

1954 CIBOLA DOCUMENTS

[Here are reconstructions of documents associated with Cibola's first season, 1954. The original documents had been kept in the Cibola records by Sandy and Eleanor. These reconstructions are based on photocopies given to Steve K. by Sandy in December, 2009.

The first two documents are letters to parents. The next document consists of lyrics to two ad hoc songs produced during the outgoing caravan (they identify the VW microbus, which was EOrr's domain, and they seem to bear her imprint).

The last page is a rather nice chart of the main ranch with typed labels. The initials TR probably belong to a Runyan.]

Cibola
San Cristobal, N.M.
July 9, 1954

Dear Parents:

It was quite a trip -- wonderfully cooperative bunch of kids and a brave staff -- arrived at Forbes State Park with lots of time to get organized and everybody asleep before sunset. We braved the next morning with the earliest up at 4:30, everybody through breakfast by 5:30, and off by 6 a.m.

The next day was quite a day -- a lot of miles to cover, but fortunately old-man-weather was with us. Excitement struck the new bus with a roaring hip-hip-hurrah as it passed the 1000 mark and could then ride at 40 miles per hour. And everything else was perfect. An infinity of sleeping bags on the beach of Lake Michigan, a hot dog feast and watermelons (and unfortunately, a beach littered with watermelon seeds) Next morning breakfast for a king, with dry cereal, bread, and all the usual foods replaced by such delicacies as scrambled eggs, bacon, toast -- and all this after a 6 a.m. swim in the Lake. Then the chuck wagon pulled out for New Salem while the kids got their first glimpse of the Chicago skyline and met the new crowd. This was to be a short day, but the heat of Illinois and the Volkswagen didn't agree, and vapor locked the gas line. When the Runyons and Rondthalers arrived in New Salem they were met by our first experience of rain, but the good Lord was with us and the park curator furnished a most elegant habitat for that night: barracks, kitchen and dining room -- we could have spent the summer there. The Volkswagen rolled in three hours late but with all in fine spirits. They entertained the staff with a rousing song of their engine troubles.

Lake of the Ozarks (third night) was beautiful to look at, but the water was more like a bathtub that had supplied many baths already. And woe to us! Our troubles began -- chiggers -- those annoying red mites that made their homes under our skin and might easily have been mistaken for chicken pox. One could have entertained himself for hours just sitting and watching the violent scratching that went on -- unfortunately most always in embarrassing places. The next day the main source of entertainment in the bus was the counting of chigger bites. Roger won the honors with 213 little red spots, but many others claimed second place with over 100 bites each. Total number of bites on the bus that day: 1,729.

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Fate took a bad turn, with the State of Kansas before us -- flat, hot, chiggered, with lakes whose fish never went over 4 inches. We have never seen Johnnie so frustrated. The Port of Entry at Fort Scott stood like Lucifer himself -- yards and yards of red tape in each hand. All cars in the Caravan got through except the bus which was detained two hours. Baseball and games, songs with the banjo, uke and auto-harp, and a ballad on the miseries of red tape. But all this proved to us again that our crowd of kids had learned to take it. Our camp site that night produced only frustrated fishermen; but at least there was the thrill of the pull on the line and the sight of a fish -- if only three inches in length.

Friday was another long day in Kansas -- straight, flat, monotonous, but the monotony proved a stimulant of entertainment en route. We got a headwind. The Volkswagen due to its squareness, was forced to a sluggish speed of 30 miles an hour. To bring some variety into the picture the kids tried the windshield wipers, the headlights, the horn, and finally tore every piece of paper they could find into a thousand tiny pieces. And in final desperation they stopped, bought balloons and crepe paper, and proceeded to decorate the car. A large sign on the back, adorned with bells and lilies, bore the words "JUST MARRIED." Streamers flew from every window and balloons from the roof. Some excitement at last! Every following car honked its horn in congratulation. And imagine the delight when occupants of cars would turn to take a second look at the newlyweds up front and the children behind.

Meade County State Park was the best yet. Peacocks and pheasants galore. (Rickie religiously followed them about in search of molted tail feathers. We suspect that most of those he got he pulled out of the peacocks!) There was wonderful swimming at Meade and, best of all, an artesian well: an everlasting stream of cold water flowing 200 gallons per minute from a two inch pipe. Every head in the crowd ducked under that water and we finally got Joe Dean in, clothes and all (he had to change his clothes now!) The kids were so delighted at the sight of water that their sleeping bags lined the stream which flowed from the well. The staff spent the night picking up bodies hanging over the edge. Sandy was punched in the nose by Guy, who was convinced that he was being kidnapped in the middle of the night.

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Another result of the Kansas heat and monotony was a birthday party for Sandy (surprise because it wasn't his birthday at all.) Tokens of affection given him were rattles, rubber panties, hairnets, pink slippers and suspenders. If Kansas affected us this way, we are beginning to wonder about people who live there all the time. Fertile field for the psychiatrists.

Saturday took us from the flats of Oklahoma to the mountains of New Mexico. The kids were fascinated by the evidence of dust storms, and blew up some winds of debate about government measures of control. Excitement mounted as the first tumbleweed rolled across the road. And then in the distance arose the first mountain. Capulin volcano with a lava-covered countryside held everyone's interest, and by this time all the cameras were busy. Shortly we were in the Sangre de Cristo mountains approaching Cimmaron Canyon. Nearness brought eagerness. Everyone begged. Darkening skies and the eager kids persuaded the staff and on we went to Cibola. We arrived here about ten o'clock to find the Keiths, the Welchmans, Carlos and Pablita, the Carbonels, and Robert and Phillip. We laid our sleeping bags on the floor of the recreation room and with much gusto settled down for our first night at Cibola.

(signed)

Sandy and Eorr

Cibola
San Cristbal
New Mexico
July 30, 1954

Dear Parents:

It has been a long time since any of you have heard from us, but we can assure you much has happened. Camp is in full swing -- Indian ruins, pueblos, plays, pack trips, swimming, fishing, hiking have kept us fairly dizzy. The kids are in excellent shape -- life is just as it ought to be. Romance is springing up among the older children, and mischief is prevalent among the younger. Health is excellent. After our first onslaught of mountain dysentery the infirmary has been lonely -- an occasional tired child appears for a good night's sleep and then is off the next morning with a new burst of energy.

Our first evening of theater was a great success -- interest increased and appreciation was felt everywhere. We caught our first rattlesnake -- a trip to Bandelier National Monument with ruins galore, and a real inspiration of the accomplishments of early man was combined with the excitement of our first rattler. Buzzards swarmed, children's hearts beat faster, and a heightened ego in all as they proudly bore the skin home. Charles and Eorr with 21 of the youngsters braved the early morning at 4 a.m. to explore Bandelier on a fifteen mile hike. It was a swell trip -- pockets full of potsherds, arrowheads, and obsidian -- and a new consciousness of the richness of the South West.

Rockie and Connie and Theodore took Cabin 1 to the top of San Cristobal Peak --proud but tired feet returned with magnificent descriptions of the vista of the Sangre de Cristo mountains and the enchantment of the desert land beyond. The first pack trip went out with Carlos and Eorr and braved an ungodly number of hours of rain. Thousands of songs were sung to keep spirits high, and Indian war dances to keep the blood moving around the body. Horses disappeared for better pastures but eager kids hunted them out and brought them home.

Mesa Verde has been visited, explored. and loved.

The Taos Indians have found a special place in the hearts of many. A wonderful evening around their fire with them dancing for us, opened our first friendship. Subsequent visits and friendly recognition have made them a part of the camp life.

The horses of course pull the heartstrings of the kids -- the boys are madly learning to rope, wrangle, and saddle. We have all got used to being roped from any direction without the slight-

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est provocation. Our horse family was increased. with much excitement, on the morning of Eorr's birthday when the children and Sandy led Eorr to the lower corral for a real surprise. Sandy had secretly kept a beautiful two-year-old filly there as a birthday surprise. Misfortune struck a few days later when the new filly tore her shoulder open in the frenzy of possible breaking, but all was well when John, our camp doctor, bravely entered a new field and with darning needle and fish line closed the gash.

The Taos Fiesta days are over. The Fiesta skirts made by the girls adorned the streets of Taos. We all saw the parade and the Corn Dance, but mutually agreed that the parade was not up to expectations. The day was saved, however, when we cheered Carlos in the parade and all applauded him vigorously as he bull-dogged the calves at the rodeo.

Spanish classes with Maria meet morning and night, some with eagerness, some with disgruntlement. On the other hand, one can hear Spanish greetings and bits of Spanish conversation at unexpected times. We have produced almost a thousand adobe bricks, with cheering at lunch as the daily quota rose higher. Ricky Stewart and friends even produced a collection of miniature adobes for special building projects. Our bridge collapsed and within a week a new bridge had been constructed by the kids, working with Charles and Sandy -- a golden spike ceremony concluded their efforts with beer being strewn on the bridge amid loud cheering as Charles drove the first car across. Occasionally one spots a proud worker step gingerly on the product of his work. Mobiles of copper wire can be found most anywhere in the camp, produced by the children with Frannie and Mike. Wet shirts and dripping hair are the universal badges of those on K. P. Everyone grumbles, but the kitchen floor and walls evidence amusing moments -- what if they do leave pools on the floor -- the camp is a part of us all -- and in spite of complaints, work and fun alike produce this feeling. Two lovely paintings by Rae Walker hang in the dining room, after an afternoon with Connie. Flies of peacock feathers have been tied with Betty and put to use, unfortunately with little success -- we did, however, have one supper of crayfish caught by fishermen ready to take anything.

Everyone is now back at camp after returning from all

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parts of the area; horseback riders from braving a hailstorm; budding archeologists from Mesa Verde; black pottery enthusiasts from San Ildefonso. We are now getting ready for the 'Little Prince' in pantomime, followed by a dance with our neighbors-in-the-valley invited to Cibola. Acquaintances are already established after a Sunday baseball game.

The summer is going beautifully. Many different kinds of fun, and best of all a creeping and lasting awareness and appreciation of the wonders and mysteries, both human and physical, of this provocative country.

Sandy and Eorr
[signatures]

CARAVAN SAGAS

By that Volks-Wagen Gang. Day II
(Tune: I've Been Working on the Railroad)

We've been workin' on the highway, All the afternoon;
We've been workin' on the highway, Just to get the car in tune .
Can't you hear the motor turning As we push along?
There ain't no gas a burning Must he something wrong.

CHO: Gas won't you flow, Gas won't you flow.
Gas won't you make the car go? :/:

We were standing on the highway. Thumbing for a ride;
Mike went to town while we Shooed the evil flies;
We were staved by Mr. Eipers and his tractor too;
He pulled us half a mile --- Nothing he could do.

CHO: Found a vapor block, Found a vapor block.
Found a vapor 'block in the gas pump :/:

To make matters worse There was a cloud burst;
To make matters worse The dust got into our eyes.
We were not to blame Sc we played a poker game;
Mr. Eipers fixed the car So thank god here we are!

CHO: May sound bad, May sound worse,
But confidentially among all of us;
May sound bad, May sound worse,
But WE HAD A DAMN GOOD TIME!

By the Bus-Riders, Day III
(same tune)

We've been waiting at the border, Port of Entry there;
Had to get a Kansas order To prove that we were fair.
Had a telegram to wait for From New Mexico
Man said, "You don't go no farther" and What he meant was NO. NO!

CHO: Waited at Fort Scott, Fooled around a lot,
Sat in a yard where the trees were not;
Texaco was nice, Gave the girls some ice,
But Kansas was TOO DAMN HOT! HOT!

By the Bus-Riders, Day IV
(Tune: Down in the Valley)

Down in the grasses, the grasses so green,
There were some chiggers, that were not seen;
The chiggers bit us 'most everywhere,
They burrowed into our skin and hair.

We rub Noxema upon our backs
So we can sleep when we hit the sack;
Our arms and shoulders are filled with bumps,
Those gosh-darned chiggers are raising humps.

Richard and Johnnie, Tony and Mike,
Nina and Karen, have 60 bites;
But Steve and Roger will take the prize
They have a hundred red chigger eyes.

We all belong to the Chigger Club
And you can join us with 50 hugs;
We're glad our chiggers are very small
But how we wish they WERE NOT AT ALL!

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CIBOLA

San Cristobal, New Mexico

