many. Nothing pleased her more than snuggling into bed between her parents, winning at a game of cards, or mothering a small animal.

Ruthie, our next-to-oldest girl, was then at the impressive age of ten. To be frank about it — Ruthie was skinny. Not slim, mind you, skinny. Her nose was a forest of freckles, and she radiated charm like a wood stove radiates heat. She dearly loved animals — all animals.

On the rare occasions when she didn't get her own way, Ruthie pouted — and got her own way after all. She and school seemed made for each other; she loved her teachers and they loved her. She kept an excellent diary and planned to have a little girl of her own some day to whom she would read all her youthful adventures.

There were a number of other notable qualities about Ruthie. She could bake a cake, bridle a horse, cook a pie, identify a wildflower, swim like a fish, and work a jigsaw puzzle faster than her father, to name just a few.

Lottie Jane was sixteen and a very fine young lady indeed. With a gently rounded face and bright blue eyes, she nearly rated as one of the grown-ups of the family and struggled valiantly to take her place as such. Despite her younger sisters' failure to recognize her parental authority, she took considerable responsibility for their welfare — fixing their meals, dressing them, and bathing them on occasion. Sometimes the responsibilities weighed heavily on her young shoulders. Her younger brothers managed to irritate her with a certain regularity, but most things brought her joy. She loved to swim, ride, fish, and entertain her little sisters by playing paper dolls, using them as big, real-life manikins. They protested at this occasionally, but actually enjoyed the game as much as she did.

Lottie vacillated wildly between abiding by every word of parental authority spoken, and in the next moment, rebelling just as furiously, obviously sure that her own decision in the matter would be much wiser than that of her parents. We felt certain this was due, in part at least, to age. She was atrocious with money, and her meager allowance was usually spent on some foolishness

shortly after it was received; yet, she never complained when her cash was all gone and she felt some desperate need for more.

Lottie was a great help around the house; it would have been hard to find a more trustworthy babysitter for the younger children. All her instincts were feminine, and there was nothing she enjoyed more than being the only lady among our group of men and boys on a trip into the Pecos Wilderness. She operated an efficient and capable kitchen with dictatorial authority.

Now for the boys. Ronnie, at thirteen, was our newest teenager and in many ways, he often seemed to be the oldest of the children. He worried about propriety and wanted all things to proceed as he felt they rightfully should. He was concerned about the doings of the family and insisted that his father maintain his proper parental role; if this role was not upheld, according to his lights, he became irritated with me, but the spat, if there was one, was always over by bedtime. It was most important to Ronnie that his father put him to bed, kiss him goodnight, and fill him in on the important happenings of the day. At bedtime the two of us shared our experiences and discussed matters of concern.

Ronnie had a number of surprising qualities, but a big part of his life was wrapped up in dancing. He is an excellent ballroom performer and has captured prizes in Chicago and Denver, dancing with the same partner since the age of five.

Your first impression of Ronnie would have been a wide, delightful smile, framed by dimples, and a strong handshake. His eyes were huge and blue, and his hair tousled and blond. His greatest pleasure was pleasing his mother and father.

Possibly one of Ronnie's greatest delights was in teasing his mother. When he had carried his jokes too far, Mother would threaten him with her hand or a yardstick. His stock answer was "Promises, promises, always promises." Then out the door he would run, making sure her threat was only a promised one.

Mike, age fourteen, was next up the ladder. Somewhat of a

lone wolf, he was thoughtful and self-contained, a little introverted but enjoying it. It may well be that this was merely our impression as parents, since Mike chafed a little under discipline, and liked to pretend that the whole thing was entirely unnecessary.

Generally speaking, Mike moved through life with quiet determination, getting the things done that he wanted to get done, without undue fuss or comment. When the mood possessed him, there was no finer helper that his mother or dad could find. Like a serious whirlwind, he could get more accomplished around the house than someone three times his size. He was a little small for his age, but the lack of stature was purely exterior. Inside, Mike was big — and doing his best to grow bigger all the time.

Our son Pat was the oldest boy. Let me try to tell you about Pat — who he really was. Let's look at him first and see if we can solve the riddle of this boy. Behind his thick, horn-rimmed glasses, his eyes shone merrily and wisely. His smile was unaffected by the two hearing aids he wore and the braces on his teeth. Music was part and parcel of him, and he lost himself in beauty when his fingers touched the keys of the piano. His fingers were not quite coordinated, which was part of the wonder of his skill. He had developed a style of his own. If his small right finger should fail to respond properly, as it sometimes did, Pat deftly reached the proper key with his forefinger in perfect time, never missing a note. The piano was one of his deepest delights. I must mention that not all of his ninth grade subjects enjoyed this affection. Ruth and I were rather stunned when he brought home a report card bearing the ill tidings of failure in "effort" or "application" in one of his subjects.

Pat's true qualities are hard to describe adequately; and especially hard for a father whose small son once said to him: "Daddy, why do I *always* have to be crippled?"

The qualities which made Pat were bravery, as he struggled to overcome problems not a part of most boys' lives, intelligence as

he learned to master and compete in the areas where his very real talents lay, and humor — Pat had become the real clown of our family, full of good-natured laughter. He added much to our lives.

Those, in thumbnail sketches, are most of the members of the family. Now for a look at the other senior partner, my wife Ruth.

Level-headed, practical, taking care of all the details of our lives with good-natured dispatch, Mother was our mainstay. At one moment, she could be an active and busy city wife upholding her reputation as an excellent bridge player with the ladies of the town; at the next, a real Pecos Mountain Mother, completely at home in the rough-and-ready life of the woods, competent and pretty in Levis and checkered shirt. She was also one of the finest fishermen in Holy Ghost Canyon.

When the fish were biting in the streams and rivers of our canyon, other matters receded to unimportance and Ruth could be seen at nearly any hour of the day, working the waters with fire-ball salmon eggs, wading through Holy Ghost Creek, Willow Creek, the Mora River, and even the rushing Pecos itself, with a dedicated gleam in her eye.

She drove a ten-year-old Jeep that made up in old shoe familiarity what it lacked in dependability. Seldom could it manage a complete trip of any length without some assistance.

When the fishing passion had her captured, Ruth often became so absorbed that she stayed out, stalking her underwater prey, long past dinner time, forgetful of her family's concern for her well being. As a rule, just as we were about to organize into searching parties, we heard the labored groans and moans of the old Jeep's motor, as, broken muffler roaring and gears grinding, it panted its way up the canyon toward our place.

Mother would be contrite: she didn't realize the hour. We would be happy, irritated, and vastly relieved at having her back among the brood.

Dusk would fall in the canyon and lights twinkle on around us.

All was forgiven at the sight of her usually fine catch as preparations for dinner began.

Now, you may have some small picture of us, in preparation for following us through our happy and, I think, important, Pecos Summer. You will know us better before this book is through, just as we all knew ourselves a little better because of that golden summer.

As for myself — let me simply be the narrator of our days of discovery and pleasure, deep in the wooded hills of Holy Ghost Canyon.



BRENDA

Our First Camp-Out

WEEKS PASSED in the busy routines of our lives, but Ruth's undefined worries preyed more and more on my mind. I had never been a great one for introspection. I had gotten things done by doing them; but her words kept echoing in my mind and I began to take a sharp, close look around me, at the paths of life I was following. I began to figure up the actual amounts of time all of us in the family spent together — all of us going in different busy ways. It was shocking how rarely we were all doing the same activity at once, as a group, as a family.

Little Brenda had been born on the fifteenth of May; three weeks later I made a decision.

"Mother, I think you're right. We really need to do something together as a group, a real family thing."

Ruth nodded, waiting, pleased I could see, but wondering what I had come up with by way of a solution. I spoke on, enthusiastically.

"We're all going up to the woods and camp out for the week end. The whole bunch of us."

Ruth's reaction came as a surprise.

"You mean now?" she asked. "With the baby just home from the hospital?" This detail had not occurred to me, but having

made up my mind, I did not let her dubiousness dampen my excitement. I tried to make her see the excellence of the idea.

"Why sure, honey. It'll be good for all of us — keep us close together, the way we want to be. And you know Pat will be going off to the crippled children's camp soon. I want him to be with us on this outing."

Ruth was in a quandary. Basically, she was all for the idea of our getting together for a long week end of strictly family life, but the thought of little Brenda out in the woods disturbed her. If it hadn't been for the nearness of Pat's leavetaking I would have put the venture off for a month or so myself, but I was determined that it would be all of us or nothing; after all, that was the whole purpose of the camp-out. It took a little convincing, but Ruth finally agreed to the project, and we made plans to leave on the day after school closed.

Great preparations went into this trip; an outsider might have assumed we were off on safari in darkest Africa. As one can imagine, the size of our family made things a little more complicated than they might otherwise have been. I borrowed a large, cumbersome tent from a business associate, one that would sleep five or six children. In addition to this, I rented a small house trailer which we attached to the rear of our station wagon.

Loaded down with our tent, provisions, and excited children, we started merrily off one fine early summer afternoon to sample the joys of the outdoor life. Ruth was still a little dubious about the soundness of my solution as she held Brenda, sleeping peacefully in her lap.

When we started we still had not definitely decided where we were going — in fact, we didn't decide until it came to choosing between the road straight ahead which led to the Pecos Mountains and the road to the left, which would take us to the Jemez country. On whim we continued straight ahead and our caravan was bound for the Pecos.

Our spirits were high, despite Ruth's misgivings, as we rolled along toward Santa Fe, skirted the ancient capital and passed Glorieta, the lovely Baptist summer home nestled in the rolling foothills of the Pecos country. Behind us, now, was Seton Village, home of the naturalist and author. Soon we approached the old town of Pecos, deep in gorgeous pine and fir.

"Now, isn't this worth it all, Ruth?" I asked my wife. She nodded slightly, still uncertain.

Stopping at the general store, we asked for information on where we might make camp for the night. The proprietor suggested we follow the road which wound along beside the rushing Pecos River, up toward the higher mountain country. We did as he advised, admiring the increasing beauty of the landscape for some fourteen miles.

The afternoon sun was dipping low and the shadows of the trees growing long, when we came to a sign reading "Holy Ghost Recreation Area."

"Well, how does this look? Shall we see what it's like up there?" I addressed our party in general. There was a chorus of excited agreement, and we found ourselves, for the first time, driving up the canyon which was later to become most dear to all of us.

There were other campers about, so we turned, after a time, into a still smaller side road where a little stream (Doc's Creek) mumbled and gurgled to itself. The spot seemed ideal and we decided to make this our campsite for the next three or four days.

Now, I might as well state right here that I was not much of a Daniel Boone at this point. I had had little contact with the wilderness — not even on a farm, and the most powerful gun I had toted as a boy had fired B-B's. The little fishing I had previously attempted had been a pretty dismal failure. In view of this, the reader can no doubt understand why raising our tent presented considerable problems. As a matter of fact, the boys knew more about it than I did. At length, however, we had it securely strapped

to stakes and hooked both to the car and house trailer to make sure it held up during the night.

I decided that the logical way to arrange our sleeping situation was as follows: Mother and Brenda in the small trailer, the girls in bedrolls in the back of the station wagon, and the three boys and myself squeezed together in the tent.

Night came, with all its murmurous sounds and rustlings, and our troop of hardy adventurers climbed into its various sleeping accommodations.

It wasn't long before we made certain annoying discoveries. First of all, it developed the boys and I could hardly move a muscle in the tent without shaking the house trailer, alarming mother, and disturbing the baby. During the course of the night, several other developments appeared. The little stove in the trailer, which was to provide warmth and comfort for our new-born, developed the depressing habit of dying during the chill hours. This necessitated Ruth's sitting up, cuddling the baby in her arms to keep her warm, and my fussing unsuccessfully with the unfamiliar object.

At one point, as Mother, the baby and I huddled in the trailer — the baby crying, Ruth fixing me with a reproachful eye, and me struggling with the little stove which had now taken on the attributes of a personal enemy — we heard a commotion from the car. The girls, Lottie Jane, Ruthie, and Melinda, had found it much too cold to sleep in the station wagon. Lottie Jane's face, pinched with cold and lack of sleep, appeared in the doorway of the trailer.

"Daddy, we're *freezing* out there," she said. I tried to put a good face on the matter. "Well, honey, that's all part of the fun of camping out. But you and the other girls can squeeze into the tent with us, if you think you'll be any more comfortable."

Lottie Jane, acting as spokeswoman by virtue of age, glared at me with big blue soulful eyes. She vanished from sight and soon there was a great scuffling and muttering of sleepy children's

voices as the young females of the family joined the boys in the already crowded tent.

Still struggling unsuccessfully with the rebellious stove, I smiled hopefully at Ruth, who was sitting on her bunk and shivering lightly, as she clutched our newest daughter to her.

"It won't be long till morning, now, dear," I said, managing to sound cheerful.

"Calvin," Ruth began ominously, "this is about the silliest thing we've *ever* done!" I politely ignored the implication that this was the last in a long string of silly things I had brought about. Ruth was in no mood for petty arguments.

"Bringing a three-week-old baby up here — in these freezing, high mountains — when we can't even keep the stove lit to keep her warm. . . ." Ruth's voice trailed off, not far from tears, and I felt remorse, as well as discomfort. Confronted by all this female physical misery, I faced up to the facts of the situation. Much as I wanted to be the pioneer outdoorsman, at ease with nature and coolly braving the elements, I admitted to myself that this was really not the time nor place for it.

When morning finally filtered through the trees and our discomfort, I began thinking of graceful ways to cut short our woodland adventure. Our plan had been to spend three days and nights on the outing, and the boys were well aware of this. Despite their chilled and rumpled condition, their youth and natural sense of adventure had made them forget the problems of the previous night. When I broached the subject of leaving that day, they were adamant in their outrage. Hastily, I went into conference with Ruth.

"You see, Mother, when you're living the wilderness life, parental authority has to go by the wayside. Everyone should have an equal vote in what we do."

Ruth gave me a look which most husbands would recognize. She spoke with that sort of female logic which absolutely ignores

the idealistic nonsense men have clung to throughout history.

"When do we go home, Calvin? Brenda isn't spending another night out here!"

I went back for another session with the boys. "Look, fellows, let's accept reality. We just aren't equipped or properly prepared to stay out here any longer. Poor Mother didn't get a wink of sleep last night. Let's be men about this and go on back home."

Mike eyed me steadily. "You said three days," he said. The other boys nodded in agreement, their looks reproachful but determined. No help there.

As a final, desperate measure, I tried a bribe. "Let's make a deal, boys. If you'll agree to go home this afternoon — no sulking or arguments — you can all go to any and every movie in Albuquerque all next week or swim every day! How about it?"

The boys pondered this proposal, and slowly their eyes lit up at the thought of such unrestricted movie going. Solemnly, they nodded acceptance — the day was saved.

Holy Ghost Home

MY FIRST IDEA for keeping our family closely bound together might appear to have failed; in fact, I gloomily thought so as we drove back to Albuquerque, stiff, tired, and on my part, rather irritable. I was wrong. Although we didn't realize it at the time, all of us had unconsciously been bitten by the wilderness bug. It wasn't long before the children were mentioning the Pecos eagerly, memories of our uncomfortable night wiped out. The beauty and power of the high country had soaked into all of us, crept under our skins and slipped into the back of our minds seductively. Even Ruth had felt it — the singing lure of the woods. Yet there were five additional years of intensive city living before our Pecos Summer.

When Brenda was five, we found ourselves the proud owners of a summer cabin some fourteen miles north of the small and picturesque village of Pecos.

I wish I could draw a realistic word picture of Holy Ghost Canyon. There may be more beautiful spots in the world — I've never run across them. Wandering through the canyon is Holy Ghost Stream, a wonderful, meandering little waterway too small to warrant the name "river." It empties into the Pecos, which *is* sizeable enough to be a river, about a mile below our summer home.

There are several theories as to how the canyon received its religious name, but the one I like best further describes our canyon. In July, almost like clockwork each day of the month, refreshing rains fall in the area. These rains are brief, usually begin around noon and rarely last more than a few minutes, enough to renew the trees and earth of the canyon. The welcome rains come and are quickly gone, then the sun, New Mexico's own special sun, is pouring its golden warmth over the land. With the return of the sun there almost invariably appears a small, brilliantly white cloud at the halfway mark of one of the huge mountains at the head of the canyon. This cloud floats gently down the canyon just over the pines above us. Our pure, completely ethereal cloud has come to be the earmark of the canyon, and because of this I think we who live here feel a little closer to God and to the wonders of nature which are His handiwork. No other canyon in the Pecos experiences this particular phenomenon.

I must add, in a slightly more realistic vein, that there are other possible reasons for the religious naming of the canyon. For one thing, religiously devout place-names are common in the entire area. The fervent padres who came with the conquistadores were men of God, seeking to spread the word of their religion as ardently as their adventurous companions sought fabled wealth and glory.

A plausible explanation to the name of Holy Ghost would be to trace the stream to its source, a lake called A Laguna Del Espiritu Santo, or The Lake of the Holy Spirit. When the lake was originally christened it is possible the stream took its name from the lake.

Within a short radius, in addition to Holy Ghost Stream and Canyon, we have such names as the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, Rito del Padre, and Cerrito del Padre — to mention just a few of the ecclesiastical titles given in the region and used by both Spanish and English.

To understand our life in the canyon, you must be familiar with the people of Pecos. The good citizens of Pecos, almost 100 per cent Spanish American, were closely involved in the day-to-day concerns of the families who resided in Holy Ghost.

Perhaps the most important man in the village — the "Patrón" in local Spanish terms — was a gentleman named Chris Rivera. In many ways, Chris was a prototype of the leading man in any small Spanish community. The words that first came to mind on seeing him were "jolly" and "grandfatherly." His goodnatured smile was nearly equal in size to his expansive stomach.

As "Patrón," Chris handled the needs of most of the families in our canyon — the necessary chores and duties that go with a place in the woods. For this general masterminding, he charged each family under his wing only \$50 a year. There was much more to him than met the eye. He was one of the political figures in the area, and had served as assistant sergeant-at-arms in the state senate in Santa Fe.

Chris could handle any situation, given a little time and an understanding of the problem. Later, I noticed him doing less actual work himself — but if he couldn't do it, he could always find someone who was willing.

Chris was major-domo of the canyon. I often wondered what we would have done without him.

The friendly people who were companions and neighbors in the canyon are a large part of this story, but before we meet them, let me tell you about our home base here — our cabin.

The little home where we spent our happiest summer faces Holy Ghost Stream, and we were always in earshot of its pleasant gurgle. Made of fir logs, it has a sharply slanting roof to shed the deep snows of winter. One of our favorite spots in the house is the long screened-in front porch, where we delighted in sitting and watching the ever-changing play of nature around us. The living room is large, and the north wall is dominated by a massive rock

fireplace. A picture window looks out to the south, toward the road, the stream and the trees. There are two bedrooms on each side of the living room, three baths, grouped together to save on plumbing expenses, and a kitchen in the rear. A two-car garage has an apartment built above for our city friends.

This more civilized approach to the great outdoors converted even Mother to the Pecos country. But getting the place as we wanted it was not exactly easy. The cabin was not always as described above. It involved a word which still makes me shudder slightly when I hear it: "remodeling."

We bought the cabin in September, at the end of the season. At that time it was really rustic, not to say unlivable. I was determined to transform it into a place of true charm whatever the amount of work needing to be done.

At the time we bought it, there were certain notable little disadvantages to it. The only heat in the entire cabin was provided by the fireplace; the kitchen was the farthest thing from modern; water was brought in through an elaborate system of piping and gravity, from the nearby stream, and of course, had to be boiled or chlorinated to be drinkable.

The kitchen was really the worst, though. It was constructed in the most unlikely shape and fashion, and when Ruth saw how incredibly dirty it was, she turned pale with housewifely horror. "I've never, in all my life, seen a kitchen so filthy!" was her comment. But a house one owns becomes a sort of love object, and I was determined to make our place one of real joy — and comfort.

With this in mind, I talked with Chris Rivera. He nodded, listened, looked wisely toward the heavens.

"Much better you should use local workmen for this project, Mr. Horn," he told me. "You don't want to let some outside contractor do this thing for you. . . . No, no. . . ."

"Why would it be better to use local men, Chris?"

"Ah, the people here — the Pecos people — they have heart. . . . They have feeling for the land and the way to build here. You leave all that to me. I'll hire just the right men for you."

Still a little dubious, I told Chris to proceed, and he left, patting his stomach happily, all smiles and reassurance.

We had only until the first part of December to get things underway, since the bad weather would begin then, so I was anxious to get things done as soon as possible. It turned out there were several items in the way. Roberto, the plumber, worked at a remarkably slow pace; Rueben, the carpenter, worked at a remarkably slow pace; Chris worked at no pace at all — he sat and with a fatherly and approving eye watched the other two men at their leisurely labor.

Partly because of our anticipation, but mostly because of the cautious way our workmen approached the whole idea of labor, it began to seem as if the remodeling would never be done. We gave up the idea of moving in that fall — anxious as we were to try our cabin — and began to hope for the coming summer as a completion date.

In a way, it worked out best for us that way — it gave us a chance to live through a cycle of Pecos life properly, from the beginning, instead of at the tail end. It was really due to Chris and his workmen that the following summer, our first in the cabin, became our Pecos Summer.

But back to that autumn and the refurbishing process. After many worried trips to check on progress, I began to feel pretty discouraged about the idea of ever getting the cabin modernized. The men had taken to bringing bedrolls up to the place to avoid the necessity of driving the few miles up from Pecos. They seemed to be living quite comfortably in our mountain retreat, even though, as I grimly pointed out, the roof leaked badly.

At last it all became too much. I had come up on an inspection tour, found almost nothing had been done during the week I had

been away, and retired, moodily, to the unfinished living room to think things over. Chris and the two workmen were nowhere in sight, although it was early afternoon. The skies had been darkening from the moment I turned off U. S. 85 and headed toward Pecos, and as I sat in the unfurnished, unfinished living room, huge raindrops began to splatter down, bursting like ripe grapes on the leaky roof. Thunder grumbled in the usually blue skies, and a lance of lightning twitched overhead. It was going to be a real mountain storm.

Then it came — the solid wall of rain that occurs only in climates and altitudes such as we have in northern New Mexico. When it happens, it's an experience. Nothing like the gentle, civilized drizzle to which Easterners are accustomed, which may go on with mild persistence for days and soggy days. This is a newer, rougher country than the East — a raw country, in many ways. Even the mountains — the Rockies — are rough and jagged — not worn down by time and comfort like the Blue Ridge or the Alleghenies. When we have a downpour, it *pours* down. Solid sheets of rain, fierce as hail, connect earth with sky in a nearly solid bridge of water, a pounding deluge that has caused many a flash flood and drowned many a steer within a matter of minutes.

I sat in the darkened room, hearing the roll and growl of thunder, slitting my eyes at the occasional flash of white, and then it happened. Rain — a bucket or so at least — burst through the doubtful roof directly on my head.

I was drenched in seconds, and I jumped half-way across the room. I am not a swearing man, but as I stood, shivering, several feet away from the steady funnel of water ruining the cabin's floorboards, I shouted: "Damn it, that does it! Patrón or no patrón, I'm going to get this place fixed properly!"

They never last long, these biblical deluges — in half an hour the sky was blue as Kentucky grass again — the sun, a little watery, was shining good-naturedly above, as though half apologetic

for its lapse of manners, and birds shrilled happily among the trees.

I walked out from the cabin toward the car, my jaw set slightly, determination in my heart.

I drove to Chris' house down the road a way at the edge of Pecos. I knocked briskly at the door.

Chris answered at once, all smiles and enthusiasm. "Ah, Mr. Horn! Have you seen the cabin . . . how much we have accomplished this last week?"

"Yes, Chris," I said. "I just wanted to tell you. I'm bringing in a firm of roofers from Albuquerque tomorrow to fix that roof, also, the Red Dot Oil Company of Las Vegas to drill a well. And any other professional, licensed, contractors I need to get that place in shape for next summer."

Chris was wounded, but resigned. He shrugged and smiled at me, man-to-man. If it was over, it was over. If I did not want people with heart and a feeling for the land to do the work, that was my concern. Meanwhile, it had been a prosperous autumn for himself and his friends. It was apparent he did not hold my decision against me; we could remain friends.

Well before the December snows, competent, if heartless, construction men had drilled 54 feet and found sweet water. Two propane furnaces had been installed and a thousand-gallon propane tank, behind the garage, furnished us with a central heating system. To keep the barefoot children warm, we installed wall-to-wall carpeting throughout the house.

Now understand me; I wanted a wilderness experience, but I wanted one we could all enjoy, not battle. I wanted to watch the snow fall, the rain erupt from the sky, and I wanted to watch the weather turn good and turn bad — I wanted all of us to watch and know this. But as a learning thing — a thing of joy, not hardship. I am not particularly a masochist, and I think it is foolish to cause my family meaningless suffering when I have spent a large part of my life trying to make them comfortable. They needed the

woods and hills and so did I — and this was the way to bring the experience to them.

The repairing and rebuilding and adding-on-to was done, and we were ready for the coming summer — the Pecos Summer — on time.

There is one footnote I must add. I had hired the local workmen to be in my employ during the fall, long enough to fix up the cabin, and when that was done, I assumed they would move on to other pursuits. But with the coming of winter, I found myself paying unemployment compensation for the men who had spent several weeks in autumn toying with the idea of repairing my summer home. I certainly admire the ingenuity used by the human race to survive.

There was one consolation. The cabin was completed, and no matter how the blizzards raged or the soft snow piled deep around the skirts of the cabin, we were ready for the coming summer.

With the arrival of spring, we were about to begin our wilderness adventure.



MIKE OVERLOOKING PECOS VILLAGE

Moving to Holy Ghost

THE WINTER, even in mild Albuquerque, was long and surprisingly snow-filled. In this land of butte and mesa, of dry blue skies and vast reaches of prairie, moisture is a precious thing. The snows were welcome and their promise of a rich, green summer made the problems they presented small by comparison.

For me, the winter was one of constant activity. I was involved in various enterprises, which have no bearing on this story, which kept my life an active, hectic, merry-go-round of conferences, decisions, and urgent phone calls. My life has been a blend of business, of political activity — which is the real root of American life — and of literature and Southwestern history. It sounds incongruous, but all of these pursuits have blended well. The thing that had been missing was sanctuary — and a reaffirmation of the silent, sweet world God created for us all.

The winter passed in a series of snowstorms, sudden days of brilliant sky and sun, and the hard realities of work. I tended to the business, involved myself in the intricacies of New Mexico politics, and judged and supervised the procedures of my publishing concern, as I had always done in the past. There were also the children with lessons and car pools.

But this time, there was a difference. Hidden in the dark of winter's work, there was a kernel of spring — the cabin and the Pecos country — the sweet soar of mountains stretching on for endless miles — the sound of gentle wind, gracefully moving the tops of ponderosa pine — the sound-filled silence of nature as it was before man came and brought his noisy factories and anxieties and confusions on the gentle earth.

Like a seed, the cabin stayed in all our minds — like a seed, I knew it would stir with lazy pleasure with the coming spring, burst through the earth, bring new life to myself and all my family.

I did the necessary things throughout the winter, forcing the cabin and the mountains away from my mind. Finally, the last snows faded and were gone. Robins strutted with their own particular arrogance on Albuquerque lawns; school was soon to be out and children's faces held half-concealed smiles of anticipation.

The morning finally came. It was the day we left our comfortable, respectable, Albuquerque home and headed for the Pecos.

Brenda was the first to wake us up, shortly after dawn had touched the Sandia Mountains with faint pink. A small, desperate hand shook me awake.

"Daddy, it's daylight! It's the day! Don't sleep all day, Daddy!"

The night before, trying to finish my work, I had worked on a real estate lease, then read a manuscript until extremely late — even so, Brenda's words brought me out of sleep. I was suddenly as excited as my little daughter. It *was* the day, and winter was behind us — Pecos lay ahead.

"All right, honey," I mumbled, not really awake, but feeling her excitement like a cup of coffee. Ruth stirred and murmured something — she was still a trifle dubious about the venture — and finally sat up in bed. She looked at the clock we keep on a small end-table beside the bed, and nearly howled with dismay.

"Brenda! What in the world are you doing up at this hour? It's only five-thirty!"

Brenda scampered onto the bed and hugged Mother (knowing she had all the ammunition on her side).

"This is the day, Mommy! We're going off to live in the woods!"

Somewhat fuzzy from too little sleep, I climbed from the bed and began my morning preparations. But I was excited, too — suddenly the seed had burst through the winter-chilled earth. This *WAS* the day — we were, after many difficulties and setbacks, finally off for the Pecos.

I tried quickly to organize the expedition of seven children and one wife for a trip to the Pecos cabin. It was a job. I had bought a second-hand Jeep of questionable pedigree, for our use in the mountains, and we had the station wagon. Loading up these two vehicles was an experience in itself. By eight-thirty, we were nearly set for our venture. Ruth was red in the face, the younger children were jumping and howling, desperate to be on the way, and I was trying my best to be calm and master the situation. I soothed everyone in our safari and made one final check of the house. All was well. I walked back to the two vehicles with an assumed non-chalance, and conferred briefly with Ruth.

"All set," I remarked. "Now, who is going to ride with whom?"

Complete bedlam broke out. The way we had it planned, Ruth would drive the station wagon, and I would drive the doubtful Jeep. There was instant chaos as the children tried to decide where to ride. At last it resolved itself with Ruth taking Lottie Jane, Pat, Ronnie, Ruthie, and Mike, in the station wagon with her, while Melinda and Brenda rode with Daddy in the overloaded Jeep.

Ruth led the way as we barreled away from Albuquerque, along the new, four-lane highway which leads from Albuquerque and one way of life, toward Santa Fe and all points north. It was a strain for the Jeep, but we kept up. We passed the ancient and history-filled towns of Bernalillo, Algodones, Angostora, and rolled toward the Sangre de Cristo Mountains, driving along the

fine new highway until we came to La Bajada Hill.

We came to the turn-off and headed away from the ancient city of Santa Fe. We were on our way to Holy Ghost Canyon and our newly-prepared retreat, deep in the silence and serenity of the Pecos.

Describing the drive from Albuquerque to the Pecos reveals the many charms of New Mexico. You go through the barren lands, which have their own particular delights, past the pueblos, the trading posts, the rare gas stations, through a world of strange and lonely beauty. Then, as you turn toward the mountains and head north, the land changes. Instead of sun-drenched desolation, rolling hills appear. The hills turn larger, their backs green with piñon and spruce, and before one is aware of it, the great sweep of mountains is all around. We drifted, at a comfortable 60 miles an hour down, down, the rolling curves of Apache Canyon, where one of the few Civil War battles was fought in the state, and where stagecoaches faltered in fear as they lashed along the Santa Fe Trail. (There were Indian troubles in those days.) Soon, past Glorieta, a fork in the road appeared.

From here the sleek highway arrows on toward Las Vegas and Raton, and the rest of the whole wide world. The fork, which we took, led into the woods and mountains of Pecos.

Crude signs told us that we were passing the oldest well in the United States. The road became more winding and narrow, the scenery more and more spectacular. Soon we passed through the little village of Pecos and were heading up, up, through the awesome canyon caused by the Pecos River. At last we were in front of our long-awaited summer home.

The younger children boiled from both vehicles, shrieking and shouting with joy like little, defurred animals, racing around the perimeter of the refinished home, wild to explore, tumble about, look for trout in the stream, and climb trees simultaneously. The boys were more decorous, but obviously excited.

I gestured toward the house and looked with some pride at Ruth.

"Well, Mother, there it is. What do you think of it?"

Ruth judged the exterior appraisingly, then slowly nodded. "Why, it certainly looks a great deal better, Calvin," she admitted.

"Wait until you see the inside," I told her.

We made an inspection tour of the entire place, inside and out — the new kitchen, the wall-to-wall carpeting, the refinished rooms — and Ruth took it all in, nodding her head slowly. At last we were through. I looked at her expectantly. She turned to me and her face lit up with a smile of real delight. She put her arms about me and smiled into my face. "Calvin, it's simply wonderful!"

Outside, tumbling and playing in the clean mountain air and rich mountain dirt, our smaller children were making the sounds all children make when in the transports of delight. The creek a little way from the front of our house gurgled and chuckled to itself, and a sigh of wind, like a great organ note, moved the tops of the forest all around us.

At that moment, I knew all the expense and effort and irritation of getting the place in shape had been well worth it.

Fishing

IT WASN'T LONG after we had actually settled into our mountain home that we began to discover the many joys and activities a life in the Pecos opens up — not just for the children, but for the adults, too, at least for those of us who respond to a closeness with nature.

The beauty of the country is like a divine tranquilizer. Little things that might irritate me intensely back in Albuquerque were of small importance up there. I saw the effect on all of us — the relaxing of little lines in our foreheads — the quickness of laughter — and, of course, the ruddy health glowing in the children's faces.

There was so much to do! And all of it wholesome, healthy, and exciting.

We soon found that there was one over-riding, all-consuming pastime in Holy Ghost Canyon, however. It's a pastime nearly as old as the race of man, I expect, and one that will continue as long as there are people on this earth. In a word, fishing.

Fishing means different things to different people, I suppose, and until that summer I had done very little of it. But in Holy Ghost, you fish.

Children and fishing go together like ham and eggs. In no time,

my whole brood had taken up the sport with vast enthusiasm; none of them had had any experience with fishing until that summer, but they learned the wily art almost by instinct. I assigned a pole to each of them, a place where they could each get their own eggs, and flies, fix their own poles, and go down to the rushing little stream in safety.

Some of the initial experiments were not entirely successful, however. One fine morning, early in the season, Brenda and Melinda, five and seven years old respectively, came to me with their new poles, impatient excitement in their eyes.

"We want to fish, Daddy," Brenda announced firmly. "Aren't you *ever* going to show us how to fish?"

Since we had only been at the cabin a few days, her accusation seemed a little unjust, but I was agreeable.

"All right, girls," I said. "First of all, let me show you how to bait the hook."

I showed them the simple procedure of fixing salmon eggs to their hooks, and was about to go into a learned discussion of the habits of trout and the methods used to trick and capture them, when I suddenly realized I was talking to two small, rapidly retreating backs. At their ages, time was far too important to waste in preparation. If they wanted to fish, they intended to fish *now*.

I followed them at a more dignified pace, and arriving at the chosen spot for the great adventure, I witnessed a rather curious fishing scene.

The stream had recently been stocked, and the two little ones were staring in delighted fascination into its depths. Several fat rainbow trout were lazing in the water, content with the world.

"Chase them out, Melinda," Brenda whispered, awe-stricken.

"You chase them out," Melinda retorted. Then, with a sudden flash of brilliance, "Make them swim over by the shore and I'll catch them by their tails!"

At this point, one of the fish made his own decision. Brenda's

fishing line, which she had been trailing scarcely noticed in the pool, gave a jerk and grew taut.

"My line's stuck on something!" she shrieked. Tugging at her pole, more in confusion than anything, she whipped a twelve- or thirteen-inch rainbow trout out of the water and up on the shore.

Both children gaped in fascinated disbelief as the fish flopped and twisted. Before I could move to capture it, the rainbow had flung himself safely back into the stream and was gone.

Ruthie, who had joined us by then — a most interested spectator — screamed. Melinda summed up her complete dismay with "Darn it!"

Little Brenda, to whom the tragedy really belonged, sat down and cried. She made a particularly heartwrenching spectacle, huddled there on the shore. On her feet were red overshoes, right one on the left foot, left one on the right. Her long mismatched stockings were of different colors, partly hidden by already ragged blue jeans, all of which was covered by a little brown sweater.

But tragedy doesn't last long in the Pecos. I dried her eyes and pointed out all the other fish that were just waiting for her to catch them, and soon all was forgotten.

From that time on Melinda's agonized cry of "Darn it!" became a kind of code word to be used whenever a fishing mishap took place. If a fish was hooked and then escaped, if a line became tangled, if a hook found its way into a small thumb — "Darn it!" was the proper comment.

Fishermen came in various sorts along Holy Ghost Creek. Most of the children, and certainly mine, were of the variety known as "Fishing truck fishermen." Our little ones joined this specialized group one Tuesday morning in early June, as we were all having breakfast.

We paused over eggs and bacon and looked up attentively as a curious putt-putt sound, rather like that of an outboard motor, came to our ears. We knew perfectly well that there was no room

whatsoever in little Holy Ghost Creek for a boat of any kind.

The sound continued, and Lottie Jane could bear the mystery no longer. She jumped up from the table and hurried to the front porch. There she witnessed a fascinating sight. A truck from the nearby hatchery had stopped in front of our cabin and a man was dumping trout by the dozens into our stream, sluicing them out of a tank with a net and throwing them, wiggling and squirming, into the water!

Hardly believing her eyes, she raced back to tell us of this odd happening. We all proceeded to the front porch to watch the spectacle.

Sure enough, there stood a two-and-a-half-ton Chevy truck, equipped with a 500-gallon tank full of 750 pounds of wriggling trout, as I later learned. I had known, vaguely, that the State Game and Fish Department did stock these streams, but none of us had ever seen the actual process before. The putt-putt sound we had heard was a small motor agitating the water in the tank to provide the fish with oxygen.

The truck had barely trundled off down the road when seven pairs of eyes exchanged long and knowing looks. Without a word, the children dived for their poles. They were off to the stream, deserting home and breakfast, almost before Mother and I knew what was underway.

Down at the stream, the children saw fish swimming about happily in the clear water — dozens of them. Fisherman's paradise!

But their dream was quickly shattered, as time after time, the trout sluggishly ignored their bait. We later learned that before planting the trout, the fish hatchery people feed them well, in order to prevent the very kind of mass slaughter my sons and daughters had in mind. In a few days those lazy and contented trout would be hungry and agile, snapping at anything remotely resembling food.

And so we learned another lesson of the Pecos and of fishing

skills — one of the many we were to learn before the summer ended.

Perhaps the high point in our fishing adventures revolved around seven-year-old Melinda. Her triumph took place on a balmy summer morning when, as often happened, all seven children had grabbed for their poles as soon as breakfast had been gulped and scattered off along the stream to see what they could catch. Melinda, I noticed, walked purposefully upstream by herself. This did not worry Ruth and me, since she often walked that way and never wandered far from home.

The morning passed pleasantly, as do most in the canyon, and I sat on the screened front porch, toying with a little office work, but mostly listening to the sounds of nature all around me. Occasionally a little shriek, a burst of laughter, would drift up from the stream, assuring me that the children were there, enjoying themselves.

From inside the house, the sound of Pat playing the piano suddenly caught my ear. I didn't know what the tune was—a religious melody that he had learned while playing at the Belvue Christian School all winter — but his playing had its usual influence on me.

I don't know why it is, but listening to Pat play the piano has a profoundly soothing and pleasant effect on me. I can always think more clearly and get at my own thoughts more lucidly when the boy is playing. The cobwebs seem to fade from my mind and my fingers at the typewriter loosen almost magically. Problems which seem insoluble clarify themselves and difficulties in writing — the revision of a sentence, the formulation of a thought on paper — are suddenly less serious. In this way, Pat has been a collaborator in the words and thoughts set down in this book.

It was nearly noon when Melinda's little figure came trudging down the road. She was carrying her pole and line and what appeared to be one fish — one *large* fish.

"Hi, honey," I called as she reached the house. "Any luck?"

Melinda was the perfect picture of nonchalance. She shrugged casually as she reached the porch and held up the huge native trout she had captured. "Just this one, Daddy," she said, elaborately casual.

I stared at the fish, realizing at once it was a native trout, not one of the planted fish from the stream. It was a beauty — fully fifteen inches long. It must have been a wily and fortunate old rascal to have survived and grown to this size.

"Why, baby, that's the biggest native trout I have ever seen come out of Holy Ghost!" I told her, amazed and proud. A little of Melinda's coolness slipped away, "Is this really a 'navy' trout, Daddy?" she asked. I decided against correcting her terminology, since "navy" trout seemed somehow appropriate for the big old seafarer.

"Why, sure it is, honey. And that's a real prize catch."

By now, the rest of the family had wandered up. All were properly impressed and excited by little Melinda's feat.

"Dear, that's about the finest fish that anyone's ever pulled out of the stream!" Mother told her. Melinda began to beam.

"Gosh, Melinda," Pat said, his voice all admiration, "I bet you could win some kind of prize with that big, old trout!"

Abruptly self-conscious, Melinda gazed at her prize with affected coolness again. "Oh, he's a pretty good one, I suppose," she said.

"Pretty good?" Mike nearly shouted. "He's terrific, Melinda. How'd you get so lucky?"

Melinda turned to him fiercely. "It wasn't luck at all! It was being a good fisherman that did it!"

By now, Melinda was really enjoying her accomplishment, all attempts at nonchalance gone by the wayside. After basking in the sun of family admiration for quite a while longer, she was off to show it to our neighbors in the canyon, carrying her "navy" trout proudly from cabin to cabin. That was a great and happy day for

Melinda, and I must repeat, to the best of my knowledge, it was the biggest native trout Holy Ghost has produced.

Being thoroughly female, though just a child, Melinda found ways to use her triumph to every possible advantage. For weeks afterward, it was her ace in the hole. When she wanted a special favor, her remarkable catch was the opening gambit, such as: "Daddy, can I have two Kool-aids . . . since I caught the 'navy' trout?" and "Since I was the one who caught the big 'navy' trout, you'll let me sleep with Mommy, won't you?"

I must admit that this argument was hard to refute. On the strength of her accomplishment, Melinda generally got what she wanted.

As is the way with success, Melinda wanted to repeat her triumph and taste again the sweet flavor of glory. Two or three times a week, she would slip away from the other children and spend long hours in the dappled, sunny nook where the "navy" trout had been captured, her line lazing in the waters, her hopes high for another fish comparable to the "navy" trout. But his like was not to be found again, and none of us, through all that summer, ever brought back a worthy contender.

Most of our fishing was done in an area of the stream just in front of our cabin. From the vantage point of the front porch, I could watch the children easily as they fished and played with the complete lack of self-consciousness which is one of the basic charms of childhood. Often I would find myself seated before my typewriter, a blank sheet of paper in the machine, watching and listening to their play for hours, while the writing I had intended stayed lazily locked in my head.

An amusing thing occurred on just such a morning. The brood had all been at the water's edge, fishing diligently for some time, but luck was bad that day. After trailing their lines in the water with no noticeable success for quite a while, the children trooped up to the cabin to deposit their poles, then scampered back to the

stream in search of other sport. The smaller offspring made a great game of throwing rocks in the water to splash each other, to the tune of wild giggles and shrieks. They splashed the foaming stream until it was muddy with silt. Soon, Levis rolled up, they were all wading in the water, gloriously soaked and messy, whooping and shouting in a way that would have frightened the fish two miles off.

Children are like quicksilver, or like a flight of swallows, darting first one way and then the other, for no apparent reason. Suddenly, some other fancy, some other notion, struck them simultaneously, and they were off and gone through the trees, the stream still echoing with their turbulence.

Almost as though on cue, a car drove up and stopped nearby, and a fisherman climbed out cautiously. Moving with great care, he took his pole and began an elaborate stalking process toward the freshly disturbed waters, obviously proud of his fisherman's skill. His plan, it was clear, was to slip up to this serene pool where he could visualize the drowsing fish, unaware and just waiting to be caught, to take them by surprise.

The unfortunate woodsman crept along the ground, silent as a cat, stalking the prey he expected to find — making not a sound, casting no shadow, sure of his wisdom. Watching this tableau from the screened porch, I was tempted to ease his efforts by mentioning that any fish that might have been near had been stampeded off long ago by the wild antics of my girls. But he was so intent, so serious in his efforts, I did not have the heart to stop him.

At last he reached the stream. Gently, carefully, he cast his line into the water and began to wait. He waited quite awhile, poor fellow, before the grim truth dawned on him. There simply weren't any fish in that very promising location. Apparently it was quite a blow to his fisherman's pride. At last, walking with the particular stride of someone who is confused and angry (after all, he had done all the right things — if there was any justice at all

he should have caught his limit) he rushed back to his car and drove slowly off, shaking his head as he headed away down stream.

I could not keep my laughter back, but I also had a sneaking feeling I had stumbled on a hidden moral. Is it possible that man, in all his vanity, is not always quite so much the master of his situation as he likes to suppose?

As I mentioned earlier, Mother soon became the most accomplished fisherman among us. Something in her nature seemed to respond to the delicate duel between fish and human being. It's a little like having a green thumb for growing things, and some people are naturally good at fishing while others, who seem to be doing exactly the same thing as the master, have no luck at all.

Although she used only salmon eggs as bait, Ruth soon taught Ronnie to use a fly. She and Ronnie often went off together on fishing excursions among the little streams along the canyon.

On one occasion, she gave Ronnie an example of her fishing skill. Mother and the boy had found a likely spot in a little stream above the Bradford cabin. A fine trout was swimming there when they approached, but seeing them arrive, it scurried under a sunken log for safety, leaving only its tail visible. The trout, Mother was sure, felt itself completely hidden and invincible.

"I can see his tail, Mom!" Ronnie said. "Shall I try and hook him now?"

"Not yet, Ronnie," Ruth answered. "We'll just sit quietly here on the bank for five minutes or so — let him feel completely safe — then we'll see."

They waited patiently for a time, then Mother quietly motioned Ronnie to drop his fly on the far side of the log. Sure enough, the fish, complacent by now, dove for the fly. Ronnie jerked his line at just the right moment, and out of the water came the wriggling fish.

Melinda's "navy" trout was the biggest native fish we saw that

summer, but Ruth had an experience with another huge rainbow, which ended somewhat differently.

She began to speak of this fish early in the month of July. He lived, it seemed, in a pool of water up the Holy Ghost Creek about two or three hundred feet from our home, between the Gersbach and Bradford cabins. Mother began what amounted to a classic contest with the beast.

"Oh, that monster! You should see him," she told us. "He took my bait three times today — right in front of my eyes — and I just couldn't get him."

Day after day, Mother stalked that fish, nearly hooking him, but always losing him at just the last moment. Her remarks about him began to take on a certain similarity. "He took the bait today, and I thought sure I had him. But I jerked the line too quickly and he got away!"

After a few days of this, the rest of the family got in the habit of asking Ruth about her progress with the "monster." Each day she seemed to have a new and more exciting story to tell us of her adventures with the big fish.

At last a curious and rather poignant thing occurred. Ronnie and Mike slipped away from the cabin one morning and were gone for several hours. Mother and I thought nothing of it, but for some reason, Ruth did not go fishing that day. We were sitting on the screened-in porch, drinking coffee, when we saw the two boys racing along the path toward the cabin. Slung proudly over Mike's shoulder was Mother's monster — caught at last — brought to defeat and death by the two boys' good intentions.

"Look, Mom, we got him for you!" Ronnie said, proudly. Both boys beamed with self-satisfaction, feeling that they had done a fine thing — a truly marvelous thing for their lovely mother, who wanted the monster fish caught so badly.

I was a little surprised at what happened next. Ruth looked at

her two proud sons, and at the lifeless trout they held toward her. "Oh, the poor thing," she said softly. "The poor, sweet monster." She took the fish and seemed to cradle it in her arms, looking into its dead, pale eye with sorrow and affection. The boys were dumbfounded, but I thought I understood my wife's feelings. That fish, her great enemy — her worthy opponent — had become a personality to her. The monster had become, in effect, a friend and familiar neighbor, even though they played a deadly game together.

"The poor, dear monster," Mother said. The boys looked at each other in confusion and dismay. I patted their shoulders and sent them ambling off, while Ruth held her old antagonist, and, I thought I saw tears in her eyes. Like Ernest Thompson Seton, who stalked and hunted "Lobo," his famous wolf, she had endowed the simple fish with human qualities, thinking of it as an individual, a person, a friend. The sport and joy was in the game, not the kill. And now her friend was gone.

Later, I tried to explain this to the two boys. I assured them that Mother was not angry and that they had done a worthy and noble deed. But never again would Mother have her lovely, lovely fish of Holy Ghost Canyon. The game was finished.

Mother's passion for fishing is almost equaled by that of my brother, H. B. Horn. I remember one day in particular when he and his charming wife, Lucille, were visiting us at the cabin. H. B., of course, was most anxious to get out to the stream and start hauling the trout. Although his stock in trade is lake fishing, he'll gladly do any sort — just so long as there are fish and water involved. He seems to enjoy watching someone else make a fine catch as well as doing the catching himself, and I've had many enjoyable boating trips with him, both in New Mexico and Colorado.

On this morning, both he and Mother were obviously frantic to leave the house and get at that stream. Lucille and I smiled at their eagerness.

"You two go on before you burst something," I told them. "We'll clean up the breakfast dishes and join you later." They were off almost before I finished speaking.

After a time, I wandered down to the stream to watch their progress. I might mention here that H. B. is really an excellent fisherman. At one time, he held the record for the largest rainbow trout caught in the state — he snared it at Bluewater Lake — and it now hangs, mounted, on the wall of the Trade Winds Motor Hotel in Albuquerque.

As I approached them, he was attempting to give Ruth the benefit of his skill and knowledge.

"No, no, Ruthie . . . that hook you're using is way too small! You need a No. 8, like I have. Here, let me fix your line properly!"

"That's quite all right, H. B.," Mother answered. "I'll just keep my little No. 10 hook — you use any size you want to."

For some moments there was a silence as the two fished. Then, unable to restrain himself any longer, H. B. turned again to Mother. "I'll tell you frankly, Ruth . . . trying to use salmon eggs at this time of year is just ridiculous. What you need are worms. Now, I bought some night crawlers on the way up, and if you'll just let me fix up your hook with one of those. . . ."

Mother listened patiently, with a serene smile on her face. "No, thank you, H. B. I'll just struggle along with my salmon eggs, if you don't mind."

As I strolled away from them H. B. was still trying to help his poor little sister-in-law, with no luck at all.

It was perhaps two hours later when they returned to the house. From the front porch, I noticed that H. B. appeared oddly subdued, while Mother smiled and waved gaily. When they arrived at the porch, I saw the reason why. Mother's stringer was jammed with trout, while my brother had caught not a one.

"I can't understand it," he mumbled.

"Oh, it's all a matter of luck," Ruth told him kindly, both of them knowing this was rarely the case. For the rest of his stay with us, H. B. refrained from advising Ruth on fishing techniques.

This has been a fishing chapter, and, though I am no great fisherman or woodsman of any sort, for that matter, I think that all of us learned and grew wiser through the simple business of walking along a stream, out in the woods, all the busy cares of city life forgotten.

It is difficult to describe the pleasure of holding a child's hand in the plum-blue Pecos dusk, and walking, complete with pole and line, along a murmurous stream. Nature becomes very real then, and the closeness between you and a child you love, is a dear and wonderful thing.

I remember one evening in particular. I was walking with little Ruthie — our ten-year-old — through the grand and beautiful forest all around our cabin, along the Holy Ghost Stream. We were very close to each other, not speaking much, carrying our rods and fishing equipment. We walked past Melvin Kurth's cabin toward a spot in the brook where I knew it was possible to catch a fish with a fly.

When we reached that quiet spot, Ruthie and I cast our lines in the water. There was only one small disinterested trout in the brook, but we both tried and tried again to snare him, with no luck at all. At that moment, under those conditions, I realized that my little daughter and I were total equals — as close together as two people ever can be. Even though she was ten years old and I was nearing that area known as middle age, it mattered not in the slightest. We were together, father and daughter, both involved in the same venture, in the great democracy of fishing.

People—even in close and loving families—are so desperately alone so much of the time, it's a precious and important thing to find a medium of communication that really works.

For us, fishing in the Holy Ghost was one such medium.



CATCHING A TROUT

Learning to Ride

THE HORNS were soon a varied family, as the Pecos presented its many facets to us. We were a fishing family, a hiking family, a jeeping family, and, not the least of it where the children were concerned — a horseback riding family.

This all began with the acquisition of a Shetland pony (later named Missie by Ruthie), which I purchased from a friend of ours, Clyde Moore. When I brought up the subject of the desired purchase with Clyde, he quickly agreed to sell me his finest Shetland mare, bred and expecting a colt in early June — with a pony cart thrown in. That seemed like just the ticket to me.

"Sounds fine, Clyde, How much will it be?"

Clyde's eyes turned distant and his face assumed the expression which, I was to learn, had special meaning when you happen to be horse trading.

"I guess I could let you have her and the unborn colt for \$400, Calvin," Clyde mused.

"What?" I shouted. "\$400 for that little animal and flimsy cart? That's outrageous, Clyde!"

"Well, now. . . ." Clyde said.

Using all my business sense and argumentive craft, I talked him down to \$399 at the end of a strenuous hour. At this point I gave

up trying. At wages of one dollar an hour, I'd be better off doing my own work.

Nonetheless, we bought the pony. She was a beautiful sorrel Shetland, and from the moment we brought her to the cabin, a love affair began between her and Ruthie. They were inseparable from the start.

"What's the use of having Missie if you can't ride her?" Pat asked Ruthie, the second morning after the pony arrived.

"Can you teach us how to ride, Pat?" Ruthie said, calling the boy's bluff. Pat grinned all over, realizing he had trapped himself neatly. As the oldest, it was his natural duty to show his little sisters and younger brothers the manly sport of riding.

I caught his eye and grinned encouragingly. As a matter of fact, Pat was as good a rider as I was, which isn't saying much. I had considered hiring one of the local mountain wranglers to teach us all the proper procedures in riding, but at this point, I decided to let Pat see what he could do.

"Sure . . . sure, I guess so, Ruthie," Pat said, taking a deep breath. "There isn't much to it, really."

Actually, Pat wasn't a complete novice at the art of riding. He'd grown up in a western state, after all, and out here a boy just naturally comes in contact with horses once in awhile. He had ridden before, and Missie was certainly no formidable conquest. But being able to hold your own on the back of a horse and teaching your younger sisters how to do it were two different things.

Pat turned to Ruthie, very business-like and self-assured. "What's the basic aim, Ruthie?" He spoke in professorial tones. "All you have to do is get on Missie's back and make her go." Then as an afterthought, he added: "You want to be able to make her stop, too, of course. And slow down and speed up when you want her to."

All this seemed reasonable enough.

"See," Pat continued, warming to his discussion, "First you

climb on the saddle, then you hold on tight to Missie's sides with your knees. Pull on the left rein and she turns left — pull the right one and right she goes."

"Yeah, but first let's see you get the saddle on," Melinda suggested, coolly.

Pat covered quickly. "That's just what I was going to do," he said. "Now. Lesson number one. Putting on the saddle."

He hefted the saddle from the ground by Missie and slung it over the pony's back, then stepped back with considerable satisfaction.

"Isn't it usual to put the blanket on first?" Ruthie asked. Pat reddened slightly. "Of course," he added, "I was just checking to be sure it would fit."

There were dubious stares from the girls as Pat took the saddle off again and placed the blanket over Missie's back.

When blanket and saddle were in place, he moved on to the next step, which was fitting the bridle-bit into the horse's mouth. Now, this is a slightly tricky business, unless you know how. But Pat proceeded with it in the manner of a seasoned old cowhand. He struggled with the leather and metal contraption valiantly, and at last had it fitted in the pony's mouth in what seemed to be a logical arrangement. Missie did not agree. She fretted and fussed, tossing her beautiful little head accusingly and fixing Pat with a round and baleful eye.

"Pat," Ruthie said in a deceptively sincere tone. Pat glanced at his sister with immediate unease. "Yes?"

"You managed to get more than just the bit in Missie's mouth. You put the strap that goes under her chin in, too."

Pat could still produce his special grin, but he was starting to sweat a little. The rest of us managed not to smile openly — a real test for the girls.

"Oh, yeah," Pat acknowledged. "How did that happen?" Once again, he wrestled with the bit.

Finally, it was all accomplished, and Pat glanced at me proudly. "Now then, we get to the real thing . . . riding the horse." Once again he was sounding somewhat professorial. I watched him closely, just a bit nervous, since Missie had never been ridden since we had owned her. With considerable caution, Pat climbed on Missie's back and grasped the reins. Pat was a tall boy — he'd shot up like a cornstalk during the past year — and Missie was a small little creature, perfectly proportioned, but still just a pony. Pat hunched his knees around his waist as his feet slid into the short stirrups. He looked anything but dignified, however, with his natural sense of humor, he was as amused at his appearance as the rest of us.

"Hup, girl," he said to Missie. "Gee! Hya!" He nudged her lightly in the sides with his knees. She turned her patient head sideways, looking up at him with gentle inquiry. He nudged her again, a bit more forcefully and she seemed to sigh — then they were off up the road at a casual walk. With some inducement, Missie worked herself into a trot, then as Pat pummeled her ribs and spoke encouragement to her, they managed a full-fledged gallop.

Behind them, we all shouted encouragement — music to Pat's ears, I could tell. Up the road flew Missie and her inept rider.

They shrieked to a halt; then they turned back and galloped down to the waiting family. The girls were waving; Ruth was grinning; I was proud of Pat's success.

After that, all fears forgotten, it was a question of who would be next to ride Missie.

I wanted to take it slowly and carefully with the children, however. I fastened a short lead rope to the bridle as Melinda, who had won the honor of being "first," climbed on the pony's back, and I walked along beside the child on the horse while both of them got the feel of each other and their new relationship. This procedure was followed with all of the children, except Pat, of course, until I saw that Missie was comfortable with this new

condition, and I was sure she wasn't about to do anything foolish — that she wasn't going to "spook" — and then we moved to the next stage.

I had each of them in turn take the lead rope as well as the reins, while I walked along beside them as a safety measure.

"Hold on tightly," I told them. "Be sure your feet are well in the stirrups." This last command had little meaning for our youngest, Brenda, since her brief legs came nowhere near the stirrups. Her feet dangled joyfully at the lower edge of the saddle.

So it went, all that adventurous day. It wasn't long until the children had begun to get the feel of riding Missie, and she to being ridden by the smaller members of the family whom, I'm sure, she thought of as her own by then. Soon, all seven young Horns had mastered the guiding principle, tugging reins right and left, and were completely at home on little Missie's back. I walked up and down beside one child or another as they grew sure of themselves and of the pony, while Holy Ghost Stream murmured its approval. I had the feeling the stream was pleased and content at seeing young children and their friend — their horse — in such close communion with each other.

In a day or two, they were all capable and anxious to ride down to Happy's store and makeshift post office to check on the mail. Happy's place, a mile down the road from us, was a sort of old-fashioned general store and meeting place, and I had chosen it as a summertime mailing address partly because I expected to receive very little correspondence during that Pecos Summer, and partly because it was just a comfortable distance from the cabin. Going to get the mail at Happy's meant just the right amount of effort and purpose each day.

Getting the mail became a ritual with the children, and we made it a rule that two of them always went together on the trip. One would ride down to the store while the other walked alongside. Once the journey was half done, the positions would reverse

and the child who had walked would ride back. Our dog, Lassie, could usually be seen loping and sniffing along as part of the caravan.

A basic part of owning an animal, any animal, but especially a horse, is caring for its needs. I had thought that this might be a problem of sorts, but in this I was pleasantly surprised. All the children, but particularly the girls—through some budding homemaker's instinct—seemed to enjoy caring for Missie. They handled the feeding, watering, cleaning of her and her ten by ten corral with a special kind of pleasure. As a rule, Brenda and Melinda would carry the large pail of water for their pet, both clutching and struggling with the handle in a kind of awkward dance, from the kitchen to the corral. Ruthie would ceremoniously lift the cement block from the container holding Missie's oats.

It was Melinda's joy to curry the horse, brushing its tense, muscular little body until the coat shone like silk. But all of them loved Missie, and she loved all of them.

We were beginning to learn the horse's droppings were kept in cardboard boxes until they dried; then placed around the roots of young trees near the cabin. It was part of the harmony, of the great rhythm which we had begun to feel and understand by then.

I awoke sometimes at night, with a feeling of disbelief, half defined, fading quickly, as I thought of Missie and my children, and the accidental series of events that led to our discovery of Holy Ghost Canyon. The children were all beginning to know the sound of wind in trees and streams chuckling to themselves in a woodland twilight—experiencing the feel of a pony's sides swelling with breath beneath their youthful thighs.



BRENDA AND MELINDA HELPING WITH THE STORY

Holy Ghost Neighbors

IN MANY WAYS, those of us who lived in Holy Ghost Canyon were like a family, rather than just a community. And, like families on vacation, each did exactly as it pleased. Each family, leaving all pretense and position at home, found in the Holy Ghost Canyon the pleasure that struck its fancy the most.

Actually, many of the families did, and still do, the same things, for it took a particular type of people to enjoy Holy Ghost Canyon. Several of the families, including the Bart Kinneys and the Phil Jonssons, enjoyed a trip or two into the Pecos Wilderness.

Planning and executing a pack trip into the wilderness was an exciting experience. Such a trip, as many other experiences, was helped by the friendly attitude of the Ley family that owned the small Terrero store at the foot of Holy Ghost Canyon. Mr. Ley, known to all as Happy, was one of the delights of Pecos mountain living. Wearing Levis and cowboy boots all of the time, Happy had a laugh in every word he uttered. I asked him once what his given name was. "I guess it's Happy. That's all I know," he grinned. Happy could be identified also by a two-day beard which he always wore. How he managed always to have a two-day growth was hard for me to determine. When he broke into a huge grin, his teeth were visible; his upper teeth were worn nearly

down to the gums and this somehow seemed to sort of fit his personality. Mrs. Ley tended to the store while Happy took a family into the wilderness for one, two, three days, or if they desired, Happy would stay a month. He told me he was happiest when back in the wilderness. There were three Ley children: Inez, who was an army nurse, Richard, a college student, and Huey, an eight-year-old whirlwind.

The Pecos Wilderness, bordering the Holy Ghost Canyon on two sides, was one of the two National Wilderness Areas in New Mexico — the other was the Gila area. One rule of the wilderness area was transportation only by foot or horseback. No motor transportation was allowed.

Great preparation went into a jaunt back into the really deep woods, or "High Country," and most of the families who made this venture were primarily prompted by youngsters in the family, who insisted that the adult residents of the canyon go pioneering at least once or twice a year.

One summer Phil Jonsson lost his son and a friend in the wilderness for an entire night, but the boys were fine the following morning. Enough of the wilderness, for I want to continue to speak of family fun and habits in a general way, to give some idea of the many elements and attitudes which make up life in the Pecos.

All of our neighbors took great pride in working on and around their cabins. In the immediate area, a prominent judge, scientist, doctor, and a lawyer — men who push buttons and dictate most of their working days — took vast joy in home improvement. Mr. and Mrs. Dudley Applewhite, our neighbors to the left, and Mr. and Mrs. George Fitzgibbon, had done wonders with their places, making them the envy of the canyon. Both families enjoyed their children and grandchildren. George and Polly Fitzgibbon allowed Brenda and Melinda to babysit with their one-year-old granddaughter, Colleen Bridgett.

There were some excellent fishermen in the canyon, such as Tom Kinney, Fred Percy, Joe Herring. Dr. Scott Johnson, a fisherman of note, was distinguished by his use of pockets as a fishing creel. It was rewarding to find Dr. Johnson on the stream and ask, "Any luck, Doc?"

"Oh, a little," he would grin, as he began pulling fish from his pockets, two fish each from the front ones, one fish from the back pocket, and one each from the two pockets in his shirt. Since he wore the same clothes to fish day after day the neighbors usually did not invite him in the house when he had his fishing clothes on.

Fishing was not the sole concern among the canyon dwellers. With the coming of good weather, hiking also became one of the important activities in which all indulged.

The beauty of the Pecos country is hard to describe in mere words, but absolutely the best way to feel and discover the Pecos is by hiking. Many painters and writers have tried to catch the grandeur and feel of this country, but they, too, rarely can express what God has created here. A poet might attempt to describe the massive, gently moving pines, vastly grand as they stand silent and enormous in the brilliant sun and dappled shadow — the little lakes, like pools of claret, the views which stretch away from the peaks of our mountains, purple with distance — but words would still not let the reader feel the scented wind or hear the awesome silence of the great, deep woods.

Friends of ours, David and Marian Noel, carried the hiking tradition to some sort of crest by walking all the way from Santa Fe, over the rugged mountains, and finally to Holy Ghost Canyon, a distance of 30 miles.

Richard and Faye Thorne, newcomers to the canyon, brought new pleasures to the Holy Ghost. Mr. Thorne, called "Sticker" by his friends, established horseshoe pitching as a sunshine activity and a card game called "Pitch" as a rainy afternoon or evening game.

Our neighbors, Al and Jean Talbot, spent most of the summer enjoying the youngest member of the Holy Ghost family, Michael Hunt Talbot, who had been born just the thirteenth of April and weighed only eight pounds when he arrived in the canyon.

Ted and Mary Lacaff amused themselves with their five children most of the day. Mary also appliqued mountain scenes and used the colored decorations to brighten their cabin. They both enjoyed riding to and from the store on a one-seat tote-goat, or mountain motorcycle. They would ride the machine together, occasionally with the baby between them.

High on one of our hills lived the two Noel families, the David Noels and Jim and Virginia Noel. They loved New Mexico and the Pecos with an abiding passion. Before their two cabins, all summer long, an American flag fluttered proudly in the Pecos breeze, and beneath that, equally proud, the state flag of Texas whipped and wrinkled in the wind.

The Jim Noels took up official residence in the Pecos on the Fourth of July each year, and a very formal celebration was involved. Everyone in the canyon was invited.

Full of interested anticipation, we wound our way up the circuitous road to the Noel cabin. Sure enough, the whole proceedings were impressive and sincere. All the children in the canyon were invited also.

The affair began at ten o'clock in the morning when one of the Noel children raised the American flag. Then, with a simple honesty and sense of patriotism that some of us tend to forget at times, the children led us all in a pledge of allegiance to the flag of our country.

The entire group joined the children in singing *America* — not too much on key, perhaps, but with considerable feeling.

Next, the New Mexico state flag was raised and we pledged our allegiance to our own beloved state. Following this, and partly in deference to the personal loyalties of the Noels we watched the

Texas flag go up and all sang *The Eyes of Texas Are Upon You*. I smiled inwardly, thinking this was one of the few times in the history of the two states that such close friendship existed. I thought back to 1841 and again to 1862 when Texas invaded New Mexico. This Texan invasion of Holy Ghost Canyon was just right.

The children then walked over to a huge old railroad bell and gave it a hearty whack. The Noels call this their Freedom Bell and it was time for the official Fourth of July address.

That year, perhaps because of our newness and the good-neighbor attitude of the people in Holy Ghost, I had been asked to make the five-minute speech.

I had thought a lot about this, and what I wanted to say were a few of the things I truly believed. I pointed out, high on the mountainside with the pines and blue spruce swaying in the morning breeze, that the purpose of any Fourth of July celebration was to pause and think of the freedoms we enjoyed; freedom to live in Holy Ghost Canyon, to fish in the streams, to hunt in the fall, to educate our children and teach them of the God we worshipped. I then spoke of the equally great freedoms to teach the truths of nature, to meet on a mountainside without any fear, to speak on the mountaintop without thought of reprisal from a police state.

I mentioned only briefly that this freedom was bought with blood and struggle. It had been a dangerous and courageous struggle from the beginning of time, and one that had given man whatever nobility he possessed. The freedom fight started thousands of years ago as the Israelites in Egypt fought massive odds of power to be free — the English barons forced King John to sign the papers which later led to the Magna Carta in 1215 — and here, in our own great land, Americans fought what was then the greatest nation on earth, for the sole, burning purpose of freedom.

Well, so far, the human spirit has generally succeeded, and the great drive for liberty and justice has been strong enough to triumph.

These are some of the things I tried to say on that windy hill-top, to that group of neighbors and friends on a quiet Fourth of July. Then we had a benediction, just before the rain began to fall. We all raced to the open porch and began to enjoy scrambled eggs, ham and bacon, and excellent fruit.

One of Pat's special friends in the canyon was Mrs. Olive Gersbach, an elderly widow who has had a place in Holy Ghost for over 30 years. She came there alone in the summers, since her own boy now had a family of his own. Pat would often saunter up the road in the mornings and sit with her on the front porch, rocking and talking with her about anything and everything under the sun. The lady's favorite topic was the days when her son had been about Pat's age and she would bring him to Holy Ghost in the summers. She and Pat developed a real fondness for each other, and I think his visits made their lives more pleasant.

Melvin and Isabel Kurth had developed a unique Holy Ghost custom. Mr. Kurth, the dean of the canyon, had a cocktail flag which he raised on his front porch at five in the evening. It was a signal for anyone passing up or down the canyon to join him and Isabel for a drink. Melvin called his cabin the "Halfway House" for it was halfway up the canyon. Once some joyriders stopped at Melvin's cabin to ask for directions just at the critical time. They stayed over two hours — the flag was flying.

Mrs. Kurth, incidentally, was an excellent tinsmith. She very kindly taught Ruthie and Melinda to make flowers of tin, using discarded cans. Melvin also played the mouth harp while Pat acted as his accompanist on the piano.

There were, of course, traditions and traditions practiced in Holy Ghost. There was, for instance, the personal tradition developed by Tom Kinney, who had become another close friend. At eleven each summer morning, Tom found it requisite to stop for serious refreshments on his front porch or on the front porch of one of his friends in the canyon.

Another enjoyment of the canyon will sound quite unsophisticated when mentioned, but it brought great joy to us, especially on this first summer. I like to think that we, as a family, refined and perfected the custom from the beginning of our stay in the Holy Ghost. The custom is that of flower and berrypicking, surely one of the most gentle and delightful of outdoor sports.

Ruthie was our expert in this field. No sooner had we settled at the cabin than she began bringing daily to the house offerings of lovely wild flowers — iris, roses, bluebells, trumpet phlox, lady-slippers, daisies — that added much to the decor of the cabin. Later we found that Ruthie daily took a bouquet of flowers to "Sticker" and Faye Thorne and usually sat and talked to them a good 30 minutes. I know of no better recommendation for these dear, good friends than that a ten-year-old would want to take them a daily bouquet of flowers.

We discovered, during that summer, that there were a number of wild berries easily found and harvested by the wary searcher. Currants, strawberries, raspberries, all of these were part of the bounty of the land. The girls, after picking for an hour, usually had a mid-morning feast. Later in the year, all along the Pecos highway, we had a riot of chokecherries — excellent for jelly as we were to discover. Melinda would ask for some of this particularly tasteful jelly in her own way: "Mommie, can I have some of that jelly that tastes just like perfume smells?"

Near our cabin, close to the Terrero Cave, grew a fine, old crabapple tree. We made a point of picking the small but delicious apples that first summer, even using a step ladder to aid in the picking, as one of our contributions to the set of traditions existing in Holy Ghost. In the dead of winter when Mother would bring out a jar of chokecherry jelly or crabapple jelly someone would start a conversation about the afternoon or morning when we had been picking in the Pecos. A laugh was usually in order, as we remembered the time Pat caught his trousers on barbed wire

while picking chokecherries, or the occasions when Brenda would be temporarily denied crabapple jelly because she had refused to pick them one morning.

With seven children to manage and enjoy this summer, the two adult Horns established additional Horn traditions peculiarly our own. These customs were born out of necessity. Without a few firm rules and regulations, firmly enforced by Mother and Father as well as the children, none of us could have had the joy from our Pecos experience which we had.

One very important rule soon stopped children from falling into the stream. If a child happened to fall in the creek, and little people seemed to be doing that constantly — often rightfully claiming they had been pushed — it was required that the child involved come home immediately, remove his or her clothing, and wait inside until the wet articles were thoroughly dry. It was sometimes necessary, in fact, for the child to forget about boisterous romps outside for the rest of the day.

Out of necessity, we also developed a rule which did not always work, but which seemed wise at the time. I acquired a large railroad bell, similar to the Noels', massive in its volume and tone. The idea was that none of the children could stray out of reach of the sound of this huge chime, at least without asking permission.

It was a hard rule to enforce; children, distance, and forgetfulness being what they are, but the intent, at least, became one of our Holy Ghost traditions.

Getting down to a finer spectrum, there developed a family tradition not universally admired in the household. This involved the three boys drying dishes for Mother once a day, one boy for each meal. Ruth and the girls and I all thought highly of this ritual. The boys were somehow less entranced by the notion. Yet, I had enjoyed doing dishes with one child helping me. That was the time for the best conversation of the day.

There were a number of other procedures, events, and habits

which filled our lives in the Pecos country — not all of them intentional. I soon learned that children get lost with a regularity which nearly approaches custom. If they were seriously lost, all of us in the canyon became deeply concerned. This happened once that summer as a canyon guest's only daughter strayed away. Just after the Forest Rangers were coming and the National Guard was alerted, the young girl walked nonchalantly to the Pecos road from the canyon to the south of Holy Ghost called Indian Creek. She had walked over the mountain, not realizing the distance. Her father, toward dusk, was beside himself with the thought of his daughter in the hills all night.

But most of the canyon customs were delightful. The families took great pleasure in going down to Happy Ley's store for the mail — then sitting on his weathered bench in front of the store, visiting with neighbors as they came to collect their mail or purchase a container of milk.

There was, also, a charming tradition of children's birthdays in the canyon. Three of our children, Pat, Melinda, and Ruthie, had birthdays in the summer, and consequently they were celebrated high up in Holy Ghost.

As these events occurred, more and more neighboring children attended the affairs and we found that a party of this sort would attract from 30 to 35 urchins. The parties had a certain similarity in the format. The children would bring toys and presents which had been found at a moment's notice — candy from the store, a can of worms, fish hooks, or a worn out jigsaw puzzle with "only two pieces missing." Festivities would usually end with a wiener roast, vastly enjoyed by all, the splitting of a watermelon and the devouring of a birthday cake purchased in Santa Fe.

Whatever habit or tradition each of us developed, all were accepted and tolerated by the family of Holy Ghost Canyon. Simply living there by choice and appreciating the beauty and serenity of the land made us all one family.

Father's Day and the Cave

IT WAS A LOVELY MORNING. The sun seemed to have chosen our Pecos country as its own special home, and it shone through the pines with bright goodnature as I sat up in bed. Outside the cabin, the day was coming to life. Birds sang and chirped and insects murmured in the high, clean air. There was something special about that day and for a moment, as I pulled myself into wakefulness, I tried to remember what it was. Then I heard whispers and giggles outside the bedroom door and I remembered.

"Happy Father's Day!" Mike shouted, as all the children, big and little, walked into the room, the girls running to the bed and covering me with small arms and much hugging and kissing.

"You and Mother stay in bed, Dad," Pat said. "We're going to fix your breakfast. Here's some coffee to start with."

"Well, thank you, children," I said. Ruth struggled to a sitting position, and we both drank steaming coffee as the younger members of the family vanished toward the kitchen, full of good intentions. Breakfast in bed was to be a special treat for me in honor of Father's Day.

Ruth sipped at her coffee with some forebodings, listening to the sounds from the kitchen, the clatter of dishes and eager young voices. The smell of frying bacon reached our noses.

"I do hope they won't break anything," Ruth said.

"Now, don't worry, Ruth," I told her. "What harm can they do?"

It wasn't long until I found out. Mother's nose, more sensitive than mine, detected the first, faint odor of something burning. She was out of bed and headed for the kitchen before I caught the scent of smoke.

"I'm sure it's nothing serious," I told her rapidly vanishing back as I sat in bed, determined to have my morning coffee in peace.

Moments passed and then I heard Ruth's voice rise in dismay. Groaning — it had been such a beautiful morning, and the children's intentions so good — I climbed from the bed and apprehensively made my way to the kitchen. Mike had been cooking the bacon. When it was done, he had placed the hot iron skillet on the drainboard of the sink, and the Formica surface had, naturally, been severely burned. Mother stood among her brood, shaking her head in sorrow, while all the children tried to clean up the fearful mess they had made. Breakfast was forgotten.

But it was still Father's Day and the youngsters were determined to make an event of it. All the younger children had presents for Daddy, selected with great care and concern.

Melinda presented me with a tin can full of writhing fishing worms, which she had dug with considerable effort. They were not the most pleasant sight at that hour of the morning, perhaps, but the proud smile on my little girl's face made me overlook that fact.

Ruthie, with her built-in love of flowers, had been up early picking a bouquet for me. The flowers she had diligently sought were trumpet phlox — her favorite bloom. I was pleased at the effort she had gone to in finding her special flowers for me. At a loss as to what to give me for a gift that morning, Brenda had come up with a package of gum, carefully wrapped, and solemnly handed me this as her donation.

We still had not had breakfast, but the girls decided they would remedy that by taking Daddy on a picnic. "Let's go up to Doc's Creek!" Melinda suggested, and the other girls were in complete accord. Lottie Jane took over the situation at once. "We'll fix sandwiches and take along wieners and cokes," she said, and soon there was great activity in the kitchen, the earlier indiscretion with the frying pan forgotten now.

Doc's Creek was the site of our first experience with Holy Ghost Canyon when we had gone on our ill-fated camping trip some years ago. But the memories, both pleasant and unpleasant, had long been washed away in the pleasure of our Pecos Summer, and the idea seemed like a fine one to all of us. The boys decided they were too mature to participate in such childish pursuits, and announced they would take me horseback riding and to the Indian ceremonial cave, which we had often passed on the way to Happy Ley's store, when the girls and I returned from our picnic.

The Jeep was loaded up in no time at all, and soon we were headed toward the public campgrounds at Doc's Creek.

One can drive only so far along this route, then hiking becomes the order of the day. When the dirt road came to an end, the girls and I parked the Jeep and proceeded on foot along the winding course of Doc's Creek. It's a beautiful little stream, gurgling to itself up there in the high mountain country. Its width is not over 24 to 36 inches at the most, but it's a natural home for native trout. In this narrow strip of water, native cutthroats lurk with complete contentment.

The creek came rushing endlessly down the canyon from its high wanderings above, chuckling and babbling as it foamed over rocks and rapids, filling our ears with its ceaseless monologue, now shouting, now whispering its timeless story of woods and mountains and rains.

A little above us in the stream, a huge grey boulder split the water as it jutted out from the greenery of the bank. Against this,

the wild little creek foamed and boiled, then momentarily calmed itself in a pool, dreaming briefly there before hurtling impatiently off again to continue its race to the sea.

The pool was icy clear, transparent as diamond. Beneath the shivering surface, a kaleidoscope of many colored rocks dazzled the eyes.

Everywhere around us, the great trees towered. Across the stream where a mountain slope loomed upward, the variety of color in the leaves and foliage seemed infinite. Gleaming in the sunlight were delicate blooms of yellow aspen, their trunks bone white against the black-green needles of the vast pines. I had never realized how many colors green really can be. From the palest shades of near yellow to the darkest bluish tone, the green of the forest seemed to possess a spectrum of its own, ever-shifting, ever-changing in the play of light and shadow.

Watching the incredibly varied colors of the hillside, I noticed a sudden flare of fire. It was a stab of sunlight blazing from the red-brown of some dying tree, perhaps one struck by lightning. But even in death, this great creation brought beauty to the land and was still a part of the harmony of nature.

We took the trail which wanders along beside the stream's path, on up to higher ground. Soon, we were walking through a natural flower garden composed of scarlet buglers, the most prevalent flower in Holy Ghost, which has a lovely round glowing red pod. Blackeyed susans, purple and white daisies and wild sunflowers joined the colorful crowd as we walked and skipped up Doc's Creek, the three little girls in the lead, followed by Lottie and me. Ruthie knew the names of all the flowers. . . . "That's fireweed, Daddy!" . . . and she pointed them out to us as we walked along the mountain trail in the bright morning sunlight.

Since breakfast had come to an unfortunate end, we were all hungry in no time, and along about ten-fifteen, lunch seemed like an excellent idea. The three little girls, plus Lottie and their

Daddy, chose a comfortable spot by the stream and we had our picnic.

Overhead, clouds began to form in the summer sky. It was early for them, since it was usually eleven-thirty or so before the daily rain came. In the sky above us, white clouds argued with dark ones until the white ones lost, and rain poured down upon us. We quickly moved our picnic to a sheltered spot beneath a thicket of trees. There, snug and cozy under the protecting branches, the little girls and I ate our sandwiches with much giggling and laughter. Thunder rolled and rumbled through the mountain air, dignified and self-important, but we felt secure in our snug retreat. Far off, the flicker of lightning lanced the sky. Delighted little shrieks surrounded me, as the girls nestled close. Life was good, I felt, and it was good to be a father on that particular Father's Day.

The rain soon passed, and then, our picnic and hike completed, we retraced our steps and headed for home. The next event — the horseback ride — was due.

All the children decided to go along for this Father's Day adventure. Ruth, true to form, was down at the stream, testing salmon eggs and her own skill against the wiles of trout in the stream. We left her to her fishing and drove to Happy Ley's to rent some horses. Across the valley created by the rushing Pecos, we saw the dark, mysterious opening of the ceremonial cave, yawning against the sun-lit face of the land. Ronnie, having found out a little about the cave with his natural, boyish, curiosity, announced to us that the cave was eight feet high. "It goes back 1,701 feet," he added.

"All right, boys, we'll explore it after the horseback ride," I told them.

We rode through a lush green meadow a short distance from Happy's store, enjoying the golden shafts of sunlight and the pleasant, rolling motion of the animals we rode. Perhaps it was

the gentle feel of wind — perhaps it was simply animal high spirits — but whatever the cause, the horses were feeling exceptionally frisky. Mike's and Ronnie's mounts began to race each other. In moments, Mike's horse was running at top speed across the rolling grass, with Ronnie right behind.

"Stop your horse, Ronnie, stop your horse!" Mike shouted, growing frightened as his mount galloped wildly through the meadow. With no trouble at all, Ronnie reined in his horse, and we all watched in amusement, and slight concern, as Mike vanished into the trees still shouting, "Stop your horse, Ronnie, stop your horse!"

He brought the animal under control, however, and cantered back to the rest of us.

The ride continued as the beautiful golden day lazed on. Brenda sat in her saddle with more and more relaxation, and suddenly I noticed her little form slide forward. "Brenda!" I shouted just as she was about to fall to the ground. With the ease of children who are worn out from too much activity and play she had gone to sleep as she rode. The hike, the picnic, the whole excitement of the day, had been nearly too much for her.

We soon rode through the meadow toward Happy's store. Just then I noticed that Melinda was not with us on the trail. I told the children to ride ahead and I would go back to find our missing straggler. I turned my horse around. Soon I came upon her. She had dropped her reins and Big Dolly, her horse, was standing upon them. The child was on the ground pushing against the huge hoof of the animal trying to get the hoof off her reins. Presently, after much pushing and talking Melinda recovered her reins, crawled back into the saddle and followed me down the trail.

The boys were eager for the next adventure on this Father's Day to end all Father's Days. The entrance to the cave across from Happy's store beckoned to them irresistibly. I understood their excitement and, as we unsaddled the horses and climbed into our

Jeep, I remembered a little of how I had felt at their age at the delicious frightfulness of exploring an ancient Indian cave.

"All right, kids," I said. "We'll have a look at it. But you all must be very careful. Caves can be dangerous." There was loud agreement to this condition as we headed for the cave.

There is a tradition in Pecos that this ancient cleft in the ground was long used for ceremonial purposes by the Pecos Indians, and by their descendants who had moved from the Pueblo. As the stories go, the Indians would enter the cave, which runs back for a distance of 1,701 feet, and never be seen emerging from the entrance again. They must have known some other, secret exit.

I had spoken with a number of the Pecos old-timers about this tradition, and had come up with some interesting and factual stories. Frank Byrd told me of hearing his wife's grandmother, Reducinda Gonzales, tell of the Indians coming once a year over the mountains from Jemez, through Macho Canyon, then up the Pecos River on horseback to the cave.

"They would all enter except one," she had said. "He would take the horses away, clear back to Jemez Pueblo. The other Indians would leave the cave on foot at some unknown exit."

José Baca and Hilario Moya confirmed this story, and Hilario mentioned that he had actually watched them enter, then seemingly vanish into thin air.

There are many verified accounts of this curious pilgrimage, including a reference in the *Santa Fe New Mexican* shortly after the turn of the century, which told of the descendants of the Pecos people, who had moved to Jemez, requesting permission from Edgar L. Hewett to insure that they were not molested while making their journey. There are few part-Indians still living in Pecos, and they too know of the cave and its ceremonial significance.

This request for protection from being molested might have grown out of a story Fred Marley told Judge Danny A. MacPherson, Jr., of Albuquerque. Judge MacPherson's family had the first

cabin in Holy Ghost Canyon; it was constructed in 1915. Mr. Marley built the cabin. He told Judge MacPherson of following the Indians into the cave years before and then boarding the entrance to discover if the Indians did know of another exit. He said the Indians never disturbed the boarded-up entrance, proving that they did, indeed, know another way out.

Judge MacPherson saw the Indians in Holy Ghost Canyon either in 1922 or 1923. He was fishing along the stream when twenty Indians on horseback rode up to the end of the canyon. They camped all night. While there, they gathered the bark of aspen trees and made long torches from the bark. That evening they came to the entrance of the cave, formed themselves in a circle, and made a huge bonfire in the middle. Young Danny and two other boys observed. Around nine o'clock a watchful Indian found the boys and politely but firmly insisted that they leave, which they did at once. Judge MacPherson was convinced that the Indians later entered the cave with the aspen torches, but he did not see them. In the morning they gathered their horses which had been grazing and left.

"Sure, I remember the last time they came," Happy Ley told me. "It was 1948. They came on horseback, down through Indian Creek and then over to the cave. Later that evening, they went to the camp grounds up Holy Ghost Canyon, then on up to Spirit Lake. Next night they came back to Holy Ghost to camp, but at around eleven o'clock that night, they all filed down to the cave."

"Our place was only about 150 feet from the mouth of the cave, in those days," Mrs. Ley told me.

"There were about thirteen of them, carrying torches. They stayed inside until about two o'clock, then out they came again, walking right past our house."

"They had a Forest Service permit to camp on the land," Happy continued. "Henry Gallegos got a call from Elliott Barker telling him to keep an eye out for them." Tom Kinney, whose mother

owned a cabin at this time across from Happy Ley, was visiting her and also saw the Indians.

Some historians believe that a quarter of a century before the settlement of St. Augustine, Florida, this small rocky cavern in Holy Ghost Canyon may well have been the first European dwelling place in what is now the United States. It is believed that Fray Luis de Escalona, a brother in the lesser order of Franciscans, made his home there. He had accompanied the Conquistador Francisco Vázquez de Coronado on his journey of exploration to this arid countryside in the spring of 1540, and was one of a handful of monks, settlers, and Indian slaves who elected to remain behind.

"Luis de Escalona," wrote Pedro de Castañeda, chronicler for the Coronado expeditions, "loved prayer and solitude." He certainly could have found it in the cave at Holy Ghost: in fact, the cavern might well be called "Escalona's Cave."

Willa Cather, in her *Death Comes for the Archbishop*, reports that Archbishop Lamy spent one night in a ceremonial cave in the area. This could easily have been our Holy Ghost cavern.

I told the children of the background of the cave we were about to explore, and their excitement mounted as we approached it. Once there, all of us entered the hole in the earth. We walked back into that ancient opening for about 150 feet, to a point where the cave veered sharply to the right and hollowed on into the depths of the mountain. There, the younger children and I stopped, but the older ones of the group, Lottie Jane, Pat, Mike, and Ronnie, continued on.

I waited patiently with the small girls, understanding the spirit of adventure that called my older children onward. They had flashlights with them, and I was sure they would be all right. Time passed, and the distant sound of laughter faded away as the children walked deeper and deeper into the silent weight of earth and mountain. I began to be a little disturbed and called out. No an-

swer. I called again, and still there was nothing but the stony silence of the cave.

My uneasiness turned to fear and I started on, into the darkness, telling the little ones to wait for me there. But I had no light, and I soon realized I could not follow the older children into the depths of the cave. There was nothing to do but take the little girls home and wait for our older ones to finish exploring and come on home.

"You're sure they're all right?" Ruth asked when I told her the older children were still in the cave. "Of course, Ruth," I said "They'll be along any minute." The minutes passed. They turned into hours, and still no children.

I had been hiding my anxiety, but when two hours had come and gone I decided to ease my own growing nervousness, as well as Ruth's. I picked up the huge flashlight we kept in the kitchen and headed back for the cave.

Spelunkers can say what they want — there is still something eerie and frightening about being deep in the earth, with all that mass of rock and soil between you and clean fresh air. It gave me a distinct chill to walk back into that darkness, even with a flashlight sending its frail beam ahead of me. The darkness was a visible thing, thick and black. I pushed onward, thinking of the children, full of uncertain terror for them. The passageway began to ooze water and the air turned stale and damp as I walked back into the stony depths. Then began the frightening part of the adventure. Tunnels opened up on either side of the main passage, and when I turned into one, I had to quickly retrace my steps.

The floor of the tunnel was slick with water now, and stalactites glistened from the ceiling in the pale light of my flashlight. The ceiling lowered and fallen rocks hampered my progress as I walked deeper and deeper into the earth. I was worried sick about the children. Anything could happen to them in a place like this!

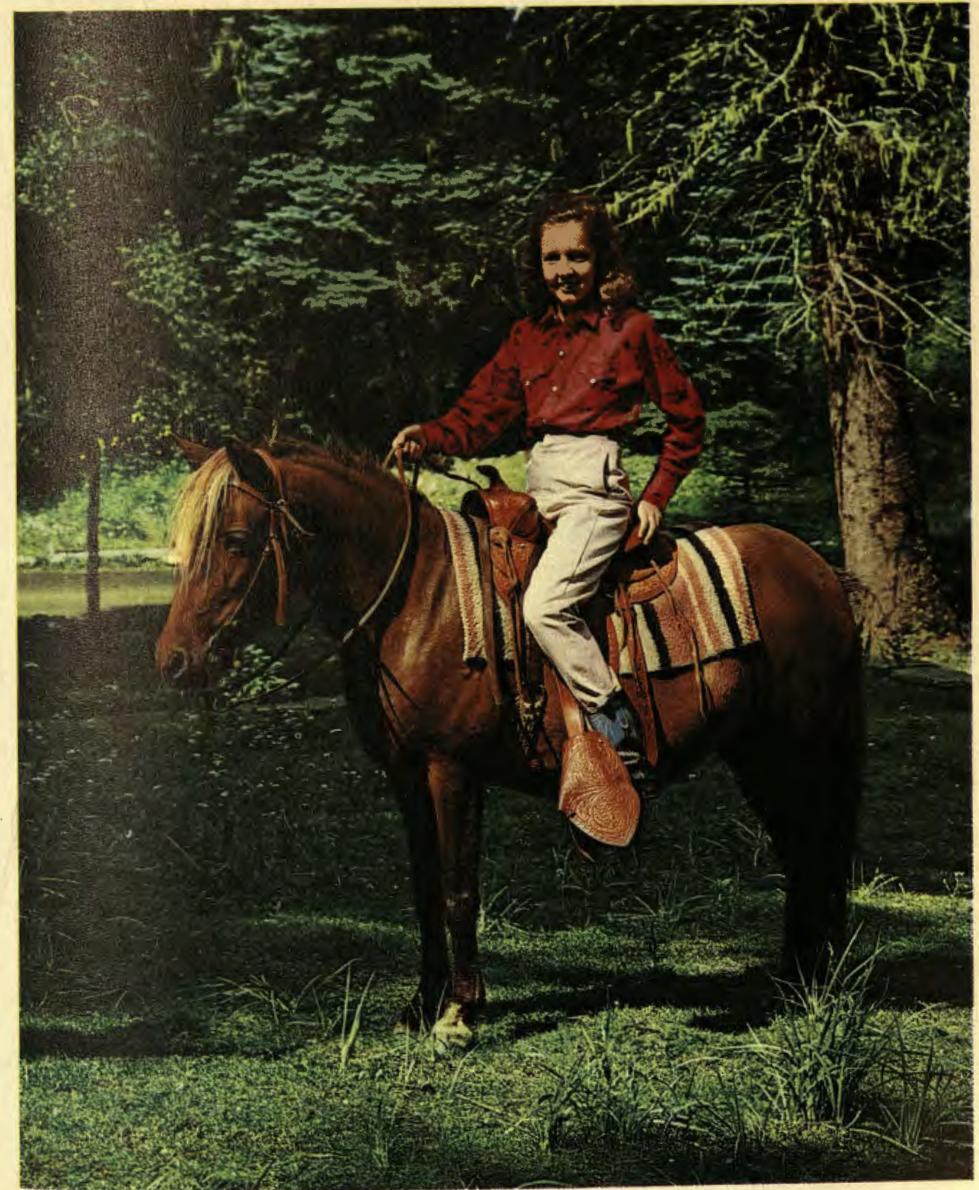
Then, as I groped, stooping and sliding on the slick floor of the

cave, I heard the sound of voices and my heart skipped several beats. The voices were tired, but they were children's voices, and they were laughing. I stopped my laborious walk through the cave and waited, leaning against the wet side of the tunnel.

"Hi, Dad," Mike said, as the children crawled into view. "This sure is a good cave. We've really been exploring!"

I nodded, scarcely trusting myself to speak as I saw that all of them were safe, although somewhat tired and dirty from their adventure.

We drove home in the Jeep and I headed for a hot bath, some food, and then to bed. It had been a Father's Day I would remember for quite a while.



RUTHIE AND MISSIE

Ruthie and the Pony

SPRINKLED IN with the joys of that summer there were some genuine tragedies. But even the misfortunes were an important part of the experience for the children and for Ruth and myself.

Little Ruthie, at age ten, experienced a very real sorrow, one which nearly broke her heart and came close to breaking ours. To understand it, you must understand a little more about Ruthie herself. At that tender age she had several very distinct loves in her life, and they had a definite order of importance.

First of all came Missie. The list of her affection then moved to Mother and Daddy — in second and third places — on to her two little sisters and then to big sister Lottie Jane. At that point in her young life, Ruthie would have hotly denied the slightest concern for any boy, even her three brothers. This is an attitude which, I have noticed, the years have a way of changing in young girls.

But first and foremost in Ruthie's mind at that time was Missie.

One day, while she sat in the grassy field which we called a meadow, across from our cabin, I asked her to describe Missie to me. The pony lay beside her, faithful as a dog, and Ruthie gently stroked her nose.

"Well, Daddy," she began, very thoughtfully. Her mouth, I

noticed, was filled with purple gum of a flavor dubiously referred to as grape. Ruthie chewed and thought.

"The thing about Missie and me is we have fun together. We play games. See, I play fingers with her." Little Ruthie tickled the animal's lips, ever so gently, with her fingers.

"And then she opens her mouth!" she said, proudly. Sure enough, Missie opened her mouth, although I had the feeling she did so more to please her mistress than for anything else.

Again, Ruthie was thoughtful. "My pony has mirror eyes. You can see pictures of yourself when you look in them."

I had never thought of it that way, but sure enough it was true. The pony's eyes were like dark, shining mirrors.

"When I tickle her ears," Ruthie continued, "she shakes her head!" Ruthie tickled and Missie obligingly shook. Ruthie kissed the pony on her neck and Missie rubbed her beautiful head against Ruthie's. It was one of those natural and wonderful expressions of affection that occurs occasionally between child and beast.

Then the moment had passed and Ruthie was on her feet, running toward the stream, like some warm, wild, little animal herself. I watched her undershirted figure scamper away, noticing her checkered shirt lying nearby in the grass. Missie lifted the shirt with her mouth and followed the little girl at a more dignified pace. She enjoyed fondling Ruthie's clothes because of the faint smell of her little mistress which they contained.

It was shortly after this that the trouble occurred. Because our cabin was on forest land, we were not permitted to keep the pony there on a permanent basis. I made arrangements to settle Missie in Joe Herring's nearby ranch, which is private land, when I had to return to Albuquerque. Joe had a strip of high meadow, perfect grazing for horses, about a mile on up Holy Ghost Stream.

As Ruth and I led Missie up to her second home, we noticed a huge, dark stallion standing in the meadow, motionless, but somehow a little ominous.

A peculiar expression crossed my wife's face. "I don't think we should leave little Missie in the meadow with that brute. She is in a family way, after all."

"Why, nonsense, dear," I said. What harm could there be in leaving her with the stallion? Missie was due to foal any day, and this fact alone should keep the stallion away from her.

Ruth looked stubborn and worried. "I don't think she's safe in there," she said.

"All right, Mother," I said. "If it will make you feel better, I'll call down to the Forked Lightning Ranch and check with the veterinarian there."

This seemed to ease Mother's mind a bit, and I spoke to the doctor, telling him the situation exactly.

"No . . . no, I don't see how there could possibly be any danger to your mare, Mr. Horn," he assured me. I passed the information on to Ruth. She still looked worried. "I don't care what that veterinarian said. I still don't like it!"

That evening, Mother's silence kept us all a little subdued.

The following morning, upon our return to Holy Ghost, Ruthie, Mother, and I drove up to the Herring ranch to retrieve our Missie. Even though I kept assuring myself everything would be all right — that Missie would be fine and the stallion would not have bothered her at all — I felt a touch of anxiety as we approached the meadow.

We rounded the last turn and parked the car by the meadow — and then we saw it — the pitiful, dark little shape huddled at Missie's feet. She had lost her colt.

"Oh, no," was all I could think of to say. Mother spoke not at all, but tears coursed down her lovely cheeks and she shook with quiet sobs.

Ruthie had run wildly over to her beloved Missie and was patting and holding her lowered neck, sobbing and shivering in sorrow. I walked, filled with a sense of grief and sickness, over

to my little daughter and the pony, grieving over her lost child there in the meadow. I tried to think of something — anything — to say to Ruthie. There must be something to comfort her, I thought, but I could not find the words. I held her shaking shoulders in my arms, and gently stroked Missie's head.

"I'm sorry, Missie," I spoke softly to the animal. "We're all sorry."

Missie's great, gentle eyes met mine with an almost human expression of pain deep inside her mirrors, as Ruthie had called them. She mourned her dead offspring with deep animal patience, while Ruthie hugged her neck and sobbed.

At last, I pulled Ruthie away from Missie and the little dark form on the ground.

"Come on, honey. It's all out of our hands now. We must go home."

We were a sad procession as I led Missie back down the road to our place, with Ruth white-lipped and little Ruthie racked with sorrow.

All that day, the little girl stood by her pony, shaking and withdrawn, seeming to share the animal's grief and loss. Ruth and I watched her from the porch.

"Well, you were right," I said. "Somehow I feel as if it were my fault. But what are we going to do about Ruthie?"

"We'll have to think of something," Ruth said.

Several days later, the child was still despondent, red-eyed, shuttered away from life. I spoke to Clyde Moore about the sad occurrence, and he was quick to offer help. He suggested, with no trace of the horse trader's expression on his face now, that Ruthie exchange Missie for another, equally fine Shetland mare, one which was about to have a colt in a matter of weeks. It sounded like a fine idea to me. Having seen the cycle of death, I thought that this would give Ruthie another chance to see the cycle as it should be — the wonderful experience of birth and life.

"Sure, Daddy, I'll look at them," Ruthie said when I told her of Clyde's offer.

Mother, Ruthie, Clyde and I drove to his sprawling ranch near Estancia, where he kept at least a hundred Shetland ponies. Once there, Clyde led the little girl from one fine group of mares to another.

"Look there, Ruthie, isn't she a beauty?" Clyde would say as they approached one pretty Shetland mare after another. "I'll bet she'll have a colt within the week! Would you like to trade Missie for her?" On each occasion, Ruthie's response was the same. "I'd rather have my Missie."

When darkness finally seeped across the Estancia valley, Ruthie's voice could still be heard saying: "I'd rather have my Missie, thank you."

We drove back toward Clyde's ranch house in a somber silence, not knowing what our next move should be to bring little Ruthie out of her sadness. Clyde seemed particularly crushed, since the idea had been his. All at once, he turned to Ruthie with a voice full of new hope.

"Say, listen, Ruthie," he said. "How would you like it if I just loaned you a mare about to have a colt? I tell you what — you can keep the colt and Missie too. Then I'll breed Missie to the prettiest palomino stallion in the whole West, one I bought just the other day. Would that fix things up?"

For a moment, there was a tense silence in the pickup truck, as Ruthie pondered this idea. All at once, her eyes began to light and a broad smile eased away the expression of sorrow she had worn for days. "Gee, that would be terrific!" she said. As if by magic, Ruthie was our own, old Ruthie once again.

Mother and I exchanged weary, thankful glances. Thanks to Clyde, the crisis seemed to have passed.

Ruthie, with the death of Missie's unborn colt, had learned one of the sadder lessons nature has to teach us. She had been shown,

along with the rest of us, that death is a part of the wheel of life. It was a hard lesson for the child to accept. But with the arrival of Little Bit, the fine, light brown mare Clyde brought us several days later, Ruthie had a wonderful example of the other side of the coin — the marvelous business of new life brought upon the earth.

Little Bit, it soon developed, was a sweet-natured, charming little pony, gentle and placid — a perfect pet for children. And she was more than ready to drop her colt.

"Now, you watch her closely, Ruthie," Clyde said as he led the docile little mare up to us. "She's about ready to deliver."

"Oh, we will," Ruthie whispered. "We'll take good care of her, Mr. Moore!"

Each evening, for the next few nights, we put Little Bit in the garage to protect her from the heavy rains which had begun to fall as summer progressed. She was, after all, in a rather delicate condition, and the last thing I wanted was to have anything happen to this colt. I doubt if Ruthie's heart could have borne it.

Every morning, Ruthie would leap from her bed before any of the rest of us were up and scamper out to the garage to check on Little Bit's maternal status. The coming birth was her whole concern and topic of conversation, and her eyes were big with anticipation and eagerness.

On the 19th of June, the whole canyon, including the rest of our family, was violently and jubilantly awakened by Ruthie's shrieks of delight.

"She's got her colt! Her baby's here! She's got her colt!" This was the signal we had all been waiting to hear, and we rushed from the house toward the garage, the children trailing half-donned clothing, half-discarded pajamas, and mists of sleep in a visible wake — Ruth and I, still in our night clothes following after as swiftly as possible for mere grown-ups.

It was quite a sight. Little Bit stood contentedly, with gentle

pride, beside the spindliest, longest-legged, most beautiful newborn colt you ever saw. He was a lovely soft light grey-brown color, and his eyes, huge and liquid clear in his pretty head, were full of faint surprise at finding himself suddenly thrown out of the warm, black womb among the living.

Standing beside the colt, tremulously petting his silky, still wet, neck stood Ruthie. It's hard to describe the look on her small face — the wonder and the joy, and even a kind of personal pride, as if she had been involved in the process of birth, somehow. And, in a way, I guess she had been if concentration, concern, and steadfast hope count for anything.

"Isn't he beautiful?" Ruthie whispered, staring entranced at the awkward little pony. Little Bit snickered contentedly, moving her feet, perfectly happy to have Ruthie make so much of her accomplishment.

We led the new mother and son out into the daylight and the entire family inspected our first-born in Holy Ghost Canyon, with much applause and satisfaction. In the history of horse breeding I doubt if a pony has every been greeted with such extravagant admiration. During all of this, Ruthie stood by the colt with shining eyes, not saying much, but filled with a bursting, rapturous delight.

The cycle had come full swing — the circle completed. Out of death had come life, and it was as if all of nature had been reborn in the birth of the little pony. Life continued, and from sorrow there came joy.

It was a task, getting the smaller children inside to eat any breakfast that morning, and from time to time, one or the other of them would be able to bear it no longer, and would rush from the table outside to check on the colt.

"I know what his name is going to be," Ruthie announced after one such excursion.

"You do?" Ruth asked. "And what might that be, dear?"

"Cosmo!" Ruthie said with complete finality.

"Cosmo?" I repeated. I wondered how that particular name had occurred to her.

"Yes," Ruthie said, firmly. "'Cause he's already 'caused-so-much-trouble'!"

Her logic was hard to refute.

During the coming weeks, all of the girls, especially Ruthie, mothered Cosmo as if he had been their own offspring. When it was time for the animal to nurse, Melinda would say: "Look! Cosmo is milking!" It wasn't long until the pony was taking regular naps each afternoon, provided it could use one of the girls' laps for a pillow. Every day, a little tableau took place beneath the sheltering branches of the huge pine which stood in front of the cabin. The tree, by the way, had a personal name, like so many inanimate objects the children had grown fond of in Holy Ghost. The name of this particular tree, according to Ruthie, was "Beautiful."

To continue — every afternoon a child could be seen, sitting cross-legged in the dappled shade of the vast pine, with Cosmo's head cradled in her lap, while the young colt took his afternoon snooze, secure and safe in the arms of one small mistress or another. It was not unusual for two tired heads to be nodding in summer sleep beneath the tree.

Of all the births in our family, the birth of Cosmo was, in some ways, the most joy-filled and curiously meaningful. At least to the children, Cosmo was the essence and meaning of life — new life — and it washed away the tragedy of Missie's lost child as nothing else could have done.



COSMO TAKING A NAP

Down the River to Pecos

THE PECOS COUNTRY had much to teach us all, most of it fascinating and fun, rather than sad. Our Pecos home, we soon discovered, was rather like the hub of a gigantic wheel, with historic, fascinating spots radiating like spokes in all directions.

The best way to get to know the country, of course, was on foot, when the areas to be explored were close enough to reach this way. By horseback was the second choice, but even this mode of transportation had its limits in terms of distance. The third choice was our battered Jeep, and in this we went roaring off to visit places twenty miles or more away from our central location.

It was early in the summer when Ronnie and I decided to visit Pecos Village and find out a little about the town, so near to us and yet so far away in custom and tradition. We climbed into the Jeep and headed down Holy Ghost Canyon toward the village.

"A town is more than just buildings and scenery, Ronnie," I remarked to the boy, as the ancient Jeep spluttered and bumped along the road. "It's all those things too, of course. But most of all it's people."

Ronnie grinned his wide grin to show he understood. Even when sitting still, his dancer's body seemed in motion — he seemed

to be hearing some private beat and melody, and to be keeping time with it internally.

One of the true delights of our whole Pecos adventure was the drive from our cabin down to Pecos and back. The fourteen-mile stretch of winding road along the Pecos River Canyon was a journey through constantly changing beauty, never quite the same. It was rather like driving through some vast outdoor art gallery where the paintings were constantly changed. Nature's great exhibition was dramatized in a subtly different way as sun and shadow painted and repainted the landscape.

It was quite early on this particular morning as Ronnie and I began our drive down to Pecos, and the sun was just topping the high mountains east of the canyon. Everywhere, pine needles glistened and shimmered in the glowing sun, and sunlight sparkled on the surface of Holy Ghost Stream like countless shifting jewels. All around us was the interplay of light and shadow among the trees and undergrowth, as a mild breeze moved branches and leaves. Each trip down the canyon was a new and individual adventure in beauty.

The aged Jeep picked up speed reluctantly. It was always happier going downhill, I had noticed, at least if I were driving. Ruth rarely seemed to have trouble with the crochety machine; by then, I had decided the Jeep had formed a personal dislike for me.

As Ronnie and I turned out of Holy Ghost to the main Pecos road at the edge of Terrero, the star attraction of the canyon drive — the Pecos River itself — came into view. It frisked and gurgled just to the left of us, enchanted by the spell of the early morning sunlight.

"It seems to be having fun this morning," Ronnie noted, watching the river dance and play, hurrying through rapids that appeared to turn the waters to flashing precious stones in the morning sun.

For a short space the river hugged close to the road in a companionable way, then darted off in its winding course, approaching and then leaving us as we dropped down the canyon.

"Look, Dad, over there," Ronnie said, pointing out a scene of pastoral beauty. We were approaching a large, fertile valley between the mountains on either side of us. Horses, fat and content, grazed calmly in the rich green meadow.

Towering above, the mountains seemed to take pride in the rich valley. They had good reason to feel possessive about it; every month they caused the rain clouds to pause above the valley and soothe it with four or five inches of life renewing rain. Like an appreciative lover, the meadow preened itself in its finest blue-green apparel for the mountains' admiration.

We were through the meadow now, and at this point the great hills seemed to pull close together, forming a narrow channel for the Pecos River. The stream shouted with excitement as it tumbled down the steep gorge by Tres Lagunas Guest Ranch. At this spot stand the grandest ponderosa pines to be found in the Pecos country — tall, straight, charged with dignity, these great trees rise to heights of better than a hundred feet. There are scores of these mammoth pines in the area, their trunks often a good three feet thick. It is nearly impossible not to slow down and admire these awesome giants. A number of television and motion picture companies have recognized the beauty of the location and shot films there. Santa Fe architect Willard Kruger is the owner of Tres Lagunas, if it can be said anyone really owns a piece of God's great outdoors.

We bounced on down the canyon road and crossed Indian Creek Bridge where the Pecos scurried beneath us and joined our company on the right hand side. The canyon had narrowed so much at this point that the road and river seemed to be arguing over right of way. There was hardly room for both. Along here the

impetuous water seemed to have matured a bit. Now it was calm but sure in its journey — no more high-spirited playing — all business for the moment.

To the left of us were towering cliffs appropriately called Cathedral Rock as they formed the image of a great church, rising straight up for 800 feet above the river. The first 500 feet were tan granite and above the granite, Mississippian limestone took over.

"Notice the trees growing out of the rocks?" I asked Ronnie. He found this strange, and I explained that the young pines had found rich soil that had drifted between the raw rocks.

"I like this part of the trip best of all," Ronnie told me.

Once again we crossed the Pecos at Windy Bridge and were driving along the side of a mountain with the river swimming far below us in a deep canyon of its own making. Ronnie glanced over to the east, across the gushing river, and noticed a farmhouse sitting lonely and remote on a plateau halfway up the mountain-side. "Who could live in that hidden ranch over there?" the boy wondered. "Let's drive over there someday, Dad, and see if we can find the bridge across to it."

That's the way it was in the Pecos. Some new adventure, some new excitement, turned up wherever you looked.

We had dropped considerably in altitude by now and farms began to appear with regularity. Alfalfa fields, the principal crop, waved their arms in greeting as we passed. A farmer hoeing his garden in the early morning sun, looked up and smiled as we drove past.

Near each farmhouse, horses grazed, adding their animal grace to the serenity of the scene. Chokecherries grew in wild profusion along the road; it looked like a good crop that year. I hoped there would be plenty for the local residents as well as ourselves.

Ahead of us, rising as if miraculously from the red sandstone of the earth, stood a little Catholic church, built from the same

red sandstone upon which it stood. Macho Church was its Spanish name. Its tin roof glittered brightly in the morning sun. In front, a platform supported a cross, and at the rear another cross stood. It was lovely but small. At an eight o'clock Mass I noticed only nine rows of pews, sufficient for four worshippers on each side of the center aisle; a church for seventy-two people. A priest from the Benedictine Monastery held services for wealthy Texans, native people, and visiting New Mexicans in the tiny but dignified church.

Almost before we knew it, we were in Dalton Canyon, which runs to the west. There is a stream in Dalton Canyon which provides some water to the Pecos, although it tends to dry up in late summer if the rains have been negligible. Here, the mountainside turns huge and awesome, rising 6,000 feet straight toward the glittering sky. The cliffs extended for miles up Dalton Canyon, their sides dotted with the most symmetrical pines in the entire area. One would almost think these trees had been purposely planted in the same year, and scrupulously watered with identical fairness, so evenly did they grow. They looked to be 35 or 40 years old; perhaps their uniformity had been caused by some past forest fire which began the growing process anew from scratch.

Crossing the river was one of the many highlights of the trip down the canyon. Four times, bridges carry the road over the waters of Pecos between Holy Ghost and the village below. Now we crossed again as the river curved beneath us in a broad sweep. Once again the valley spread out before us, opening up in an expanse of piñon and junipers, the ponderosas left behind at higher altitudes. The mountains turned to bluffs as we drove down from the high country. In the valley to the right, the Pecos was completely hidden by large-leaf cottonwood trees and mountain willows growing side by side in the harmony of nature, drawing life from the deep well spring of the Pecos.

We passed a cluster of small adobe homes where a herd of goats grazed near the highway, and I thought how strange such a scene would be to some city dweller.

Two particularly lovely homes stand in the valley at this point, the most impressive of them a creation of the late Frank Lloyd Wright, all strange angles and brown shingles — an extension of the natural landscape around it in keeping with Wright's aesthetic concepts.

We had lost the river now. It flowed behind the Lisboa fish hatchery, which provides anglers with over 50,000 pounds of trout each season for the lakes and streams of Pecos. This means that some 100,000 legal-sized trout are made available to fishermen each season. Fingerlings are also raised at the hatchery and are planted for future use by members of the state Game and Fish Department. Horses, airplanes, and helicopters are utilized to dump the fish in the high streams and lakes of the Pecos back country.

The hatchery is fun to visit. There are large circular ponds where fish of various sizes are raised, and all of the children had taken the tour of the hatchery shortly after we began our Pecos Summer.

We drove on by the hatchery, past a ten-acre lake, built on the grounds of a Benedictine Monastery. This lake is also operated by the state Game and Fish Department, and it offers leisurely lake fishing to those who prefer it to the rushing streams higher up in the mountains.

We were passing through rolling hills now, gentle compared to the rugged lands behind us. We passed the quiet buildings and farmlands of the monastery and entered the outskirts of Pecos Town itself.

We drove around a mountain and approached the river again, and the entire village of Pecos lay sprawled before us. The neat, small homes which comprise the town looked natural in the valley,

as if they were a part of the landscape, dropped into place in an orderly, logical fashion. The little houses were half-hidden among the juniper and sage. From our vantage point above, I had the feeling that everyone in the town was in some sense in accord with the natural beauty of the Pecos River valley.

It was a scene which might have been lifted, complete, from a painting of a seventeenth century town in old Spain. The mingled cultures of Spanish, Anglo-Saxon and Indian had created a pleasing blend of old and new. Time seemed to have stopped and I felt myself in another age — another period devoid of atom bombs and missiles.

The newly paved highway lacing through the peaceful village brought us back to reality. The shiny road had destroyed some of the old homes which had dreamed in peace there for years. The impatient rush of so-called progress was apparent even here. I thought gloomily that nothing is really safe from the no-nonsense encroachment of concrete and steel which constitutes our modern civilization.

We crossed the Pecos River again, for one last time, and entered the town of Pecos. The river, tamed now, had become broad and shallow, subdued after its high-hearted rush down from the mountains. Slowly we drove along the main street of Pecos, past lovely banks of flowers in front of modest homes, past St. Anthony's Church, past an occasional bar, the Pecos High School, and then the crossroads which lead the traveler to Santa Fe or East Pecos across the river.

Our first stop was at the home of Refugio Vigil, Police Judge and great-grandson of Governor Donaciano Vigil. Governor Vigil was appointed to his distinguished post by General Stephen Watt Kearny in 1847.

Mr. Vigil's house was a modest, vine-covered adobe, facing the main street in the center of the village. He greeted us graciously and made us welcome.

"Come in, come in, Mr. Horn," he said as I introduced Ronnie and myself. At age 66, Refugio was a courtly, unassuming gentleman with manners that would have been hard to equal in old Spain itself.

We chatted easily, and soon he was telling us of the past glories of Pecos and of his own impressive family history.

Judge Juan Cristobal Vigil, Refugio's great-great-grandfather, received a 47,000-acre grant from the King of Spain, we learned. The town of Pecos is now located on part of this land.

"You see," Refugio explained, "The King granted large parcels of land to his soldiers in the new world for their efforts for the Crown. As a rule, the grant was given in the vicinity of a pueblo both as protection for the local padre and for the purpose of stimulating trade and commerce."

As early as 1737, families in the Pecos region were trading with the Indians. Judge Juan Cristobal Vigil's son, Donaciano, recognized the rich possibilities of trade with the caravans winding their dusty way over the Santa Fe Trail, and he soon took advantage of this business aspect. By 1830, Donaciano had a mill by the Pecos River, and Ronnie and I went to see the remains of that long-ago enterprise. The big wheel was still present, standing on the site of the old mill.

"Here is a copy of my grandfather's will," Refugio told us. He quoted a section of the document: "I declare to have one mill with free right to a ditch and from the mill below the ditch I have granted to the landowners, for having lost their dam on account of high water by the river, the right to irrigate their lands with water that passes through the mill. Said mill I leave for the benefit of all my sons in equal part so they can grind their grain for their supply without cost, under the condition that they keep it in repair so that it will not be destroyed and lost."

It was like hearing a voice from the far off past, distant and concerned for the welfare of the future of sons not yet born.

Wisely enough, the old man's wishes have been followed. This spring, the old mill was used to grind over-ripe wheat to make Panocha during the Lenten season. Although time has wounded and slackened the mill's effectiveness, it still creaks and groans in the quiet, blue air of Pecos, performing the duties its long-dead builder requested of it. Ronnie and I felt that we had gained a real closeness with the history and past of Pecos village from our talk with Refugio.

Next, we visited José Baca, a living legend in the area. José, who was the model for one of the figures J. Frank Dobie wrote of in *Coronado's Children* (called José Vaca in the book), was one of the last of the real, dedicated miners from the Pecos area. His lifetime had been spent in working his mine at Pecos, and his faith in it had never faltered. An elderly man, José had to stop working his mine, after all the years and efforts he had put into the venture. But his faith and his belief were still as strong as they were when he came to this land as a youth, sure his "Pecos mine" would yield all the riches and bounty of the earth.

Then in his middle seventies, José sat on his front porch, chewing hard candy as he talked with us.

"I remember finding the Indian cave in the mountains southwest of here," he mused. "There were relics there . . . what do you call them? Artifacts? I sold them to Dr. Alfred V. Kidder. He was very pleased with them." The old man's eyes, huge and dark as coal, were thoughtful and distant as he reminisced of the old days, the days when he had been a young man, strong and sure of all the things which life would bring him. Now, his face was a map of lines and tracteries, the edges of his mouth creased sharply with the effects of time and age.

"It's been a great pleasure talking with you, Mr. Baca," I told him. Ronnie and I left the ancient gentleman on his front porch. He continued chewing his hard candies, thinking dimly of the past and of the things he had known and seen.

Driving on down the highway, we stopped at the Pecos Municipal Building. "What's that plaque for, Dad?" Ronnie asked.

"Let's go over and see."

We approached the plaque and discovered it had been erected in honor of the most famous citizen of Pecos Town — Greer Garson. "This building dedicated to Greer Garson Fogelson, September 30, 1961, by the citizens of Pecos," it read. The Fogelsons, Greer and Buddy, own the nearby Forked Lightning Ranch where they raise Santa Gertrudis cattle. The Fogelsons have been most generous to the village of Pecos.

From there we went to visit Ceferino Quintana, a former lieutenant governor of the state. As we stopped the car before his house and approached him, he grinned and waved, and immediately began talking politics in an enthusiastic way.

"Hold on, Ceferino," I managed to squeeze in. "I'm not here to worry about state politics. I just wanted to talk a little about Pecos."

Ceferino shrugged, standing, in his plaid shirt and Levis, in his field of waist-high timothy grass. It was obvious that the political scene was of much more interest to him than the affairs of the little village in which he lived. But he was cooperative: "You come back next week, Calvin, and I'll give you some papers about Pecos."

Having disposed of this trivial matter, Ceferino proceeded to tell me who would be the next governor of the state. He then began to joke about his age with Ronnie.

"I was here before the Indians came, Ronnie," he said. Although he was 72, Ceferino's dark brown hair was thick and still vital.

From Ceferino's place we went to the home of George Adelo, a history teacher at Pecos High School.

"Come in, come in, Mr. Horn. You're just in time for lunch," George hospitably stated. We needed no second invitation, and we sat at a table groaning with the weight of the finest pinto beans,

chili, and white flour tortillas I had tasted in years. The tortillas, not thin and crisp like Old Mexico tortillas, were large as a plate, soft, and half as thick as a slice of bread. I added butter, salt, and pepper to the tortillas. While we ate, George and I talked of the history of Pecos and of the entire state, and I discovered that he had a wealth of knowledge about New Mexico. "Mr. Adelo," Ronnie broke in, "do you think your wife could give my mother the recipe for the tortillas? My Dad has already eaten three." George laughed and assured Ronnie she could.

Ronnie and I thanked him for his warm hospitality and continued with our journey of discovery through Pecos. We chatted with a number of people in town, getting the true feeling of the village, then made one final stop at the home of José S. Vigil, another great-grandson of Donaciano Vigil. He was harnessing his horses as we approached him. He spoke courteously of Pecos and of the background of his family, adding that he had old family letters he wanted us to see. Ronnie and I listened in fascination as he spoke. In his 70's, Mr. Vigil's face was still smooth and unlined. His corral, located at the east edge of Pecos, sloped up the steep edge of a mountainside, bounded by huge rocks which created a fence.

"Thank you for the information, Mr. Vigil," I said, and Ronnie and I climbed into the Jeep.

We drove slowly back up the Pecos road, stopping at Our Lady of Guadalupe Benedictine Monastery where Brother Gerard graciously met us. He showed us the 1,150-acre grounds and told us of the mission of the monastery. The good monks offer a retreat for entire families. The monks take care of the children with hikes, horseback riding, fishing, while the parents under the direction of a Retreat Master have a quiet period for reading, meditation, and conferences.

We were told that the life of the Benedictine monk is the highest and most spiritual form of the Christian way. Here they

have a major silence for twelve of the twenty-four hours each day. Saint Benedict took the family, the pillar and foundation of all society, as the basis for his religious life. His monastery was to be a "school of the Lord's service," with each monk willing "to renounce one's own will."

The brothers operate a printing plant, known for its excellent quality. This venture has superseded their breadmaking occupation; for years the monastery produced the finest bread to be found in the Southwest.

Ronnie and I walked and talked with Brother Gerard for a time, then headed toward our cabin, driving along the rushing course of the Pecos River. We spoke quietly of the monks, realizing it was hard to grasp the aims and ideals of Benedictine life, knowing the institution was 1400 years old.

Yes, it's a rich country, New Mexico; rich in land and people and history. We felt a little closer to it from our visit to the village. There are only 1,500 people in the town, but each has his own connection with the land and with the fabled past of the area. Ronnie and I felt ourselves to be more a part of it as we drove home that day.



SERIOUS BUSINESS

Into the Wilderness

ONE OF THE BIG EVENTS of our stay in the Pecos was a long planned and much discussed pack trip, back into the really rugged areas of the mountains.

The first decision to be made was whom to include in such a venture, which involved much more than did our jeeping excursions around the area. This was the real thing — a deep plunge into outdoor living which was a little more than the younger girls could handle.

I arranged our party with considerable care. The boys were included, of course — the trip was really for their benefit — plus a neighbor boy, Jimmy Hammons, and a friend of mine, Dick Losh and his two boys, Dick Jr. and Danny. Lottie Jane was old enough to be included, and here the trouble began. After much effort, Mother and I had nearly managed to convince Ruthie that a ten-year-old little girl was too young for the trip. Then with masterful bad timing, a photograph of one of her friends appeared in the newspaper. The child was going on a pack trip into the Pecos Wilderness. Ruthie cut the picture out of the newspaper and carried it for days, showing it to Mother and me with a dramatic plea: "If she's old enough to go, why can't I?" The matter was discussed at length, and Ruthie finally won out.

"Promise to keep her dry and warm, Calvin," Mother admonished me. I assured her I would at least keep the child dry, if it were humanly possible.

The solution to the Ruthie problem merely created another, however. When Brenda learned that Ruthie was going along, she protested mightily. "Why can't the whole family come?" she asked — her way of worming herself into an event which was intended only for older children. But in this case, Mother and I were firm. Though the prospect of staying home with Melinda and Mother was almost more than Brenda could bear, we held our ground against her utmost protests. The night before the trip was to take place, Brenda spilled her plate of food on the floor, breaking the dinner plate. This gained her nothing but a stern reprimand.

At bedtime, Brenda brought out her heaviest artillery. She refused to give her Daddy a goodnight kiss — an unheard of situation. But even this did not work. The child was simply too small to come along. I don't know which of us felt more unhappy about the missing kiss.

The evening before the big event the boys went down to Happy's — he was providing the horses and going with us — to help him lead them some seven miles up the trail we were to follow, in order to shorten the first day's ride. The boys left the cabin in the middle of the afternoon, and moments later rain began to pour from the sky. It rained and continued to rain, all the time the boys were leading the horses to our point of rendezvous. Dick Losh was immediately concerned about his two boys getting soaked from the downpour. When the boys finally returned, drenched and bedraggled, they promptly got hot baths, and Mr. Losh insisted upon giving each one cold pills; then they were hustled off to bed, without any noticeable argument. My boys grinned at taking cold pills, but Dick worried about the boys developing serious colds.

I heard Mike comment to Ronnie, "You drink water to get it on your insides. If it doesn't hurt the insides, how can it hurt the outside?" All the boys chuckled delightedly at this observation.

"I hope that ends the rains for this pack trip," Dick Losh said fervently. I was somewhat surprised at Dick's concern over the rain, but thought very little about it.

Next morning, we arrived at our point of departure bright and early. Disaster had struck even before we began, it seemed. Of the fourteen horses Happy and the boys had pastured the night before only twelve remained. Eleven were needed for riding purposes, leaving only one for pack duty.

"Well, let's see if we can find them," Happy said gloomily. His gloom proved prophetic, since we scoured the area until ten-thirty with no luck.

There was nothing for us to do but make the best of the situation as it existed. Food and tents went on the back of the one remaining pack horse, while Mike, having lost the saddle horse intended for his use, rode an irritable pack animal called Lightning that kept trying to bite the other horses.

But, eventually, bedrolls strapped to our individual horses, since the extra pack horse was missing, we were off at last. Just as we began riding into the high mountains, the rain began to fall. It apparently wanted to go along on the trip.

It was slow going, but the country itself was so lovely that none of us minded. The farther and higher we got, the more beautiful the landscape became. The vistas grew grander and the solitude more complete as we progressed. The country up in that part of the world has to be seen to be understood. Like a Beethoven symphony, it thunders and croons with majestic authority.

It continued to rain, but this did not bother anyone, except Dick: "Look at those clouds," he frowned. "I hope we don't all get pneumonia."

We had ponchos, luckily, since the rain continued steadily, and

I found that my glasses were soon dripping, hampering vision. I had brought along a leather-billed cap which solved the problem. I placed my poncho over the cap, and together the cap and poncho kept my glasses and face dry. I felt as if I were on the front porch of our cabin watching the rain. The bill cap acted as an eave for my personal front porch on our ride into the mountains.

There is a closeness to nature during a rain. The rain was like a companion as the horses kept jogging along. I turned around and Pat grinned his finest grin at me: "Think it will rain, Dad?" he asked, laughing, wiping the water off his poncho. Here and there, water gushed across the trail we were following, exposing huge pine roots which sprang before us like tremendous fishing nets. Our horses carefully picked their way among the roots, avoiding their slippery surfaces.

As we entered the actual Pecos Wilderness area, we stopped to read the sign: "Santa Fe National Forest. Entering Pecos Wilderness Area. This area embraces the headwaters of the Pecos River and contains over 136,000 acres. Primitive conditions of transportation and habitation are frontier qualities which are preserved for historical, educational and recreational values. Motorized transportation prohibited."

The Santa Fe National Forest, established on January 11, 1892, enabled us three-fourths of a century later to enjoy the virgin wilderness. I mentally thanked the fathers of our National Forest for such foresight. All travel in the Wilderness Area is either by foot or horseback. There are no roads, no commercial timber cutting, no stores, resorts, developed campsites or summer homes in the Wilderness Area.

Almost at once, the forest became more dense, the trees packed close together. The children were delighted by the mysterious quality of the deep woods, and little hushed comments followed me along the trail. Ruthie got off to gather a few flowers at a break we took and proceeded to get her trouser legs in the water.

I suggested to her that she stuff her trousers in her boots, which she did. A Forest Service sign read "Pecos Falls, nine miles."

Up we went, higher and higher. Deeper and deeper, we pressed on into the virginal wilderness. Soon, we found ourselves riding along the crest of a mountain, with great valleys dipping below us on either side. Dense clouds dreamed by in the lower air of the valleys, and up ahead, still higher peaks soared through the rain-drenched air.

"Look at those white clouds down in the valley break as they hit a rise," Ronnie pointed out. The rolling clouds would contact and then foam up the mountain. To the east, the sky was ocean grey, and the rain continued to fall on our party.

Ruthie, riding a small black horse named Ink Spot, with a tip of white at its nose, turned in her saddle and smiled at me delightedly. "This is so much fun, Daddy," she said. The idea of going on her first pack trip had her in ecstasy. I don't believe she was even aware of the rain that poured on us from the soggy sky.

After a time, we left the ridge of mountain and found ourselves riding across a mesa — Hamilton Mesa — which seemed to be painted brilliant blue by the masses of bluebells and asters covering it. Ruthie's delight was tremendous. Just below us, the aspens ceased to grow, and the view was superb. Noticing a tree which had grown with two distinct trunks, closely entwined, Ruthie pointed and remarked: "Look! Look! The trees are hugging!"

Moments later, we were all startled by Jimmy galloping ahead and pointing. There were two huge brown shapes loping just ahead of us across the trail. They were deer, of course, and completely nonchalant about our presence there in the domain they owned. One could almost hear them saying as they glanced briefly toward us: "Oh. Just another bunch of people on a pack trip."

It was time for a break and some food, so we stopped and ate sandwiches in the now drizzling rain. As I helped Ruthie from her horse and her feet touched the ground, water spilled over the

tops of her boots. Her trousers inside the boots acted as a funnel, letting the rain completely fill both boots. I took them off, emptied them, and she stepped into them again. "What did Mother tell you about keeping Ruthie dry, Daddy?" kidded Lottie. Ruthie began to laugh and Dick Jr. and Danny joined in.

"That child may get sick, Calvin," broke in Dick. "Can't you put some dry clothes on her? Why, her poncho is soaked even on the inside. This child is wet all over!" There was nothing we could do about it, however. Happy built a roaring fire in the rain, using an ace in the hole for such weather — small scraps of aspen which he had soaked in kerosene and brought along in a bottle. These he deftly tucked beneath the soaking branches he had gathered, added pine needles, and in moments we were all around a fine, cheerful blaze, right there in the rain. Ruthie was wet, but she was warm, I thought, which fulfilled half of my promise to Mother.

We were soon on our way, as we had carried the sandwiches in saddlebags in order to avoid unloading the pack horse. "Happy, you're a man of many talents," I told him. He grinned modestly.

It was late in the afternoon when we heard the roar of the Pecos Falls some 600 feet in the distance. "We're here," yelled Danny, as he urged his horse into a trot. The children all speeded their horses to reach our chosen campsite, Pecos Falls, where the water tumbles and boils down some 200 feet over jagged, ugly rocks. The rain had swollen the Pecos River to much more than its normal size, and the water, brown and roaring, thundered over the falls toward the valley below. We were only three miles from its source, at an altitude of over 10,000 feet. The children were delighted at the exciting noise.

As we watched the brown water tumble down the rocks, Dick Jr. said: "I'll bet a trout couldn't come up those falls."

Happy scoured around until he found several large tree trunks, which he hauled to the campsite with his horse. He then placed

them criss-cross over the fire until the center of the logs had been burned, making two short logs. Then he placed the shorter logs over the fire, continuing this as he burned the logs. With great pleasure, Lottie cooked a mess of canned hash over the small gasoline stove we had brought for that purpose. Exercise is wonderful for appetite, and some of the children were back for seconds before the slower eaters had finished their first helpings.

Ruthie was the official waitress and Lottie's helper, both of them taking great pride in their feminine duties. It was a wonderful meal all around and we ate heartily, which is something the out-of-doors and fine, free air will do for people.

When the luminous stars gleamed through the now clear sky and the fire had burned down to a comforting bed of embers, we all retired to our various sleeping accommodations. In a nine by nine umbrella tent, the Horns spent the night comfortably arranged on five air mattresses and bedrolls.

We had taken with us two bedrolls that could be zipped together, with little Ruthie in the middle between Lottie and me. The children were soon fast asleep, worn out from the exertions of the day, but Ruthie, I soon discovered, was as restless as any child could be. Just as I would drift into weary slumber, her small feet would kick as if she were running, then squirming, and I would be pulled awake. Ruthie muttered in her sleep, reliving the excitement of the day, and at one point during the night, I heard her murmur, "There go two deer!" She jerked and twisted during the early hours of the night, even sitting bolt upright once, still deep in her child's slumber. After enduring considerable punishment to my back from her kicking feet, I gently turned her over facing away from me, and she quieted.

The night was warm and pleasant, and we all were dry and comfortable. In the stillness of the dark, I thought of Ruth admonishing me to keep Ruthie dry. If the child had spent all day in a swimming pool, she would not have been wetter, I thought

wryly. The ponchos, I discovered, finally soaked in the rain and became merely wet blankets that soon soaked all our clothing. I smiled when I thought of Dick's great concern over the dampness, but I knew it was due to the asthmatic condition of one of his boys. There was nothing any of us could do about it.

We awoke, refreshed, to face a cloudless blue day, lovely and warm. In fact, it soon became quite hot even at that rarefied altitude. All of us were eager to get out and around in the high country and we ate a hasty, but hearty breakfast. The boys were off to a meadow across the Pecos from our campsite where we had pastured the horses for the night, to round them up and bring them back to our temporary home. When they returned, full of boys' exuberance, they were herding twenty white-faced calves before them. Ronnie was in the lead, grinning as if he had accomplished a miracle.

We were soon packed up and on our way, with me riding at the end of the column and Ruthie just ahead. It was a glorious morning, and the sunlight warmed us against the coolness of the high mountain breezes.

Lottie and Ruthie were determined to bring back a columbine plant for their mother, and they had found a fine specimen of the beautiful blue flower with four blossoms at our Pecos Falls camp. They dug it up with great care and wrapped it with a gunny sack, then watered it. Ruthie carried it ahead of her. She covered it with a raincoat in order that the wet plant would remain moist.

As we jogged along I could see the blossoms framing her little head of partly combed, streaky brown and blonde hair. That day she wore an outfit fairly typical for her — blue and red checkered shirt, worn Levis and two-tone cowboy boots. Her orange bedroll was slung behind her, and in front were tied her poncho, red jacket, and blue sweat shirt. I knew she was wearing three pairs of socks in order to fill up her over-sized boots. Each time she turned in her saddle to grin back at her Daddy, letting him know

her joy in the outdoors and the trip, I felt a little closer to all my family, and to the mountains and valleys of the Pecos Wilderness. Ruthie seemed to be a natural part of all of it; part of the horse she rode; part of the Pecos itself.

"There's some more cows!" Mike shouted. We were riding along the ridge of a mountain at the moment, and were just descending into a mountain meadow where the grass stood twelve or fifteen inches high.

"Come on, let's round 'um up!" Mike cried, and soon all the boys were chasing the mildly annoyed animals around the meadow.

Clouds were beginning to pile up in the sky by now. "They look like an enemy army grouping for an attack," Dick Losh commented.

"You should know about clouds and rain," Happy grinned at him. He turned to me and remarked, "The rain clouds follow Dick. We should take him down to the dry plains. We could make a fortune renting him out as a rainmaker."

As the clouds moved their mass in our direction, I could almost believe Happy was right.

"You've got a real skill there, Black Bart," I said to Dick, using the nickname given him by the children. But the rain was no joke at all to Dick.

The children had given all of us nicknames which seemed appropriate to them for our cowboy adventure. Jimmy Hammons was referred to as Brody, Mike was Tonto, and Ronnie had become the Lone Ranger. Pat was temporarily Hopalong. The Losh boys, Dick Jr. and Danny, also had western titles.

The trail dropped down to one of the best known locations in the Pecos Wilderness — Beatty's cabin. Beatty had been a prospector who came to the area in the late 1870's and built a home at the northern end of a beautiful canyon overlooking the Pecos River. Several streams join together here in the broad valley, flowing into the Pecos River in the vicinity of Beatty's cabin, filling out

the Pecos so that it becomes a respectable river for hundreds of miles.

The cabin itself, which old Beatty built, is gone without a trace although its site is marked by a Forest Service sign.

It was here that we made some contact with civilization again. Campers had spread their tents for half a mile or so along the banks of the Pecos River, up from Beatty's cabin. There was a modern Forest Ranger's station there, and we stopped and filled our canteens with fresh water from the pump, then headed on toward Pecos Baldy. This took us due west, over another mountain; we were gaining altitude all the time.

We watered our horses at Rito Sabadiosis. I heard Pat say to Dick: "Mr. Losh, wouldn't a fish have better sense than to be here in all this rain?"

"Pat," Dick agreed, "almost anyone but this group would have better sense." I smiled at his answer, as we pressed onward higher and higher, up an extremely steep trail.

"If it keeps on raining before we climb up the next steep mountain, we'll have to walk the horses," Happy informed us. Ahead of us to the west, in the direction we were going, the sky was thick with clouds, although the sun broke through from time to time. The storm was obviously going to continue.

In moments, the great pulse of nature had changed, and the rain began to stop in areas around us. Valleys stretched out below us, and I could see four separate storms, grey-white sheets of water, pouring down. Then the entire eastern sky turned to a warning grey, quickly darkening.

At the peak of the ridge we had been climbing, we could see Pecos Baldy ahead, soaring up to 12,510 feet, wreathed in a majestic crown of clouds. Far to the north, three high peaks of the Truchas range towered at better than 13,000 feet. In such surroundings, the importance of man seems small indeed.

It was an awesome view. The cloud formations, driven by a

brisk summer wind, moved toward Baldy, encountered the mountains, then broke against them, boiling upward like fat, white mountain goats. The clouds at the top separated, giving us a view of the top of Pecos Baldy, while clouds continued to play at its base.

I looked again to the east. The rain clouds appeared to be chasing us. We rode on toward our appointed campsite in a foredoomed effort to beat it; it wasn't long until we knew the battle was lost. The entire east was grey and dark; it was now raining over all that section of the Pecos Wilderness. The grey clouds covered the mountain, then us. We were in a Pecos downpour. I shouted, "Ponchos, everyone!" But before we could unstrap them, the rain had come full force.

Even so, with the thunder of the Pecos rain all around us, we rode toward our proposed campsite with high good spirits. We had descended below the timber line and soon a straggling company of blue spruce surrounded us. They were short, like dwarfs, as the altitude was too high for fine blue spruce to spread their branches. We reached the campsite at the foot of Pecos Baldy almost blinded by the monolithic sheets of roaring water falling from the heavens.

"Can you perform your miracle and make another fire, Happy?" I asked, as we prepared to camp. He merely nodded, and within minutes, he had built a roaring fire in the drenching rain. Happy split the trunk of an aspen and used the wood from the center of the trunk, since it was, naturally, dry. Soon the fire was floating on four inches of water. I dug a trench from the ground around the fire to let the water drain away but still it burned, a cheery and comforting sight.

"Can we go fishing in Pecos Baldy Lake?" Danny and the other children asked, as soon as we had our camp in order.

"You might as well be fishing as just standing around in the rain," I told them, and they were off at once.

Those of us remaining stretched out the kitchen tarpaulin and

placed our bedrolls beneath it, as they were wet from riding behind the saddles, and I hauled our tent under the tarp, hoping to keep it moderately dry. It rained all afternoon, and I finally gave up and raised the tent outside, though the rain hampered every movement. I crawled inside and blew up the air mattresses, zipping our two bedrolls together. Just as I finished, Ruthie appeared, sopping wet.

"Calvin, Ruthie has fallen in the lake!" Dick shouted, horrified.

"No, Mr. Losh, I was just fishing." The little girl answered.

Then Dick saw that all the children were just as wet. I looked again at Ruthie's dripping figure, and shook my head. I had promised to keep her dry and warm!

"Calvin," Dick began, "in the morning I'm going to get up early, gather the horses, and we're going to beat the rain." He had a cunning look about him as if this would be a real achievement.

"Change out of those wet clothes, young lady," I told Ruthie, "and climb in the sleeping bag right now!" She offered no objections in her bedraggled state.

"Daddy, will you crawl in with me for a minute until I get warmed up?" Ruthie asked pitiously. I agreed and lay down beside the shivering child until she had warmed up enough to fall into a deep, exhausted sleep. Then I crept from the tent and left her to her dreams.

That night we ate a wet but tasty supper. Lottie fixed a mess of hot chili and beans—from a can, but delicious in the rainy mountain air—and precooked ham and fruit. I had to awaken Ruthie to eat and perform her duties as waitress.

All tired, happy, and feeling wonderful, we retired early that night. The stars had begun to shine as we crawled into our various sleeping bags. The storm, which lasted a good four hours, was done, and the Pecos had renewed itself with the blessing of rain for another day. We slept like the dead that night, content beneath the vast dark sky and the sighing of the pines all around us.

When morning came, Dick was up bright and early to get the horses and beat the rain. Happy was not much concerned about this as he helped Dick and the boys gather the horses. While eating breakfast he grinned at me and whispered: "We gathered all but one horse. When Dick is all ready to go, I'll have to go find the other one, then we can leave whenever you and I agree."

After breakfast the boys were off to the lake for more fishing. Dick saddled his horse, Buck, and was ready to call the children when I had to tell him that there was one horse missing and Happy would go after it.

According exactly to Happy's plan, rather than Dick's, we broke camp at eleven o'clock and were on our way home, Dick in the lead. Coming down the trail, two hours later than Dick had anticipated, we noticed that there had been a tremendous early morning rain. Had we been on Dick's schedule, we would have been soaked once again. Pools of water stood all through the forest. But we were not to get off that lightly; another shower was on our trail and it caught us, finally, as we descended from the mountains. It was light, though, and all but one of our group enjoyed the rain.

We crossed Jack's Creek three and a half miles below Pecos Baldy Lake, and began coming across signs placed by the Forest Service. They amused us somewhat, I must admit. "Pecos Baldy Lake—3 miles" the first one stated. We traveled another mile or so and came upon another: "Pecos Baldy Lake—3 miles." The Forest Service is a fine and dedicated organization, but according to their thinking, it would appear that everything is three miles away, no matter where you happen to be.

Down and down we wound, past fields thronged with wild flowers, past Round Mountain. Behind us, clouds gathered around Pecos Baldy, turning black with sudden anger, and we knew that buckets of rain were pouring down where we had been earlier.

Around four o'clock that afternoon, the village of Cowles ap-

peared ahead of us. The outside world was present again — the world of paved roads, cars, human habitations, and vacationing Texans. Our feelings were mixed as we rode back into the twentieth century. All of us were both relieved and sad — relieved since all were well and healthy, and no accident had marred our adventure — sad at leaving all the mighty strength and dignity of the wilderness. Actually not a child or adult had so much as a cold or runny nose from all the wet exposure. I think Pat summed it up best as we approached the town itself: "I wish we didn't have to go back, Dad," he said. In a way I wished the same thing myself, but I knew that this, too, was a lesson for all the children. You do, of course, always have to go back, sooner or later.

That evening — before the fire in our cabin — the children related their happy, though wet adventure. I noticed everyone was excited. The more we talked, the more excited the children became. I failed to notice that Brenda and Melinda were not entering into the pleasure. Then it happened. Brenda started to cry: "You wouldn't take me, you wouldn't take me."

I confessed to Mother that I *should* have taken all the children.

"There is not, repeat, not going to be another wild night in the wilderness for me — I remember the first camp-out in Holy Ghost when that baby was three weeks old," Mother said firmly.

"But Mother," Melinda said, reasonably, "you don't have to go."

"You and Brenda will never go without me," Mother answered.

"Why, your Daddy nearly lost Brenda on one of our hikes."

"Ruth," I said, entering the conversation, "all the children really should have a chance to go."

"There's only one way you could get this entire family into the wilderness at this age," Mother said with finality. "You'd have to take our pediatrician with us."

On this note, we all went to bed. Luckily, by this time, Brenda had fallen asleep; I lay awake and thought of Mother's last words.



PAT, RONNIE, LOTTIE, AND MIKE ON THE TRAIL

Glorieta Battlefield

ONE FINE SUMMER MORNING, everyone was busy except Mike and me. "Mike, today might be a good day to have some fun and learn a little local history, first hand," I said.

Mike looked interested, and I gathered the idea was well received. We climbed into our ancient Jeep and soon were rattling down the road toward Glorieta, six miles west of the town of Pecos.

In the course of our comings and goings we had often noticed, and been amused by, a series of obviously hand-painted road signs, which made up in fervor what they lacked in literacy. Along the Las Vegas Highway, the signs fairly shout commands, entreaties, and reproaches to passing motorists. "See Oldest Well!", "Most Historic Spot in Country!", "Your Friends Will Ask You If You Saw The Oldest Well!", and, finally, with a sort of sad and accusing tone, "You Have *Passed* The Oldest Well!"

As we continued driving, the signs became more realistic. "Glorieta Pass, Old Pigeon Ranch, Most Historical Stop, Old Glorieta Battlefield," read the one before which we stopped.

An elderly gentleman approached the Jeep, squinting at us ominously. He stomped up to us in cowboy boots, head covered

by the remains of an old straw hat. Behind his glasses, two piercing blue eyes inspected us from the framework of a startlingly red face. I started to speak, but was silently motioned to inspect the Oldest Well, before doing anything else.

We clambered from the Jeep and obediently looked at this unimposing structure, both of us trying to be impressed by the supposed antiquity of it, but finding it difficult to whip up much real enthusiasm. The old gentleman's signs nearby were of considerably more interest.

"It Would Be Impossible For the Guide To Answer All the Questions So Read the Boards and Don't Ask Questions," one message informed us coldly. Another read: "This is Called and Said To Be The Oldest Well In the United States. We Don't Try To Prove It Is — Nobody Can Prove It Isn't."

Still a third notice sternly warned: "Do Not Detain The Guide With Kodaks!"

I began to get the sneaking suspicion our guide did not especially care to talk. Mike watched him with open mouth and some trepidation.

After our instructive visit to the Oldest Well, we were led, still silently, across the road, toward a sign reading "Pigeon Ranch." I was interested in this location since the actual Glorieta Battle was fought here.

When we arrived, I murmured, mostly to myself, "So this is the old Pigeon. . . ."

Turning to me swiftly, with considerable reproach in his eyes, the old man instantly pointed to the sign we had neared, using his forefinger to spell out the words. I clamped my lips tight, abashed. Mike would have rather bitten his tongue than let out a peep. We exchanged slight smiles and shrugged. On went the tour.

In spite of our guide's somewhat depressing lack of communication, we began to feel a sense of history and long past events as we wandered around the old ranch headquarters. Originally one

of the earliest Spanish trading posts, there were three rooms still standing, now in use as a museum.

The past was there, all around us — the feeling of great events, long over, of lives lost and acts of bravery forgotten in the dust. We could almost hear the faint whisper of trumpets blaring, horses screaming and the rattle of rifle fire in the still summer air.

It was hard to realize that it all had happened long ago and now lived only in history books and men's imaginations.

I decided the old man wouldn't object to a little conversation as long as it wasn't directed toward him. I turned to Mike and began telling him a little of the significance of this Civil War battlefield. He listened, big-eyed and silent, not dreaming of asking any questions, so I decided to postpone the history lesson until we were back in the Jeep, and we moved on from the museum, up a pathway to a hill north of the ranch. Here, an American flag fluttered in the gentle breeze, and still another sign awaited us. This one contained some actual information. It read: "Over On The Side Of That Little Blue Hill In The Low Place Just Below Is Where The Northern Soldiers Were Buried. Fifty Years After They Were Buried, They Were Taken Up And Moved To Santa Fe And Remain In The National Cemetery."

I was jotting this information down for future reference, when I looked up to find our guide studying me keenly, with an expression of sudden interest on his face. I startled slightly, and then again as he actually opened a conversation with me.

"You one of those paper people men?" he inquired.

I chuckled at this, and confessed that, unfortunately, I was not. "I've lived in New Mexico nearly all my life, though," I told him, "and New Mexico history is one of my greatest interests."

I told him my name at this point, and offered to present him with a copy of a book I had compiled on the Civil War in New Mexico.

At this, as though by magic, we were suddenly great friends,

and our guide's silence vanished as if it were an invisible shroud.

"Name's Thomas L. Greer," he told me, "and I'm over 80 years old. Been showing Glorieta Battlefield for over 40 of 'um."

As we walked down the hill toward the Jeep, the old gentleman chatted on, telling us of his loneliness, since his second wife had recently passed away. He had had a total of four children, but they, too, had left him and he was alone — a lonely old man and a quiet battlefield. Suddenly, his silence and even his signs seemed humorous no longer. The witty things I had planned to say about them to Mike died in my throat.

People are so complicated — their lives so full of unknowns to the rest of us — so full of joys and sorrows and lost hopes — it's often easy to deride or accuse when we should be offering understanding.

Mr. Greer, it turned out, had lived quite a life. In younger days he had traveled widely throughout the world, and had known a number of famous cowboys, including Will Rogers.

"Had the biggest rodeo grounds anywhere in these parts," he told me. "Down in Juárez, that was. I've seen near everything and done near everything."

He paused and motioned around him. "All alone, now. But I don't owe a dime to no man. Got a good house here — two cars — got my attraction here. Can't complain."

"You've been showing this place to tourists for quite a while, haven't you?" I asked him. He nodded.

"Yup. Like I said, over 40 years." He seemed to meditate for a moment. "If you could stop time, you'd be all right. Otherwise it gets you, finally."

The old man had roused my interest. "I'm in the middle of writing a book about the Pecos country, Mr. Greer. Would you have any objections if I mentioned you in one chapter?"

He eyed me suspiciously for a moment, then nodded. "Why not? You can't put me in any place worse than I been put already.

I've been put in some mighty poor places. Why, son, I been put in Mexican jails! . . . you go right ahead and put me in that chapter of yours."

With this matter settled, Mr. Greer dropped the subject and began telling us some of the fascinating history of the place.

Coronado, on his way to Pecos Indian Pueblo, stopped there and later, the Spaniards who had captured a group of invading Texans in 1841, paused at this spot. On his way to claim New Mexico for the United States, General Stephen Watts Kearny had stopped here. It was the last halt in the Santa Fe Trail before the town of Santa Fe itself, we were told, and we began to realize just how historically important the area actually was. "Well, you folks be sure and come back, anytime," Mr. Greer told us as we climbed into the Jeep. He seemed suddenly very lonesome as he shook my hand and waved as Mike and I pulled away.

"Tell me about the Civil War battle, Dad," Mike asked, as we jounced along the road toward home. He was interested because he had actually visited the site of those historic events and had gained a sense of reality about them which can be found in no other way.

I reflected a few moments, putting my thoughts in order. "Actually, Mike, the battle fought back there in those peaceful hills was the decisive action of the Civil War for the West. . . ."

I began to talk on one of my favorite subjects — New Mexico history.

It is a fascinating story. The first major action in this state during the Civil War — The Battle of Valverde — took place far to the south of Pecos, on February 21, 1862. In the encounter the Confederate forces, numerically a much smaller group than their antagonists, were victorious over the Union forces.

The governor of New Mexico, Henry Connelly, reported to Secretary of War Seward that Union strength was 4,000 men under arms, while the enemy troops exceeded 3,000. "We have

now no fear of any serious reverse to our arms," he concluded. But when the opposing forces met on that cold February day at Valverde, one of the bloodiest smaller battles of the whole war took place. The Confederacy won the field. On March 2, 1862, the conquering troops raised their flag over Albuquerque.

On March 4, Governor Henry Connelly, who had remained loyal to the Union, abandoned the capital city of Santa Fe and moved the state government to Las Vegas, near the sheltering shadow of Fort Union. It turned out to be a wise move, since Santa Fe fell to the invading Southerners on the 23rd day of that month. In this fashion, the stage was set for the final, decisive battle for New Mexico, and with it the entire West. The Battle of Glorieta was about to begin.

It was March 26 — just three days after the capture of Santa Fe — the place was a stretch of rugged, wooded land between Santa Fe and Pecos, in fact, the place we had just left.

Both forces fired their cannon and then withdrew temporarily. On the morning of March 28, Colonel John M. Chivington of the Union forces circled to the rear of the Texans, found their supply trains and forthwith attacked.

This was a decisive occurrence in the outcome of the battle. In his unexpected assault on the supply train of the southern troops, Chivington managed to capture the entire train of 80 wagons. He burned the wagons, bayoneted the mules, and destroyed all the precious supplies, according to a report to Secretary Seward from Governor Connelly. Actually, Major Chivington, with 500 men, had been ordered to make a detour through the surrounding heights, and his good luck in coming across the wagon train, guarded by only 200 men, settled the outcome of the battle.

Rumors flew among the Confederate troops; among them the story that Colonel Edward R. S. Canby and his forces had attacked

them from the rear. Panic spread among the Southerners. As a matter of fact, Canby was 140 miles to the south at Socorro.

Thinking themselves hopelessly beaten, the Confederates left the area in haste, and the Union troops went back to Fort Union above Las Vegas.

Reported the Confederate commander: "The losses of my supplies so crippled me that after burying my dead I was unable to follow up the victory. My men for two days went unfed and blanketless. I was compelled to come to Santa Fe for something to eat."

Although they did not immediately realize it, the Union forces at Glorieta had dealt a death blow to the hopes of the Confederacy.

Mike was silent, absorbing all these facts as we pulled up before our peaceful, mountain retreat. And later that evening, as the family sat on the front porch and dusk softened and blurred the forest around us, I think Mike could hear faintly the distant boom of cannon and the shouts of long-dead battle wafted up from Glorieta on the winds of time.

The Hike to Spirit Lake

TEN THOUSAND FEET UP in the majestic Pecos Wilderness, a serene, blue mirror nestles, reflecting the depthless skies and fluff-white clouds above. This lovely little body of water is Spirit Lake — a name which aptly fits its ethereal beauty.

I had been thinking for some time that Ruth and the older children should have the experience of seeing this, and one day the topic came up in discussion.

"We want to go, too!" Brenda, with all the determination of any five-year-old, announced. Melinda and Ruthie, the two other smaller girls, took up the cry immediately, and I realized I had made a tactical error in mentioning it before them.

"Now, wait a minute, girls," I said. "That's too tough a hike for little folks. It's seven miles of very rough walking each way. Girls your size just couldn't walk fourteen miles through the mountains."

The argument made perfect sense to Ruth and me, but our smaller females set up a hue and a cry of indignant protest at the idea.

"Sure we can, Daddy," Melinda told us, nearly at the brink of tears. "If the others can do it, we can too!"

I cast a harried glance at Ruth, who shrugged and offered no

aid at all. And then, quite miraculously a solution came to me.

"Tell you what, girls," I said. "We were going to go on the hike Sunday, but instead of that, we'll make a sort of trial run on the Wednesday before that — and we'll all come."

The strategy was a simple one. As I saw it, on Wednesday we would all start off and before long the little girls would be completely worn out, ready for home and able to accept the realities of the matter.

The plan was agreeable all around, and that issue was peacefully solved.

Wednesday morning saw a feverish bustling of preparation for the big hike, and all nine of us girded our loins for the journey ahead. The older children exchanged glances with Mother and me, well aware that the walk today was really just an object lesson for Brenda, Melinda, and Ruthie, and the *real* trip would come about on Sunday, as planned.

It was about ten-fifteen in the morning when we filled the old Jeep to its brim with youngsters and set off for the adventure. In five minutes or so, we were at the edge of the wilderness and ready to begin the walk. By ten-thirty, we were trekking away up the trail. Ronnie and Mike took the lead, carrying the packs, with the smaller girls following, then Pat, Lottie, Mother and myself bringing up the rear.

Since there was no real intention of arriving at Spirit Lake, the trip was planned to be a leisurely one. Mother had brought her inevitable fishing rod along and soon she was casting her line in a likely spot in the stream. I waited with her, content to be out in the golden air, among the trees. Melinda retraced her steps, away from the group moving on ahead, in order to walk with Mother and Daddy.

Time lazed by but Ruth had no luck with her fishing. About eleven o'clock, Mother, slightly damp and irritated by her lack of bites, gave it up for the moment.

"They just won't bite this morning, Calvin. I'm ready for a good drink of cold water."

We looked at each other abruptly and I glanced at my watch. We realized simultaneously that the rest of our band, with the exception of Melinda, would have climbed out of earshot by now.

"Those children will just keep right on going as long as the little ones can take a step," Ruth said.

We discussed the situation briefly. "There's nothing to worry about, Ruth," I told her. "I'll hurry on ahead and catch up with them. You can come along at your own pace and I'll hold the clan together until you arrive."

This seemed like a sound policy to Ruth, so little Melinda and I went hustling up the trail. All was fine for a time, until the trail began slanting in a steep grade. My legs started to tire and soon were definitely aching. I looked at Melinda with some concern — surely the little tyke must be worn out. But no — she romped and flitted around my trudging feet like a small, bright humming bird. She was on and off the trail and skipping circles around me. That won't last long, I reassured myself.

I could hear the pounding of my heart increase as we progressed. The perspiration under my shirt became a steady, flowing stream, dripping gummily through my undershirt. I had been wearing a hat, and now I took it off, noticing it was dark with perspiration. Still Melinda pranced circles around me as I grimly tried to keep up the pace we had set.

At the end of twenty minutes or so, I was thoroughly winded. I decided honor would let me pause here to call ahead in hopes we were within yelling distance. Besides, I really needed a rest.

"Mike!" I bellowed as loudly as my condition would permit. No answer. "Ronnie!" Silence again, except for Melinda's shrill little voice echoing each of my calls, like a giggling mockingbird.

Along about this point, the skies darkened with sudden, mountain capriciousness. Raindrops, large as tiny balloons, began splat-

tering about us, refreshingly cool, and sweet with the special scent of woodland showers. I turned my perspiring head to the sky and panted, enjoying the coolness of the drops. I believe I sighed with physical relief. Then, with some sort of natural perversity, the shower passed on like a shadow.

Melinda, I noticed, was observing me curiously. "Daddy, why did you turn red?" she asked. "I never saw your face so red!" I realized the quick-step climb was too much for me.

I turned a little redder at the child's words, and mumbled something or other.

I caught my breath for a few moments longer, then off we went once more, as fast as I could manage. I *had* to stop the children. If we didn't hurry and catch up with the rest of them soon, I reasoned, they would just keep going until Brenda gave out. Looking at Melinda, I wondered gloomily how long that might be — probably not until they actually reached Spirit Lake.

I pumped my aching legs onward and upward, jaw set in the nearest thing I could manage to undaunted determination. Melinda still walked briskly along, beside or ahead of me, showing not the slightest signs of tiring. She laughed and chatted, while I gasped in reply. No trace of perspiration showed on her face, and only occasional raindrops met and blended in her blonde hair, turned half light, half dark by the moisture.

I knew Mother must be feeling her thirst quite badly now, and I wanted to catch up with the main party not only to call them to a halt, but also to give Ruth much needed refreshment.

On we tramped, one of us climbing with more and more difficulty. Melinda saw a doe and her fawn watching us with gentle shyness near the trail, and I prevailed upon her to stop and observe the animals for a few moments. We again crossed Holy Ghost Stream, and Melinda requested that I help her over, which I managed to do, dropping only one of her feet in the stream. She smiled at me compassionately.

I was completely bushed by this time — exhausted. I leaned against a tree and summoned what remained of my breath. "Mike!" It was a pretty weak shout, I'm afraid, but to my vast relief, the boy's voice answered me calmly from a little way ahead. "Yes?"

"Wait, wait," I shouted back. Melinda and I resumed our trek, and in minutes, caught up to the group. They were seated comfortably by the trail, enjoying a break of water and fruit.

"Oh, hi Dad," Ronnie said calmly. "What took you so long? Where's Mom?"

"Coming," I panted, glowering at the boy slightly.

"We were just ready to go on, Daddy," Brenda offered brightly.

"We'll wait here for Mother," I told them. Some note of firmness in my voice prevented any arguments in the matter.

It wasn't long until Ruth arrived, thirsty and hungry, and we both had drinks of water and sandwiches, and a chance to gain our breath. When we were in shape to proceed again, orders were given that we all stay within hearing distance of each other.

We had left the Holy Ghost Stream again, and we wound straight up the mountain, our journey enlivened by such incidents as Ronnie's sighting a wild turkey, just a few feet in front of him on the trail. We all moved close to the fat bird, who was evidently as curious about us as we were about him. When we were just in front of him, he lazily flew to a nearby tree and continued his inspection of us.

We kept climbing, and soon reached a summit point on the mountain. It was a breathtaking sight — well worth the strain of the climb. The view was unbroken for miles, a vast panorama of natural beauty, sweeping away beneath us like a mighty, swelling sea of forest, cloud, and hill. There it was — the great expanse of the wilderness area, virginal as the earth must have been before the coming of man with his concrete and steel, petty wars and hatreds. I had the wonderful feeling that, if I chose, I could soar

from the peak like some freed bird and become a part of the grandeur of the wilderness. The wind was like an organ, rumbling deep and sweetly in the moving trees.

We all stood unspeaking, caught up in the spell of it. This is what it's all about, I thought. This gives it all meaning and reason. This land was the way God had created it in the beginning and the presence of His hand lay upon it like a warm and awesome blanket. I find it hard to believe there could be any atheists in the high, still country of the Pecos.

We stood there for minutes, staring, then we gave a small, group shudder and pulled our souls away from the view.

"Come on, let's go," Brenda said in her practical, little child's voice.

We pushed on through the fine mountain land, and around one o'clock, we came to the very top of the mountains, to a meadow radiant with wild flowers and sunlight. We should be near the lake now, I felt. "Come on, Brenda," I called, and her little figure darted into motion. "Let's go on ahead and look for the lake." Soon the meadow became a saddle between two mountain ridges, and I continued marching forward at a steady, rapid pace.

I don't really know how much time passed — I was absorbed in the beauty around me and my search for Spirit Lake — when I suddenly felt that slight and eerie prickling somewhere back in my brain which, I think, most parents will recognize. I stopped short and looked around me, feeling frantic all at once. Where was Brenda?

I stared in all directions. Not a sign of my little girl in all that vast, sweeping wilderness. I was absolutely alone. I noticed the skies had darkened and it once more began to rain. "Brenda!" I shouted, as loudly as I could. There was nothing but the murmur of wind and rain in reply. We were 10,000 feet up in the mountains; it was raining; it was cold; the afternoon would soon be waning. Terror struck me like a physical blow.

"Brenda!" I screamed, my mind filled with a rush of nightmare fears. I started walking back along the trail, then broke into a panicky run. I shouted her name at the top of my lungs.

"Daddy?" a faint child's voice floated up to me. Then I saw her tiny figure down the side of the mountain waving cheerfully to me. I clambered and stumbled down until I held her in my arms, dizzy with relief. "Why didn't you stay on the trail, honey?" I asked her, unable even to pretend anger in my delight at seeing her safe.

"I just found a short-cut, Daddy," Brenda said. She was all happy cheerfulness. "I think the lake is down this mountain."

We walked back to the meadow, joining the rest of the family, and there we ate the rest of our food. I was silent and somewhat chastened by my scare with Brenda, and when the children began fretting to continue the search for Spirit Lake, I was quiet, but firm. We had had enough hiking experiences for one day, I felt, and Ruth agreed with me. The older children, as tired as we were, accepted the decision without complaint, but Brenda, Ruthie, and Melinda were unhappy all the way home.

It was four o'clock or later when we climbed wearily from the Jeep in front of the cabin. Mother and I both made a beeline for the tub, where our feet were soon soaking. The older children collapsed in various chairs and couches, too exhausted to talk.

The three little girls — the ones to whom we had planned to teach an object lesson — scampered, shouting and laughing, outside to play.

Sitting beside each other on the edge of the tub with our aching feet immersed in hot water, Ruth and I looked at each other. Suddenly, we both were laughing so hard the tears came to our eyes. We knew, as far as we were concerned, the hike to Spirit Lake had been consummated in purpose if not in fact. Although we had not actually reached it, we had certainly had all the hiking one family required for that summer.



RONNIE AT PECOS PUEBLO RUINS

Pecos Indians

OUR PECOS COUNTRY is full of age and physical reminders of the long-dead past. One such concrete reminder is the ruin of Pecos Pueblo, located two miles south of the present village of Pecos.

I decided Lottie Jane, our oldest daughter, might enjoy a trip to the ruins. The rest of the family was all off at various pursuits, Mother fishing, not surprisingly, and the rest of the children engaged in activities of their own.

"How about it, Lottie? Would you like to tour the ruins?"

"Sure, Daddy. I really don't know much about them," Lottie said.

The ruins at Pecos make a fascinating subject, and as my daughter and I rode down the canyon, headed for a firsthand look at them, I cudgeled my memory in order to tell her what I knew about the history of that ancient dwelling place.

"It's a long and not very happy story, honey," I began. "The Pecos Pueblo, once known as Cicuye, was built in A.D. 1200, or at least that's what archaeologists concluded from studying tree rings of old beams still intact, and from diggings in rubbish piles that can be accurately dated. Two centuries before that the Indians were living nearby in smaller communities. The Pecos Pueblo was

occupied from 1200 to 1838 — the longest continuous period of any known pueblo."

As I spoke, I began remembering what I had read and been told about the great city which was now no more than ruins. The Pecos Ruins, now a National Monument, are a truly impressive sight. Today, when you walk through the crumbled reminders of another time, it is hard to realize all the lives that were lived there, and all the exciting events which occurred in the long-dead past.

In 1350, or thereabouts, the Indians who had settled in the region began to build their compact homes, three and four stories tall, as a protected fortress against the attacks of the Plains Indians who had begun to raid them with regularity. Then, when Francisco Vázquez de Coronado marched through with his conquistadores in 1540 on his monumental exploration of the west, he sent Captain Hernando de Alvarado who found one of the largest and strongest pueblos in the Southwest thriving there. By then some 2,000 Indians had settled in Pecos.

One of the prime motives of the Spanish who adventured in the new land was, of course, to bring Christianity to the native population, as well as to achieve personal fortune and further the glory of Spain. A priest arrived at Pecos and felt his calling had led him there. Friar Luis de Escalona decided to stay.

In the mid-eighteenth century a series of misfortunes began to plague the Pecos people — misfortunes from which they were never to recover. Comanches raided them continuously, ravaging the pueblo. In 1750, the Indians decided to send their entire force of warriors to attack the raiders in their own territory. It was a disastrous move. Only one Pecos warrior survived the ambush. The population in 1760 was only 599.

In 1788, the pueblo was further reduced by a dreadful scourge of smallpox which left only 180 survivors. Fevers and various illnesses continued to weaken the Pecos Indians. The Indians

began to wonder, and with good reason, if they had been deserted by their gods. In 1805, the population had been reduced to 104. The pueblo became a pathetic ghost of its former self, full of memories and death. By 1838, only 17 human souls remained, where once thousands of industrious people had lived and worked.

The condition of the pueblo was a far cry from the days when Castaño de Sosa arrived there in December, 1590. He recorded finding sixteen kivas, five plazas, a labyrinth of mines, and much irrigated farm land. And in 1630, Fray Alonso de Benavides described Pecos as a town of some 2,000 people, reporting a "monastery and a new, splendid temple of distinguished workmanship and beauty." Historians differ as to whether the church — Nuestra Señora de Los Angeles, as it was called in Spanish — was begun or completed in the year 1617.

It was possible that in that same year — 1617 — the King of Spain sent the painting of Our Lady of the Angels as a gift to the pueblo. The painting, which resembles the work of the famous Spanish artist, Bartolome Esteban Murillo, was brought to the Church by oxcart by faithful Franciscan Friars. If the painting is the work of Murillo, it, of course, arrived later in that century. The painting has remained in the Indian village, and later at the town of Pecos, since that long ago time.

The painting and High Altar was observed in 1776 by Fray Francisco Domínguez: "A little above the center of the wall hangs an old oil painting on canvas with a painted wooden frame of Our Lady of the Angels. Below this is another, which is similar in size and frame but not so old. . . . The King gave them both. Eight ordinary old oil paintings are gathered around these mentioned above. . . . The wooden altar table is movable, with an altar stone donated by the King."

By 1838, the few surviving Indians there had made the decision to leave Pecos and to live with the Jemez people, 100 miles to the west in the Jemez mountains. The language spoken at the two

pueblos was similar and probably was the reason for this choice.

When they were ready to leave, the handful of Indians removed the large painting from their chapel and, it is said, entrusted it to the church at the Village of Pecos, providing that they should keep on celebrating the feast of Our Lady of the Angels on August second. The Pecos villagers have observed this feast ever since.

By this time, we were through the village of Pecos and I headed the Jeep on along the highway for the two miles' distance before the huge ruins rose into view. A historical marker directed us up a short side road to the Pecos Indian ruins. They were located on high, nearly flat rocks. Dominating the view was the once great church, the edifice dedicated to Nuestra Señora de Los Angeles. In a few minutes we were walking through the gigantic remains of an earlier people, a people who prospered long before Columbus discovered America and who were declining as a nation before the birth of the United States. I felt we were almost intruders as we walked up the pathway leading to the once great church.

"I can almost see the Indians worshipping here," Lottie said as we toured the ruins of the massive church which had been built in 1617. The place was full of ghosts and memories of former greatness, and my daughter and I walked through the preserved ruins with a sense of awe and sadness that this mighty pueblo, once the strongest and one of the largest of Indian villages was now nothing more than ruins, only hinting at the thriving city it had been back in the fourteenth century.

The church, built entirely of adobe made from red sandstone, appeared to grow directly from the earth, like a native New Mexico plant from the soil. The sand and the adobe church were one and the same. Beams of the church were exposed. "What a tragedy," I said to Lottie, "that some of the roof-beams of the church were removed in 1858 to be used as corral posts."

Standing in the midst of the church — the gigantic walls were

six feet thick — I thought of the faithful followers of the Cross whose blood had been willingly shed for the benefit of this church. First there was Friar Luis de Escalona, who insisted on remaining at Pecos to attempt to Christianize the Indians after the Spanish warriors returned to Mexico. He built a small hut and began his work of bringing the Word to the Indians of Pecos. But like so many of his later brethren, he was doomed to martyrdom. The medicine men, sensing a real threat to their religious authority, conspired against him with the simple people he tried to teach. He was killed. Thus Pecos became the scene of one of the first, perhaps the very first, Christian martyrdoms to take place in the United States.

But Christianity was not to be stopped by such an incident. This great Franciscan church, the ruins upon which Lottie and I gazed, was under construction. The mission thrived for some time. Then, in 1680, came the great Pueblo Revolt under the leadership of Popé, the Tewa medicine man from San Juan Pueblo. All Europeans were driven south to El Paso.

On this fateful day, August 10, 1680, no fewer than 21 devoted sons of St. Francis met their death. The funeral oration for the 21 Franciscan missionaries was held in Mexico City on March 20, 1681. The Father from Pecos was singled out with these words: "At the Convento of Porciuncula (Pecos), the Rev. Padre Fray Fernando de Velasco, who had served thirty years as a missionary in that Holy Custodia . . ." He had been overtaken and murdered within sight of Galisteo where he had been hastening to warn his superior of the revolt.

Twelve years later, New Mexico was reconquered. The Pecos Indians, along with all the others, submitted.

"Have you noticed how, late in the evening, the Glorieta Mesa turns a brilliant red, like a newly built piñon fire?" I asked Lottie. She nodded, as we both looked at the mesa to the west.

"Tradition says that the blood of those first martyred priests

has stained the mesa forever," I explained to Lottie.

As we walked away we noticed an old wooden cross supported by a huge pile of rocks in front of the church, which was constructed at the south end of the pueblo. When we looked northward the ruins of the once mighty nation were practically on the ground. We continued our walk up the pathway observing the great size of the pueblo. The earliest buildings were long rows of rooms with the round ceremonial chambers, or kivas, in front of them. The ruins of these rooms were on every side.

I saw a well-preserved kiva, circular in shape and built entirely underground. Only the ladder rising up in the middle was visible. I asked Lottie if she wished to enter the kiva, the ancient meeting room where many of the Pueblo rituals were carried out in total secrecy. She agreed, and we carefully climbed into the sacred chamber. As we descended, I thought of the early excavations of Pecos under the direction of Dr. Alfred V. Kidder. I knew of the valuable artifacts that he had uncovered in the kivas. He had found looms for weaving and in sealed niches in the walls, he discovered oddly-shaped medicine stones, shell beads, pipes, and idols.

While standing in the kiva, I asked Lottie if she had ever heard the legendary explanation for the sad decline of Pecos as told by the neighboring pueblos. She said that she had not, but "Please tell me, Daddy, right here in the kiva."

"Well, Lottie, the neighboring pueblos placed the responsibility for all the misfortunes of Pecos on a large sacred snake which was supposedly kept in one of the Pecos kivas, possibly this one."

I noticed Lottie shiver. "Here, a sacred fire was kept burning day and night and according to tradition, young children were periodically offered up in sacrifice to the holy serpent.

"The story went that the residents of Pecos became lax in their worship of the snake and of the sacred fire, and the more lax they became the worse the misfortunes which befell them."

Lottie listened with fascinated interest as I continued the legend of Pecos. As the tale went, there came an epidemic in which most of the children of the village died. The serpent demanded that the son of one of the war captains be given in sacrifice. The war captain was desperate at the thought of losing his one remaining child and he substituted a young goat in place of the boy. This deception greatly angered the sacred snake and he abandoned the pueblo, swimming down the Pecos, then the Rio Grande to the Gulf of Mexico. Pecos was hence doomed.

"The snake seems real, doesn't it, Daddy?" Lottie responded wide-eyed. "Here in the kiva the story seems real. Let's go before it becomes too real."

We climbed out of the kiva and continued walking to the extreme north of the pueblo.

We then stood where the two great quadrangular structures occupied the extreme north end of the pueblo. These main structures, with 585 and 517 rooms, respectively, were standing when Coronado saw Pecos. They were four-story, flat-roofed, terraced buildings surrounding a central court, or plaza. I looked at the ruins of this former great city and thought that Pedro de Castañeda, the chronicler for the Coronado expedition, had accurately described this largest and most thriving Pueblo Indian town when he came there in 1540: "... a very strong village four stories high, situated on a rock, with a large court or yard in the middle, containing the estufas (kivas). The houses are all alike, four stories high. ... There are corridors going all around at the first two stories, by which one can go around the whole village. ... The village is enclosed by a low wall of stone. ... The people of this village boast that no one has been able to conquer them. ..."

I knew that one of the gigantic apartment houses kept its form for many years, as its plaza served as a prison to hold the Texans who were captured by Governor Manuel Armijo of New Mexico in 1841. I thought how worthwhile it would be if the government

would restore this pueblo to its former grandeur for all Americans to visit and enjoy.

As Lottie and I started back along the west edge of the pueblo, she remarked, "I feel as if I were here with Coronado." We looked back again at the site of the four-story pueblo. "Looking through the mist and to those dark purple hills of Pecos I feel like I can see it the way it used to be."

We continued walking, noticing beautiful, reddish-pink blossoms on the cacti along the pathways. The walk led to the west bank overlooking the valley. I knew the Indians had used springs in the valley for a bountiful supply of water. We were now strolling along the west ridge where the finest archaeological ruins in America kept an excellent chronological history of the peoples of Pecos from the foundation of the pueblo to its abandonment.

"The Pecos Ruins are one of the most important archaeological sites in America — an American counterpart of ancient Troy," I told Lottie Jane.

"Why is that, Daddy?" she asked. "What's so different about the Pecos ruins?"

"Well, you see, honey, the town was built on this cliff and for eight centuries the Indians used the same rubble pile — kitchen midden — filling up over twenty feet with debris. Because of this, archaeologists could accurately trace the history of the people. There were at least six distinct towns built one upon another, and excavations of the pit covered a period of ten years."

"How did they do it, Daddy? Explain it to me."

"Well, the earliest material lay on the bottom," I began. "The next oldest above and so on, the whole providing a perfect stratification of waste products throughout the long existence of the town." I then told her that the pile contained countless thousands of fragments of pottery, stone, and the bones of animals used for food. It also served as a cemetery with over 2,000 burials uncovered. Excavations in this vast rubbish heap were carried on by

means of trenches carefully cut layer by layer from the top downward. This resulted in recovery of information as to changes in pottery, in tools, and in burial customs and was extremely valuable in dating the periods of time in the history of Pecos. Grass has now grown in the area where the rich story of history was uncovered.

As we walked back toward the entrance and the Jeep, I thought of the defeat of the Pecos Indians, and of the victorious Plains Indians riding with Pecos treasures over the beautiful hills to the east. A chunky brown meadowlark, flutelike in song, skimmed just above us and landed on the rock wall to watch us. A small herd of goats was eating nearby. We reached the entrance and were back in the twentieth century.

"It's funny, isn't it?" Lottie said as we climbed back into the Jeep.

"What's funny, dear?"

My daughter tightened her pretty face in a thoughtful frown. "When you think how hard all those people worked building their town, and now it's nearly gone."

I looked at her intense face and nodded, waiting to hear more.

"But the walls of the church stayed up through everything . . . I think that's good."

"Yes, honey," I agreed, glancing back at the massive, timeless structure. "People die and buildings crumble, but religion seems to go on."

I quickly did a little rapid calculation in my head, trying to be sure what the date was. Time, as men figure it, can become an illusive and unimportant thing in the Pecos.

"We're in luck, honey," I told Lottie. "In two more days we'll have a chance to see a good example of just how religion can and does survive."

"What do you mean, Daddy?" Lottie asked, perplexed.

"Day after tomorrow is August first," I explained. "You re-

member how I told you that the last Pecos Indians gave the painting which they had received from the King of Spain around 1617 to the village of Pecos, providing that a special Mass be held for the departed Indians?"

Lottie agreed.

"Well, the ceremony takes place on August first this year. They usually celebrate it on a Saturday, beginning a two-day fiesta. I think we should participate in the Mass, a custom that actually goes back to the time of the painting's arrival here near 1617."

The idea pleased Lottie, and we drove on home to our cabin with considerable anticipation, eager to witness the special Mass which was so linked with history and tradition and which had been carried out for such a staggering length of time.



FATHER BEACH, OUR LADY OF THE ANGELS, AND LOTTIE JANE

Our Lady of the Angels

VISITING the Pecos Ruins and learning a little about the exciting and tragic past which surrounded the extinct pueblo had fired Lottie Jane's imagination.

"But why are they celebrating the special Mass on August first this year instead of on the second?" she asked. August second was the day the Pecos Indians had moved, and ordinarily this was the date of the traditional Mass.

"The second falls on a Sunday," I explained. "It was decided to hold the special services a day earlier, on Saturday, so as not to interfere with the regular services."

A little after nine in the morning, on the appointed day, Lottie and I were in our less-than-trusty Jeep and on our way to St. Anthony's Church. We parked and walked to the churchyard to await the event.

Soon leading citizens of the town began drifting in, congregating before the lovely sandstone church. The soft and gracious words "Buenos Dias" filled the morning air.

I knew some of the villagers and we chatted about the news of the day, the weather, crops — all the small concerns which are of great importance in a town the size of Pecos.

It was a fine morning and I enjoyed standing there before the

church, chatting with my Pecos neighbors. I was filled with a sense of peace and belonging.

I spoke to several old-timers about the tradition of Our Lady of the Angel painting. They all spoke of the tradition and also told Lottie and me that the agreement of 1838 between the Indians of the pueblo and St. Anthony's Church included carrying the painting back to the Pecos Ruins for the August second Mass. Although the old-timers spoke of the agreement to carry the painting back to the ruins, it appeared from careful checking that no definite arrangement over the years had been fulfilled. Gavino Varela, now in his 80's, but with clear eyes and smooth face, told us that his father, Miguel Varela, often mentioned marching in the procession back to the pueblo to take part in the celebration of the Mass there. This was during the latter part of the nineteenth century.

Pablo Salmeron, also in his 80's, told us that he took part in the procession back to the ruins many years ago. Mr. Salmeron insisted that Lottie and I come into his home and visit with him. The home was spotlessly clean. The old gentleman's wife was fixing a dinner of tacos and the odor filled the small house. She soon came in to visit with us also. One of Mr. Salmeron's grandsons, nine years old, politely listened to him speak of walking in the procession, over 50 years ago. I thought perhaps his grandson might someday tell his own grandson the story of Our Lady of the Angels.

Later, we spoke with José S. Vigil, great-grandson of Donaciano Vigil, and he recalled that he had walked in the procession in 1906. He was very definite about the date.

At ten A.M. the great bell in the church tower began tolling, reminding the village parishioners that the special Mass was soon to be held. It called its message in deep, solemn tones, reverberating across the hills. Soon the large asphalt parking lot was filled.

Lottie and I walked around the church, examining it with inter-

est. Built of rock, it faced away from the busy highway which is the main thoroughfare of Pecos. Behind the parking lot, we came upon a graveyard enclosed by a wall of stone. Here, protected by the wall and the massive presence of the church, the departed souls slept in peace in their sheltered valley. Most of the departed lying there had been born and raised and lived their lives out in the village.

Sounds of delicate singing informed us that the Mass would soon begin and Lottie and I walked into the cool depths of the church.

From a second-floor choir loft at the rear of the church came the sweet voices of twelve Spanish girls. They would chant a phrase and then the members of the congregation would answer, their voices blurred together in the ritual replies. It was still early, and the bulk of those present were elderly folk, grandparents with their young grandchildren. The old gentlemen and ladies were severely dressed in black, as befitted the occasion — the women wearing long rebosas wrapped closely around their faces — the men in suits of black, worn and shiny but neatly pressed.

"It's beautiful," Lottie whispered to me as she looked around at the interior of the church. It was, indeed, a lovely place. The pews, able to seat perhaps 350 people, were a polished shade of tan, the old wood seeming to glow with a light of its own. The ceiling above us was painted pale blue and the walls were a delicate yellow on each side of the pews; by the altar they were tinted pink. The altar itself was ornate and lovely, elaborately trimmed in gold leaf, with six tall candles burning upon it. Above the altar was the statue of the Virgin Mary, and a little farther back, an American flag was placed. Behind this, leaning against the wall was the painting, "Our Lady of the Angels."

"It looks neglected, just sitting back there on the floor," Lottie whispered and I smiled and nodded slightly. It did seem as if on

this, its very own special day, the painting should be accorded a more honored spot. But I could tell even from where we sat that it was in remarkably good condition.

"Just think, honey," I murmured to Lottie. "Every year since 1838, that same painting has had its moment here in the church."

"And before that, back to 1617, in the Pecos Pueblo," she replied. Lottie was wide-eyed. She stared at the old, old painting, bathed in the tinted daylight shining through the stained-glass windows set in either wall.

Hanging above us, I noticed two ancient crystal chandeliers, so old they were supported by wires from the ceiling, and they too added to the feel of antiquity in the church. They were purely ornamental nowadays, I saw. Six light bulbs afforded the church its actual illumination.

At ten-fifteen the bell rang again, and people still walked into the church, kneeling in the aisle, then taking seats and joining in the response to the singing of the choir. I observed that the elderly men seemed to find the most enjoyment in the music as they murmured their responses.

I sat there looking about me, listening to the sounds of the girls' singing voices and taking in the beauty of the scene. It was clear that St. Anthony's Church fulfilled the spiritual needs of the native people of Pecos completely.

The bells rang out one last time, calling to the last few faithful in final warning. It was ten-thirty, and by now the church was packed. Every pew was filled and people stood quietly along the walls. Straight chairs were brought into the church. There was a general rustle of subdued motion as people settled themselves for the service to come.

Father Robert M. Beach, the local priest, began. He spoke entirely in Spanish, but I was able to follow most of what he said. He retold the story of "Our Lady of the Angels" in simple, beau-

tiful language, then, moving to a less solemn vein, he spoke of the fiesta which would begin after this Mass and continue for two days. Then the Mass itself began, with all its pomp and ritual. Assisting in the Mass were three visiting fathers from Española, Santa Rosa, and Bernalillo, along with six altar boys.

It was nearly noon when the Mass was concluded, and two men carried the painting — it's roughly four feet by six — up the aisle to the front door of the church. The people then filed to the altar for communion and afterward walked out to the churchyard where they gathered in rows behind the painting. I asked Ceferino Quintana, an old-timer in Pecos and a former lieutenant governor of New Mexico, what was to occur next. He was in charge of the arrangements for the ceremony with the painting, I had been told.

"Now we will carry the painting around the churchyard, in memory of the Indians of Pecos Pueblo," he told me. "The altar boys will walk in front, in honor of the Indians."

"But aren't you going to carry it back to the Indian village, the way it was agreed?" Lottie asked. Ceferino smiled indulgently at her. "Oh, no, no . . . that would be too far. This is only a ceremony, a token."

Lottie looked disappointed that the old tradition was not to be followed in fact, only in spirit, and assuming the legend was true, felt that the long-dead Indians were possibly being short-changed.

All was in readiness now for the token march around the churchyard. In front of the procession were the altar boys, then the painting, followed by the congregation.

Abruptly, with almost no warning, the skies turned dark and a gust of cool, damp wind blew on us. In moments, the heavens had opened, as if in protest against the breaking of the promise to carry the painting back to the pueblo, and buckets of rain dropped on all of us. The painting was rushed back inside and the token ceremony was over for that year.

"The Indian Rain Gods are angry," Lottie said, a little smugly. "If they had carried the painting back to the pueblo, everything would have been all right!"

"Maybe you're right, honey," I grinned at her. We went back into the church and examined the famous painting that was the cause of all this activity. At close inspection, it was a beautiful thing, framed all in gold gilt. The children depicted before the Virgin Mother were reaching their hands upward toward her, and the expression the artist had captured in the Virgin's face was one of beauty and compassion.

The painting had been carried back to the Pecos Ruins after a 50-year lapse on the beautiful morning of August 2, 1950, a Wednesday, when Father Stanley Francis Crocchiola was the local father in charge of St. Anthony's parish. He had fulfilled the 1838 promise completely, perhaps because of his knowledge and love of New Mexico. The celebration had opened with a long procession of several hundred citizens, led by Juan Gonzales and Hilario Moya of Pecos. Also in the procession were "Hermanos Mayores" of the Penitente order of Nuestro Padre J. Nazareno. The procession proceeded to the Pecos Ruins where the painting was again placed on the site of the original sanctuary in the ruins of the old church.

Five honored guests for the occasion were descendants of the Pecos Pueblo Indians who came from Jemez Indian village for the celebration. All had the surname of Pecos, which was retained by the seventeen survivors of 1838.

A plain wooden altar decorated with flowers and statues from private chapels of various societies was set, with a canopy enclosing the painting symbolic of Christianity.

The Mass was sung by Msgr. Clarence Schoeppner of Santa Fe, with the choir of St. Anthony Church participating. The sermon was delivered by Father Joseph Doran from the Guadalupe parish in Santa Fe.

The painting was carried back to the Pecos Ruins for the last time the following August when the Mass was again sung at the Pecos ruins, thus fulfilling a century-old tradition wrapped around an old Spanish painting and a deserted Indian ruin. Taking part in the celebration again were Father Stanley and Father Beach who is now at St. Anthony's Church.

Father Beach then graciously showed us the early baptismal account still recorded at St. Anthony's Church. In beautiful handwriting the record showed an early noted baptism of one Juanna Jonsen in October, 1862. It was unusual to see the Anglo name there for even now the Mass is still given in Spanish. The Santa Fe archives of the Archdiocese have Pecos church records of births, marriages, and deaths going back as far as 1706.

Father Beach then told us that he was planning a special altar in the church where Our Lady of the Angels could properly hang. He took us into the lovely church and we discussed the new location where the painting would be placed. He had chosen the south wing as the new altar.

"I hope next year they'll carry the painting back to the ruins again, and keep their end of the bargain," Lottie Jane said to Father Beach.

"I hope it can be arranged too," Father Beach said, smiling.

After saying goodbye to the good father, Lottie and I walked toward our Jeep through the rain which still tumbled down from angry clouds. Thunder complained in the distance and the sky was grey with moving clouds. We drove silently toward home through the downpour.

Melinda's Animal Friends

SOME PEOPLE have a special affinity for particular creatures — dogs, cats — Ruthie with her love of horses. But Melinda has a broader rapport. She loves all animals, and somehow, they seem to know and feel it. They love her in return. Like Daniel, she would probably be safe in any lion's den. Her heart would go out to the beast and she would soon be mothering it.

In the course of that enchanted summer, we all had constant contact with the full-time residents of Pecos — namely, the creatures of the woods who made their permanent homes there. Some of our contacts were amusing, some mildly exciting. But Melinda was the one who seemed, instinctively, to be at home with the wildlife of the area. She was delighted by animals and they by her. The gentle deer, who often ran when a clumsy-footed adult stumbled on them, would look at my small, blonde daughter with their wise compassionate eyes and seem to smile at her in recognition. Reeling in the sea of sky, even the saucy blackbirds appeared to chatter hello to her. The child seemed to find companionship in nature's inarticulate creatures, and seeing this, Ruth and I saw more clearly into her young and delicately sweet heart.

Our dog Lassie was Melinda's particular, special friend. She is a lovely beast, well bred, full of natural grace and humility. The

little girl and the handsome collie seemed so attuned to one another that I would have sworn they talked some private, secret language.

An example of this was Melinda's habit of reading aloud to the dog. Although only seven years old, and therefore not exactly a scholar with words, she had a number of picture books. She and Lassie would frequently sit beneath the stately trees in our front yard, nestled close together, while she read the captions to the pictures in some book or another.

"See, Lassie? This is a picture of a fire truck."

The animal, her face close to the child's, would examine the picture Melinda had presented for her inspection, seem actually to nod in comprehension, then lick Melinda's face, gratefully edified. The child, in turn, would love the dog with an unsanitary kiss.

This would go on for hours sometimes. Lassie is probably the best read dog in New Mexico.

It is, according to Lassie's thinking, her duty to protect Melinda and the entire family from the dangers which afflict all humankind. Poor mortals do not understand the evils which lie in an approaching car, another dog, an unknown sound. Lassie, however, handles all of that. She takes her responsibilities most seriously, and we have yet to be assaulted by a ferocious mouse or lizard.

Lassie and Melinda understood and admired each other. Lassie slept on our screened back porch, and each night Melinda would take great pains to cover her with an old rug, under which the dog would sleep in blissful warmth all night... except when there was thunder and lightning. On these occasions, she would mourn her way into the house, in search of Melinda, who would comfort and protect her, she knew.

There was a chipmunk among Melinda's friends in Holy Ghost. She had named him "Chippy" and it was her delight to feed him every morning, a ritual the animal had come to expect. Each

morning he would wait for her to appear, bearing the remains of breakfast for his repast. She learned that hot cakes were his special favorite in the way of human food.

"Sorry you had to wait, Chippy," she would shout. "I had Mother make an extra one especially for you!"

The little creature would sit up and devour the treat, holding it in his forepaws, while Melinda squatted nearby, approvingly.

But Chippy had a rival — a particular blue jay who had seen the free feeding and decided to join in. Biding his time, and watching the procedure shrewdly, the bird would dive from a nearby tree when the chipmunk was absorbed in eating and off his guard.

"Now, you stop that!" Melinda would shout at the bird. "That's Chippy's breakfast, not yours!"

The bird, knowing that he, too, was a natural friend of the child, would not be frightened at all. He would chatter to her with his own sense of reason.

"Whack-ack-ack, whack-ack-ack-ack," the handsome bird would squeak.

"Nonsense," Melinda would reply. "You had plenty of breakfast yesterday! This is Chippy's. And besides, you ate all those wild strawberries yesterday, and I wanted them for Mother."

Grudgingly, the blue jay would retreat after Melinda's scolding, talking to himself with great self-pity. If he did not understand the child's words, he caught the content of her message.

There were a number of robins who congregated about the cabin who were friends of Melinda. Their cries, clear carolings broken up into short phrases like an intricate phrase from Bach, made our lives more pleasant in the Pecos. "Ty-eep-tut-tut-tut" the saucy robins would exclaim, walking boldly about the front yard of our cabin. They knew they had nothing to fear from Melinda, and very little from the rest of us. They were also close,

close friends, as were all the animals with whom Melinda made contact. Take the case of the bobcat and the boys. . . .

"Dad! Dad! There's a bobcat in the garage!" Pat shouted in wild excitement one afternoon shortly after lunch. He came tumbling into the house in a flurry of cries and eagerness to tell me the thrilling news.

"All right, Pat, calm down now. If there's a bobcat around, we'll get him."

Actually, bobcats are fairly common in the Pecos woods, along with all sorts of other wildlife, and the boy's story was easy enough to believe. I went to a closet and took our new .22 rifle — a weapon sufficient to handle such a small, though dangerous creature — then decided to be doubly sure and strapped a .38 pistol around my waist. I was ready for the most ferocious of beasts. "You won't hurt him, will you, Daddy?" Melinda cried.

"Not if we can help it, honey," I told her.

"We saw it out in the garage!" Pat told me. "Hiding under that pile of wood, I think!" The other boys joined him and confirmed his story.

Feeling a little like a character from a Western movie, I led the procession of excited youngsters out to the garage. Melinda was obviously concerned much more for the welfare of the bobcat than her immediate family. We entered cautiously, and began searching the empty garage for signs of the animal, with no luck at all.

"Here, Mike, you stay down here on guard with the .22," I said. "We'll go up to the apartment over the garage and see if we can scare him out."

The rest of us went upstairs, stamping our feet vigorously, in hopes of chasing the creature into sight. No success.

Another idea struck me. I went downstairs again, climbed into the Jeep and drove it into the garage. I honked the horn, raced

the motor and shouted, thinking surely this commotion would frighten the bobcat into the open. Still there was no sign of life from the garage.

"Are you sure you really saw a bobcat in here?" I asked, starting to feel a little dubious about the animal's existence. "If there is one in there, I'm sure he won't hurt anybody," Melinda assured me. I doubted this.

"He's in there, Dad," Ronnie assured me. "We saw him and he's there all right."

There seemed to be nothing to do but wait the creature out. Sooner or later, I presumed, the beast would grow hungry and try to leave the garage. Very well — we'd be ready for him.

We took turns standing guard duty in front of the garage, waiting with the loaded .22. Melinda was dubious about the whole project.

It was a very dramatic vigil, and the boys who were not standing guard at the moment all crowded upstairs and peered excitedly from a window, waiting to see the bobcat make his exit from the garage.

The afternoon waned and tension grew greater and greater. I noticed that the boys were swaggering a bit in front of their sisters, especially Melinda, acting the part of mighty hunters engaged in a grim and dangerous task.

Sometime around five P.M., while Ronnie had the arduous task of standing guard, the finale occurred at last. There was a great gasp from all the children watching from the upstairs window as the mighty jungle beast — the terrible predator we were stalking — made his exit from the garage.

For a moment, all were silent. Then, in absolute delight, the girls began to shriek with laughter. Melinda, I noticed, laughed loudest of all. The boys were suddenly subdued and a bit shame-faced. The awful wildcat we had been facing so bravely was a tiny kitten from the cabin next door.

Ronnie grinned as he put down his gun. Melinda smiled smugly.

We did have a number of experiences with actual creatures from the forest, most of them pleasant. The Pecos, especially higher up, deeper in the actual wilderness area, is full of game and often, walking along a trail or path, one of the family would come face to face with a doe or buck which would view the intruder calmly and move gracefully away. It was an unusual experience, looking up and suddenly finding yourself staring into the great, tender eyes of a deer. They seemed to realize with some deep animal instinct that we meant them no harm. Rather than run in terror, they would usually observe us for a moment, as if in greeting, then move calmly about their business.

Melinda, especially, loved the sight of deer, and primarily because of this, we placed three 50-pound salt licks on our mountainside, about 75 feet from our bedroom window. Soon each morning, we had a regular bread line of deer down from the higher hills to enjoy the precious salt. Promptly at six-thirty, the stately beasts would begin to drift to the salt, usually coming in pairs, their ears and eyes alert. The children loved to watch them.

This had been going on for some weeks when one morning I was pulled out of that deep sleep which often descends in the early morning just before time to awaken; I opened my half-drugged eyes. Melinda was shaking and pulling at me.

"Daddy, Daddy, be quiet!" she hissed at me fiercely. I mumbled and groaned and managed to force myself awake.

"What is it? What's wrong?" I inquired fuzzily. Melinda instantly shushed me, finger to her lips. "Be QUIET, Daddy," she commanded. "There are two deer at the salt lick. You'll scare them away. That's why I woke you up!"

"And just how could I scare them if I were asleep?" I asked. Melinda shook her head impatiently at my lack of logic. "I was afraid you were going to wake up and scare them," she explained. I'm sure it all made sense to her in some strange little-girl way.

But deer and hallucinatory bobcats were by no means the only form of animal life surrounding us. There were the countless smaller creatures to be found all around — chipmunks by the dozen, skunks, a few mink, and many saucy blue jays. Then there were harmless snakes, and an occasional squirrel, to mention only a few. All of the woodland creatures fascinated, and seemed to be fascinated by, our curiosity-filled children.

There were stories, of course, of bears and lions appearing ominously in the gentle Canyon of the Holy Ghost, but such visitations were extremely rare. These larger predators had the entire rugged Pecos Wilderness in which to roam, and I doubt if they desired our company any more than we did theirs.

Much of our contact with the smaller animal life of the Pecos took place at the Terrero community dump — not the likeliest place for a course in natural history, perhaps, but that's the way it turned out. The dump, it seemed, was a natural feeding ground for many little creatures of the forest. With the basic hunter's instinct common to boys, Ronnie enjoyed hefting his trusty B-B gun and potshotting at the frisky creatures, never hitting any, I might add. They seemed to enjoy the game as much as he did and they dodged and darted out of the way of his less-than-lethal pellets with the greatest ease.

The crows at Terrero dump were a different matter, although they too were singularly unharmed by the boys' efforts to bring them down. For this larger game, we would take only the .22 along and practice marksmanship against those wily targets. As a matter of fact, for this sport, it turned out we had to leave Melinda at home. She had soon learned the crow's danger signal — a kind of "ca ca, caw caw ca ca," sound — and if we took her along she would cry out the warning noise as the boys approached. The crows, appreciating Melinda's concern, would lift into the air with a polite "caw, caw" of thanks for the warning.

We soon learned several things about crows. Specifically and

foremost, we found out that the crow is a very smart bird, nearly human in its raucous sense of humor and seeming ability to tease a poor mortal with a .22. We learned another basic truth about these birds; a crow is just about impossible to hit (we shot only when they were flying).

Still, we had a great time using them for unsuccessful target practice, although I don't believe a single bird had so much as a feather ruffled all that summer from our deadly marksmanship. They would see us coming in that old Jeep and caw out what almost sounded like a rather bored welcome, then circle good-naturedly out of gun range while we blasted away mightily.

The dump provided us with an eerily enjoyable experience one evening. It was a beautiful night — a Saturday, as I recall — and the moon rode comfortably on a sea of rolling clouds. The wind was fitful among the pines, the air a little chilly — a perfect evening in the high country among the sighing woods.

"Let's go see the skunks have their party, Daddy," Melinda said. I was instantly a bit uncomfortable. I had jokingly told the children, perhaps a week before, that the skunks of the region had a weekly Saturday night party at Terrero dump, when they all got together and had a wonderful time. It was meant as a piece of whimsey — a facetious little joke. But the children had taken me seriously, and now they were anxious to watch the event.

"Yes, Daddy, let's!" Ruthie joined in with great excitement. It was an awkward moment and I began hedging. "Well, children, I don't think the skunks would like outsiders watching their party..."

This was greeted with howls of disbelief and outrage. Yet I hated to disappoint the children should I drive them all the way to the dump and they found nothing but the moonlit silence I knew would be there. I could almost see Melinda's reproachful eyes when she discovered her Daddy had simply been telling them a story.

"I don't really think we'd better..." I began, when Mother's voice cut me off, amused but firm. "Now, Calvin. Why can't we drive over to the dump and see the party?" I could tell from her voice that she was mischievously amused at the predicament I had created for myself.

"A little ride in the cool night air will do us all good," she added. When Mother called my hand I knew I was licked, and I stopped my feeble protestation, praying that at least *one* skunk might happen to be nosing around the dump.

We armed our intrepid band with a couple of .22 pistols, not that we had ever hit anything with them or expected to — it was simply the thing to do — one .22 rifle, one battle-scarred B-B gun, and a slingshot, and off we went through the moon-drenched night. Melinda did not approve.

It was a strange and exciting feeling, driving slowly along the road in the windy Pecos night. Holy Ghost Stream roared in the darkness, swollen by the day's rain, demanding attention like an eager puppy. Above, the stars burned sharply in the great black vault of sky, undimmed by city lights. Nature talked in many voices in the darkness around us, each voice clamoring to be heard, demanding that we listen to its particular story in the cobalt night; the loud-voiced stream, the rushing wind in the trees, the cracklings and rustles among the darkened foliage — all spoke and demanded that we listen.

High above, the moon rode its sea of cloud as though at anchor, gazing down benevolently at the swaying pines and our old Jeep pumping along the road toward the dump grounds in pursuit of a mythical Saturday night party which I had incautiously pulled out of thin air.

Too soon to suit me, we turned off the main road which led to Cowles and approached the dump. I turned the lights to "parking," not wishing to disturb any wildlife which might be present, and we inched forward. The Jeep's oil pan scraped dirt as we crawled

along the rough road, but the blazing moonlight was bright enough to see by. We crawled up to the dump site, located by the abandoned Terrero mines.

"Turn on your lights, Dad, so we can see the skunks," Ronnie whispered excitedly. I intoned a silent prayer, sure that the kids were in for a bitter disappointment in their father's trustworthiness, and switched on the headlights.

"Look at them! Look at all the skunks!" Melinda shouted, enraptured. I opened my eyes and looked.

There must have been 20 or 30 skunks among the debris — frozen in the glare of the headlights — stopped cold by the sudden blaze. The skunks *were* having a party, to my gratified amazement.

In seconds, the children were out of the Jeep. I lined them up carefully to prevent them from blowing each other's heads off. They banged, shot, and slung with the slingshot, all except Melinda, who was rooting for the skunks. These creatures sat still, thinking the situation over. They weren't worried in the slightest and, in fact, had no particular reason to be. Every shot went gloriously wild, but this did not spoil the fun.

The small animals made a leisurely decision and began to leave the area. They showed very little concern over the noise and activity; I felt they knew perfectly well they had little to fear from these tenderfeet and their noisy guns. As a matter of fact, none of us really wanted to hit them. It was the game that counted.

Presently the party had dispersed and we all climbed back into the Jeep and headed for home. The children had enjoyed it all immensely, and Daddy's reputation and honor had been upheld. Ever since then, I've had a particularly warm spot in my heart for skunks, those most odorous of creatures.

Of course, since reality is what it is, there was a reason for the gathering of animals at the dump on Saturday night, I later learned. The people of the region usually clean up their cabins on Saturday and carry their garbage to the dump that day.

Pickings are particularly rich on Saturday night, and the skunks had come to know this. Still, my story had not been entirely fantasy—the skunks *did* have a party of sorts at the dump on Saturday night.

As I parked the Jeep before our cabin and the children climbed, a little sleepily now, out of it and raced toward the house, I turned to Ruth somewhat smugly. "I'll expect a little more belief in the future, Ruth," I said. I could feel her grinning at me in the darkness. "Yes, all-knowing Father," she said. Her voice sounded a little too respectful.

I kissed Melinda goodnight that evening and she kissed me in return, said her prayer, then smiled: "Sweet dreams, Daddy."



MELINDA AND LASSIE

Terrero Mines

IT WAS A DAY of gold and green, mid-summer in the Pecos. We arose to the excited shouts of our younger children.

"Daddy, Daddy," Melinda shrieked. "You promised! You said we could go find rocks at the Terrero mine!"

I groaned, struggling out of sleep, but she was right. I had told the children that one of these days we would jeep down to the remains of the old, long abandoned Terrero mine site. We had passed it often on the way to the dump. It was a lovely day in the high Pecos country, and there was no reason to put off the trip.

Breakfast was soon over and we all piled into the Jeep, headed for another Pecos adventure.

We bumped and rattled along the road, following Holy Ghost Stream for a time, dwarfed by the huge pine, cedar, and fir trees which loomed above us. After leaving Holy Ghost Canyon and crossing the Pecos River we swooped by Happy Ley's store and turned up the country road that led away into the forest at the foot of Elk Mountain. Beside us, Willow Creek chuckled to itself as we rattled and bounced through the dirt toward the remains of the once prosperous mine diggings.

I parked the Jeep and the children were out and running about like crabs, looking for rocks. The first thing that caught their at-

tention, of course, were the chunks of iron pyrite, or fool's gold, which lay everywhere, reflecting the sun with ironic temptation.

The long abandoned slag heaps rose high above our heads and the little girls darted here and there with squeals of delight as they came across one worthless find after another.

Some of the weed-covered piles of slag rose hundreds of feet above the surface level, and an old wooden loader still stood at the bottom of Willow Creek — a silent reminder of the active days that had once been.

Ruth and the children and I explored this piece of rotting antiquity. Nature had taken over, and the transient works of man were nearly gone.

The land was taking its own again. Trees, underbrush and weeds were there, re-claiming the soil and obliterating the efforts of industry. It had nearly all vanished, back to the earth which had borne it.

I had heard that a man called Joe lived right above Willow Creek — that he had lived there for years, even back in the days when the mine was running, strong and vibrant, and important to the economy of the Pecos Valley.

The younger ones were still absorbed in finding rocks, but Pat and I decided we should go find Joe, if he actually existed and were something more than myth. We climbed into the Jeep and drove to the small store which Joe supposedly operated on the Pecos highway.

When we found the place, we were confronted by a scene which would be strange in any other context except New Mexico. Joe's wife was calmly milking a goat on the front steps of the store, squirting the milk into a quart-sized 7-Up bottle.

We walked by this tableau and on into the store, where we met Joe himself. He was a small, elderly, somewhat stooped Italian gentleman who was both slightly suspicious of my motives and full of a private dignity. I don't know how long he had been in

this country, nor what odd fate had brought him high up to the Pecos in the remote state of New Mexico — but there he was, running a tiny little store, high in the mountains. He had not mastered English to any great degree, and he viewed Pat and me with a certain basic mistrust. Thick glasses hid his intelligent but wary eyes and a straw hat covered his iron grey hair. His jaw was dark from a noticeable lack of contact with the razor.

"Yes?" he said, suspiciously. "I can help you? What you want?"

I shook his hand which seemed to throw him a bit off stride.

"I'm Calvin Horn, and this is my son Pat," I told him. He accepted the information with no particular delight. "You want to buy something?"

"Uh... yes. Yes, of course. We each need a coke and..." I thought for a moment, trying to call up something that we might need at the cabin. "And a can of whole corn, if you please."

Mollified by this indication of sensible business transaction, Joe brought the requested items to me. Pat and I drank our cokes and stared nervously at a vicious dog which was leashed nearby.

"My son and I were interested in hearing a little about the old Terrero mines," I told Joe. Immediately, he seemed to come to life — seemed to feel that we were no longer strange Americans who could not be trusted until the color of our money was shown.

"Ah, si, the mine," Joe said in a reminiscent tone. "When it was running, my store was over there, across the river." He gestured vaguely. "But when the mine closed I moved it here."

Mr. De Angelis, his full name, as we learned, was bursting with information about the old diggings, and Pat and I listened with great interest as he spoke of the mine.

"There were over 3,000 miners working here at one time," he said. "Then, in 1939, came a labor dispute and the place shut down. But someday, someone will strike it rich there; I know it in my bones."

Back in the distant days, there had been a complete town based

around the mines. A post office, a twelve-bed hospital, a school, store, jail, and nine dance halls had existed where now there was nothing but nature. And, of course, there was the golf course which had been the pride and the joy of the miners. I have often thought I would like to play that course someday, alone with the memories of the long-gone miners who had built it years ago.

The mine itself was one of the oldest in the states and was worked, at first, with the help of carts and oxen during the Spanish period. In 1927, American Metals Company of New Mexico purchased the diggings, building shafts which penetrated the east slope of the mountain to a depth of 1,750 feet or better. At 100-foot levels, starting 300 feet beneath the surface of the earth, there were tunnels shooting out to provide working access to each level.

Perhaps the most amazing aspect of the mine was a gigantic aerial tramway — at that time, the largest in the world — on which ore was hauled in one-half-ton buckets from the mine to the village of Pecos. This mill was geared to take care of 500 tons of ore in eight hours, using a selective flotation and separation process first to remove what gold and silver might be present.

"I was told," Joe said, "that the payroll at the mines reached as high as a million dollars a year."

Then came the strike. Representatives of the company warned the workers that if a strike should come, the company would have to close the mines. But those were days of labor violence throughout the land, and the miners were insistent. The strike was held; the mines closed down. Pumps stopped, machinery was dismantled and hauled away, and the sound of ore buckets clanging against steel cables on the way down the canyon was heard no more. A stillness, never to be broken, descended on the Pecos. The mine was finished — over and done with.

It was not long until Terrero assumed the look of — and became — a vanished town. Another ghost of the West, its purpose finished, it sank back into the wilderness it had temporarily defied.

The graveyard is still there, still clasping the last remains of miners who had worked and sweated years ago. But the buildings are gone — the dance halls, the shafts, the homes — all dust.

"In 1936, when the mine was at its height, it produced 22,000 tons of zinc and 11,000 tons of copper, silver, and gold," Joe told us, something like personal pride in his voice.

"Some people tried to run the mine again, awhile back," he said.

"Oh? What happened?"

"They did real fine for a while, then ran out of money," Joe shrugged. "It's an expensive business, running a mine."

Interested at this development, Pat and I walked on down to the recent workings. Core drilling had been carried on in the shaft which had been created several years ago, and a new tunnel, supported by timber, dug deep into the earth. The most recent shaft was on the west side of the highway running beneath it, and the miners had cores drilled deep into the awesome weights and silences of the mountain. The newest tunnel was close to the original Christiana Riviera shaft which was part of the old, original Terrero Mines. The original effort had all been nearly obliterated by the passage of time and the winds which sigh through the valley.

After we had peered into the latest attempt to mine the rich earth of the mountains, Pat and I returned to the store and our Jeep. Joe watched us curiously.

"Thanks for the information," I told him. He nodded. I got the impression that he found all non-Italians, especially those who were concerned with historical matters now ended, a little strange.

Pat and I drove back down the road, past the silent, wind-swept little meadow which was all that remained of the miners' cemetery, until we came to the dirt track which led up to a place I thought Pat should see. It was almost gone, now, the unused road no more than an indication of ruts in the great clasp of the forest's hand. I turned the Jeep from the highway, and headed away from the main road, up into the mountain stillness.

At an altitude of 9,000 feet, remote and distant in the high, clean forest, an odd monument to man's ingenuity exists. The remains of a golf course, built by the miners years ago, still stand. I doubt if there was ever a finer driving range created anywhere. High in the profound silences and beauty of the Pecos mountains, the wind is the only player on that lonely course, but once the supposedly crude workers in the dark shafts took joy and recreation from the mountain meadow. Greens and tee boxes, the wood rotting away with the passage of time, still can be seen on that old, old field.

Pat and I climbed from the Jeep and walked around the long-dead golf course, listening to the mourning wind and the bright cries of distant birds. We both, I think, felt a kind of sadness for other days, other times when the lusty miners had gone to all the work of creating this place, hacked out of wild country unused to laughing voices and the sounds of men.

The miners are long since gone, their dreams and hopes as nebulous as the summer air — but the remnants of their proud golf course still are there, bravely facing the bitter weather and the grey hand of time. They had been there, those particular men, they had worked and loved and died, and they had left what monuments they could manage. But the Pecos existed long before they came, had buried some of them, and would be there, unchanged, long after the last mementos of the miners had crumbled gently into the earth.

Without saying much of anything, Pat and I left the sun-drenched meadow — the golf course which existed only as a dream, a memory — and climbed back into the Jeep. We drove down the rugged trail and back onto the highway, and then, for some reason I find difficult to understand, we nursed the uncooperative machine back to the remnants of the graveyard.

The wind spoke in a remote, mountain whisper as we climbed from the Jeep and walked, not speaking, among the faded, broken

crosses, high up in the pristine silence of the mountain. There was only sun and sky and grass in the tiny graveyard — only peace and a sense of the past.

I paused and crouched before a weathered, bone-grey marker, nearly destroyed by the elements. Whoever lay beneath it had long years ago found his final peace. Even the name, crudely carved in the rotting wood, had been erased by rains and wind. But for just a moment, I had the eerie feeling that he and I — that dead miner and myself — shared a vast secret about the Pecos. Here there was peace.

The wind sorrowed among the nearby trees, and puffs of cloud appeared in the sky. I stood up and put my arm around Pat's shoulders, strangely moved, strangely reassured. If I were given a choice, I could not have conceived of a more fitting and restful spot in which to sleep that final sleep we all must face.

I said a mental farewell to all the miners lying there in the silence and beauty of the meadow. I thought that they had, at the last, made a wise and good choice for their final resting place.

Pat and I were both somewhat subdued as we drove back to the rest of the family. But this mood was quickly altered when we arrived at the scene of their intent rock-hunting activities. Shouts of greeting and excitement met us as we pulled the Jeep to a halt. It appeared that Brenda had managed to find the most rocks. She had collected easily 15 or 20, and all of them were precious to her, full of special meaning and importance. This situation presented quite a problem, since a Jeep is just a Jeep, with little room to spare after the family was ensconced within.

"Now, each of you pick out the three rocks you like best, and we'll leave the others behind," I told them firmly. A howl arose.

"I'm not going in the Jeep if I can't take my rocks with me!" Brenda wailed.

"Me too!" Melinda joined in. "We spent all that time COLLECTING them, Daddy!" she sobbed. Well, it was obvious dis-

aster was imminent unless I capitulated. I tried to present as good a face to the situation as I could. "All right, girls, all right. Load the rocks in the Jeep."

It wasn't long before the entire back end of the vehicle was sagging with the weight of all the precious rocks. The Terrero mines were considerably less rich than they had been before our visit.

We all managed to fit in the groaning Jeep and we drove up Willow Creek, following a lovely canyon where the creek chuckled to itself beside us. After a time, we came to one of the loveliest meadows in the Pecos country, where a quiet stream ambles down the slopes of Elk Mountain.

"I've simply got to fish that stream," Mother said, and I agreed to watch the little ones while she pursued her love affair with rod and reel. Ruth went about the serious business of fishing while the children and I took off our shoes and waded in the cool water, enjoying the peace and sunlight, perfectly content. Presently, we all lay under the golden rays to sun ourselves, snuggling into the rich, thick grass.

When Ruth returned, she carried four beautiful rainbow trout which she had snared from the quiet stream. Everyone was happy and content with the day. We piled back into the Jeep.

From there, the road led us on up toward the peak of Elk Mountain. We could see down, in dizzying vistas, to Cow Creek Valley, far to the east. From that vantage spot, we looked far off into the Pecos Wilderness, seeing Hamilton Mesa, Pecos Baldy, and three Truchas Mountain peaks to the north, all soaring and majestic in the vast panorama of wilderness.

The view took our breaths away for a time; then we headed for our snug home in the woods. There was a mild dispute when it came to unloading the car and deciding just whose rocks were whose. But it was soon all resolved. There were plenty of rocks to go around for everyone, I felt.



PAT AT GLORIETA

Glorieta Gardens

WHEN THE REALITIES of life intruded, we sometimes found it necessary to drive to and from Albuquerque during the course of the summer. Each time we did so, we passed the beautiful Glorieta Baptist Assembly — a cluster of well designed buildings which nestles in the protecting arms of the Sangre de Cristo Mountains like a pocket of jewels in the sunlight.

This is a unique and delightful place, created and existing solely for the purpose of furthering the Word of God. It could not be set in a more lovely location. Overlooking the encampment is Glorieta Baldy, a mammoth peak which rises over 10,000 feet to the north and west of Glorieta.

One day, in that long succession of pleasant days which made up our summer in the Pecos, we all scrambled into the Jeep and drove to the peak of Glorieta Baldy. Below us, the Baptist Assembly lay spread out in ordered, symbolic beauty — a place which has had much meaning to those who look to Jesus Christ as their eternal leader.

Pat, our oldest boy, had been going to a denominational school in Albuquerque, because of his inability to speak, hear, or see as well as other children his age. This had caused us all great worry and anguish, until we found Belvue Christian School, in Albu-

querque. Here, the teachers and authorities were truly sympathetic with Pat's small handicaps. They considered it, and rightly, an honest challenge to work with the talented boy.

This school is a Baptist organization, and we had a special fondness in our hearts for the kindness and understanding they had shown.

We had been to Glorieta before, but it was a favorite place for the children and on this particular summer day, I thought it was appropriate that we visit the Assembly again, and perhaps learn something more about it. We headed the Jeep down from Glorieta Baldy and parked in the grounds, lush with flowers.

It was lunch time and all of us were hungry, particularly the children, so before doing anything else, we headed for the dining hall, bought meal tickets, and ate a surprisingly hearty and tasty luncheon, considering the nominal price of the food.

"Now can we go through the gardens, Daddy?" Ruthie, with all her particular love of flowers, asked eagerly.

"Sure, honey . . . the gardens are really something to see."

And indeed they are. Our troop set out to explore Glorieta with great anticipation.

The grounds of Glorieta Baptist Assembly cover some 1,300 acres of piñon- and pine-covered hills, all rich and lovely with the handiwork of God's love. There are many ways Glorieta could be described and as I walked through its gardens I thought of it. God has created all the beauties that are in this world, but it is as if He lavished special care and affection on this green, mountainous spot, giving it a special tranquility and beauty for the Southern Baptists who were to come there specifically to worship Him.

The buildings themselves are constructed in native, territorial style, a repose for leading Baptist church members throughout the Southland. There are a number of dormitories for individual churches, and leading Baptists maintain summer homes at the assembly, where they come each year to refresh their souls.

It is fitting, somehow, that Glorieta was chosen as the place for the Assembly. There are so many places mentioned in the Bible where Jesus received His inspiration by going into the mountains. There is a lovely verse which goes: "And when He had sent the multitude away He went up into a mountain apart to pray, and when the evening was come He was there alone."

And again: "And when Jesus departed from hence and came nigh unto the sea of Galilee He went up into a mountain and sat down there. And great multitudes came unto Him, having with them those that were lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others and cast them down at Jesus' feet and He healed them."

And still again: "After six days Jesus taketh Peter, James, and John His brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart and was transfigured before them and His face did shine as the sun and His raiment was white as the light."

Somehow, hills and holiness seem to go together, and there are no prettier hills to be found than those around Glorieta.

After finishing our lunches, we drove around the grounds of the Assembly, admiring the beautiful buildings and landscaping. Holcomb Hall is a particularly lovely structure and here services are usually held.

Throughout Glorieta, chimes and bells tinkle in the air wherever you go, adding to the spiritual charm. And often a multitude of voices can be heard singing "Wherever He Leads I'll Go," as Southern Baptists gather together to sing in praise of God.

But the most beautiful feature of Glorieta is certainly the gardens. They are truly beautiful, and well worth a visit by anyone. We entered the garden area through a flagstone-covered stairway leading up the mountain toward fourteen acres of lush flowers planted in terraces. Each terraced level is, in effect, a separate garden of its own, with its own special meaning and theme. The different gardens are separated by low walls, filled with banks of vines, flowers, and shrubs. From the top of the gardens, a water-

fall cascades downward to a bubbling pool at the bottom, where a water garden has been built, gorgeous with water lilies and iris.

"Isn't it beautiful!" Ruthie said excitedly, as we began our tour of the terraced, intricately landscaped gardens.

There are a number of separate gardens at Glorieta, many of them with special names. There is the Children's Bible Garden, with over 100 varieties of day lilies; Memory Garden, through which Memory Lane wanders, surrounded by white snowballs with a foreground of pale blue iris; God's Garden, which is filled with flowers, shrubs and trees mentioned in the Bible.

When we arrived at God's Garden, little Brenda was quite excited. She had heard a great deal about Him at church, and she was anxious to meet Him in person and have a little chat. I tried to explain to her that He was there, all around her in spirit, but somehow this was not quite what she had expected.

There is the Garden of Gethsemane, which is a replica of the one in which Jesus prayed one decisive night. Here there are olive trees, which can stand more cold than many other varieties. Blue spruce, native to both the United States and Syria are there, and rosemary grows in masses along the ground. A huge rock stirs the imagination.

There are many others. Shakespeare's Garden is sown with seeds which were gathered at Stratford-on-Avon, the home of the great bard. Then there is the Music Garden and the Missionary Garden, both with flowers appropriate to the themes involved.

Glorieta Gardens are like some vast, outdoor cathedral, it seemed to us as we wandered through them. The great dome of the sky is an endless blue by day, scattered through with puffs of snowy cloud, and at night, a great arch of black velvet, pinpointed by the remote glimmer of stars.

From the cathedral, music echoes across the mountains and over the mesa below, and in this cathedral, the words of God are read from the ancient book which has so many settings in the great

outdoors. Some 6,000 seedling evergreens, in 27 varieties, were planted in Glorieta Gardens. Thousands of aspens — a variety of cottonwood tree — whisper in the mountain breezes, the leaves trembling at the slightest motion of air — hence the name "quaking aspen."

Our eyes were dazzled with the variety of flowers all around us. Geraniums, petunias, columbine, daisies, and iceland poppies were everywhere. But the different sorts of iris were perhaps the most astonishing. Glorieta has one of the five largest iris gardens in the entire world.

We had just finished our inspection of the fabulous gardens and were walking back past Holcomb Auditorium when the thrilling sound of a vast congregation joined together in song reached our ears. From inside the auditorium, the joyous and awesome notes of "Near to the Heart of God" came to us. We looked at one another and all nodded agreement, so we entered the auditorium and found seats at the extreme north wing of the building. The auditorium was nearly full. When the congregation had finished, a choir of 200 stood and sang and then, as it sat once again, the lovely bells chimed out in "More Love to Thee, Oh Christ." The deep voice of an organ accompanied the bells, and again the chorus of young people raised its voice in praise of God.

When the singing and music was done, a young man walked to the podium in silent dignity. He looked about him at the congregation for a moment, then began a prayer. From where we were sitting I could hear only two sentences. They were: "We thank Thee for Thy mountains, for they remind us of Thy omnipotence," and: "We thank Thee for Thy gardens, for they remind us of Thy care. . . ." He spoke on, in personal communion with his God, but his words had sent my thoughts away from the auditorium, out to the mountains and gardens nearby.

I turned and looked through one of the north windows toward Glorieta Baldy, serene and majestic in its robes of fir and pine,

rising in magnificent affirmation, like a tangible representative of God, there for all to see. Its beauty dominated the entire landscape to the north.

Breezes cooled by the soaring height of the mountain bathed the hall, as if from some celestial air conditioner, and even my coat felt comfortable on that July afternoon. Abruptly I was filled with a sense of well-being and of pleasure at being a part of the worshipping group here at Glorieta. Watching the majesty of the great mountain visible through the window, I thought of the words spoken by the young man at the podium . . . "We thank Thee for Thy mountains, for they remind us of Thy omnipotence." And I thought of my own particular feeling for the mountains of Pecos — how they seemed to bring me, personally, nearer to the Creator. I wondered how many of the more than 2,000 people present in the great hall fully realized the sacredness inherent in mountains, and their significance all through the very fabric of religion. I was sure, at least, that none of them knew what the Pecos mountains meant to one silent worshipper there in the building.

The service was completed and we left Holcomb Auditorium and returned to our Jeep, feeling as though we had been in a special, magical world of flowers, nature and beauty, truly close to God.

As we drove thoughtfully back toward our Pecos cabin, Ruthie expressed the only complaint any of us could find with the gardens.

"Daddy, I wish they'd let you pick the flowers. I wanted to get a bouquet for you and Mommy."



FUN IN THE EVENING

Mother's Day Off

ALL NIGHT, the rolling boom and grumble of thunder had kept the entire family in and out of fitful sleep. It was one of those rather unusual storms for the Pecos—a continuing downpour that was noisy enough to keep even the little girls from their usual deep slumber.

Sometime during the night, I was aware of a small, warm creature climbing in bed with Ruth and me.

"Which one is it?" I mumbled, not sure if I were awake or dreaming.

"Me, Daddy," Brenda's voice came sleepily. She snuggled in with us, secure, now that her mother and father surrounded her with adult warmth and safety.

It seemed only moments later when the bed springs quaked again, and another small visitor had joined us. "Ruthie?" I asked.

"It's me . . . Melinda," a weary little voice informed me. The bed was getting just a trifle crowded, and I began to feel like some forest beast, with all his clan nestling around him in the darkness of a cave.

Just before dawn, the picture was completed. Ruthie had awakened, found herself alone in the big bedroom, and promptly joined her sisters in our bed. That made five of us, and any hopes

of further sleep faded from my mind. The bed was a welter of little arms, legs, knees, and drowsy breathing.

I had managed to fall back into half slumber when Ruthie's voice pulled me awake again. "Look at her lick the salt!"

It was daylight now, early dawn, and the deer had come down to our salt lick for their morning refreshment. The girls were all bright-eyed and awake—watching the spectacle with great interest.

"Look how she wiggles her tail after she licks the salt!" Melinda cried.

"Sure," Brenda explained, condescendingly. "Didn't you know the salt tickles her, Linda? That's why she wags her tail!"

"How do you know that?" Melinda asked.

"I read it in a book."

"But you can't even read, Brenda," Melinda pointed out. This was true, of course, but Brenda was about to make some defense when Mother decided it was time to step in before the discussion turned to argument.

"Hush, hush, children," she said. "Watch the beautiful deer." Disagreement forgotten, the children did so.

Ruth brought two cups of coffee from the kitchen and all of us watched the animals for a time. Mother lay back in bed and stretched luxuriously. She yawned and wriggled. "Oh, this is such a lazy morning. This is one day when I don't feel like working at all."

Immediately, a conversation started up among the girls.

"Mommie works too hard," Melinda announced.

"Yes, yes!" the two other children agreed, suddenly full of compassion for their hardworking mother.

"Let's give her a day off," Ruthie suggested, full of excitement at the plan. The two other girls agreed at once.

"We'll do all the work today, Mommie," Brenda said.

"I think that's a very fine idea, girls," I told them. "Let's all give Mother a day off. How does that strike you, Ruth?"

"I think it's a wonderful idea," my wife announced. "And girls, you can start by bringing me another cup of coffee and the book I was reading in the living room."

The girls darted from the bed toward the kitchen, eager to begin Mother's special day.

"We don't want you to help either, Daddy," Melinda announced. "We're going to fix breakfast by ourselves."

"All right, kids, but when you're making your own, don't forget the oatmeal and fresh peaches!" I've always felt that a hearty breakfast, including oatmeal, is of considerable importance to the health of growing children.

Ruth and I stayed in bed for some time, until the sound of giggles from the kitchen became too pronounced for comfort.

"We'd better see what those monkeys are up to," Ruth said.

"You stay right there, honey," I told her. "I'll find out what's going on."

When I entered the kitchen, a somewhat surprising scene met my eyes. Brenda was cracking eggs on the surface of Pat's head, while the entire parcel of children watched, giggling wildly. Everything was going swimmingly until she cracked one too vehemently and raw egg spilled all over Pat, thus ending that particular game.

Noting my presence in the doorway, the children returned to the business of making breakfast, and I went back to reassure Ruth.

"Oh, was that all it was? Just Brenda cracking eggs on Pat's head?" Mother said, with the good-natured cynicism of mothers everywhere. "For a moment I thought they might be acting up!"

I went back to the kitchen, where the children were now eating their oatmeal and peaches. As I neared the doorway, I heard a conversation which made me pause. The boys had just asked Melinda a question, and she answered.

"Yes. Sure I love Mother, silly."

Ronnie was teasing his sister. "Well, how about Daddy?"

"Not very much," Melinda allowed, coolly.

"Why not? Why not very much? He's your own Daddy!"

"But he makes me eat oatmeal!" Melinda explained. This grave crime against her was certainly reason enough for a lack of filial love. The remark didn't bother me greatly. Only the day before I had taken her fishing, to her great delight, and she had cooed: "Daddy, I love you more than too much."

The next remark I overheard surprised me a little though. Pat had evidently thought over Melinda's complaint. "When I grow up and get married and Dad comes to visit me, I'm going to serve him nothing but oatmeal, every morning!" He said this as if he were pronouncing the worst doom of which he could think.

Mike entered the conversation. "Remember the morning Daddy had taken off his pajamas and I found them and we sneaked them away?"

There was universal merriment at this fond memory. "... and we all made him promise not to give us oatmeal that morning before we'd give his pajamas back," Ruthie giggled delightedly at the thought of this coup over the powers of authority.

I recalled the incident well. All the children had walked into my bedroom and, suppressing their laughter with vast effort, announced their ultimatum. No oatmeal or no pajamas. Recognizing blackmail when I saw it, I had quickly capitulated. That was one of their few oatmeal-less mornings.

The children's conversation drifted off to other topics. As Brenda took her first bite of peach, she announced: "OOOH! These peaches make frizzles go up and down my back."

"What are frizzles?" inquired Melinda.

Brenda considered for a moment. "Frizzles are those things that make your back tingle," she explained in a matter-of-fact voice. The explanation seemed clear to everyone but me.

The children had taken Mother's breakfast in to her, and when they had finished their own, they disappeared as if by magic.

Mother entered the kitchen, carrying her dishes, and looked around at the chaos, sighing slightly. She immediately began to clean up, while I had my own breakfast.

Just as Ruth was finishing the last dish, there was a knock at the door and my old friend, and former construction boss, Chris Rivera arrived. The call was strictly social. As Ruth bustled about the kitchen, doing those tidying things women do in kitchens, Chris and I sat at the table drinking coffee, which is what men primarily do in kitchens.

"Whatever happened to Rueben?" I asked Chris. Rueben had been one of the local workmen Chris had hired to help repair our cabin.

"He does nothing," Chris announced, disapprovingly.

"How does he live? Is he on relief?"

"No, his wife is a school teacher," Chris informed me.

Our conversation ambled on over the coffee. "Say, what about Roberto, the plumber? What is he up to these days?"

"Roberto does nothing," Chris said.

"How come?"

"His wife is teaching school, too."

The two of us looked at each other thoughtfully, then Chris' big, good humored face opened into a smile. "Better we had both married school teachers, Calvin," he said, as we sat there at the table while my wife worked diligently.

Ruth sniffed audibly, hiding a grin. "It occurs to me, Chris, that your wife and I could have done better, too." All three of us roared with laughter.

Presently Chris went on his way, mumbling about some undefined business he had to attend to, while Ruth continued cleaning the house. The front doorbell rang and I went to see who it was. Mrs. Bart Kinney stood there holding the hand of her red-headed four-year-old son, Bartley. The child's finger was bleeding profusely.

"Oh, Calvin, just look at what he's done!" Mrs. Kinney said, quite naturally upset. The little boy had managed to stick a fish hook deep into the finger. "Do you think Ruth could get it out for us?"

The freckle-faced child, although a little white, was not crying. He bit his lower lip gamely.

I looked at the barb deeply buried in his small finger and felt totally inadequate.

Ruth examined his finger and nodded briskly. "We'll get that right out, Bartley," she said. She went to the back room and returned with a pair of pliers.

"This is going to hurt, but just for a minute. Will you be a brave boy?"

Bartley looked at Ruth with complete trust. He nodded, and Ruth quickly and deftly yanked the buried hook from the boy's finger. It was all over in a moment. She put on disinfectant and bandaged the finger.

As Mrs. Kinney was leaving, she turned to me gratefully and said: "It certainly is a lucky thing for us that your wife is a nurse!"

I was so surprised at this assumption that I forgot to tell her that Ruth is many things, but a professional nurse is not one of them. Although, come to think of it, if you raise seven children as she is doing, you probably become a nurse for all practical purposes.

The day wound on, while Mother, having cleaned up the kitchen and performed an emergency operation, was now briskly making the beds and cleaning the rest of the house. Just then the girls appeared on the scene again.

"This is your day off, Mommie," Melinda announced firmly. "So we're going to take you on a picnic."

Ruth glanced around her at the many chores she felt she had to do, then smiled with sudden fondness at her eager little daughters. "All right, dears. Where shall we go?"

"Willow Creek," Ruthie said. "And you can fish all you want. We'll keep on doing all the work."

Ruth glanced at me wearily, and preparations were begun. They were rather simple. We packed a chicken (which Ruth had cooked previously) and little Ruthie managed to boil some eggs without utterly destroying the kitchen. We added potato chips and cold pop, and we were ready to go.

Everybody piled into the cantankerous Jeep and we were rolling unevenly down Holy Ghost Canyon, across the Pecos, waving at Happy as we trundled past his store. We turned up the Willow Creek road, past a large slag pile, left over from the mining days. "That's my sandpile," Brenda was heard to remark.

"Mine, too," Melinda decided.

We stopped twice along the way to allow Mother to try her luck fishing at likely looking spots along Willow Creek, but nothing seemed to be biting. We drove on until we came to a huge, lovely meadow. Here, a beautiful open valley exists where two small streams join to form Willow Creek. It was lovely, but exceedingly wet. Rain had begun to drop in torrents.

The children and I sat in the Jeep and ate our lunch, but Mother had come to fish and fish she was going to. Dressed in furlined boots, fishing jacket, a raincoat and rainhat, she was out in the downpour fishing the small streams.

Something about the beauty of the place and the suddenly cool, rain-washed air made all our appetites excellent. We devoured the chicken and Brenda gobbled down the boiled eggs, an unusual occurrence.

As is the way with rainstorms in the Pecos, this one soon ceased, leaving brilliant blue sky above us. The three little girls leaped from the Jeep and were soon playing like puppies in the damp meadow. Brenda, forgetting that the ground would be thoroughly drenched from the recent rain, went running along at top speed, and in moments she was bogged down in black, sucking mud

clear up to the tops of her boots. Suddenly dismayed, she shrieked for help. I smiled, knowing there was no possible danger to her in that soft, green meadow. Little Melinda rushed to her rescue and Brenda stepped entirely out of her boots, then lost her stockings to the grasping hand of the thick mud. By this time the entire situation had become too much for her; she began wailing and screaming. Suddenly motherly, Melinda attempted to pick up her little sister. The effort was a doomed one — both children reeled together unsteadily for a moment, then went head first into the mud.

I could see that by now the situation required a little adult intervention, so I hauled them in my arms over to the car. It was necessary to strip Brenda clear down to her underthings, since her sweatshirt, shirt, and trousers were unrecognizable with a solid coating of mud. I tossed the soggy garments in the back of the Jeep, where Lassie eyed them with distaste, and turned on the heater, full blast. For once it decided to cooperate, and soon the two little bedraggled girls were giggling gleefully at their great, if wet, adventure.

Little Ruthie and big Ruth were not far off, both of them fishing with great determination. Sitting in the Jeep, we heard a cry of exultation; Ruthie had pulled a fat trout from the stream.

"Let me see! Let me go see it, Daddy!" Brenda pleaded, oblivious of her stripped-down condition. Since she had neither shoes nor stockings on, I lifted her in my arms and carried her to the stream to see Ruthie's fish. Melinda, still the possessor of shoes and stockings, walked along with us.

"Isn't he a good one?" Ruthie asked as we arrived. She held up a fine rainbow for our inspection and praise, duly given.

Suddenly a curious thing occurred. I was standing beneath a huge pine tree when all at once I had the distinct impression that some unkind soul was throwing rocks at us. Round, hard objects began to pelt around us as I held Brenda in my arms and Melinda

stood nearby. The rock-like pellets were the size of golf balls, and it was a moment or so before I realized they were actually huge lumps of hail — among the biggest I've ever seen in the Pecos, or anywhere else, for that matter.

In my surprise and concern for little Brenda in my arms, I completely forgot about Melinda, and raced for the Jeep a few hundred feet away.

The hail storm was just beginning, and Brenda and I managed to make it to the safety of the Jeep without being hit. Poor Melinda didn't fare so well. She, too, made a run for the Jeep, and just as Brenda and I arrived I saw Melinda racing after us. Then her face twisted in pain as one of the big hailstones made a direct hit on her shoulder. It was the only one which struck her, but when she stumbled into the sanctuary of the Jeep she was crying bitterly. An ugly welt raised on her shoulder, turning blue in minutes.

Just then Mother arrived and took matters in hand. She comforted and cooed to Melinda, while the child's sobs slowly subsided.

"Poor baby — first falling in the mud and then hit by a terrible hailstone! Calvin, let's take these little things home. They've had enough for one day."

We started off while the hailstones continued to fall, harder and harder. They were the size of golf balls, and they hammered needles and even branches from the pine trees around us.

"There was a rock inside that hail that hit me," Melinda announced, her snuffles subsiding. She began to be rather proud of her distinction as the only one in the family who had been wounded by the storm.

Driving down the somewhat circuitous road, I noticed that the brake pedal on the Jeep was behaving in an unpleasant fashion. It had to be vigorously pumped to have any effect at all.

"Are the brakes always this way, Mother?" I asked Ruth.

"Why, yes, Calvin," she calmly answered. "I always pump the brake pedal a little. It's perfectly all right." Then she looked at me accusingly. "I wish you'd stop saying unkind things about my Jeep."

The Jeep and I mistrusted each other with a deep, basic, mutual dislike. It disgusted me by its orneriness and when driving it, I always felt a distinct sensation of fear. Normally I'm willing to accept the premise that inanimate objects cannot be actively malicious. But that Jeep was a different matter. Of all the Horn possessions, whether animate or mere objects, the Jeep behaved most badly — at least when I was in the driver's seat. Sometimes I could have sworn that it felt a kind of metallic affection for Ruth. As soon as she took the wheel it seemed to purr.

We arrived back at the main Pecos road, still all in one piece, and I breathed a sigh of relief. But then, as we rolled down a rather steep hill, I pumped at the brakes to slow us to a reasonable speed. Nothing happened! It was like putting in the clutch. The last remnant of brakes had departed, with an almost willful spite, just at the worst possible time.

A thrill of horror ran through me as I thought of the children trapped in the speeding vehicle with me as we picked up speed dangerously, whizzing down the incline of the rutted dirt road. Headlines flashed across my mind. "Entire Family Wiped Out As Brakes Fail. . . ."

I swung the rapidly accelerating Jeep sharply to the left and rammed roughly into the far ditch. Finally, the Jeep groaned to a stop, foiled in its diabolical plan. We limped the rest of the way home in low gear, using four wheel drive. If the experience wasn't bad enough in itself, Ruth looked at me accusingly all the rest of the way. Her implication was obvious; somehow it was all my fault. I just didn't treat the Jeep with the proper affection. I simply didn't know how to handle it. I restrained the remarks which came to mind as I nursed the rickety creature — I had ceased to

think of it as a machine by then — the rest of the way home. As we rolled to a stop before the cabin, a curious sound filled our ears. None of us could identify it or recognize it as any of the familiar forest noises we had grown to know.

"What in the world could that be?" Ruth said. The sound was harsh and metallic, like a gigantic, angry bumble bee. We jumped out of the Jeep to investigate. In the meadow across from our cabin, a group of khaki clad workmen was industriously sawing down dead trees, using gasoline powered hand saws.

The boys, full of curiosity, were across the meadow in no time at all, like inquisitive puppies. Mike was the first to report back to us.

"They're Forest Service men, Dad," he told me. "They have a program where they cut down dead trees so they won't fall on people fishing along the stream."

It seemed like a worthy pursuit. That afternoon, the primary consideration around our house was watching the Forest Service men felling trees in the vicinity. After sawing down six or eight large trees near our cabin, the men proceeded to cut the downed trees into lengths of three or four feet, then stacked them in neat piles.

"What are you going to do with all those fireplace logs?" Pat asked them.

"Anybody who can use them is welcome to 'um," Pat was told. He gave an enthusiastic whoop and ran back to the rest of us with the news, as the Forest Service truck pulled away. That was the beginning of a new pastime for the Horn family. We all spent the rest of the afternoon carrying, splitting, and stacking logs for firewood, using an elderly wheelbarrow to tote the wood to our cabin. When we encountered a log too large for the wheelbarrow, we laboriously rolled it over the meadow to the house — a game which the little girls seemed to particularly enjoy.

After we showed the children the proper procedure for sawing

and splitting logs — well, let's be truthful — after Ruth showed all of us how it was done — the activity became great sport for all of us. Fierce, though good-natured, competition soon arose as to who could split a log in the shortest length of time, hammering a winch into the wood until it separated. The boys, it developed, averaged 30 to 40 seconds for the task, whereas Mother got her time down to below the 30-second mark within an hour.

Later that afternoon, Ruth was vainly trying to better her log splitting time, swinging her axe like a female Paul Bunyan, red-faced with effort, perspiring heavily from the hard physical work. She had put on a pair of faded Levis several sizes too small for her, held together in a tenuous fashion by a bit of string.

It was at this point that a car with Washington, D. C., license plates pulled into the yard.

The occupants were old friends of ours — one of the most important men on Capitol Hill and his wife. They were in New Mexico on a brief vacation, staying at Tres Lagunas Lodge a few miles down the road.

Ruth threw me a glance of mixed dismay and embarrassment, then resignation. She glanced down at her unsocial appearance, then, wistfully, at the house. Retreat was useless. She shrugged and smiled at our guests, who smiled back, giving the impression that log splitting was the most normal thing in the world for a little lady to be doing on a Pecos afternoon. They managed also, with innate good manners, to get across the notion that too-tight Levis held together with string, are exactly the proper attire when meeting famous political figures.

We were chatting with our guests when Ruthie bounded into the living room.

"It's your day off, Mommy, so I'm going to bake us a cherry pie!" she announced. Introductions were made, but the child was far too concerned with her project to pay much note to the eminent guests. She was off to the freshly cleaned kitchen, somewhat to

Ruth's dismay. We had brought a batch of fresh cherries from our tree in Albuquerque.

In due time, our friends took their leave and it was only moments later that Ruthie appeared from the kitchen, wailing for some almond extract. She positively couldn't finish her pie without it.

"Please Daddy, take me down to Happy's store so we can buy a bottle. It's for Mommie, after all."

I glanced at Ruth, who shrugged resignedly. "OK, honey," I said to our daughter. Off we went in the wretched Jeep, headed for Happy's.

We had driven perhaps half a mile when Ruthie shouted in delight. "Look, Daddy, it's Coral!" Coral was a school friend of Ruthie's, and she and her parents were fishing in Holy Ghost.

"Hi, Coral!" Ruthie shouted. "Daddy, stop the car and let me out. I want to play with Coral."

"But, baby," I said, slowing the Jeep. "What about the almond extract? What about the cherry pie?"

"You get it for me, Daddy, please? I'll just play with Coral a little while."

She turned all her youthful, feminine wiles on me and I knew I was helpless. I let her out of the Jeep and proceeded to Happy's, where I dutifully bought the extract. When I returned home, minus Ruthie, Mother took it with resignation. She muttered something about giving Mother a day off, and went to the kitchen to finish the pie. "The next time that girl offers to make me a pie I'll know what to say," she remarked, as she took over the completion of Ruthie's project.

Ruth had just put the pie in the oven and told the little girls to wash at least the surface accumulation of Willow Creek mud from their faces when, as happened with depressing frequency, the lights failed.

Ruth and I had managed to assume a philosophical attitude to-

ward power failures by then — they occurred almost everytime it rained. But you never could be sure. One day, in clear, bright sunshine, the electricity simply faded away.

"Why did the lights go out when it isn't even cloudy?" Brenda wanted to know. None of us knew the answer.

This situation created a problem. Anyone who has had any young children will understand that making them remember to flush the toilet is nearly as hard as housebreaking a pet. And, of course, as soon as the power failed, Melinda felt the need to avail herself of the bathroom. Let me simply say that we have an electric water pump.

"Now, remember not to flush the toilet," I told her — just the reverse of our usual instructions. And, naturally, two minutes later we were appalled at the sound of Melinda flushing the toilet — one of the few times in her young life when she had remembered that this was the proper, adult thing to do.

Luckily, the lights came on immediately, saving the day for all concerned. Childhood logic is irrefutable, if sometimes a bit confused. Melinda was firmly convinced that the way to get the electricity back was simple — just flush the toilet.

Meanwhile, the activities of the day continued, most of them revolving around Mother. She cooked the dinner and cleared up the dishes, then bathed the three babies with bubble bath and somewhat weary affection, letting them crawl up on the wash basin to brush their teeth. We all relaxed before a blazing fire as twilight sifted over Holy Ghost.

Melinda was obviously proud and a little self-righteous about her part in giving Mother such a glorious day.

"But really," she pondered, "I like birthdays better than days off for Mother."

"Why is that, honey?"

"Well, on birthdays we get a great big cake. It's not like on

Mother's days. I remember the last Mother's Day, you gave Mommie a big box of tools."

I avoided Ruth's eyes, wishing Melinda had not found it necessary to bring up that particular memory just then. I had, indeed, bought a massive tool set for Ruth on the previous Mother's Day — the best that money could buy. I had been quite proud of the gift at the time. After all, she did most of the repairing and home improvement that was done around the cabin. I had naively assumed the present would be just what a cultured lady would want.

"Yes, indeed," Ruth said, dryly. "That was certainly a thoughtful gift. I expect I'm the only mother in New Mexico, not to say the entire country, who was lucky enough to get a complete set of tools for Mother's Day. I can't imagine why I deserved such a treat."

I cleared my throat and spoke of other matters. Home repairs, as well as the handling of obstreperous Jeeps, are just not my forte.

From the playroom, like a reprieve from the governor, came the melodious sounds of Pat playing "You Are My Sunshine" on the battered piano we keep there for him. The little girls heard their favorite song being played and rushed into the room to sing. Lottie and Mike relaxed on the floor with a game of cards; Ronnie sat in an easy chair, absorbed in a book. Collapsed on the couch, Mother turned her head and smiled at me with a mixture of exhaustion and affection.

"Calvin?" she said.

"Yes, honey?"

"I'm not a teen-ager anymore. Another day off like this and I'll collapse with nervous exhaustion!"

Seton Village

NOT FAR FROM OUR PECOS RETREAT, there stands a curious monument to a great man, and one of the most important naturalists of all time. The monument is Seton Village, and the man, of course, is Ernest Thompson Seton.

Ruthie was reading *Wild Animals I Have Known*, and Ronnie was reading *Two Little Savages* that summer. Both were deeply captivated by Seton's wonderful knowledge and understanding of wildlife.

"When are we going to visit Seton Village?" Ronnie would chime out whenever we drove past the entranceway to the road on our way to or from Albuquerque. For months, however, our schedule simply seemed too tight to make the detour off Highway 85, back to the remarkable little village Mr. and Mrs. Seton had built there in the rolling hills.

"Next time, children," I would tell them, always meaning the promise but somehow, always too rushed to follow through.

But children, or at least mine, can be the most persistent creatures on earth, once they have set their minds to a project. And so it was that one brilliant blue day, I found myself loading the entire family into the Jeep, headed for Seton Village, and we were off on another jaunt around the Pecos country. I didn't really

mind. I'd been wanting to see the village, and perhaps meet Mrs. Seton, for quite awhile myself!

I knew a little about Seton Village even before our trip there. I was aware that the famous artist and naturalist had founded and built — mostly by hand — the village some 30 years before, and that his widow, Mrs. Julia M. Seton, had continued the development of this last joint venture of theirs since his death in 1946.

Mike and Pat chattered in great excitement as we turned off the highway and bumped along a dirt road for some small distance, under the identifying archway which led us off U.S. 85. We drove along the winding road until, looming up before us, we caught sight of the 45-room "Castle" which was Seton's home.

Surrounding the edifice was a vast and lovely panorama of western landscape. The rolling plains melted away into swimming blue mountains, rising from every horizon like great sculptures. I could imagine the joy Seton must have felt, living out his last, rich years in this gigantic world of nature.

We pulled up before the house itself, and looked around us. Nearby, smaller dwellings, all of adobe, formed the actual village. But Seton's home was the impressive sight. I was a little awed by the grandeur of the place and the fame of its builders, but we went to the door and knocked even so. Just as we reached the entranceway, a tremendous deluge, which had been threatening for the last few minutes, came thundering down on our heads. I rang the doorbell and hammered at the wood, while all of us were soaked to the skin in seconds. It was a typical mountain rainstorm — the kind that comes along only in New Mexico.

There was no answer to my ringing and pounding, and all of us were drenched. Finally, in despair, I gathered my courage together and turned the doorknob. We all stepped into the house, shaking with cold and dripping like sieves — nearly into the arms of the extremely gracious lady who had come to answer our summons. It was Mrs. Seton herself.

"You'll have to excuse our barging in. . . ." I began, apologetically, but Mrs. Seton was all smiles and concern. "Oh, I'm so sorry to have kept you waiting out there in the rain," she said.

"Come in and dry yourselves off for a moment or two then I'll be happy to take you on a tour of the castle."

I explained to her that the children were reading her late husband's books, and that I had always been one of his admirers, and her reception could scarcely have been more cordial.

When we were dry enough to walk without leaving trails of water behind us, the tour began. It was a wonderful experience, nearly as much so for me as for the children. On the walls of every room hung the fantastically faithful and detailed nature paintings of Ernest Seton, and I began to understand why he was known as perhaps the greatest wildlife painter who ever lived. The originals of some of the illustrations from *Two Little Savages* were there, much to Ronnie's delight, and in one room of the house, a portrait of Seton himself hung on the wall. It showed us the image of a very vital and alive man, even though it had been completed only a month or so before his death. Beneath black wavy hair piercing hazel eyes looked out at us from the canvas. A black moustache curled above a mouth that was strong and gentle, and the entire face of the man gave an impression of alert and kindly interest. We almost felt his presence as we looked at the portrait.

The Seton house itself is worth considerable comment. Within its pueblo-style walls are housed a library of 70,000 volumes, a museum, a natural history collection unmatched in this section of the country, and many other living reminders of the man's life and career. There are some 3,000 mammal skins alone in the natural history collection, some dating back to as early as 1880. In one room, some 50 volumes of Seton's daily journal are preserved — a journal he kept from 1879 until twelve days before his death in 1946. Hand-written and illustrated by the famous man, these

evidences of his life and work gave us a still stronger sense of his presence.

Several other guests arrived as we finished our tour of the castle. We all settled down in comfortable chairs in the main drawing room, and Mrs. Seton began telling us of her late husband — "Chief" — as she always called him.

"You may have noticed the large painting on the wall over there," she said. We had, of course, and I thought I knew which one it was.

"Perhaps that was his most famous oil," Mrs. Seton said. "It hung at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893."

The canvas depicted an actual incident in which a wolf hunter, who had spent his life hunting down and killing the animals, was himself killed by a wolf. An interesting aspect of his work is that Seton used a number of actual props, as well as paint, to capture the scene. Peasant clothing, human blood, and other realistic elements were utilized in the painting.

"The work was done in the forest of St. Cloud, outside Paris," Mrs. Seton told us. "Somehow the police got wind of the project, and when they burst in on him and found the human blood, the clothing and the remains . . . well, of course they were sure that murder had been committed."

Seton was dragged before a magistrate, and it took a good deal of talking and explanation to convince the worthy French police that Seton was merely doing a particularly realistic painting — not hiding some horrible crime of violence.

We all looked at the painting again as Mrs. Seton spoke. The expression on the faces of the slaving wolves, who had just done away with their old enemy, was one of gleeful satisfaction. At the time, I wondered whether the naturalist had intended to portray them as villains or heroes; later I learned that he was always on the side of the wild creatures, particularly wolves.

"He lived with the Indians so much that they gave him a special Indian name," Mrs. Seton spoke on. "It was Chief Black Wolf. He thought like a wolf. In many ways, he learned to move and think like a wolf."

Ernest Seton did a number of important things in his life. One of them was helping organize the Boy Scouts in England. He became, of course, the Chief Scout of the entire organization.

"That was one reason I called him 'Chief,'" Mrs. Seton said. Her eyes turned gentle and misty. "He doesn't seem far away. I feel he knows we're here, all of us, this morning. I think he's glad. . . ."

Turning suddenly brisk, Mrs. Seton directed her attention to the children, who had been taking it all in with huge-eyed fascination.

"Would you like to hear one of Chief's stories? Which one would you like?"

Speaking up in a voice of smothered respect, Ruthie said: "Please, I'd like to hear the story of Lobo."

All of us sat entranced as the grand lady told us the famous story.

Ernest Seton was studying art in Paris, it seemed, when he met a gentleman who was the owner of a ranch in far-off Clayton, New Mexico. There on his vast acres a band of wolves made their home, and for the past five years the wolves had killed at least one cow a night. Leading the pack was a huge and immensely clever wolf, who had avoided capture and taken care of his followers for all those years.

As the displaced rancher sat with "Chief" one evening, speaking of the great wolf all those miles and watery leagues away, Seton calmly announced: "I think I could capture that wolf. I'd like to try."

The rancher was properly skeptical. "How long do you think it would take you?"

"Two or three days, probably. Maybe even two or three weeks."

As it turned out, five months were necessary to take the crafty animal, when Seton finally went after him. It took twenty men, 130 steel traps, and all of Seton's skill to catch "Lobo" as he named the wolf once the great hunt was begun. The animal stood three feet high and weighed 150 pounds — and his cleverness nearly matched that of his pursuers.

"Chief loved that wolf before it was over," Mrs. Seton said. "He loved and respected him. Lobo guarded his pack like a father. He could sense a trap ten feet away!"

The little lady with sharp, keen eyes, delicate in a black embroidered pink dress, spoke of Lobo now with the same sort of admiration and love her husband must have felt.

"It began to seem that no one could ever catch him," she said. "He always led the pack, far out in front, making sure that all was well for his followers. Then, one day, Chief noticed a smaller footprint running slightly ahead of Lobo's. There was only one answer to this riddle. Lobo had found a mate.

"Sure enough, it was so. We named the great wolf's mate 'Blanca,' being a white wolf, and we knew that this was to be Lobo's downfall. How sad. . . ." Mrs. Seton's voice trailed off for a moment, and then she picked up the thread of her story. The children, as well as Ruth and myself, were spellbound.

"His downfall," Mrs. Seton repeated. "They caught Blanca, and put her scent directly by one of the traps. Poor old Lobo followed the scent and was caught."

Mrs. Seton motioned to the wall where a great, grey hide was preserved. It was Lobo's. Beneath it was the torn lasso Seton had tried to use on his dear friend and enemy. It was torn apart from the fierce teeth of the beast.

"They finally got him tied and brought him home without a single broken bone," she continued. "They strapped him and bound him and brought him back; then they staked him out in the

pasture. All that night, he howled and called to his pack, calling for help — for the first time in his life. But none of them came. In the morning he was dead."

Mrs. Seton paused in her narrative, smiling rather sadly. "What would you do? His mate was gone, his wild life was gone, and most important of all . . . his freedom was gone. There was nothing wrong with him physically. It was just that his fierce, old heart would not accept the loss of freedom."

We were all still for a moment, and then Ronnie spoke. "Were all his stories true ones, Mrs. Seton?"

"Oh, yes," she said, "although sometimes a lot of true events were combined to make one full story."

"There was something about Chief which is hard to put into words," she added. "He didn't have a wrinkle in his face or in his mind."

I was deeply touched by this simple statement of love. I looked at Ruth and she smiled back. I would feel myself a successful man if, after I am gone, someone would feel this about me.

Driving back along our own familiar road toward home in the Pecos, I thought again about Lobo, that tough old warrior. He had died rather than give up his freedom. That spirit seemed appropriate for New Mexico, somehow.



FISHING AT JOHNSON LAKE

Family Pack Trip

"THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY you could get this entire family into the wilderness . . . you'd have to take our pediatrician with us!" These had been Ruth's words after our last journey into the high country which had included the older children, but excluded Brenda and Melinda. We felt they were too young for such a venture.

But here we all were at last, a party of twelve this time, which included the two young girls and Mother, riding our horses up the Holy Ghost Canyon, headed into the Wilderness Area. With us were Happy and our family pediatrician, Dr. Charles Fishback, and his wife Katherine. Dr. and Mrs. Fishback are remarkable people; he has managed to combine a most successful medical practice, connected with the Lovelace Clinic in Albuquerque, and, with his wife, a large and thriving dancing academy, the Fishback School of the Dance, in New Mexico's largest city. Katherine Fishback is the directress there while the good doctor carries on his practice, but there, in the dancing school, is where his heart lies and where many of his evenings are spent.

At any rate, Mother's condition had been fulfilled, and we were taking the little ones up into the rugged woods with the protection of their doctor.

I rode along at the head of the procession, thinking of all the elaborate preparations which had gone into this adventure, and smiled inwardly at the memory of Ruth's determination to spare no expense or effort to be sure that her family would be comfortable in the wilderness. On our earlier trip we had placed all of our provisions for the entire company on the back of one pack animal — now we were hard put to find sufficient room on the backs of three horses for all our food and equipment.

Our pack trip included all the essentials in addition to the luxuries. For our first evening meal, as an example, we dined on T-bone steaks, corn on the cob, potatoes, milk, coffee and sweet well water. This repast was prepared on a two-burner stove and a grill for the steaks, with charcoal lighting fluid, gasoline and kerosene as fuel. Daniel Boone would have been dumbfounded. We even had dry ice along, to keep the steaks frozen until needed. We also had bread and cinnamon as well as butter, since this was a dish the younger children favored.

The food provided for the rest of our meals was of a similar caliber — full course meals for everyone — and we were, in fact, living in a manner any first class hotel would have been proud to advertise.

Melinda said it to perfection: "We brought all the comforts along with us, didn't we, Daddy?"

Aside from the food, our tents, clothing, and other items were all calculated to make us as comfortable in the wild woods as we might have been at home. As far as I could tell, there was no way Ruth could really worry about Brenda and Melinda under such conditions.

It was apparent from the start, though, that the two little girls were absolutely determined to prove their fitness for such a trip into the wilds. They had been unhappy and quite upset at having been left out of the last one — now they were going to show their Mother and Father that they were more than capable of being a

part of such a venture. The two small ones started taking over from the beginning of the trip.

"Here's the plan," I had told the family the day before we left. "We want to leave the campgrounds at the head of Holy Ghost Canyon by eight-thirty in the morning. In order to make it, we'll all go over to Happy's and pick out our horses and have our saddles fitted this afternoon."

We had done just this, and Happy had tagged each saddle with the name of the horse and rider. We were fully prepared.

Everyone went to bed early that night, at the firm insistence of Mother. "This will probably be the last night's good rest we get until the trip's over," she remarked, fatalistically, "So we all had better make the most of it."

In the chilly stillness of five o'clock the next morning, we were all up and about. I told the boys to head on down to Happy's and get the horses.

"Melinda and I are going, too, Daddy," I was informed by Brenda. Her little jaw was set and Melinda showed the same determination. I saw their intent at that moment; they were going to prove their equality and stamina for such a journey no matter what it involved. Off they went.

We adults finished the packing while the children were bringing the horses up the canyon. Sticker Thorne had been alerted to follow the horses to our cabin, where he would transport us, in the old Jeep, to our take-off point at the edge of the wilderness.

While the children were doing their chores with the horses, all the adults worked with considerable effort, stuffing into each sleeping bag not only pajamas, but also an entire change of clothing, in case the weather was as rainy as it had been last time. Included were four changes of stockings for each of the children, and air mattresses either inside the sleeping bags or rolled around them.

It was roughly eight-thirty when the horses and the children ambled up the canyon to our place. Sticker arrived on schedule, a

trifle red-faced and irritated, since I had told him to expect the horses at seven-thirty. He had made the trip to Happy's twice to discover the reason for the delay.

We loaded the pack bags in the back of the Jeep, as well as the sleeping bags, two tents, and fishing gear.

We beat the equestrians to our take-off point. The Jeep was soon unloaded and we waited for the riders to appear. When they showed up, our final preparation began.

"Oh! I've left my sunglasses at the cabin!" Ruth suddenly announced. "I'll be lost without them, Calvin."

"I'll go back in the Jeep and search the cabin for them," Sticker offered. He was just out of sight, heading back down trail in the Jeep, when Mother discovered her glasses were in one of her pockets after all. I went thundering off on my horse and brought Sticker back.

Happy and the children were working hard at getting our provisions on the pack horses and Mother was tying saddle bags to my horse, Big Dolly, when our first disaster occurred. Big Dolly, whose size fitted her name, inadvertently stepped on Ruth's foot, which brought the first frantic call for Dr. Fishback's assistance.

"Nothing broken, Ruth, but you'll have a painful bruise there," he told her. We all agreed to be extremely careful for the duration of the trip.

Finally it was time to mount. I decided to give Brenda and Melinda a hand, even though they were so determined to show us they could do anything the rest of the family could do. Before I could get to her, Brenda had managed to make the ascent on her horse, Peanuts, and I was about to walk away when I felt a stabbing pain in my backside; the animal had bitten me viciously.

Dr. Fishback took me, limping, behind a tree and examined the wound.

"Just a peanut bite, Calvin," he grinningly reassured me. He approached his wife, Katherine, and remarked: "Honey, I won-

der if one doctor is sufficient . . . the trip hasn't even started and we've had two casualties already!"

But now, here we were underway at last, winding up, up toward the wilderness, even though it was after eleven o'clock. I was feeling very good as I looked about me. The sky was blue, the mountains hovered around us in all their glory, and the warm sun caressed my back. The mountains around us were as perfectly groomed in their robes of trees and flowers as any queens of old. All was harmony in the scene; little springs bubbled across the trail and the Holy Ghost Stream, not so large now, was speaking up cheerfully, trying to get a little attention.

"Would you check my saddle, please, Daddy?" Ruthie asked. I slid from Big Dolly's back and checked the child's saddle, and as I walked back to my horse, I noticed a lovely black and white butterfly resting on a pale blue wild delphinium. I carefully lifted it up with my fingers over its graceful wings.

"Oh, give it to me, Daddy. Please!" Melinda pleaded. I did so, and Melinda, that great lover of all things living, had a heart-to-heart talk with the butterfly. "Now you must be more careful," she scolded, "some wild animal might catch you and eat you. See how easily Daddy caught you? I'm going to let you go now, but you be more careful next time!" With this motherly reprimand, she released the butterfly.

Presently Brenda pressed her horse, Daisy Mae, close to the front of the riders. "Let me lead, Daddy," she said and smiling a little, I did so. Brenda was now head of our party. Reaching a meadow clearing, the child urged her horse into a quick trot, and to keep up, I put Big Dolly into a trot also. The two of us had soon left the rest of our party far behind.

I have been aware of beauty many times, in many different sorts of ways. It can appear almost anywhere, that rare and wonderful quality — at almost any odd moment of time — but in the Pecos it's all around you. I have seen it in the quick, heart-breaking, in-

nocent smile of Ruthie's, in the sudden glint of a tear in Melinda's eyes, in the flush of joy in Ruth's face as she held up a string of fat trout. And this morning, as I watched little Brenda and Melinda taking charge of the family pack trip, full of grave delight, I felt it all round us in the closeness of our family.

Brenda and I raced through the meadow, through the glorious mountain country, and I felt myself, once again, a tiny part of the pines, the stream, even the breeze that tautened my shirt and the clouds that puffed above me.

The game done, Brenda and I brought our horses back to a walk. Around us there was nothing but the loveliness of nature. Sunlight dappled the aspens and the air was so still that even these had ceased their quaking on that golden morning. Above our heads, clouds jostled each other, vying for attention — big, white, fluffy things with no rain in them. Ferns covered the ground through which we passed, jutting up to twelve or fifteen inches in height, and scrub oak grew along the trail. From time to time, Big Dolly would snatch a bite of the oak as she walked along, munching contentedly as if she were enjoying the stroll as much as her rider.

After a time, we came to another high meadow — this one dressed in a coat of solid clover which dominated all other plant life in the area. Though it has no name, it should be called Clover Meadow, it seemed to me.

Ahead of us, a grey squirrel shrilled a warning to his animal neighbors; strangers coming, beware of the intruders. They had nothing to fear from us.

Presently we reached a lookout point on the trail. It was the identical spot where we had paused on our hike, weeks ago. Here Brenda and I paused to rest our horses and await the arrival of the rest of our party. I sat quietly, listening to the sound of the wind caressing the aspen leaves around us. They fluttered coyly, with a sound of distant, rattling paper or the excited whisper of

young lovers. Above us the sky was still and pale blue and the white powder puffs of clouds moved gaily about.

The rest of our expedition arrived in a few minutes and we proceeded to climb the trail with Brenda still in the lead.

It was a little after one when we reached Stewart Lake. It was time for a lunch break and we all enjoyed our sandwiches with the greatest appetites, mountain air and exercise being the gastric stimulants they are. It was good, too, being out of the saddle for a time. Our horses took up restful, patient stances, nibbling at the grass and clover at their feet.

"Look, darling," Dr. Fishback said to his wife, "that must be Cecchetti fifth position." He indicated the graceful stance of the horses. Katherine laughed. "Why, so it is. How did they learn it without attending our school?"

A dedicated man of medicine, Dr. Fishback still thought in terms of dancing, whenever the opportunity permitted.

Stewart Lake sparkled and gleamed in the clean mountain sunlight with high good humor. Named for Tom Stewart, an early ranger on the Pecos forest and later forest supervisor, the lake had been deepened thirty years ago by extending the height of the dam.

Lunch completed, we continued our climb into the soaring mountains of the wilderness.

"Look! Look! A beautiful doe!" Brenda called to us delightedly. There ahead of us, just off the trail, stood the handsome female deer. With no sign of concern, the deer grazed while our troop filed past. Wondering at her tameness, I rode Big Dolly toward her, nearly up to her. She watched our approach calmly, then, as I took up my camera, she leisurely walked away. It was the easiest wild-life photograph I had ever taken.

We arrived at Johnson Lake, which dreams in the sun at an altitude of 11,120 feet, just before three o'clock and at once began setting up our tents. This beautiful, high lake was named for its

discoverer, J. W. Johnson, an old-time forest ranger. Covering approximately ten acres, the crystal mirror of its surface reflects huge pine trees on three of its sides. At the western edge there is a marshy field of grass, which provided fine grazing for our horses. Beyond the field, a steep cliff towers up to a 12,044-foot-high, unnamed peak. The lake itself is fed by waters from the Rito Oscuro, or dark creek, which enters from the west and flows out at the eastern end of the lake.

"Look at the beautiful birds," Ruthie said as we were pitching the tents. We had spread a tarpaulin between two trees and built a roaring fire. Two inquisitive grey birds were sitting on a nearby branch, watching us with the greatest of interest. They were of the grey or Rocky Mountain jay family — big handsome fellows. They were short billed with white heads and collars, leaden grey upper bodies, and whitish breasts. Their tails were blackish with white tips.

"They call those fellows 'Camp Robbers,'" I told Ruthie. "They're bold as highwaymen around people and people's food."

"Let's see how close they'll come to us," Ruthie said, but Melinda couldn't wait to be near these new bird friends of hers. She approached them gently, cooing like a little bird herself, and offered them bits of bread. The birds responded with a soft "Whee-ah" sound of gratitude and ate with a hearty appetite.

For the next three days, while we maintained our camp, the two birds adopted us — or rather, Melinda — who saw to it that they were thoroughly well fed without the necessity of stealing.

As soon as the camp was set up properly, we all headed for the lake, but by nightfall the only catch had been made, naturally, by Mother. She had pulled out a nice thirteen-inch cutthroat, or "navy" fish, as Melinda would have said. These are handsome fish with a deep red line on each side of their throats, hence their rather bloodthirsty name. Black spots adorn their streamlined bodies.

"Tell you what," I said to the group, "Let's see if we can't all catch our own lunches tomorrow morning." There was general enthusiasm for this new game and it was agreed upon.

The high altitude and all our exercise had put the whole group into a mood for retiring early. One by one, they drifted off to their various sleeping accommodations in the three tents, until only Melinda and myself remained before the huge campfire, still burning brightly.

"Let's walk around the camp for a minute before we go to bed, Daddy," she suggested. The night was lovely, and I took Melinda's hand for a quick evening stroll into the star-pricked darkness. The gleaming jewels that were stars gave us just enough light to move carefully among the night-drenched trees. Up a hillside before us, a gigantic pine stood silhouetted blackly against the lesser black of the sky.

"Look, Daddy! It's a Christmas tree!" Melinda whispered to me ecstatically, and I saw what she meant at once. Behind and around the huge tree, stars hung in the night sky like dozens of gleaming Christmas lights. Some effect of cloud had blanked other stars from view everywhere except around that one, great pine. The stars seemed sprinkled through it in clusters and loops.

"I wish we could take that pretty tree home with us for our own Christmas," Melinda said, rapt with the majesty of the sight.

"We will in a way, honey," I told her. "We'll carry the picture of it in our minds. No one can really ever own beauty." The remark was a little over the child's head, but ever since our summer in the Pecos had begun, I had been growing more and more aware of the things of loveliness all about us, in a way I had not known before. I had learned that the only significant history is that of discovery, and the most significant discovery of all is the individual discovery of beauty — the loveliness everywhere in nature, in others, and even in ourselves.

In the darkness, pictures flashed through my mind — Melinda's

face just now as she had gazed at the Christmas Tree — Brenda gallantly struggling onto her saddle by herself — Ruthie loving her Missie and gathering flowers — Ronnie waltzing with a grace far beyond his years — Mike swinging his little sisters outside our cabin — and Pat dazzling the keys of a piano — Lottie Jane smiling her own particular sweetness. The quality, the precious quality of beauty, was there in all these images.

The summer had done this for me; fully opened my eyes to the loveliness present in countless little things, if only one can see it. Now that we were soon to leave the Pecos, I thought that this personal insight alone had made it all worth while. Certain mists that had obscured my vision of life had been gently washed away by the Pecos rains and the summer.

We all slept well that night and the children were up and busily fishing early the next day. But again, fishing was poor at the lake. After a while, only Mother, Lottie and Dr. Fishback were still trying their luck. The boys had made a log raft, held together by stout cord, and were floating around on the lake like a collection of Huck Finns, while Ruthie had corralled Katherine Fishback as her special buddy for the day. Soon I had teamed up with Brenda and Melinda.

"Let's explore that cave we saw, Daddy," Brenda suggested. The two girls had seen an opening in the face of the wall of cliffs to the west of the lake.

"All right, honey. I want to take some pictures anyway, and that might be a good spot for it."

Our agreement that each catch his or her own lunch had to be curtailed since only Lottie caught fish that day, but we all dined happily on chili and beans. Then Brenda, Melinda and I started off for our trek up the cliffs.

It was rough going. There had been a rock slide at one point, and we scrambled carefully over this, headed for the mouth of the cave above. At that altitude of nearly 12,000 feet, my breath

gave out in no time at all. The girls seemed to feel no effect from the climb.

Along the way we passed riots of wild delphinium rising five feet tall. Then we were at the cave. It was damp inside with a trickle of water running along its floor and dark green ferns growing in the dimness. After exploring it, we went back outside where the girls discovered layers of mica imbedded in the face of the cliff. They seemed to view the mica, glittering in the sun, as a special prize.

The location of the cave turned out to be useless for my photographic purposes, however, since the lake was not visible from that point. We climbed down to the rock slide again and then tackled a route which would take us to a higher location on the cliff. We held hands to steady each other as we made our second ascent. In moments I was covered with perspiration and I was huffing and puffing like an old-fashioned steam locomotive.

We climbed and rested; rested and climbed, until we had reached the highest spot possible on the cliff face. We turned around and gazed off over a staggering distance — vista after vista of natural beauty. Johnson Lake seemed small as a fish pond from that altitude and distance, a spot of turquoise in the midst of deep green pines. Far to the east, clothed in sunlight, we could make out the town of Cowles. In the wilderness country itself, I saw Hamilton Mesa rising from the forest, as well as Grass Mountain, Valle Medio, Valle Largo, and Elk Mountain. For just a moment, as the initial impact of the panorama spread out below us, I felt like an eagle, soaring through the vast Pecos sky. It was a dizzying and marvelous sight.

"Isn't the lake beautiful when you see it from here?" I asked the girls.

"What makes a lake, Daddy?" Brenda wanted to know.

"Nature," Melinda answered before I could form a reply.

"What's nature?"

Melinda's retort was exasperated. "Brenda, don't you know I'm too little to answer half of the big questions. I *couldn't* know everything at my age!"

Although this was the first time I had heard Melinda admit such a fact, I stayed out of the conversation.

We hung there, suspended between sky and earth, while the sun veiled itself behind a cloud. When it burst free again, shortly before vanishing behind the peak protecting Johnson Lake, it shone over the land with almost supernatural-brilliance, bringing out all the vivid color of the country below. The entire scene took on the aspect of a freshly painted picture, with living things, rather than oil as the pigment. A billowy cloud stood out against the eastern sky and the trees seemed to be stretching up on tiptoe to appreciate the dying rays of the sun before old velvet night put them to sleep.

As we stood high on the mountain looking at the clear Pecos Wilderness, there appeared a near-perfect rainbow in the eastern sky. Melinda grinned as she watched it glow. "Daddy," she asked, "Can you climb a rainbow?"

The colored archway over the wilderness seemed to be absorbed within my chest. I was surprised to hear my answer, "Yes, sweetheart, you can climb a rainbow. Even Daddy might climb a rainbow after this summer, along with the entire family."

In a way, that sunset was prophetic. This would be our last journey into the Pecos before winter came and our time of solitude and self-renewal at the cabin ended — before we boarded up the windows and said good-bye to our cabin and the woods, at least for that year. Watching the flushed, happy faces of the girls, I made no mention of this fact.

Now the sun was sinking behind the vast, unnamed peak to the west — one I had come to refer to mentally as Elliott Barker Peak, after the famous New Mexico naturalist. It seemed an appropriate name for the mountain in honor of a man who had involved him-

self so deeply — and done so much to preserve — the natural wonders of the state.

There was no getting around it; the two little girls were taking over our pack trip. Brenda had led our procession all the way to Johnson Lake, and Melinda had guided me very firmly up the face of the cliffs to our lookout position. And that evening, Brenda more or less took over the preparation of dinner. Melinda, too, was all business with dinner preparation. She gathered wood with Happy and Brenda and kept a watchful eye on the fried potatoes.

On the previous trip, Ruthie and Lottie had been cook and waitress, but this time they found little to do, since their small assistants were determined to prove their worth. Melinda made a point of carrying water from the lake to our camp, over and over, in order to assure enough water for dishes, hand washing, and similar needs.

Yes, this was an entirely different sort of pack trip from our earlier one; for one thing, the weather had shown us great favor this time. Not a drop of rain had fallen so far.

After an enjoyable supper we all retired early, again worn out by the events of the day. Then, as though following an inaudible cue, gentle fingers of rain began to tap the canvas above us. Gently at first, then with terrific, mountain force, the heavens emptied themselves. It came in great, rolling sheets. But we were all snug and protected in the tents and bed rolls, and I didn't begin to worry until the thunder and lightning grew remarkably severe and obviously close at hand. We were, in fact, directly in the center of the storm and the rainclouds, a most uneasy feeling. The lightning was being generated right around us, not just above our heads.

But all went well and by four in the morning the storm had passed, grumbling away in the distance. I fell into a deep, profound sleep almost at once, although Ruth had some difficulty in breathing that rare, thin air.

When we awoke the next morning, the aftermath of the storm was still apparent around us. Clouds lay sullenly close to the ground and even below us from our vantage point at that altitude. Brenda and I walked down to the lake, where clouds hovered above the water like phantom boats. The wind was stirring them across the lake and up the side of Elliott Barker Peak. They moved like sluggish old men, resentful of the wind's brisk prodding.

"Can I touch a cloud, do you think?" Brenda asked me. We arrived at the lake shore and a chilly mist of cloud enveloped us—"See, Brenda? You're doing more than touching one. You're standing inside one!" The concept delighted her.

I timed the coffee water that morning, curious to see how long it would take to boil at such an altitude. It was 30 minutes over the hot fire before it began to bubble. Everything seems to slow down a bit at 11,120 feet, including the adults. While I watched the water, our small trail boss, Brenda, was frantically stirring the scrambled eggs while Lottie and Ruthie watched with some amusement a little distance away. The young ones were proving themselves with a will.

It was shortly after ten o'clock when we finished breaking camp and loading up our horses. We started back down the trail with Brenda in full command of the expedition; she had been the first to mount and was at the head of the procession.

Melinda was not far behind, perched on Peanuts, the biting horse. She seemed to have worked her own special magic with the beast and he had become gentle and obedient.

"When we get back, Melinda," I told her with an imitation of sternness, "I'm going to buy that animal and turn it into glue if it so much as looks like it's going to bite again."

"Oh, Daddy," was the child's only reply.

We moved rapidly down the sweep of the mountain, over Rito Oscuro and down the mountainside, our spirits high from the brilliant sunshine.

"What do you think you're doing, young lady!" Mother called ahead to Brenda. Somehow, she had managed to turn around in her saddle without getting off, and was now riding backwards on the horse, grinning at the rest of us.

Mother shook her head in amused exasperation. She managed to get the child turned around again, then spoke to Katherine in a flustered voice. "What in the world am I going to do with that child!"

"Just enjoy her, Ruth, just enjoy her." Katherine knew Brenda well from her close contact with our family and also through the little girl's attendance at the dancing school.

I was riding in the middle of the group when we entered the upper end of Panchuela Campground, our final destination. Ahead was a gate across the trail and I climbed quickly off Big Dolly and ran ahead to open the gate for the others. When all had passed through, I was about to remount my horse when, grinning wickedly, Melinda nudged Big Dolly and off she went with the rest of the party. The horses were in a hurry now, sensing that they were approaching home, and I found myself gazing at the backside of the last horse which quickly vanished down the trail. A burst of giggles trickled back in the wind. I started to walk the short remaining distance, chuckling at Melinda's audacity. She had pointed out once again that she was thoroughly capable of getting along just fine on a pack trip—even to the extent of rustling her father's horse.

Never again, I thought, will we make a pack trip without the two young ones. They had convinced me.

In minutes I caught up with the rest of the group, to the tune of enthusiastic, if ironic, cheering from both Brenda and Melinda. They were immensely pleased with their prank.

Sticker and Faye Thorne were waiting in both the Jeep and their own car, to take us back to Holy Ghost Stream and home, since we were still some five miles away. The boys were to help

Happy herd the horses back to his store. In one final act of self-assertion, Brenda crawled on the top of the Jeep where we were placing the sleeping bags. "Daddy, I want to ride one of the horses back to Happy's with the boys. If you don't let me do it, I'll ride back right here, on top of the Jeep."

I decided the time had come to take our small trail boss down a peg or two. Youthful independence can go just so far.

"Brenda, you're not riding a horse another five miles today, and you are *not* driving back on top of the Jeep!"

Brenda admitted defeat and sat beside me on the front seat all the way home.

Our family pack trip was done and it had been great fun — except for one incident that was tragedy for me. At one point as we rode along the trail, little Brenda's horse, attempting to jump a log, threw the child forward so that her mouth struck her saddle horn. One of her already loose front baby teeth was struck, and that night in camp, Mother pulled it. And suddenly, in the passing of a moment, I found myself looking not at my baby, but at a grinning little girl.

It dawned on me that in the course of that short, mountain trip where she handled chores like everyone else, rode hard all day, and now — with the final symbol of the lost tooth — I had lost my baby. When a father has six children and one baby, the loss of the baby into full-fledged little-girlhood is a poignant thing, especially when I fear there may be no more babies.

I knew it was inevitable, like the changing of the seasons — first there is early spring and soon summer follows. But that night, back in the cabin after tucking the children in bed and slipping the lost tooth beneath Brenda's pillow, I felt again a little stab of sorrow that our baby had left us forever.



WALKING UP THE CANYON

Farewell to Pecos

IT HAD TO HAPPEN SOMETIME, no matter how much we all ignored, or tried to ignore, the possibility. Our Pecos Summer was drawing to a close.

Imperceptibly, the sweet air turned cooler each day, and each day the sunlight, rich and golden, turned a mellower and deeper shade. The winds that murmured among our huge, dark pines seemed to whisper a trifle sadly, now. In the wind voices of the trees there was a note of faint regret that summer was coming to an end.

Little signs were present all around us in the woods. The creatures who made Pecos their permanent home began their preparations for autumn. The trees that were not evergreen began to change their sober, summer attire for the hectic gaiety of fall colors, as if in one last defiant party mood before old winter sent them into their months-long sleep.

Then, with a swiftness we could hardly believe, the last day arrived. The wonderful times in our Pecos retreat were over, at least for that year. Ahead of us loomed a long winter of school, the cares and responsibilities of business and work, the bustling life of the city once again.

It was a glorious day, almost as if the Pecos knew we were

leaving on the following morning, and had made a special effort to see us off looking its best. The sky was a dazzling blue, with little powder puffs of cloud bunched here and there. The liquid trilling of birds sounded all around the cabin, and Holy Ghost Stream bubbled to us with its almost human tongues.

We were all a little subdued that morning, but determined not to let the sadness of departure affect our last day. The children had soon scampered off to enjoy themselves as much as possible, and Mother, shortly after lunch, with the fisherman's gleam in her eyes, picked up her rod and equipment and marched off to the stream, determined to enjoy her favorite outdoor sport up to the last possible minute.

The golden day lazed on, far too rapidly for comfort, and then, almost before I knew it, it was five o'clock and autumn dusk was sifting over the land.

Mother had not returned and I found myself alone in the house. I drifted aimlessly about, drinking in the familiar sights that had become so dear over the past few months, gazing through the windows at the views which were so well known by now, but always changing, always different in some subtle way. I wandered from one place to another, picking up a colored rock some child or other had proudly found, touching the back of a chair that would soon be gathering dust, staring up at the high, beamed ceiling.

There should be some way, some little gesture, to say good-bye to the cabin and to Holy Ghost itself. I went to the icebox, filled two glasses with ice, and fixed two drinks. Then I was off in search of Ruth with my ceremonial toasts in hand.

I walked along the winding little road which leads up into the canyon, following the ever-rushing stream until I reached a place of particular loveliness. I saw Ruth, still determinedly fishing away, even though night would be on us before long. She turned and looked toward me as I approached, then lifted up her

catch for me to see. Fishing had been good; nine fat trout had succumbed to her skill. As I sat down close to her, she saw the glasses I carried and grinned warmly.

I sat near her, holding the glasses, observing the beauty around us. It was an enchanted scene. I had the feeling at that moment that here at this spot, all the glory of the Pecos country was trapped and crystallized—as if the essence of nature and the peace that it brings had settled for a time on this particular bit of earth where we sat.

Ruth continued to fish as I held the glass to her lips for her to take a sip. "Look, look! at my pole. Watch it! See, see. I've got him, I've got him!" she shrilled as she swung the fish toward me. Ducking it, I knocked her drink over. "Just look at him, Calvin, look at him," Ruth laughed. Then she noticed her drink knocked over. "Darn it, just a little sip left." She reached over and gave me a kiss—I returned it. After a time, I said: "Now, isn't that more fun than fishing?" For a second or so Ruth seemed to agree with me.

"Calvin," she said, smiling, "let's drink a toast. A toast to the seven little guests in our home." Her eyes turned a trifle sad, perhaps a little moist. "They'll be with us such a short time... and all this," she gestured around her at the glory of the woods, "Our whole Pecos Summer would have been meaningless without them."

I understood what Ruth meant, what she was feeling in that tender moment. "Yes, darling," I said. "It's hard to believe that three of them were only loaned to us. But they're our very own now, and always will be. Adoption is the sweetest word I know."

Our eyes met in complete accord, and we lifted our glasses as the stream babbled its approval. We drained our drinks in a loving salute to our seven precious little guests, happy to have had them even though someday they would be leaving us. But then her eyes lit mischievously, and she jumped to her feet. "Well... this is

one day I'm going to catch my limit." She was a fisherman to the core, and soon she was casting her line in the stream with single-minded concentration, her glass empty on the grass.

I sat on the bank, watching the union of Ruth, fishing pole, and the stream as they all contrived together to help her catch her limit of trout on this gentle evening.

Ruth stood as if cradled in the arms of roots that spread from a gigantic pine by the pool. The tree rose upward in awesome height and age, its bark smooth and strong, defying time. The bark of the trees around us seemed to speak of the character of the trees — the delicate white of the aspens seeming shy and a little embarrassed, as if not properly dressed — the mountain willow, wrinkled and furrowed like the faces of old Indians — and the great blue spruce, its bark a story of dignity and power and ageless wisdom.

I stared up the mighty trunk of the pine beside us, following it with my eyes until it seemed to vanish into heaven, and I thought that the trees, in their silent reach for the skies were like the soul of man, yearning upward all his life, reaching, reaching for purpose and meaning.

As I watched Ruth and the Holy Ghost Stream and Canyon, I felt something tugging at my trousers, and looking down I saw Brenda's little face.

"I don't have anyone to play with, Daddy," she said, a trifle mournfully. I took her small hand in mine. "That's all right, honey," I told her. "We'll take a walk up the canyon before it gets too dark."

At once, with the quickly changing emotions of her years, Brenda was content. The two of us — a little girl and her Daddy — walked slowly up the stream, holding hands tightly. Above us, the last dying flare of sunset had turned the clouds to rose. An evening breeze was sending them scudding toward the horizon, like fat, pink sheep racing off to pasture. "Where are the clouds

going, Daddy?" Brenda asked, glancing up at my face with infinite trust, sure that Daddy knew the answers to all things. I murmured some vague reply, and the two of us watched the clouds hurry off.

"I see a castle," Brenda told me, eyes shining. She squeezed my hand still more tightly.

"Yes, and there's a city made all out of gold," I said, pointing it out to her.

We walked along again, and as we walked, my child and I conversed.

"Does Missie dream dreams like I do?" questioned Brenda.

"I'm sure she dreams her own horsey sort of dreams, honey."

As Brenda and I silently, slowly ambled up the road hand in hand, a doe delicately tiptoed down the mountainside and to the road only a few paces in front of us. The deer still wore its light brown summer coat. Its dark crystal eyes fastened themselves on Brenda, as though recognizing her as a part of the forest, a part of its life. As the doe took a step or two toward Brenda, I felt the little hand in mine tighten. The dark, clear, quizzical eyes of the doe blinked at Brenda. The deer twitched its short tail, then turned and slowly walked down to the stream. Brenda and I watched it take a long drink, slowly walk across the stream and up the other mountain until it reached a trail some 100 feet up the mountainside. The animal turned and looked at us again, as if to say: "Sorry you have to be leaving. Could the little girl stay?" Then it was gone, bouncing on down the trail.

Brenda took a last look as the deer pranced away. She knew, as I did, that the woodland creature was a vital part of Holy Ghost. She looked up at me. "Daddy," she said, her eyes still sparkling from the comradeship of the doe, "Deers are surely lucky."

"Why, darling?" I inquired.

"They don't have to leave."

There was very little I could reply to that. We walked up the whispering, dusky canyon. For a time, Brenda was silent, then,

her fertile mind running in every direction, she said: "How high does Pat's school go?" I knew what she meant — she was asking what grade was included in her older brother's school.

"Clear up to twelve," I told her.

Her eyes grew round. "Then does he have to get married?" she inquired. I could see the limitless vistas of adulthood opening up in her five-year-old mind.

"No," I tried to explain. "You don't ever have to get married until you want to. Marriage is something two people decide to do because they want to be together. Like Mommy and Daddy. You'll understand when you're a big girl."

Brenda nodded, accepting her all-knowing father's wisdom, and together we continued our walk.

Night was coming on us rapidly, now, and the clouds, which had been little pink lambs, were darkening. We were about to have one of Holy Ghost Canyon's brief and unpredictable showers. The rain, our constant Holy Ghost companion, came on us swiftly, perhaps its way of bidding us good-bye. Looking up at the mist and moisture-shrouded hills we had grown to know and love, Brenda said, "The mountain needs a sweater, Daddy."

And still the rain fell, through the dusky evening — our last one in the lovely mountain country for that year.

"Let's not go back, Daddy," Brenda said. "I won't be able to walk up the canyon with you ever again!"

"Of course you will, Baby," I told her. But in a way she was right, with the wisdom of a child — never again would she and I be in that particular harmony and closeness. Time would alter things and make its inevitable changes. Brenda would grow older; I would grow older. Life is never static, and each moment is a moment unto itself, never to be repeated and retained except in memory. This was one of those moments which would not come again.

"We'll be back, Brenda," I assured her. "We'll come back again

some other summer." But I knew that things would change — my little daughter would, with the passage of time, become a woman, and the great cycle of change, which we had learned and watched in the course of that Pecos Summer, would apply to the children I loved and who were mine, even as it did to the rhythm of the land and the country we had discovered up in the Pecos.

I had a thought then, which is difficult to define. I held the child's hand, alone together in the rain and stillness and beauty of the forest, not speaking now. It seemed to me that we had learned, unconsciously perhaps, some massive and important secret — some comprehension that would live with us throughout our lives. At that moment I had the feeling — no, the certainty — that the Pecos country all around us was as close to an earthly vision of paradise as I would ever see.

My little daughter held my hand and looked up at me with the innocent trust of all the children throughout the world, throughout all time.

"Promise we'll come back again, Daddy?"

"We'll come back, Brenda," I said.

And we will. Somehow, we all have to find our own Pecos Summer — our own silence and wisdom and recognition in a world which is hostile to gentleness, and a deep, emphatic return to the earth and the basic roots of life. But we will, at least many of us, find the road back. There still is truth and honor and beauty. The summer had taught us that. For every man, woman, and child, there is a Pecos of the soul — a hidden place where the trees are green, the birds sing, and there is beauty for those who can accept it.

Brenda and I walked back toward the cabin, and that particular time was done. But none of us would forget it, and none of us would ever be quite the same. It had been a time and a condition that we would remember. We knew things that we had not known before, and whatever the future might bring about, we had

learned and loved and lived through an experience which was profoundly important, and we were all more fully alive because of it. As my children grow and spread their wings in maturity, they will do so with a strength and wisdom because of the sweet Pecos Summer.

Brenda held my hand tightly as we walked back to the cabin for the last time. "Daddy, will the Pecos always be here?" she asked.

"Sure, my baby, the Pecos will always be here," I mused. It always has been, for those who can find it. And it always will be.

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