

Vacation: 1961

It was hard to believe, but Bill and Joel got all our gear in or on top of the Simca with room left over so we could all go along. We left home a little after 1 p.m. on Tuesday, August 8 and after having hamburgers and delicious french fried onions in Galesburg, arrived at Lincoln's New Salem State Park around 5 p.m. We set up our tent, or more correctly, we "pitched" our tent, (My apologies to all campers.) And started to prepare supper. Since it was too late to get a big enough fire going for enough coals for both corn and chicken, I rolled the chicken in Yvonne's High Protein cereal and fried it in bacon fat and butter on the Coleman gas stove. It was yummy and so was the corn which we wrapped, husks and all, in aluminum foil and laid in coals. After doing dishes, we drove to Petersburg, about 2 miles and got groceries and ice. It was bed time for Neal and Yvonne when we got back. Neal slept in the tent with Bill and Joel and was always so tired, he never made any fuss about going to bed. Yvonne and I slept in the Simca, with the seats reclined way back. Not bad after about the third night, as far as I was concerned. Yvonne adjusted to her new bed right away. She wiggles around so much that I fastened her in place with the seat belt so she'd stay on her own side of the bed.

Wednesday: Bill was the first one up. Partly because Neal moved over on his air mattress when the air went out of his own. When he got up he told us that his sleeping bag broke. After that, Bill took the leaky air mattress himself. Guess it was easier to sleep on the ground than to get pushed out of bed. We had a good breakfast of french toast and then Neal said, "Don't you think we should go home, now, and get ready to go to the fair?" We had told him we were going camping and then to the fair and I guess he thought we'd been camping. Loafed all morning. After Neal's nap we walked down to the Lodge to see about going swimming and found out it would cost us 60¢ each to swim in an overgrown bath-tub, so we hiked back up the hill and had an ice cream cone instead. Then, we started a tour of the Village of New Salem which has been restored to look as it did when Lincoln lived there. We were looking at the first building when I saw a man I thought I recognized so I spoke to him and here it was Bernard Busse who taught in Lansford when Beth was in high school. He was there with his wife and two daughters, and of course he sent greetings to all my family. Before long, we could see we'd never make it through "The Village" before supper-time, so we headed back to camp. Yvonne slept through most of this excursion, lying on her tummy on her stroller, and there was surely no lack of admirers. Supper: hamburger, mashed potatoes, roasted corn, lettuce, iced tea and store-bought cake. Bill and Joel really gave me a vacation because they did the dishes most of the time. There were big swings right across the road from our campsite so Neal was in his glory when he could get somebody to push him. He wasn't the only one who enjoyed them. We all swung in them when we got the chance and our biggest mishap of camp resulted from them. Joel was swinging on Wednesday night and we heard him laughing as he walked back to camp and he got into the circle of light from the lantern, we could see he had ripped his shirt up both side seams from hem to arm-hole. He'd jumped out of the swing and his shirt had stayed. It was a warm night, but he was cooler than before.

Thursday: Neal's 3rd birthday got off to a rumbling, wet start. At 1:45

a.m. it started to thunder and rain and it kept it up till 7:15. None of us had ever heard such a long-lasting thunder storm. It finally stopped enough so we could get up, but I cooked pancakes with water dripping down my neck and in the frying pan from the trees. More fun! Neal was delighted with his birthday present, a little plastic motorcycle. We spent the morning hanging things on the line to dry and, of all things, washing the car. We bought mosquito netting to put over the car windows and it was green until it rained. Then, the car was green and was it ever hard to get it off the car. In the afternoon, Bill and Joel took the kids to the "Jungle Gym", a big playground area near the headquarters. I stayed at camp and baked Neal's birthday cake, a gingerbread baked in a frying pan on the Coleman camp stove. Then, thanks to the fact that I picked up powdered sugar instead of granulated when we got groceries, I made powdered sugar frosting for it. It was a good thing it worked because a birthday cake was the only thing Neal wanted for supper. We gave him a choice of wieners or steak and he chose birthday cake every time. We had wieners, baked potatoes, lettuce, apple sauce and cake. He blew out the candles one at a time and ate the frosting. That evening, it started to sprinkle so we loaded up and went for a drive. Ended up driving to Springfield and found the fairgrounds so we'd know where to go on Saturday.

Friday: Started out to be a beautiful day, but about lunch time it started to rain, so we all moved into the tent. Yvonne didn't like it too well. She was tired, but wouldn't go to sleep with everybody around. Neal napped in the car. When it quit raining, we went down and finished our exploration of "The Village". Joel and I mailed cards from the post-office where Abraham Lincoln was once postmaster. We had cheese omelet for supper, with tomatoes, toast and iced tea. I think what we had for dessert was the remainder of Neal's birthday cake, but it was hard to tell by looking at it. Most of the frosting had been removed by some little two-legged varmint. During supper Neal tipped the stroller over backward with Yvonne in it. He was scared to death, but she looked like, "Gee, that was fun. Do it again."

Saturday: We could hardly hold Neal because this was the day we were going to the fair. We did convince him that we didn't have to go home to get ready, though. Nothing too exciting in the morning except that we had skillet baked biscuits for breakfast. Good, too. Thought we'd never all get ready, but by 3:45 we were on our way to Springfield. First, we went to visit Lincoln's tomb and memorial. Quite a sight! We were so proud of Neal and Yvonne. They were both real quiet while we were inside. We got to the fairgrounds and thought we'd never get in. Drove by gate after gate before we found one we could go in. Bill had read someplace that they didn't charge after 5 p.m., but we couldn't believe it so he had \$2 read when we drove up and all they wanted was 50¢ for the car. We parked and walked over to see if we could find the calf one of our Sherrard boys was showing and who were the first people we saw? Ralph and Jean Erickson. They took us to see Kenny's calf and we also saw some more people from Sherrard there. Then, we headed for the midway which is "the fair" to Neal. Just inside the gate there was a kiddy ride with motor scooters, and army tank, a fire-engine, etc. on it. He would have stayed there all night if we'd let him. He rode on a real pony, I had one ride with bill and one with Joel. We asked Neal if he wanted to ride the Ferris wheel which he'd been talking about since we told him we were going to the fair, but he

wanted to go back and ride the motor bike. In all, he rode that ride 4 times. While he was riding I had to find a place to feed Yvonne, so I took Joel with me so when Bill and Neal came he could tell them where I'd gone, but we got all our wires crossed and it was over an hour before we all got together again. We were all getting a little worried, but I was hungry anyhow and sent Joel for foot long hot dogs and he stumbled across Bill and Neal. They weren't too worried to eat, either. We made our way back to the car, stopping for a Lemon Shake-up. Real good lemonade at 25¢ per and 2/3 ice. Almost as good a profit as in snow cones and cotton candy. We got back to camp a little before 11. No trouble settling the kids. They were tired and so were we but we had to have a midnight snack before we went to bed.

Sunday: Had pancakes for breakfast, stacked the dishes in the dish pan and went to church in Petersburg. Planned to go to the Presbyterian Church as their service began at 11, but when we drove up, we saw the Evangelical and Reformed Church right across the street had services at 11, too, so we went there instead. The people were real friendly and we enjoyed worshipping and taking Communion with them. We got back to camp and got a good big fire going for a "Tarzan broil" steak cooked right on the coals. It was good and so were sliced potatoes and carrots which we cooked in the same coals. We tried to loaf all afternoon, but Neal finally jarred us loose to take him down to the Jungle Gym. We took a short-cut so we did do a little hiking in the woods; didn't get lost, either. Had french toast for supper, cooked by Joel. It was good and I enjoyed sitting down at the beginning of a meal. After supper, I made the mistake of pushing Neal in the swing by running under him. He would have kept me at it all night. We packed up as much stuff as we could before going to bed so it wouldn't take us so long in the morning.

Monday: Up and starting to load about 7, and on the road by 9. We stopped in Havana (No, we weren't hijacked. This is in Illinois.) For breakfast and then, decided to visit another state park on the way home, we stopped at Dickson Mounds. This is at the site of an Indian burial ground and part of it has been excavated very carefully by archeologists and preserved as found. The lecture by the guide is very interesting. We stopped in Galesburg again for lunch, but it was too close to our late breakfast for very much so we got a double order of french fried onions at the Huddle and drove across the street to the A&W and got root beer to go with them. We completed the circle about 2 p.m., and we had had our camping trip. Not too primitive we'll admit what with running water from a faucet instead of a stream, flush toilets just a short hike away, and laundromat which made diaper-washing simple, and a supermarket close by, but fun anyway. And with two little campers who were so good, we may just do it again someday.

Note: If you have difficulty reading this because of typographical errors, please send a recording tape and we'll read it for you.

[handwritten in blue ink from this point]

P.S. On the way home, Neal must have been trying to think of a reason to

go back because all of a sudden he said, "I know what we gotfor (forgot)! We gotfor Joel's lanterin!" But he was mistaken.

August 20, 1961

Dear Mom & Dad,

Hope you enjoyed our camping trip.

Bill's birthday was yesterday and since he didn't have to write a sermon or make bulletins we celebrated by going out for lunch and the show. Saw "Guns of Navarrone," a W.W. II picture and really full of suspense. We enjoyed it. We left the kids at Jean's and she asked us to come back there for supper so we did. I had made a cake so we stopped for it and took it along. Yvonne got along fine except she wanted to visit instead of sleep. She took almost all of 7 ounces of formula and didn't wake up till after we'd finished eating supper.

Yvonne woke up early from her morning nap yesterday and when I went in to see if she was hanging out through the rails, here she was on her back. She's turned over 3 or 4 times since, so it wasn't an accident. I saw her do it once, and she just gets her little bottom up in the air and throws it to one side and over she goes.

Neal got over his sick spell okay, but he was sure careful what he ate that one day. I didn't have to tell him no more than once when he'd ask for something he shouldn't have. Yesterday, he started eating better and Jean said he told her his stomach hurt and she asked him what was the matter and he said, "It wants something to eat."

Got the car back yesterday, but it rained so Bill got Everett Coyne to take him instead of riding the bike. They had to shave the head this time, whatever that means, but it was a pretty expensive haircut.

Forgot to thank you for Yvonne's rattle. Joel brought her one just like it, so I'm going to keep on in the diaper bag for when we go someplace. She's beginning to play with things like that and notice her hands.

Sounded like the Pipers had a busy time, again. Wish I could have been home.

Had a letter from Edith to let us know that Joel got home okay.
Time for Bill's 10 o'clock feeding (and mine, too).

Love,
Marilyn