

Trip to the Eastern U.S.

Fall, 1979

This trip was taken with Mother and her toy poodle, Mitzi. Diary was sent home in installments in the form of letters to Fern Zimmerman. Salutations and beginning and ending remarks have been deleted.

Wed., Sept. 5, 1979

Green River, Utah

I'm sitting in my motel room at dusk looking out on the Green River. The Barn Swallows have called it a day, and the bats are taking over. I tried taking a walk just now, but decided the mosquitos were too bad.

Mother and I stayed in Green River, Utah, when we drove home from Colorado three years ago. We remembered it as about the worst town we've ever stayed in. Now there is a new motel. (It was there before, having just opened, but we had made reservations elsewhere.) *And* a new restaurant just opened *today*. It was quite good. So there's hope for the town yet.

We've been driving fairly long days, and it's been rather hot, so not much sightseeing to report. Last night we enjoyed a motel we've stayed in before--Springdale, Utah, just outside Zion N.P. Rooms looked up into the park.

Sun., Sept. 9

Mitchell, SD

From Green River we drove a long day's drive to Idaho Springs, Colorado. The town is pretty dismal--full of old gold mine tailings, *but* it is the closest place to a restaurant (El Rancho) we loved in 1976 and we wanted to return again. It was all as good as we remembered--multicourse menu with everything absolutely delicious, and excellent service, too.

A long drive brought us to Kearney, Neb. The next morning we spent in the Pioneer Village in Minden--old buildings full of things used in the settling of this part of the country. A particularly interesting section was a typical kitchen, living room and bedroom from each generation from 1830 to 1950. I always like the needlework, too.

Yesterday afternoon we visited the Stuhr Museum of the Prairie Pioneer in Grand Island. It was a more typical modern museum building, and the displays were very professionally done. In one display on old-time bread-making techniques, instructions were quoted exhorting the pioneer housewife to kneed the dough 45 min to an hour and don't stop to rest or it won't come out. Thank goodness methods have changed. Resting is actually recommended today, and total times are much less. I wonder why. Maybe the flour is ground finer nowadays.

The Stuhr Museum also has a collection of old buildings, but we were diasppointed that they closed that part Labor Day.

Weather has been quite cool since we left the Nevada desert--until today! It was 100 degrees this afternoon as we toured the Corn Palace (picture in original) in Mitchell, SD. This is a large auditorium decorated inside and out with murals entirely decorated inside and out with murals executed from vari-colored ears of corn, sliced in half lengthwise and nailed to a tar-paper design. The 1979 displays of Birds of SD are still left on the front of the building. We could see the various stages of work on the 1980 murals on the side. It's a sports theme. They have a gala festival near the end of Sept., so all must be ready by then.

Mitchell also has a pioneer museum--not as well as done as the two we saw yesterday, except for the 1880's house, which has been carefully restored to the way it probably was when a SD realtor built it in 1886--very Victorian!

Tues. a.m., Sept. 11
Aberdeen, SD

The weather cooled off greatly yesterday--to the high 60's with occasional drizzles. It was, to me, one of the most important days of the trip, for we visited De Smet, South Dakota. This was the Little Town on the Prairie that Laura Ingalls Wilder wrote about in five of her books. They were my favorite (by far) books of childhood, and I read and reread them many times. The stories are based on Laura's own childhood. (The TV show, "Little House on the Prairie," is a gross distortion of the plots, and worse, the characterizations, in the books.) It was a very moving experience for me to see the places and things told about in the books.

The surveyor's house where they spent their first winter "By the Shores of Silver Lake" has been moved into town and is the oldest building there. The Ingalls family stayed there alone in the winter of 1879. In spring, 1880, the stampede of homesteaders arrived. The house, which seemed so large to Laura, is really quite modest.

Behind the house is the Brewster school, where at age 15 Laura had her first teaching job handling 5 unruly pupils. It was originally located 9 miles south of De Smet. It is a shack of a building with large cracks between the wall boards and very little light--very much unlike the town schools of the area, which were quite pleasant.

We drove down the Main Street of the town and saw the Wilder Brothers' store (she married Almanzo Wilder) and the sites of other store buildings. The originals have been torn down and replaced by newer buildings. De Smet today has 1400 people and probably draws many more from the surrounding countryside. It's the county seat.

The house Pa built after Laura married has also been restored and contains Pa's "big green book" of pictures of animals of the world, Ma's organ, and many other artifacts of Laura's life. The second floor contains memorabilia of Rose Wilder Lane, Laura's daughter, who was quite a famous author and foreign correspondent.

Then we drove a couple of miles out of town to Pa's homestead site. The cottonwoods he planted are still there, but only a stone monument marks the claim shanty site. The site is on a little hill, from which I could look across the Big Slough toward the town. The Big Slough is really not far from town. It is hard to realize how fearful the family was for Pa's safety when he drove out there during the Long Winter of 1880-1881 to gather slough grass to burn.

(Please forgive me for going on like this, Fern, but I am keeping carbon copies of these letters for myself and want to remember what it was like.)

After lunch we drove north and visited the little town of Garden City, where Mother spent her first five years (1905-1910). That poor town is not on a main road or railroad and is pretty much unchanged from when Mother lived there. Mother thought she recognized the house they used to live in, but there were several vacant lots nearby, so the house may have been torn down. The "downtown" contains the same buildings which were there then--no more, no less. The names of the builders were carved in the stone (or concrete?) above the doors, and agreed with Mother's recollection. The fine two-story brick school building has been abandoned, and the grounds are weed-filled. Mother was too young ever to attend school there. There were one or two new-looking houses in town, but most look as though they've been there since the turn of the century. Some are in good condition, but quite a few could use a coat of paint or some shoring up. We didn't stop or go into any of the stores, for Mother didn't want to. She was actually so young when they left the town, that the memories of it are not particularly strong--just flashes of recollection here and there about candy from the lady of this house, etc.

As we drove along the roads yesterday, we saw several huge flocks of migrating Franklin's Gulls milling around in the sky or resting on plowed fields. Their numbers were in the thousands.

Thurs. p.m., Sept. 11
Jamestown, ND

What changeable weather these Dakotas have. One day it's 100 degrees. The next it's damp and drizzly. Today was clear with puffy white clouds and about 68 degrees--just the most delightful kind of day for a visit to Sand Lake NWR in northeastern South Dakota.

This shallow lake was formed by damming the James River. Giant Canada Geese are making a comeback through a captive breeding flock. We drove the tour road. The most common waterfowl were Coots and Mallards. Western Grebes also nest here. Most of the young are almost as big as their parents, but can be told from them by their gray napes. We were fortunate enough, though, to get a good look at a late chick which was still small enough to ride on its mother's back--a most appealing sight.

There were a few shallow marshy areas where sandpipers could be found, but I saw nothing that one couldn't see in Orange County.

Although the species seen were nothing out of the ordinary, it was an absolutely delightful day--the lovely lake sparkling in the sun, and the brisk, cool breeze enhanced everything. TV news says below normal temperatures for the next week. That suits us fine, though the farmers are probably not too pleased.

Lots of sunflowers are grown in this country (for safflower oil). The heads *all* face east. Why?

Today we crossed into North Dakota. Now I can say I've visited all 50 states.

We've been amazed at how many wildflowers we've seen on our travels. First, there were a few in the deserts of Calif. and Nev.--watered, I suppose, by the late summer thunder storms. Utah had carpets of them in the highlands just east of Zion NP. The Colorado plains around Fort Morgan were also lovely. The road there had broad shoulders filled with flowers. Of course, the rest of the land was farmland. Farther east, Nebraska had mainly sunflowers and goldenrod. Flowers have diminished in the Dakotas, but there are still a few.

Thurs. a.m., Sept. 13
Devil's Lake, ND

Yesterday morning we visited Arrowood NWR, another series of shallow lakes on the James River. We were a bit disappointed in the part open to travel--only a short 5 1/2 mile loop. (Sand Lake had had perhaps a thirty mile loop, much of it right along the water.) I walked a good part of it, and Mother drove the car. It was a beautiful day for a walk, and I did get to renew my acquaintance with the Clay-colored Sparrow.

The weather clouded up and got very cold and even spit on us a bit as we ate our picnic lunch. It was gloomy as we drove north to Devil's Lake. The Fort Totten area was a disappointment. All of the buildings were closed, so we couldn't really find out very much about it. It was built in the 1870's, so I suppose its purpose was to enforce the eviction of the Indians from their lands so the settlers could take over. Ironically, it stands today right next to the headquarters of a huge Sioux Indian Reservation. [1994: This was wrong. See details in 1994 trip log.]

Sully's Hill National Game Preserve is near Fort Totten. It is a wooded hill and is home for Bison, White-tailed Deer, Wapiti (Elk), Prairie Dogs, and a few captive waterfowl, too. We saw all but the Wapiti. The Prairie Dogs were especially interesting to watch--*fat* this time of year and busily gathering huge mouthfuls of grass and carrying them down into their burrows.

Had an excellent prime rib dinner at Mac John's restaurant here last evening. The new-looking restaurant reminded me of the old Tam-o-Shanter Restaurant in the Los Feliz district of L.A. It seemed quite incongruous to find such a large, elaborate restaurant in such a small town. Certainly the motel is nothing fancy. In fact, it's pretty poor.

Sat. a.m., Sept. 15
Near Walker, Minn.

Thursday we drove from Devils Lake to Thief River Falls, Minn. (What names!) I had planned to visit Agassiz NWR that afternoon, as well as the next morning, but decided against it because of the cold blustery weather. It was almost 3:00 by the time we'd had lunch and moved into our motel. So I just took a long walk--nothing special in the bird line, but the town is lovely and has much parkland along the Thief and Red Lake Rivers, which merge there.

Yesterday we spent the morning at Agassiz NWR--a lovely place. (Our mornings have been sunny and relatively calm, with clouds and winds appearing afternoons. Quite cold--probably not above high 50's.) The highlight of the visit was my first Yellow-bellied Flycatcher. According to the book, they're hard to find during migration, and the NWR bird list rated it as rare in *summer*, and not seen in fall (Sept. to Nov.). So I was very lucky, I guess. I had an excellent look at it. It wagged its tail appropriately and was *much* yellower than any *Empidonax* I've ever seen before.

Am. Bitterns were resting at intervals along the dike-road we drove and flew up as the car approached. Once I was lucky enough to see one before it saw me. It adopted its characteristic head-up posture and hoped it was not observed.

I was not so lucky with a flock of Snipe. They kept flying up as I walked along, but *never* could I see one on the ground, and I must have flushed thirty or forty in groups of from 2 to 6.

We arrived in Walker late yesterday afternoon. Our cabin is about 10 miles from town--on a peninsula which sticks out from the south end of Leech Lake. It's quite nice. Today we're just taking it easy. I took a nice long walk this morning. Saw Palm Warbler, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Wood Duck and a few others. Birds have to be worked for in the fall.

Mon. eve., Sept. 17
Near Walker, Minn.

Tomorrow we leave our nice cabin by the lake. Tonight we used up the last of our lettuce, tomatoes and carrots. Tomorrow morning we'll use up the bread, eggs, bacon and half-and-half. No more kitchens till Williamsburg. Nice not to have to worry about perishables.

I just came in from checking on "my flower." I don't have a flower book, so wonder if you know what it is, Fern. It's looked the same way for two days. It's a very deep blue. The head consists of four soft pillowy blue heads with a fifth one in the middle, surrounded by four leaves--two large, two small. These are on a one-foot-high stem, which has several other pairs of opposite leaves on down the stem. (Diagram in original log.) I've done a lot of walking, but this is the only one I've found. It's in the woods quite close to our cabin. (See Sept. 22 section for ID.)

We've had lots of wind, but not so cold as it was. Fairly sheltered in the woods, though. I've taken several long walks. With Mother's help, I've not had to retrace my steps. Last evening after dinner, she left me at the end of a dirt road about 2 miles from the cabin. I walked back. It was a beautiful wooded road, with occasional clearings and, once, a pasture with scattered trees. The last half mile was along the main road. It seemed like a perfect place to find birds feeding just before sunset. My *total* list was: 1 Yellow-shafted Flicker, 4 Blue Jays, and 1 flock of about 20 Chipping Sparrows plus 2 more later on!

This morning I spent quite a bit of time at the Stony Point Campground. It's a lovely U.S. Forest Service facility which is closed for the season. I had the place to myself. Gulls (Ring-billed and Bonaparte's) and terns (Common and Caspian) were cavorting in the wind off the rocks at Stony Point. They also rested on the rocks. An exhausted Lapland Longspur had apparently just flown south across the lake (Leech Lake). It was too tired to flush very easily--poor thing. Around from the point a couple of *Empidonax* sp. (Willow, I'm pretty sure) were working the middle story of some willows. In the woods on a lovely nature trail I flushed away a couple of small birds, but that was all.

Never could I see what they were.

This afternoon Mother let me off where a narrow Forest Service road intersected a paved road. Two hours later she picked me up about three miles away where the dirt road came out at another paved road. (The lodge owner had suggested it as a nice walk.) Again, the setting was beautiful--mixed deciduous and a few coniferous with about 10% of the trees in fall coloring. Occasional lakes, ponds, meadows, etc. Very few birds, but noisy Red Squirrels passing the alarm along the way. Best bird was an Ovenbird. I flushed it back into the woods from near the road, but fortunately was able to see it well enough to identify it before it flew completely. (This time I guessed its identity correctly. The first time I ever saw one--in Nova Scotia two years ago--I had to resort to page-turning to figure it out.) The only other sighting of note was four Ruffed Grouse, which whirred away before I could see them very well. Some Blue Jays, Chickadees, a Yellow-bellied Sapsucker--that was about it. Maybe the west wind we're having is part of the problem. I hope the north shore of Lake Superior and Duluth will treat me better.

Oh! I just realized I didn't tell you about the *best* bird of our stay here. (I put it in my *Tattler* article and forgot it wasn't in your letter.) As I was sitting at the picnic table outside our cabin writing my Nov. *Tattler* article, I heard a song in the tree above me, which sounded like I remembered the Red-eyed Vireo sounds, only longer spaces between sounds than I recalled. I looked up to find the singer. Even a Red-eyed Vireo is nice when you haven't seen one for two years. It *wasn't* a Red-eyed. It was a Yellow-throated Vireo--by far the most beautiful Vireo in the book, and I saw it very well. My 2nd life bird for the trip. I guess if I'd spent more time sitting outside the cabin and less prowling the trails, I'd have seen two or three more life birds.

Wed. evening, Sept. 19

Yesterday a long drive through some beautiful fall foliage to Silver Bay. It was interesting, too, to see the Mesabi Range, which I've read so much about. We found it a bit ironic in one ugly mining town full of barren tailings to see a large city-placed signboard with a "Do Not Litter" appeal.

We drove north to Ely and then down to the shore at Silver Bay. Fall color was most pronounced along that road, although it's still a bit early.

I had forgotten that Silver Bay is the home of that infamous asbestos polluter, the Reserve Mining Company. It's not a very nice town, but the motel is satisfactory and we had a reservation with a deposit. Today we drove up the north shore from Silver Bay to the Canadian border and back. It was a glorious crisply clear fall day. Saw many nice motels right on the lake shore where we wished we were staying.

The *only* place to eat in Silver Bay is Margaret's Cafe. When we went in it last night, it was practically filled with husky mining company workers, still in work clothes and all with hats on. Quite an experience. Food was OK, though. This morning was a repeat, but this time the entire place *suddenly* emptied between 7:45 and 7:50 a.m. (Guess when work starts at the Reserve Mining Co.!) Had delicious homemade caramel nut rolls for breakfast, so will be happy to return there again tomorrow morning--but after 7:50 a.m. This evening we ate at a motel dining room up the road a ways on our way back from our north shore drive, so avoided the crowd.

I spent a long time this morning birding at the Temperance River (no "bar" at its mouth, hence the name--really!) State Park. Lots of migrants--finally! Saw 8 warbler species, but no new ones. Best was my 2nd good view ever of a Pileated Woodpecker. Golden-crowned Kinglets were nice, too.

I've decided the Ovenbird is the coot of the warbler clan. It sits on a limb with its tail cocked and stretches its neck out and looks around in wide-eyed amazement at all that happens. That prominent eyering makes it look so incurably curious. It really looks silly.

Hawks were migrating, too, and I saw one huge "kettle" of Broad-wings, which went higher up into the sky than my binoculars would reach.

Grand Portage Nat'l Monument was interesting. It's an archeologically accurate reconstruction of the meeting place between the Voyageurs who brought beaver pelts from the interior by canoe and the fur buyers from Montreal. It all came to an end, and the action shifted to Fort William, Canada, when the U.S. tax collectors (1803) discovered what they were missing. Anyway, it was the first white settlement in Minn (1780's).

Sat. p.m., Sept. 22

Thursday we drove into Duluth, again enjoying the beautiful Lake Superior shoreline. Ore ships loading at Two Harbors were easily viewed from the city park. It was interesting to watch how a single tugboat could maneuver one of those big ships out of that tiny harbor.

Friday I birded almost all day. In the morning a two-mile walk (and two miles back) out on Park Point, a sandspit which juts out into Lake Superior and helps shelter the Duluth-Superior Harbor. Very few warblers and other land birds. Best was a flock of Swamp Sparrows, the first I've seen since that single one on the north shore of Upper Newport Bay on the 1970 Christmas Count. They have a funny tinkly trill. They were in a weedy field, not a swamp, but the book says that's where they often are during migration. Land birds were scarce because wind was from the southwest. It must be from the northwest, as it had been on Wed., when I saw so much.

I met a young couple just as I set out on the long hike. They were from Michigan, so the area was new to them, too. It was fun to have company birding. The young man (college age) was the birder, while his girl friend was interested in the plants and mildly interested in birds. Coincidentally we found a single plant like the one I was so curious about in Walker. She knew it was a gentian, and when I got back to the car and her library of field guides, we discovered it was the Closed Gentian, which never opens up. It is an endangered species, she thought.

That afternoon I spent on Hawk Ridge, a place where the ridge of land behind Duluth ends suddenly. Hawks flying southwest along the north shore of Lake Superior come to this ridge and enjoy a sudden updraft. I saw a few hawks, but nothing spectacular--again the winds were wrong. The view was fantastic, though.

Duluth is in the middle of a grain-handlers' strike. There were 18 ships (!) anchored outside the harbor *idle* waiting for the strike to be settled. It was a beautiful sight, but the enjoyment was marred by the knowledge of what a waste it is for all those ships to be idle and the elevators to be full to overflowing and this year's harvest waiting for a storage site.

Today we drove south to Fountain City, along the Miss. River in southern Wisconsin. It was a lovely drive. Saw beautiful fall coloring in the first part. Then the trim dairy country. Finally, and best of all, the spectacular drive along the bluffs with the Miss. River on one side. Also took a brief detour 7 miles inland from Pepin, Wis., to see the birth-site of Laura Ingalls Wilder. It's a Wayside Rest Area now, and a reconstruction of the Little House in the Big Woods has been built--except now it's surrounded by corn fields, not woods. The road up the bluff from Pepin was still pretty woodsy, though.

Tues. p.m., Sept. 26
Springfield, Ill.

It's been three days since I've written an installment.

When we left Fountain City Sunday morning, we had about 60 miles of spectacular road along the shore of the Mississippi R. (until Prairie du Chein). The wooded bluffs rose steeply. Along the road we were alternately beside sheltered marshland with much open shallow-looking water, and open stretches of the main shipping channel of the river. We saw a few barges (or rather, barge trains being pushed by a single boat). One was obviously carrying coal; several power plants were located along the river. The traffic was very light compared to what we saw on the Ohio River in

1977. Then we had hotel rooms in Marietta, Ohio, which overlooked the river.

Inland from the river, we enjoyed the lovely hilly dairy farms with their huge barns. Spent the night in Monroe, Wis., the cheese center of the state. Had a nice dinner in the Idle Hour Mansion, a mid-19th-century house which has been converted into a beautiful restaurant. It's filled with genuine antiques, as well as many nice reproductions, many of which are for sale.

Monday we drove to Peoria, via Bishop Hill. B. H. is a partially restored and open to visitors, partially ordinary residential, town, which was settled by a strictly religious communal Lutheran group from Sweden. The communal part disintegrated several years after the leader was murdered by a disgruntled member. The property was divided among the members. Many of their descendants still live in the town today, and they run the businesses and lead tourists through the restored buildings. Some practice and demonstrate the old crafts (weaving, metal work, candle-making, etc.), but we only saw the broom-maker actually working. The most interesting building was the church. On the first floor it has ten rooms, five on each side of a hall. An entire family lived in each room. The sanctuary is on the second floor and is still used today.

Today was spent in Lincoln country--Springfield and vicinity. First we visited the reconstructed village of New Salem, where Lincoln spent his young adult years. The town declined and disappeared not long after Lincoln moved to Springfield, so excavation and reconstruction were possible on the site. Deep hickory and oak woods are about the town on all sides. Birds filled the woods--warblers, vireos, woodpeckers (several species of each)--nothing I've not seen before, though. The homes and shops have been furnished as they might have been then. Again, no one was at work but the broom-maker!

After lunch in the picnic area nearby, we drove into Springfield. Visited Lincoln's home and the State Museum--interesting, but not exciting. The home was furnished as it would have been when Lincoln was raising his house full of boys.

The Holiday Inn where we're staying has over 400 rooms, but what's really amazing is their "Holidome." This is a huge indoor area which contains a *large* swimming pool, exercise room, saunas, pool and ping-pong tables, *many* pin-ball machines and electronic games, a snack bar, a putting green, etc. Of course, the place also has coffee shop, dining room, and banquet rooms. We've stayed in places with covered swimming and game areas in other towns on this trip, but nothing of this size. Jill and Gina (my young nieces) would *love* it.

Springfield *is* Lincoln! Every reference in town is directly or indirectly connected with him. Signs on every corner direct one to his home, etc. There's a Lincoln Memorial Botanic Garden with quotes by him on every bench. Benches donated by garden and veterans groups from all across the U.S. The Holiday Inn has a Railsplitter Dining Room. Even the bedrooms are Lincoln. One entire long wall of every room has 4 or 5 photographs which completely cover it. The one right over my bed was placed so that I could see a full length photo of the man himself in the mirror. Other photos were of his house, law office, statue, etc. They haven't completely ignored Illinois' other famous politicians, though. Our motel was near the corner of Adlai Stevenson Drive and Everett Dirksen Blvd!

Morning, 9/26
Springfield, Ill.

I spent a couple of hours in the Lincoln Botanic Garden this morning. Not many migrants. It's funny how spotty they are. They were common in New Salem yesterday. The garden claims to have "almost all the plants native to Illinois." I was disappointed that none were labeled. It was a lovely wild, not well-manicured, garden along the shore of Lake Springfield. Many plants which I've seen and wondered about elsewhere in the state were there, but I'll just have to go on wondering what they are.

To me a "supper club" or a "road house" has always meant either a night club or an unsavory bar on the edge of town. We've been surprised to discover that those terms in this part of the country

merely mean a nice restaurant that's only open for the evening meal. If it's out in the country, it may be called a "road house." We first encountered the "supper clubs" in Fountain City, where we *had* to eat in one. From outside, both the supper clubs in town looked awful, but we were amazed at the beautiful river boat decor inside the one we chose.

Evening, 9/27

Bloomington, Ind.

We were glad to leave Illinois' roads behind. That state takes the prize for the worst roads in the U.S. They're narrow, broken up, poorly labeled as to where they go and their highway numbers. It's almost impossible to locate a road, even an Interstate Hwy., unless you're right at it. Roads in the deep south were nothing like this.

We're spending two nights in Bloomington. Today we spent in beautiful Brown County, which rivals the Great Smokies in its beauty. Fall is just starting. October is the big month. I walked several trails in Brown County State Park today. The first one I took was rated "moderate," but I found it pretty difficult, so I stuck to the "easy" ones after that. Lots of woodpeckers--Downy, Hairy, Y-b Sapsucker, Y-s Flicker, and *especially* the Red-headed, which was everywhere. I even had a glimpse of a Pileated. Yellow-billed Cuckoos were fairly common.

Best bird was my lifer, the Bay-breasted Warbler. I found a flock of them as I was walking a deeply forested trail just before dark. It was very quiet except for the Red-headed Woodpeckers screaming in the distance. Suddenly I became aware of a faint "seep-seep" all around. With some effort, I was able to get good looks and to identify the birds. They, of course, looked like the picture on the "Fall Warblers" page of Robbins' *Birds of North America*. With the flock was a nice colorful Black-throated Green Warbler.

We left the park for a few hours in the early afternoon to go into Nashville--best described as the Carmel of Indiana. It has lots of nice little shops, not much junk. We ate in the Nashville House Restaurant. I had hickory smoked sausage and Mother had a huge ham sandwich on home-made bread. Both of the meats were outstanding. The ham, which Mother kindly let me sample, was by far the best I've ever eaten. My sausage was good, too--sort of like a wiener, but better.

After lunch we went down the street and had sundaes made from home-made ice cream. We saw them packing the freezer with ice and salt the old-fashioned way. They didn't turn the crank by hand, though.

A specialty of this part of the country is fried biscuits and apple butter. We had them in our motel dining room last evening, this morning for breakfast, and again at the Nashville House. They're made out of yeast dough and fried in deep fat. I read a recipe in a cookbook in one of the shops. The yeast dough is made up entirely with milk, allowed to rise once--not too high--formed into balls, and fried at 350 degrees in deep fat. They come out as balls 2 inches in diameter. They're not sweet like doughnuts. *Really delicious.*

Sun. p.m., Sept. 30

Near Akron, Ohio.

We left Bloomington and drove straight through to Lebanon, Ohio--not far from Cincinnati. We wanted to arrive in time for a late lunch at the Golden Lamb Inn. We had eaten there in 1977 and wanted a repeat. It's one of the earliest hotels in the state which has been in continuous operation. They still rent rooms, but are most famous for their meals. I had Quiche Lorraine and apple dumplings (delicious) for dessert. After lunch we visited the County Museum nearby. It has many early American things, arranged in natural room settings whenever possible. We found it very interesting, certainly more so than the Illinois State Museum in Springfield. Particularly, I enjoyed the display of Shaker tools. They had a gadget for everything. An apple peeler looked like some

contraption Stan Kann, who humorously demonstrates gadgets on TV, might have come up with. It was quite large (for an apple peeler), and I certainly couldn't tell by looking at it how it worked.

Lebanon is a beautiful old town, and the downtown is nearly all red brick buildings. The next morning we ate breakfast in the ice cream parlor, which a group of local citizens has restored to turn-of-the-century splendor. We'd been too full of apple dumpling to try the ice cream the day before. [I doubt we ate it for breakfast, either, despite the way this sounds.]

Ohio has very few migrant birds. I only seem to be seeing the residents and those which were here all summer and haven't left yet. It don't believe it's on any flyway, and the Great Lakes probably divert the birds around it. I suspect western Penn. may be similar.

Yesterday we drove some Ohio back roads through rolling country studded with pretty farms and quite a few colored trees. Ended up in Mansfield, where we visited the Kingwood Center Gardens. It's an old estate, whose owner willed it and an endowment to run it to a private trust. It's open free, and many nature oriented civic groups use its buildings and grounds. The grounds were lovely--many roses, mums, and dahlias, plus smaller numbers of lots of other flowers.

Had excellent ice cream (4 scoops, 4 flavors, for \$0.85) at Friendly Ice Cream Shop in Mansfield. It's a chain, so we'll watch for others.

This morning I returned to Kingwood to look for birds, but there were none of interest. Then we drove on to the Akron area, dawdling because we wanted to visit the Hale Farm, which didn't open until noon. After parking Mitzi (elderly toy poodle) in a cool motel room, we went out there.

Hale Farm and Village was settled by Jonathan Hale in 1819 when he migrated to Ohio's Western Reserve from Conn. His 1826 house stands and has been restored to its condition when first built. Historic buildings from around the area have been brought in and restored. This time we saw *many* people practicing the early skills: blacksmithy, woodworking (furniture making), potter, lace-making, spinning, weaving, glass-blowing, cooking, sawmill. This time there was no broom-maker, though. They've acquired and are restoring a grist mill. It's a very interesting place and rivals Old Sturbridge, Mass., though it isn't that big yet. It's sort of like Upper Canada Village in Ontario, Canada, too.

We've really been fortunate in our weather. Had a touch of drizzle one day, but aside from a bit more humidity lately than I'd prefer, it's been perfect.

Mitzi gets along quite well despite her blindness. She sniffs each new motel over once, and then after that can go directly to her water dish wherever Mother places it. She's really an experienced traveler. I suppose having done so much traveling when she could see helps her now.

We've learned what a "California Sandwich" is. It's just a hamburger with lettuce, tomato and onions, and is on all menus in Minn., Wis., and northern Ill.

Wed. p.m., Oct. 3
Lancaster, PA

We've been traveling lately through the beautiful Allegheny Mtns. of PA. Unfortunately Mon. and Tues. were terribly foggy, almost to the point of making driving difficult at times. Today it rained a little and was cloudy most of the time, but we were able to see a little farther. Again we're finding only about 10% of the trees in fall color, but the contrast they make with their green neighbors is lovely.

Mon. we planned to visit Old Harmony Village in Ambridge (north of Pittsburgh), but when we got there they said we'd have to wait 1 1/2 hours for the next tour. We weren't that interested, so we went on. Besides, those tours often tell you more than you want to know. We prefer the self-guided kind, with a brochure or labeled stops.

We went on to Mt. Pleasant, where we enjoyed a tour of the Smith Glass Factory. Glass-working is a craft I never tire of watching. We wanted to buy a piece as a souvenir, but most of it seemed heavy and coarse and not to our taste. Down the road was the Lennox crystal and china factory store. No tours here, but we did buy a couple of their "seconds" to use as vases. The

workers were on strike and we're ornery enough to like to patronize those places, though the strikers here seemed quite well-behaved.

Tuesday we had only a short drive to Bedford, PA. On the way we tried to find a Nature Center described in Pettingill [bird-finding guide book], but couldn't locate it. The roads we explored in the effort had about the prettiest trees we've seen in PA, though.

Bedford is the site of Old Bedford Village, a collection of old buildings brought from around Bedford County or reconstructed on the site. Not so many craftsmen and women working as at Hale Farm, but there were some. The most notable thing about it was the especially friendly people in the various buildings describing their uses. The village was a 1976 Bicentennial project, and it's amazing how much has been accomplished in such a short time.

An added bonus was a craft festival taking place on the same property. Many booths were set up, and many people were performing their craft, as well as selling the product. One woman made bread-dough dolls' heads and fitted them to rag bodies. They were the most expressive faces I've ever seen--looked like wax museum heads in quality. Most were of elderly hill-country people (toothless grins, etc.), but they were *not* caricatures.

One group of ladies was making and selling "funnel cakes." A batter similar to a waffle batter is placed in an ordinary kitchen funnel and allowed to run into a fry-pan full of 375 degree fat. The funnel is kept moving as the batter runs in, resulting in a tangle of dough strands. After it has browned on one side, the whole mass is turned over and browned on the other side. (It floats.) Then it is drained and removed to a plate and sprinkled with powdered sugar and eaten at once. Very crispy and delicious--a Penn. Dutch specialty, we were told. We bought the recipe for the batter. (You're beginning to think we're doing nothing but eat, I'm sure!)

Today we drove to Lancaster, the heart of the Penn. Dutch country. On the way we stopped in Hershey of chocolate fame. The Hershey Company has developed a ride in a little car on a track similar to the rides at Disneyland. This ride takes you through an animated version of their manufacturing process, starting with the harvesting of the beans in South America or Africa and ending with the packaged product. Of course, there was ample opportunity to purchase the product at the end of the ride! It was very well done, probably the most elaborate "industrial tour" we've ever taken, even though the actual factory was a mile or two away and not open to the public.

After renting a motel room, we decided to have a full-course family-style dinner at the Good and Plenty Restaurant. (We'd been told by the motel owner in Bedford not to miss it.) Since it was 2:30 and we'd not had any lunch, we were well prepared to gorge ourselves. For \$6.50 we had all we could eat (and, most important, all the time we needed to do so!) Menu was (in order of appearance): white and wheat bread, cottage cheese, apple butter, whipped butter, cole slaw, chow chow relish (had many more vegetables than just corn and no cabbage and was very good), fried chicken, roast beef, ham with cabbage, mashed potatoes with chicken gravy, cooked carrots, cooked dried corn (sweetened and very good), buttered noodles, orange jello with pineapple, soda cracker pudding, shoe-fly pie, black raspberry pie, chocolate and vanilla ice cream, orange sherbet. Would you believe I sampled *everything* but the jello, the chocolate ice cream, and the orange sherbet? I found it all delicious except the roast beef (which others liked, but I had enough of to last me a lifetime when I was at Occidental College) and the cracker pudding (texture too much like mushy crackers). After buying some cook books, chow chow, and apple butter in their shop, we returned to the motel to plan our strategy for the two days to come in this country.

Fri. p.m., Oct. 5
Lancaster, PA

We've really enjoyed our two days in the Lancaster area (accent on the first syllable of Lancaster and intermediate accent on 3rd syllable, not the second--almost "Lankster"). Let me see if I can remember all the things we did and the good--and not so good--things we ate.

Yesterday morning our first stop was at the local Information Center to see a movie about the Amish and Mennonite people. It tried so hard to set a mood that we didn't feel that its message came across very clearly, although we did enjoy it. Certainly it was well made--wide screen, quadraphonic sound.

Next stop was the Pennsylvania Farm Museum, another pioneer village, and probably the worst of the lot. We arrived around 11:30 and many of the buildings were closed while the attendants went to lunch! What a gyp! Others were only open on special days. On ordinary days the only way to see them was to peer in the window. It's a state of Penn. facility, and the employees said the state was cutting corners. But Bedford had been a state facility, too, and there was no sign of that there. I think the reason was that the staff there had actively sought outside support, for several agencies were cited on their brochure as supporters.

After a late lunch we visited the Candy Americana Museum of the Wilbur Chocolate Co. in Lititz. It was free and a very interesting collection of candy (in general) and chocolate (in particular) paraphernalia--processing equipment (old and new), molds containers, a large collection of lovely hot chocolate pitchers. They had a shop where their product was on sale. Bargains in broken pieces--unlike Hershey, where everything was the regular price. Wilbur supplies mainly to house brands of various stores, which is why we'd never heard of it. The plant, which was not open for tours, was very large, although by no means as large as Hershey's.

Next was a short visit to Mill Bridge Village, which had been highly overblown in what we'd read about it. We failed to see any of the working craftsmen which they promised, and they wanted \$2.00 just to tour an old gristmill, and we know we can see one free on the Blue Ridge Parkway. The gift shop has nothing but junk.

By then it was 4:00, so we decided to drive around a while through some of the beautiful farmland. The Amish do not use electricity, so it is possible to park on a hilltop and view an entire landscape of farmland and buildings unmarred by powerlines. Amish farms average only 80 acres and often several families live in separate or connected houses on one farm, so the scene contains a great many more houses and barns than you usually see. A typical house contains up to three "houses" of graduated size all connected together. As one generation grows up and starts a family, the older generation moves into the smaller house. If no smaller house exists, then one is built. Sort of a nice arrangement. The generations are near to one another, but still not in the same household.

We ended our day at the Amish Barn Restaurant. My meal was OK, but Mother's "chicken pot pie" was pretty skimpy--a bed of noodles with one small chicken leg on top! She complained and they brought her a couple more pieces of chicken. I had ham loaf with raisin sauce, which was ample and not bad, though I've had better. They had a nice salad bar with various relishes and some of their home-grown vegetables. The tomatoes were especially delicious.

Today we ate a delicious breakfast at the Willows Restaurant. Scrapple and their own coffee cake were the unusual parts, but it also consisted of juice, 2 eggs, coffee and apple butter--all for only \$2.45.

Then, after rejecting the pretzel factory tour because it had 5 bus tours there at the same time, we went to the farmers market in the village of Bird-in-Hand. Lovely produce and meat, but we had no way of preparing any, so had to content ourselves with just looking. We did buy some special potato chips and some cracked dried corn, which we plan to prepare like that we had at Good 'n plenty Restaurant. It came with a recipe. The farmers market was pretty small, so we were somewhat disappointed.

The rest of the morning we spent prowling the various shops in Bird-in-Hand and Intercourse. Especially nice were the preserves and relishes kitchen and a *huge* store devoted entirely to quilts and the fabrics for making them. We loved looking at the many locally made quilts in traditional patterns, which were on sale for \$200 to \$300. (I wonder how much per hour of labor that works out to--probably very little, for there was no machine work on any of them.) They also had yardage of small prints suitable for quilts--an enormous selection. It really made me want to piece and quilt a

quilt, but I resisted.

Also in Intercourse was The People's Place. There we saw a well-done, tasteful and informative documentary about the Amish and their way of life. They also had a museum which contained 40 carved semi-diaramas of Amish life. They were beautifully done. I say "semi" for they were half way between a diarama and a bas-relief. I've never seen anything quite like them. They were made by a man who grew up Old Order Amish, but left it to join the less strict Beachy Amish as an adult.

Our "lunch" consisted of molasses cookies, apple cider, and potato chips at various times and places. Then a visit to the "Choo-choo Barn," one family's model train set-up with many animated scenes between the tracks--circus, zoo, roads, Lancaster Co. farms, towns, tourist traps, motels, restaurants, ice skating, skiing, boy scout camp, military maneuvers, etc., etc. Very nice.

Then another long drive through more lovely farmland. It was school bus time and we enjoyed seeing the youngsters in their old-fashioned garb get off the bus. One little girl carefully looked both ways for traffic before she crossed the street, despite the fact that the traffic had to stop for the bus. Most children we've seen just dash out, confident that the world will always look out for them.

The drive brought us to the Ephrat farmers' market (Green Dragon Market), which is only open on Fridays. This was a much larger affair than the earlier one and had the untidy ambience one usually considers appropriate to such establishments. Again there was much lovely produce, baked goods and meat. (It's harvest time now.) We wished we were staying a few days so we could buy some. They had a funnel cake stand, but it was 4:30 p.m. and we hated to spoil our dinner, so we didn't buy one, even though it was probably our last chance. [Little did we know that they'd be all over the country in a few decades.]

We returned to the Willows for dinner and were not disappointed. I had Saurbraten and mother had roast pork. Many other courses, including lots of the savory Penn. Dutch goodies. This was not family style, so we didn't have to make conversation with strangers. We really enjoyed it more than we had Good 'n Plenty for that reason. The best and most unusual things were corn custard and sour cream apple pie (sort of like cheese cake with pieces of still-partly-crisp apple in it and topped with streusel of cinnamon, sugar and a bit of flour). It's a good thing we're not spending our entire trip in this country, or we'd look like balloons when we got home.

Sun. p.m., Oct. 7
Smithville, NJ

Yesterday, after another breakfast at the Willows, we left Lancaster. We had a bad time finding a motel. Nothing in Reading or Kutztown, but we finally were successful in Allentown, PA. No one was quite sure why the crush--antique car show in Hershey, Parents Day at Kutztown State or what. By this time it was noon, but we set out on our planned activities.

First, a visit to the famous Hawk Mountain Sanctuary. There were hundreds there--people, not hawks! I asked the gatekeeper how many when I left around 4:00, and was told they'd had 1300 so far that day, but that it was not uncommon to get 2000 on a day. The wind was wrong for the hawks to fly by very close, but there were a fair number to be seen as specks in the distance. An expert was there calling and tallying them. He was quite explicit as to the location of each one, so I began to get a feel for the "jizz" of the more common species. Saw lots of Turkey Vultures, Ospreys, Sharp-shinned. Smaller numbers of Red-tails, Cooper's and Marsh Hawks [now called Northern Harrier]. Also one gull! (Herring probably)

I was amazed at the way people were clambering all over the boulders which clung precariously to the steep escarpment that constitutes the edge of Hawk Mountain (really the north end of a long ridge). I wonder how many they lose every fall.

Most of the people there didn't know a hawk from a glider. It's just something to do for an outing on a nice fall Saturday. Many were loaded with huge back-packs--for a 2/3 mile trail! Some

lacked binoculars entirely. The thing that amused me the most, though, was the way so many people carried their binoculars from car to lookout carefully protected in their leather cases. It didn't occur to them that a walk through a forest might produce an interesting bird. They were there for hawks, and hawks were "supposed" to be at the official look-out sites, and not in between.

After leaving Hawk Mtn., we visited Roadside America. It's much larger than the Choo-Choo Barn described earlier--also much older. I suspect CCB people got some of their ideas from Roadside America. The light was so poor in Roadside America that we had trouble making out some of the details. Also, quite a lot of equipment was out of order. The whole thing could have stood a bout with a dust cloth, too. We really didn't enjoy it so much, although it really was a mammoth undertaking for one family to construct in a lifetime.

We ate dinner at the Glockenspiel Restaurant, which Mother remembered fondly from an earlier trip, but which I had forgotten. It was OK, but not as good as Willows and twice as expensive. Service was poor, too.

I should have mentioned Kutztown earlier. (We drove through it in the a.m.) It is the most Holland-looking town I've ever seen in the U.S. Many white and red-brick buildings with the stair-step "gables" which are so typical of Holland. Very attractive. We'd have enjoyed it more if we hadn't been so worried about finding a motel.

Today we drove straight through to Smithville, NJ. Drove through an area of sod farms which a *Birding* bird-finding article recommended as being good for shorebirds in Sept. and Oct, but nothing to be seen but blackbirds.

Smithville is a collection of old buildings with glassed-in fronts, so you can peer through and see the furnishings inside. The main attraction here, though, is the many little shops--sort of like Ports-of-Call in San Pedro. To add to the fun, today they were having a Fall Craft Fair. Lots of tables were set up where local amateurs and pros could display and sell their wares. Local charity groups had food stands set up. A German Oom-pah-pah band and dancers performed. It was loads of fun for all the local people, and they were there in large numbers. I even stood in line 30 (or more) minutes for another funnel cake. It seemed it would probably be my last chance. It was just as good as the earlier one we had.

Mother and I decided that after day-after-day of full-course Penn. Dutch food, we'd let a hamburger and a funnel cake be our dinner today (We might piece out of our ice chest after while, though.)

Tomorrow a chance to revisit Brigantine [now Forsythe] NWR, which I remember fondly from our 1971 stop in this area. Then on to Cape May.

Tues. p.m., Oct. 9
Cape May, NJ

Yesterday morning we spent a pleasant few hours driving the dike roads and walking the nature trails (not Mother on the trails) of Brigantine NWR. This is a coastal sanctuary just north of Atlantic City. It consists of flat land with many salt and fresh water marshes. NWR personnel have controlled the flow so as to provide the best habitat for breeding ducks and Canada Geese. On the inland portions of the refuge are deciduous forest areas. The wind was blowing very hard and the temperature was in the 50's--not too good for land birding, but I did see a few, but nothing new. The sight of many Canada Geese, herons, egrets, ducks, etc., was thrilling. The only shorebirds were Dunlin, Lesser Yellowlegs (one bird) and Greater Yellowlegs (several hundred). I still keep hoping for the shorebirds I've never seen, but their migration is pretty much over in this area.

Perhaps the most distinctive thing about a visit to Brigantine is to *be* in a lovely peaceful setting--open water, puffy clouds and waving marsh grasses--and to look across the bay and see the skyline of frantic Atlantic City looming up several miles away.

Around noon we left Brigantine and drove down the coast to Cape May, the southern tip of NJ,

which juts out into Delaware Bay's mouth. We chose the coast road rather than the turnpike. The *entire* stretch of coastline (maybe 45 miles) is just one enormous resort. Most of the motels and houses were in good condition, and there were very few junky areas. But habitat for wildlife is reduced to only a couple of minuscule sanctuaries.

Cape May is perhaps the oldest of the resort towns. Its ocean front is a mix of attractive hotels and motels along with a large number of beautiful old Victorian seacoast-style mansions. Many have been converted into rental units, but they are still lovely--tall (3 or 4 stories) with all sorts of gingerbread. Many have cupolas which face the sea.

We are here out of season and had not trouble at all finding rooms with a gorgeous ocean view for only \$22.00--about the average price we've had to pay.

Many restaurants have closed for the season. We've been having some trouble finding any of them open. This afternoon we tried three places before we found anything open at 3:00. Some are open for breakfast and lunch. Others, for dinner, but hardly any have continuous hours. If they do serve lunch and dinner, they close for a few hours, say from 2:30 to 5:00. (We wanted to eat an early dinner so I could spend the waning daylight birding.)

After we got our rooms, I set out to scout the recommended birding sites. I found the article in *Birdwatchers Digest* to be the most helpful. Cape May State Park was the place I spent most of my time. It's on the very tip of the cape near the lighthouse and has extensive wooded and marshy areas nearby.

When I arrived, I walked out to where the local hawk count was going on. (This is the 3rd place we've visited where volunteers count hawks from dawn to dusk *every day* during the 2 or 3 months of fall migration. People sign up for various days, I suppose.) It was easy to see what they were tallying, for Sharp-shinned Hawks were literally everywhere--darting high and low, in and out of the shrubs and trees, behaving more like swallows than hawks. I introduced myself to the counters and the hangers on, who seem always to be present at these hawk counts. They were very friendly, more so than those at Duluth. Hawk. Mtn. was so crowded that it wasn't comparable.

As I walked back to the car, I heard warblers in the shrubbery and stopped to investigate. Saw Myrtle (Yellow-rumped), but more than one kind of call note could be heard, so I persisted. As I stood there, a group of local men came along and I thought I heard one comment, "There's a Cape May." I wasn't sure, because they could have been talking about their location, not the warbler. But I asked him, "Did you say you saw a Cape May Warbler?" He hadn't seen it, just recognized the call, but he stopped and helped me "pish" it out. A life bird! And what an appropriate place to see one for the first time.

That first afternoon there was very little wind, but during the night the wind became gale force, and there was quite a lot of rain. It whistled around the motel so fiercely that we had trouble sleeping. The next morning there was only a little rain, but much wind. In an open place, I could almost lean back against it. It blew sand over the concrete retaining wall in the town of Cape May. The city had to get out early with their sand removal equipment and shovel it out of the road so cars could pass.

I went out to the Cape May Point lighthouse before breakfast and again afterwards. The Sharpies were out in force--even more of them than the night before. Literature had said hawks fly low at dawn, high at midday; low in the wind, high when it's calm. They were flying low! The trees, bushes and marsh grasses ranged from 6 to 12 feet in height. I took a 2-mile nature trail through this habitat of restricted visibility. All through it the Sharpies were constantly darting in and out of view. I tried an experiment. Every few minutes I stopped and estimated how long I had to wait before a Sharpie came into view. I think no wait was longer than 10 seconds!

Sharpies weren't the only birds present in large numbers. Yellow-shafted Flickers were also passing through. The first evening I saw one flock of around 50 and many smaller groups. The second day they were fewer, but still numerous. Blue Jays were also very ubiquitous. Today's strong wind combined with the presence of their mortal enemy, the Sharp-shinned Hawk, and the fact that passerine migration is nearly over in this area, resulted in my seeing very few land birds. I did find a

Palm Warbler and an American Redstart, but that was all.

Once as I was walking through the dense wooded area, a Sharpie flew out of the thicket and landed on a tree limb at eye-level only four feet from me. It remained several seconds before flying off to a perch 20 ft away, but still in plain sight. That should have been my chance of a lifetime to look for those sharp shins which supposedly distinguish the bird. Instead I looked at those wild, and probably very hungry, hawk eyes. If this bird was having as much trouble finding land birds as I was, it was probably very hungry.

Later I was in a somewhat open area and conducting my "experiment." This time I waited quite a while, but no Sharpie--or other bird either--appeared. It was getting on toward noon, so I wondered if the activity were slackening. Finally the bird which broke the lull was a Peregrine Falcon. It flew over my head not more than 20 ft up. What a sight! Shortly after its passage, 15 Blue Jays popped up on top of a bush across the way. They came up one at a time and reminded me of puppets appearing on stage in a Punch and Judy show. (They were just as noisy, too!) Shortly after that, the Sharpie activity resumed much as it had been earlier.

I returned to the hawk count area and sat around for a few minutes--maybe half an hour. During this period two more Peregrines appeared. By the end of the day, I learned later, they had counted an even dozen.

Thurs. p.m., Oct. 11
Ocean City, MD

The main event yesterday was the weather. We awoke in Cape May to a strong wind and pronounced drizzle, and it was very cold. After breakfast when we set out, it was still raining. We hadn't gone 50 miles when the rain turned to wet snow. It melted on the ground, so driving was no problem. By the time we got to Dover, Del., our scheduled stop, the trees and buildings were distinctly white, and the snow was starting to get slushy on the road. I had planned some birding stops along the way, but with the weather so poor, we decided to keep going, so we arrived in Dover at 1:00. Fortunately the motel was a motor inn with rooms opening on the hall and with its own restaurant (very good food, too). The TV news said this date was the earliest date ever for snow in Wilmington, and we were south of there by 50 miles. Philadelphia hadn't had an earlier snowfall since 1895, when it occurred Oct. 9.

We were happy this morning to find the snow nearly all melted, the sky bright, though overcast, and no rain. It was still very cold all day, but there wasn't too much wind.

We visited Bombay Hook NWR, one place we had planned to go yesterday. It's a lovely area of fresh and salt marsh, grasslands, and mixed deciduous and coniferous forest. It has a good amount of all these habitats. There were no "dead" places from the birding standpoint. Every habitat was active, if not always bustling, with birdlife.

I had no sooner walked into the Information booth when I heard the honking of a vast throng of geese. When I walked out, they weren't visible for a few seconds. Then scraggly skeins began to appear from the southwest. They kept coming and coming until the entire sky was filled with their patterns and their voices. They headed toward the ponds on the refuge, and we saw them there later. Canadas mostly, but a fair number of the Snow-Blue variety.

Sharpies were present, but not so numerous as at Cape May. So land birds were easier to find. The mud flats had shorebirds. In all I saw 54 bird species by the time we left at 1:00.

Bombay Hook is near Dover and is located on the west side of Delaware Bay.

We drove straight down to Ocean City, MD and located ourselves in the only place on the entire ocean coast of Del. and Md. which AAA indicated accepts pets. Improbably enough, it is the Sheraton, a 15-story high-rise, located among many other high-rises strung out along this barrier island. Mile after mile, this mid-Atlantic coast is nothing but seashore resort. Not all is high-rise, but all is developed.

Since few places accept pets and all entry and exodus from the hotel is through the main lobby, there is a constant stream of people and their dogs parading in and out to be "exercised."

The hotel is located right across the highway from the only undeveloped land we saw in our four mile drive north from the bridge to the island from the mainland. I found out why when I crossed the road to do some birding. I heard sounds of grading in the woods and kept away from it, but apparently I was seen, for a man came up to me. He was apparently the contractor on the site and told me he was expecting "the water inspector" and thought I might be that person. Apparently the property has a severe drainage problem and development will not be permitted until it's solved. His job is to solve it to the inspector's satisfaction. I hope he fails, for it's a nice piece of marsh and woodland and an oasis in the vast string of developed property. I saw 26 species in an hour's walk, and most were land birds. I especially enjoyed Pine Warbler and Bobwhite, which were new to the trip. I learned the contact call of the Bobwhite and realized I'd heard it other places, but hadn't been able to identify it. I'd passed it off--uneasily--as chipmunks or squirrels.

We had planned to go down to Assateague Island National Seashore after checking in, but it was 4:00 and we discovered we'd have to backtrack 100 blocks of Ocean City plus the 10 miles to the National Seashore. So we had to give it a miss, although it seemed a bit of a waste to have come clear down here without going there. Thank goodness for the nice birds right across the street. Mother enjoyed the surf view from the hotel window while I was out.

Fri. p.m., Oct. 12
Easton, MD

We drove north along the ocean highway to Lewes, Del., (right across the mouth of Delaware Bay from Cape May) and found that there was a fair amount of undeveloped land in Del. We spent most of the morning in Cape Henlopen State Park. It has dunes and pines mostly. Got nice looks at a mature male Pine Warbler and at the Eastern race of the Solitary Vireo [now separated off as the Blue-headed Vireo]. (Curiously enough, the Plumbeous, or Rocky Mtn. race, which occurs between our western race and this one, has scarcely any yellow on it at all.)

Drove from there to Easton, PA, and rented nearly the last rooms in the Holiday Inn there (and it was only 2:30). The sign out front said, "Welcome Birdwatchers." When Mother registered, she asked who was staying there. The desk clerk said, "It's orioles." Mother didn't think I'd been seeing any orioles recently, so she was still puzzled. So the clerk explained that the Baltimore Orioles *baseball* team was in the World Series, and people were staying clear out here in Easton 50 miles away because the Baltimore motels were full. (I was disappointed that it wasn't some Audubon field trip with people I could talk to.)

We took a jaunt later this afternoon down to Blackwater NWR on Chesapeake Bay's inlets. It was raining pretty hard, so we did most of our viewing from the car. Best by far were two Bald Eagles. Brown-headed Nuthatches, the only life bird Mother has over me, were supposed to be there, but despite a walk in the rain in the spot where they are most often seen, I was unsuccessful. I've tried many times since Mother saw one at St. Marks NWR in Florida in 1971, but not yet. We're going down farther south into their preferred country, so I have hopes.

Fern, you'll be interested in the name of a person who visited Blackwater on the same day we did--probably came and left in the a.m. It was Frances Robinson from Newport Beach. I know it was your friend, for she made some remark (almost illegible) in the "comments" column of the registration book about Upper Newport Bay. (She was apparently with two Md. friends.)

Produce stands throughout the East have been really lovely. Many bushel baskets of apples and other small items. Piles and rows of pumpkins and assortes squashes all around the outside. We have yet to be offered squash or pumpkin pie in a restaurant.

Sat. p.m., Oct. 13
Fredericksburg, VA

It was still raining when we set out this morning and didn't stop until we were eating lunch. We did not look forward to visiting Mount Vernon in the rain, for it consists of many outbuildings as well as the main house. As it turned out, the rain was moderate by then, and I'm sure the crowds were much smaller because of it. (When I visited there in 1957, I can remember truly pressing crowds of people.)

After getting a room in Fredericksburg, Mother and I agreed that the historic places in this town, which we visited in 1971, did not demand a revisit this time. (They were interesting, though.) So that left birding to fill the p.m. Where to go? Pettingill was no help, so I decided maybe the Civil War battlefields might provide promising habitat, and I was not wrong.

We headed for the visitors' center at Chancellorsville, where we obtained a map of it and also Spotsylvania. We spent time in both and enjoyed the winding country roads between them, too. I've never been particularly interested in battle strategy and tactics, so didn't spend much time reading all the signs. However, I couldn't help but be moved by the realization that these places, which are so peaceful today, were once the sites where many men lost their lives. An outcome of that which no one could have foreseen is that, if they had not been battlefields, these sites would today be farms or homes, not natural forest and meadow where wildlife abounds.

I saw 25 species of birds in the battlefields in just a couple of hours. The rain had only recently stopped and they were very active. At Chancellorsville in *one* tree, which had red berries, there were Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, Catbird, Wood Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, Cardinal, and Rufous-sided Towhee. Not far away I added Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Downy Woodpecker, Blue Jay, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Black-throated Green Warbler, Yellow-rumped Warbler, Magnolia Warbler, Scarlet Tanager, and Yellow-billed Cuckoo. None of these was more than 50 ft from the tree with the berries. (Sort of like Blome Ranch [now Santiago Oaks] on a spring morning, huh!)

Later, in Spotsylvania, I had another active tree. There were many nice birds in it, but the one which meant the most to me was the Black-throated Blue Warbler, because it was a life bird. I was struck by the fact that this peaceful spot contained only one living thing wearing both the Union blue and the Confederate gray, and the place where I found it was the spot where one of the bloodiest battles of the war was fought, the Bloody Angle Campaign.

Mon. p.m., Oct. 15
Williamsburg, VA

Yesterday was a long day. Besides 170 miles on slow roads, we toured two very interesting plantations on the Potomac River.

First was Pope's Creek Plantation, birthplace and home for his first three years of George Washington. It was a gorgeous clear fall day, cold and breezy with puffy white clouds. Everything sparkled after the rain. In this setting the lovely plantation house and outbuildings were especially attractive. The house was not especially large, but very livable--a home not a mansion.

The place went to Washington's oldest brother when his father died. (He inherited Mt. Vernon from his 2nd brother when that brother died. He inherited no land directly from his father, which is why he had to take up surveying and military careers.)

There was a very well made introductory film in the Visitors Center, which emphasized the recollections a small boy might have of his childhood there (ages 0-3 and occasional visits while growing up). The house on the grounds is a reconstruction, the original having burned about 200 years ago.

Next we went downriver just a few miles to Stratford, birthplace of Robert E. Lee, and home for many generations of his family. This place was a mansion in every sense of the word--most elegantly furnished and having lots of rooms. The outside was too severe to be attractive. It was built at the

height of the 18th Century Age of Reason, when perfect symmetry was a prime virtue. No embellishments--not even shutters--softened the outside appearance. The shutters were inside the windows. I was amazed at the many members of the Lee family, generation after generation, who were leaders in political and military life. Two brothers signed the Declaration of Independence.

We arrived in Williamsburg about 6:00, very tired and hoping to find a nice cottage waiting. (It was a place I'd seen highly recommended in the Travel section of the *L. A. Times*.) But we had been greatly misled about it. In our letter we had asked for separate sleeping rooms with equally comfortable beds. We found one of these rooms was a combination living room, dining room, and kitchen with a bed-davenport! They're seldom very comfortable. After our complaining, the owner agreed to put a mattress on top of the opened out sofa. This means the bed is open all the time, pretty well filling the room. The only chairs are the straight chairs around the table. Though we've been twice promised others, they have yet to appear and it's now 9:00 p.m. on our 2nd night here. There are other things wrong with the place, but you get the idea. (It's expensive, too. Williamsburg is that way all over.)

Today we spent the day in Yorktown. We toured the town and battlefield. The place we saved for last turned out to be the best of all, and we had to rush through it. It was the Yorktown Victory Center, where the causes and course of the American Revolution were presented in a multimedia form--slides, posters, dioramas, even holograms. A hologram is hard to describe if you've never seen one. It uses laser light to synthesize a 3-D image in mid-air. The program concluded with a 30-min movie, also well done.

It was moving to see Surrender Field, where Cornwallis' forces surrendered to Washington, effectifely ending the American Revolution, even though the participants did not realize the significance of that surrender then. It must have been humiliating for those well-dressed British (and Hessian) troops to lay down their arms after filing between parallel columns of French and ragtag American troops--a bunch of hicks, although that was probably not the word used then.

Wed. p.m., Oct. 17
Williamsburg, VA

After six weeks of tracing the westward movement backwards, we've gone about as far as we can go. We hadn't planned it that way, but the list of places we've visited and their dates of settlement are interesting. I may have some dates a bit off, but the chronology is right:

- | | | |
|----|----------------------------|---|
| 1. | Nebraska and Dakotas | 1870's and 1880's |
| 2. | Illinois | 1840's and 1850's |
| 3. | Ohio | 1820's |
| 4. | Pennsylvania | variable with area |
| 5. | Mt. Vernon | ca. 1740 (Washington's father) |
| 6. | Stratford and Pope's Creek | ca. 1660 (Lee house 1720) |
| 7. | Williamsburg | became capital 1699, settled
earlier |
| 8. | Jamestown | 1607 |

We'll be going to St. Augustine, which was still earlier, but the Spaniards did not contribute to the flow of American settlers westward. Their history was separate.

Yesterday we stayed right around Williamsburg. Since we remembered the area so well from earlier visits (most recently in 1971), we decided not to spend the \$8.00 needed to buy a ticket to enter the various buildings. Instead, we wandered the steets, did some shopping, took some pictures, and ate lunch at the King's Arms Tavern in the heart of the historic area. The food was delicious, as it was on both our earlier visits. This time we had "orders" from a friend of Mother's to try the Virginia Peanut Soup. It was delicious. We bought a recipe book with recipes from all the Williamsburg restaurants. I just looked it up. Very simple: chicken broth (from a bird cooked with

onions and celery), peanut butter and flour for thickening. I also had rabbit in a delicious wine sauce. "Secret" ingredient, I discovered from the book, was currant jelly.

Our sightseeing was completed at the Wax Museum. Not very good. Much too dark.

Today we went to Jamestown. First stop was the "Jamestown Festival Park." Highlight of this is a reconstruction of the first settlement, made from what written and archaeological records were available. They also have replicas of the three ships (Susan Constant, Godspeed, Discovery) which brought the original settlers--all men. This village is about 1/2 mile away from the original site of the village and is a state of Virginia enterprise. Excellent.

Next we went to the actual site of the village, a National Historical Park. After an introductory movie in the Visitors' Center and a look at some of the artifacts which archaeologists have dug up, I roamed the grounds where the town was originally situated. The site of the fort and the very first homes is now under water just off shore, but the sites of somewhat later homes are still on land. Their foundations are marked with bricks and beside each one is an artist's painting of what the house might have looked like. At intervals there are recorded "voices" of the residents who lived there, done by professional actors. You really get a feeling for the settlement. Also on the grounds is a reconstruction of the original glassworks. Workers demonstrate the techniques used then.

Jamestown fell into ruin soon after the capital moved to Williamsburg in 1699. The site became just another plantation after that. The ruins of the last plantation house (1800's) seem out of place among the outlines of the early foundations.

We have one more day here. Have decided not to go to the Great Dismal Swamp. After reading Pettingill and also the information Norma Berry lent me, it looks as though access to a person in a car is severely limited. I prefer not to rent a boat. It's sort of a long way from here for such "iffy" birding. We'll let you know in the next installment what we decided to do.

Fri. p.m., Oct. 19
Front Royal, VA

After seriously considering a harbor cruise in Newport News, we decided we really craved a relaxing day. Since that awful cottage we were stuck with was no place to relax, we spent the entire day along the Colonial Parkway from Williamsburg to Jamestown. That road is a wooded corridor from Yorktown to Jamestown and is part of the the National Park System and open only to non-commercial traffic. I walked several one- to two-mile stretches and Mother drove the car between the scenic and/or historical turnouts, so I didn't have to retrace my steps. I also walked a two-mile loop road on Jamestown Island. I'm sure I covered 6 miles at least, birding all the way. Saw nothing spectacular, but it's nice on a trip like this to have time to really watch the activities of the birds instead of merely identifying each one and rushing on to the next. Saw Carolina Wrens and Brown Thrashers very well. Saw more Myrtle (Yellow-rumped) Warblers than I cared to! Learned *thoroughly* the voice of the Fish Crow (like a Common [now American] Crow imitating Donald Duck). On Jamestown Island there were many very tame White-tailed Deer--a very small race. At first we thought they were fawns. I think it's an illustration of the principle that the farther south you go, the smaller are the members of a particular species. (The Key Deer on the Florida Keys are especially tiny.) Also saw a very unperturbed (by me) raccoon. The walk was highly varied. Deep woods at first with very tall trees. This then opened out to grassy meadow, marsh and open shallow bodies of water--Tidewater Virginia, as the TV announcers call it.

This morning we were so glad to be leaving Williamsburg that we went out before daylight (6:45) and ate breakfast in a restaurant. (Our cottage had a kitchen, you'll recall, and we'd cooked our other breakfasts.) The woman who owned the place got more and more obnoxious as our stay progressed--always worrying in snide little ways that we'd use too much electricity. When she knocked on our door at 8:45 one evening to say she'd noticed that the upstairs windows were open and "wondered if the heat was on," that was the last straw. I blew up, and so did Mother.

(Incidentally, it had been a warm day and the heat was not on.)

We got to Front Royal around noon and discovered that the motel we'd rented in advance is right by a river on the edge of town and is the *cleanest* place we've had for over a week. Beds seem OK, too, but haven't tried them yet.

Front Royal is at the north end of Skyline Drive (Shenandoah National Park). I've been promising Mother as we've driven through Minn., Wis., Ind., Penn., etc., and seen only a few colored trees, "Wait until we're on the Blue Ridge. It'll be exactly the right time there." Now I can relax, for it *is* exactly the right time. We drove 30 miles of the highway this afternoon and it was an avenue of color--any color so long as it's fiery. Individual trees and long vistas are both beautiful, though the latter were rather hazy. That's what gives the Blue Ridge and the Great Smokies their names. I guess it's usually hazy. I've even read that terpenes from trees, when acted on by the sun, produce photochemical smog. I thought I smelled it a couple of times. I took one fairly long walk through the forest. Best were a couple of Winter Wrens, but there were a reasonable number of other birds, too.

The walk through the forest was rather difficult. I was forever climbing over, pushing aside, walking around, or ducking under fallen trees. The snow we met in Dover Oct. 10 also struck these mountains a cruel blow. With all their leaves still on, the deciduous trees caught much more snow than they would in the winter when bare. So the entire mountain range is a mass of fallen trees and tree limbs. The Parkway was closed for almost a week after the storm because of fallen trees on the road.

Sat., p.m., Oct. 20
Charlottesville, VA

We spent the entire day along Skyline Drive. Everywhere we went the color was spectacular. Only in the highest places had very many leaves dropped, leaving the trees looking bare. I've seen many pictures of the Eastern Fall, but even movies showing rustling colored leaves can't do justice to the light effects one sees in person. It was hard not to feel a bit jaded after a whole day of it.

Unfortunately it was Saturday and the crowds were terrific everywhere. I took one nature trail, and despite trying, in turn, hurrying ahead and sitting on a stump waiting for them to get ahead of me, I couldn't seem to shake one obnoxious family group. They took up 200 yd of trail at a time, screaming to each other all the time. The kids raced back and forth. They didn't look at anything except which numbered stake they were next to now. I never saw any evidence of their reading the leaflet past the first three markers, though. I noticed on the map that it was possible to return by the bridge trail instead of the nature trail, so I did. Saw very few birds on either one. I think the altitude was too high. Later I took another nature trail, and there were fewer people, but no more birds. Again it was pretty high. The trail yesterday was below 2500 ft. These were both 1000 ft or so higher.

Traffic was pretty bad, too. We got stuck in some slow-moving caravans behind motor homes or buses. No way to pass because oncoming traffic was too thick and the road was full of curves. The last part of the road, after a turn-off to the valley, was better. Maybe tomorrow on the Blue Ridge Parkway will be less crowded. Many people visit a place just because it has a "Seal of Approval" called a U. S. National Park, not because it is intrinsically any more beautiful than some other place. (We saw scenery in 1976 all over Colorado which was just as beautiful as Rocky Mountain National park, but only there did we encounter crowds.)

I learned an interesting fact on one of the nature trails: There are more native plants in Shenandoah NP than in all of Europe--1200 in the park.

The Winter Wren is a mouse-like little bird. Several times in the park I saw movement in the lowest bushes and heard rustling. I was sure it was a mouse until it flew a short ways.

Sun., p.m., Oct. 21
Nr. Buchanan, VA

I'm writing this sitting out in front of our motel. In front of me is, first, a well-separated row of absolutely glorious maple trees. Next is a steep grassy slope down to an Interstate highway far below. Across the way there is a picturesque farm with pasture and colorful trees. Above the farm towers layer upon layer of autumn-garbed mountains. It's a stupendous scene. The view out back is just as nice.

Our day on the Blue Ridge Parkway was even prettier than Shenandoah NP, if that's possible. We both agreed that there were more juxtapositions of contrasting color and that more of the trees were maples, which are really the prettiest.

Our first stop was a reconstructed mountain farm, showing how the mountain people lived. Wood was everywhere, so essentially everything was made entirely of wood--not even any nails, just pegs.

At another stop we walked up a short trail to a little waterfall. Along the trail the leaves on the ground and on the rocks made a colorful pattern. Mother photographed them.

Dogwood is in full berry now. Some have dropped their maroon leaves, some have not. One tree was covered with Rufous-sided Towhees and White-throated Sparrows, busily tweaking the berries off. They must be tightly attached, for the sparrows had to jerk hard to get them off.

Most of the snow damage to the trees was confined to the north half (50 miles) of Shenandoah NP. We've seen few broken limbs since then, but there have been some. Our weather has been absolutely glorious--highs mostly in the 70's, clear with some of the afternoon cloudiness so common in mountains everywhere, little wind. I started out on a nature trail near where the Parkway crosses the James River this afternoon, but turned back because it was too hot. However, that was a very low place. There were too many people around for birds to be very likely.

By mid-afternoon today, the traffic got pretty thick, and it was horrendous around the Peaks of Otter. We decided not to make any more stops, so we kept going until we got to this lovely motel site around 4:00. Now we're glad to be able to enjoy the view for a couple of hours.

Two hours later, same place.

It's beginning to get dark. The gold trees across the valley seem to glow inwardly, even though the sun is no longer on them.

Mon. p.m., Oct. 22
Hillsville, VA

What a relief. Virginia (the state's people, that is) went back to work today, so we didn't have to fight hordes of them. Only at Mabry Mill were there very many. At our first stop we met a National Park employee, who told us that yesterday drew the biggest crowd ever recorded on the Blue Ridge Parkway. He gave as his reason the fact that there was so much rain in Aug. and Sept. This (1) prevented people from taking an outing then and (2) made more and bigger leaves grow on the trees, thus making this one of the prettiest fall-color seasons on record.

Surprisingly we found fewer pretty trees today than we did yesterday. Even though we were farther south and the altitude lower, more trees had turned brown or shed most of their leaves. It was nice, though. In contrast to the almost constant forest of the past couple of days, much of our trip today was through meadowlands with occasional forested areas. Much of the Parkway seemed to be a relatively narrow strip with private farm holdings clearly visible on both sides. The farms looked neither highly prosperous nor particularly run-down, just homey.

Not very much opportunity for birding, but I did find one active area this morning, all "a-chirp"

with White-throats and Tufted Titmice. I never saw so many all in one spot nor had such close looks at White-throats. They're usually rather secretive, much more so than White-crowns.

We enjoyed a tour of the Mabry Mill area. They've collected equipment related to many early mountain crafts and small industries; blacksmithy, sorghum molasses making, saw mill, even a moonshine still. There was even an old still where steam distillation was used to make mint extract. I doubt they understood the principle behind steam distillation, but they sure knew how to do it. (Organic Chemistry students usually don't understand it very well either, when it's explained to them.)

The main attraction, though, is a working gristmill, water powered just as it was then Ed Mabry founded it 100 years or so ago. We bought some stone-ground cornmeal there in 1971, and it was the best we've ever had. So we really stocked up this time. It'll keep a long time if we freeze it as soon as we get home.

Tues. p.m., Oct. 23
Glendale Springs, NC

Today the Blue Ridge Parkway showed us some different moods. It was raining when we left our motel in Hillsville. By the time we were up on the Parkway seven miles away, we were in the clouds. Dense fog and rain was our lot for about 60 miles. Because we had no desire to stop along the way, we were afraid we'd arrive at our scheduled evening stop before last night's guests had even left. Around 11:30 the rain let up. We pulled off at a turn-out to read the sign there. As we looked across the valley, the fog began to become wispy, and some of the trees became so bright, they had to be getting sun from the thin places in the clouds. Since the rain seemed really to have stopped, I took a short walk along the trail that passed by there. Soon the clouds began to break up in earnest. The whole process took less than 20 minutes, I'm sure. Now (5:00 p.m.) there's hardly a cloud to be seen, and the temperature is probably in the 50's, quite different from the Indian Summer 80's we've been having.

I took a couple of walks (total 3 miles maybe). The views of meadows, woods, mountains and far-flung valleys were breathtaking. Even on a clear day, the Blue Ridge is distinctly blue. Each successive layer of mountains off to infinity is bluer than the one before it.

We have a motel just off the National Park Service land and very close to the Parkway. The view from our rooms looks down to a couple of ponds and across to a lovely scene of meadows and trees. It also looks at the sun. I hope it's still nice in the morning so Mother can photograph the scene.

We had no sooner pulled up in front of our rooms than I spied some birds on the wires with that hunched over look that marked them as bluebirds. Of course, here only Eastern Bluebirds are expected, and that's what they were. I've wanted to find those almost more than any other birds. So it was a real thrill to see them at last. I've seen blue painted bird houses occasionally on fence posts the last couple of days. The houses were numbered, so I suspected they were for these Bluebirds, which are on the Blue List of species whose status is precarious.

Fri. a.m., Oct. 26
Asheville, NC

Two more days of beautiful mountain scenery have passed. Wednesday was beautiful and sunny, but there was a bitterly cold wind blowing. For this reason I did not want to take any of the nature trails. We were also anxious to get to Asheville so we could visit a couple of handcraft shops we remembered.

Yesterday we took a loop drive which consisted of the last miles of the Blue Ridge Parkway, a 30-mile stretch in Great Smoky Mountains NP to Gatlinburg, Tenn., then back to Asheville via fast 2-lane roads and a stretch of I-40. We didn't get back until around 6:30 p.m., so headed straight for the

Forest Manor Restaurant, where we'd had such a good dinner the previous night.

When I returned to my room a little after 8:00 and turned on the TV, the Boston Symphony was playing the music from *Swan Lake*. I lay there and relived the entire beautiful day, for each passage reminded me of some scene I had seen or event I had witnessed. The order was anything but chronological, of course. We had had perfect weather the entire day--cool, but *no* wind at all, and crystal clear. [More detail on the music and the scenery near the end of the day's account.]

The last part of the Blue Ridge Parkway is the most spectacularly scenic of all. It ascends to the tops of 6000-foot mountains (highest point on entire road is 6053 ft), which almost match Western mountains in their ruggedness. Then down into wooded valleys where the trees still wear their yellow and red and orange leaves. The views down into the cramped valleys from the mountain tops 3000 ft higher reminded me of Switzerland, especially when a town could be seen. We also could see across to other mountain ranges 50 or more miles away. At one place a display identified all the mountains which are visible on a clear day. We could find them all! Each one was a paler shade of blue than the one closer.

In the National Park the maples in the lower story were in full color--more yellow than red here. The trees above them had lost their leaves, so the sun shone down and made these small lower trees look like something in a Japanese garden.

I took one nature trail to the top of Richland Balsam Mountain. It took me up to 6410 ft--ca. 400 ft higher than the highest point on the road. Here the last ice age receded leaving remnants of Canadian forest surrounded by a sea of southern hardwoods. The plant and animal life are most interesting. Birds were few as I ascended the trail, but curiously enough, even though the summit was as wooded as the rest had been, there were birds flitting all over--Golden-crowned Kinglets and Slate-colored Juncos. The latter is the Carolina sub-species, which just migrates up and down the mountain.

We ate a picnic lunch not far from there and were not a bit cold, since there was no wind and we had chosen a table in the sun. There had been thick frost all over the car 4000 ft lower that morning.

It was 3:30 p.m. by the time we finished our drive on the Blue Ridge Parkway. I visited a demonstration farmstead near the entrance to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, but after that we decided we had best just keep going, since we had over 100 miles left to go. We were glad we had poked along when we saw the crowds at all the stops in the park--that same "National Park Syndrome" again: People who don't really have an interest in the outdoors visit national parks because it is something one must do. The scenery on the Blue Ridge Parkway had been just as scenic, and there were only about 1/10 as many people, if that, per mile.

Gatlinburg was its usual junky self--souvenir shops, fudge stores, even a tower which one can ascend for a fee. Unfortunately there is no bypass, so we saw it all.

We were pleasantly surprised by the 59-mile stretch of freeway which brought us back to Asheville. It was entirely through the Pigeon River Valley. On both sides were wooded hillsides (Oops, they call them mountainsides here.) covered with beautiful colored trees. The low late afternoon sun illuminated them to perfection.

A fitting conclusion was Tschaikowski's lovely music helping me relive the entire day. Passages brought back. . .

The grandeur of the long views.

The strength of the granite cliff-faces.

The silly crowds in Gatlinburg.

Me awkwardly galumphing up and down that steep trail, trying not to trip on tree roots.

The flitting of the kinglets in the tree-tops and their twittering played by the piccolo.

The intimacy of the drive through the "Japanese" woods.

The burnished glory of the setting sun on the hillsides.

Afterthoughts:

I learned on the nature trail why the "serviceberry" (pronounced "sarvice") is called that. It blooms about the time the mountain preacher makes his rounds to tell his flock that "sarvices" will start next Sunday. The snow is gone!

"Balsam" is the name the mountain people used for both spruce and fir. One has rough bark and is called "he-balsam," the other has smooth bark and is called "she-balsam." I don't remember which is which.

Sat. p.m., Oct. 27
Charleston, SC

We hated to leave Asheville and the lovely Blue Ridge yesterday morning. We had really enjoyed our week (counting Skyling Drive) on that marvelous road. It was so much fun to drive the smooth pavement (yes, every mile of it was in top shape) and never see a truck, for commercial vehicles are prohibited.

We drove to Santee, SC, yesterday with no sightseeing enroute. Enjoyed a night on an excellent bed in a cheerful Ramada Inn. Some of these Eastern motels have been pretty unpleasant--dirty, and with worn-out mattresses. We don't understand the AAA rating system back here. The Auto Club of Southern Calif. would not even list some of the 2-diamond places back here. We've not had nerve enough to look at any of the 1-diamond places. Some of the 3-diamond places might rate 1 diamond at home. Our place here in Charleston, where we're spending 6 nights is fair, though the bed is not very good.

The main event today was a visit to the Francis Beidler Forest in Four Holes Swamp. I had wanted to see it ever since it was mentioned in that *Audubon* Magazine a couple of years ago, which was devoted entirely to their sanctuaries. This is co-owned by The Nature Conservancy, but managed by National Audubon Soc. The main attraction is a 1.5-mile boardwalk through a section of the sanctuary, which contains the largest remaining virgin stand of tupelo gum and bald cypress trees in the world. Thanks go to Francis Beidler, who acquired the land and held it until his death in 1924, and his heirs, who held it until taxes forced them to sell--but to a conservation group. Beidler was a lumberman, but he could not bear to harvest this land; he recognized how precious it was.

The bald cypress is an interesting tree. It's a deciduous conifer. When I saw them today, their needles were all turning yellow, and I wondered what was wrong until I read that they drop their needles in the fall. That's one possible explanation for the name "bald." The other is that lightning-struck trees often have bald limbs which are bleached white by the sun.

I was struck by how every sound echoed through the forest. Voices carried long distances. Most visitors took pains to be very quiet. One woman even apologized for not changing to her tennis shoes, for her other shoes really echoed on the boardwalk. Only one group was noisy--a woman and her two teen-age daughters. They giggled and engaged in horseplay that could be heard all the time they were present. Remember it's a 1.5-mile-long loop trail! I always take nature trails backwards from the guide leaflets, because of people like that, so I wasn't bothered by them too long. [Now that I'm doing sound recording, I suspect they'd have been a nuisance the whole time.]

The boardwalk has only been complete and the place open to the public (9 to 5, closed Mon., \$2.00 per person) since 1977, so the bird list is pretty cursory so far. The staff has been too busy to do much extensive birding. The man in the office said no one on the staff had walked the trail birding for a week. He was glad to have my complete bird list for the day--24 species. He was surprised at several things: (1) I found Red-headed Woodpeckers to be very common. They're just beginning to realize they may be more common in winter than in summer. (2) Swainson's Thrush, which I found, was not on their list at all. Robbins' *Birds of North America* lists it as a migrant in this vicinity, but no one had ever seen it in the sanctuary. (3) White-eyed Vireo was on their list as a common permanent resident, but I saw none. Robbins does not show it this far north in winter. (I'd dearly love to see one.)

I heard a Barred Owl in the distance, but had no hope of seeing it. It sounded very far away, and I was confined to the boardwalk. I've never seen one, but anyone could recognize that "Who cooks for you? Who Cooks for you-all?"

Even the headquarters fits into the area well. The building is designed to use solar heat in winter. The parking lot consists of individual stalls "carved" by hand out of the forest in such a way that only the smallest trees had to be removed. I was confused on arrival as to where the whole thing started, the office was so well hidden.

Anyway, the entire place is truly a credit to National Audubon Soc. I just wish they'd do as well at Starr Ranch.

Sun. p.m., Oct. 28
Charleston, SC

One night (not six as originally planned) was enough in the Golden Eagle Motor Lodge. The place, except for the price, was rather run-down. That we could have tolerated. However, the central AC had been turned off and the central heat turned on. Although the fan could be turned off, heat still entered the room. The only window was one square foot up over the door, and that amount of cool air could not counteract the heat. My room was 77 degrees this morning when I got up, and of course turning on the fan would have brought in hot, not cold, air. Besides, the Golden Eagle Lodge wasn't as close to the nice old part of town as I had calculated from the street number. In fact, it is in a pretty sleazy section. I'd be afraid to take an early a.m. walk alone, so the idea of staying in Historic Charleston for that reason saw shot, too.

So we decided to view Charleston from across the river to the west. We're in a 14-story cylindrical Holiday Inn and have rooms on the 9th floor with a sweeping view of the city, the tidal river, the salt marsh on this side of the river, and four bridges. Two bridges are very close. In fact, the Inn is located between the eastbound and westbound spans' approaches. Access to the highway in either direction is very simple. No left turns across traffic are ever required. So we can cross to the city side as easily as can be. Frankly we're thrilled with it and really looking forward to our stay here. Soon we'll go up to the top-floor restaurant for dinner.

This morning we circled the peninsula which is old Charleston, stopping wherever we wished along the way to bird and take pictures of the beautiful old homes. We (all three of us) took a walk along the Battery section and enjoyed looking at the unusual old homes on one side and the harbor on the other. I saw several things in the bird line which were of interest. (1) A flock of at least 36 White Ibis were in the reeds very close to shore. (2) A Loggerhead Shrike had caught what I'm pretty sure was a crawfish and had it stuck up on a twig or wedged between two twigs; it was pecking at it and pulling off big mouthfuls. (3) Several Ruddy Turnstones were wandering around on the gravel at one shoreline park. They were not ten feet from me, and on the other side of them from me were some men fishing from the shore. I've never seen turnstones act like park pigeons before. Black Turnstones out west certainly don't, and I don't think Ruddies do either.

In the afternoon we went to Charlestowne Landing, a state park built on the site of the first city of Charleston, settled in 1670, but moved to where it is today in 1680. They were having their annual festival, but it was meager compared to those we saw in Bedford, PA, and Smithville, NJ. There were only a handful of people displaying craft work. There's a small reconstructed village, but it has only three or four buildings. There were people in the buildings doing a few things, in honor of the festival. Most interesting was the activity in the kitchen of the house. The ladies were cooking all sorts of things over an open hearth. We sampled some of their cornbread; it was delicious. The lady who had made it had left, but the one there told us she thought the secret was the use of whole wheat flour combined with ordinary cornmeal--not even stone ground. The park had a grandiose display area and a grandiose 30-min film. Both had cost plenty to produce, but were so poorly focused in content as to be either laughable or pitiful. In all, it was a disappointing park. The grounds were

beautiful, for the site had been a private estate before the state converted it in celebration of its tricentennial in 1970. Huge live oaks and loblolly pines, the former draped with Spanish moss, are all over. In their shade grow huge camellias, many in full bloom. One area is the Animal Forest, a very nicely displayed collection of the animals which were present in SC in 1670. All looked healthy and alert, and the settings were large and forest-like. One had little sensation of their being in cages.

Tues. p.m., Oct. 30
Charleston, SC

What fun to sit by my Holiday Inn window looking across the Ashley River at Charleston. We're enjoying this city as much as we thought we would based on the taste we had in 1971.

Yesterday morning we investigated some of the spots Pettingill recommended just across the Cooper River on the east side of the peninsula which is Charleston. There is lots of nice habitat, but the best was Fort Moultrie. This old fort was active from Revolutionary War days until it was decommissioned in 1947. It is now a National Historic Site. Replicas and/or originals of what the fort was like in each of its periods exist, but best of all is the huge expanse of undeveloped land, partly sandy beach and partly shrub-covered dunes. I resolved to come back and take an early morning walk.

Yesterday afternoon we took the two-hour harbor cruise. It was most enjoyable. We went by Fort Sumter and Fort Moultrie, saw the commercial docks and the Charleston Navy Yard. The picturesque homes look especially pretty from the water. I was particularly impressed, though, with how much of the tidelands of Charleston Harbor and the Ashley and Cooper Rivers which surround the city are bordered by undeveloped salt marsh--most unusual so close to a major city. There were lots of birds to be seen from the boat: gulls (Laughing, Herring, Ring-billed), terns (Caspian, Royal, Forster's), Double-crested Cormorant, Brown Pelican (fairly common). In all, I've seen 48 species in the immediate vicinity of Charleston, and we still haven't spent any time in the oak woodlands.

This morning I went back to Fort Moultrie, arriving about 6:30 just as the sun was rising. It was a beautiful walk along the broad sandy beach with occasional excursions up into the shrubby dunes. The air was warm and humid, but a strong breeze kept me comfortable. Best of all, I encountered only three people. The birds along the sand weren't much different from those at home. Sandpipers were Willet, Sanderling (saw Semipalmated yesterday). Plovers were Black-bellied and Semipalmated. The birds back in the brush were of the type which flew from one dense bush to another and were difficult to see. I suspect there were more species than I identified, but I did find Palm and Yellow-rumped Warbler, House Wren, Song and Savannah Sparrow. There were also lots of 6-inch-diameter sand crabs all over. Saw porpoise and lots of fish leaping out in the water.

Had delicious Quiche and fresh fruit brunch in Market Square area of Old Charleston and spent the afternoon making the rounds of the little shops in the area.

People fish everywhere--off bridges, shores, near marshes, on sandy beaches. We even saw a man in a sport coat and matching subdued plaid pants fishing in a lake near downtown. We couldn't tell if he had a necktie on, but he looked very sharp. Blacks and whites mix freely at these spots. With all the salt marshes as breeding grounds, fishing ought to be good. Charleston has an active shrimp fleet. I counted 15 off Fort Moultrie this morning. (Fort Moultrie is on the north side of the mouth of the harbor.)

Fri. a.m., Nov. 2
Charleston, SC

Wed. we went to Magnolia Gardens, an old plantation on the Ashley River about 12 miles north of Charleston. It has extensive planned gardens, full of camellias (many in bloom) and azaleas, all shaded by huge live oaks, cypresses and pines. Very pretty. Some of the camellias are among the

oldest grown outdoors in this country; they were planted in the 1840's. Unfortunately none of these old ones was in bloom yet. The plantation used to grow rice, but those areas are now maintained as an extensive wildlife area. Nature trails wind through the entire estate, and there is a tower which overlooks the marsh. The main marsh-dwellers were hundreds of coots, but there were also good number of Common Gallinules [now Moorhen]. A trail follows the dike all around the marsh, and thin trees on both sides of the trail provide a perfect blind for viewing activities. I've never been able to watch Gallinules behaving naturally before. At one place a coot "invaded" a section of open water occupied by a small group of adult and immature gallinules. One gallinule and the coot engaged in a real battle. They both raised themselves up out of the water on their feet, and with wings flapping and neck feathers puffed out, pecked at each other vigorously for a minute or so. I don't think either bird was hurt. The coot retreated.

Other good birds at Magnolia Gardens were Louisiana [now Tricolored] Heron, American Bittern, Blue-winged Teal (the only duck species), Canada Goose (2), and two or three Anhingas. Land birds were not to be found, except for the most common varieties. I don't know if they were present or not; we didn't get there until 10:00, and the wind was fairly strong by then.

Around 3:00 that afternoon we went back to Market Square to look in a bookstore we'd missed the first time. Market Square is a successful attempt to convert old warehouses and abandoned buildings in the worst part of town into an area of small shops and restaurants. It's not unlike New Orleans' French Quarter. One building has many food stalls all around the edge of a large room and tables and chairs in the middle. One can purchase food at any stall and carry the tray to the table. We ate a mid-afternoon dinner there. I tried the Low Country Kitchen, where regional Carolina cuisine was offered. A group of black women ran the shop, and the food (barbecued chicken, red rice, Creole gumbo) was delicious--no garlic! Mother was disappointed in her Mexican plate--rather ordinary. We both had excellent pecan pie from the Low Country Kitchen for dessert.

Yesterday we followed Pettingill's suggestions about birding in the Folly Beach area, just southwest of Charleston. This is another barrier island region, with bay and ocean habitats. Again there was lots of undisturbed marshland. I finally found the Seaside Sparrow, which had eluded me for a long time. I'd hate to say how often I've stood by and walked slowly past likely-looking pieces of salt-marsh hoping one would pop out. This place (near the Marine Research Labs) had Sharp-tailed Sparrows [now Saltmarsh Sparrow], the first I've ever seen other than the Upper Newport Bay ones of a few years ago. Both of these sparrows were very cooperative and perched for quite reasonable periods of time in full view high up on reed stalks. The tide was nearing its low, too. [Actually the Sharp-tailed Sparrow at Upper Newport Bay was what is now called Nelson's Sparrow. The birds have been split.]

Next we drove out to the end of Folly Island, where I took a long walk along the beach (possible only at low tide) and back along the dunes. Saw very few birds, but it was a nice walk. I gathered my pockets *full* of enormous scallop shells--the kind people serve seafood casseroles in.

Shortly after I got back to the car, the sky opened up and it rained hard for a few minutes. When it stopped, we thought maybe we could try another Pettingill site north of Charleston, but we met rain up that way, too, so spent the rest of the day looking at it from our Holiday Inn rooms. We'll be sorry to leave them today.

Fri. p.m., Nov. 2
Jekyll Island, GA

The weather interfered with some of our activities today. The TV weatherman said something about two competing highs preventing a front from moving through very fast, and we're to expect rain tomorrow, too. It's a very warm, muggy sort of rain. I turned on my defrost in the car. When the shower stopped and the wipers were turned off, I discovered that moisture was condensing out of the air onto the outside of the windshield.

We started out from Charleston this a.m. and hadn't gone more than 25 or 30 miles when I saw a sign "Nature Trail 1/2 mile" You know I couldn't resist that. It turned out to be a one-mile loop trail constructed by the Westvaco Co's Timber Division. It was a most interesting trail. Trees and shrubs were identified, and remnants of man's phosphate mining, rice-growing, barge-running, etc., activities were pointed out. The trail crosses the area where the very old Savannah-to-Charleston Hwy. crossed the Edisto River, so much has happened there. I saw very few birds, partly because there were very few, but also partly because the mosquitos were so bad that whenever I stopped moving to try to "pish" out a sound I heard, the beasts settled all over me. I had smeared myself liberally with repellent, too. I think the utterly still muggy weather was part of the problem, too.

I had no sooner returned to the car, than the sky opened up and shed torrents.

We went on toward Savannah, where we wanted to visit Savannah NWR. (We had been there in 1971. In fact, that's where we saw the turtle laying eggs and took a picture of the act--almost.) I started out to walk along the auto-tour road with the understanding that Mother would drive after me in 1/2 hour or when it started to rain, whichever came first. This time I was not to have my walk, for I hadn't been gone 5 min when it started to rain hard. We drove a little farther, but could see little. They were doing some construction, so we had to turn around anyway.

On to Jekyll Island, one of the barrier islands off southern Georgia. We were very impressed by how tasteful all the development is--not like the junky seaside resorts we've seen so many of farther north and expect to see farther south. Our Sheraton is nestled in the live-oaks behind the dunes from the ocean--not so nice from the sea-view standpoint, of course. Will tell you more when we've had some time to sight-see. We're here for three nights.

Sat. p.m., Nov. 3
Jekyll Island, GA

I just came in from a short stroll out to look at the full moon sparkling on the surf in front of our apt. I could also see the lights on St. Simon's Island to the north. Many lighted boats could be seen far out to sea--shrimp boats no doubt, for Brunswick claims to be the largest shrimp port in the world.

Today started out well. When I went out for a short walk before breakfast, the last of the storm clouds were dissipating. It was clear, *dry*, and in the 70's all day. The only thing that marred the beautiful morning was the stench of the pulp mill over in Brunswick. Fortunately for us this evening, the wind has shifted and we no longer smell it. There were few birds to be seen this morning, for the tide was high--right up to the rock sea wall, so no shorebirds. I walked back through the lush shrubbery of the dunes. American holly and saw palmetto mostly, I think. I heard few birds and saw none, but decided to stop and "pish" anyway. I immediately produced two puzzled Ruby-crowned Kinglets, who peered down at me through their spectacles as they flitted back and forth in the high bush. A bit more pishing, though, brought the prize bird of the day: A White-eyed Vireo emerged from the thicket into a small open place at the top of the bush, and I could see it fairly well as it moved sedately back and forth, never entirely out in the open, of course. Vireos never do show themselves completely, do they? It was an immature with dark eyes, and a life bird. [Error: After I got home I discovered I'd seen it in Texas the year before.]

After breakfast we drove to St. Simon's Island. I wanted to visit the site and ruins of the town and fort of Frederica, established by James Oglethorpe in 1736. Its purpose was to serve as a safeguard against attack of Savannah by the Spaniards in Florida. It served its purpose, for the Spanish were repulsed decisively in 1742. Shortly thereafter, the troops were transferred elsewhere, and the town soon died. Excavations have determined where each bldg. stood, and their foundations may be viewed. The only ruins above ground are parts of the original fort and barracks buildings. Interpretive signs are all over telling something of the people who lived and worked in each place. Occasional recorded messages enliven it, too. It's a National Monument.

Fern, if you recall your Methodist history, you know that John and Charles Wesley

accompanied Oglethorpe when he established the town. They were extremely unpopular. The people suspected them of being Catholics in disguise! They also resented their attempts to impose puritanical restrictions on their already dull lives. Charles was forced to sneak out of town on his final visit.

Land birds were strictly routine at Frederica and also several other places I visited, following my booklet, "A Birder's Guide to Georgia." It was not until late afternoon when I ended up on the ocean-fronting beach, that there were any great numbers of birds to be found. The tide was coming in. The beach has a very gradual slope with lots of sand bars and calm pools of water in between. It was a perfect spot for shorebirds to feed and for gulls, terns, and Black Skimmers to rest. I had a great time sorting out the multitudes. I'm still not sure I can tell a Western from a Semipalmated Sandpiper, but I think both were present. When I see them side by side, I'll know for sure. Apparently the two species have been misidentified in the field for so long that the range maps for them in this area are wrong. (I have an article on it, but it's out in the car and I'm too lazy to get it now. I just know both could be here at this time of year.) I walked far up the beach to where I could look at the sand bars frequented by the Skimmers--along with the gulls and terns. I hoped the incoming tide would force them off the bar, so I could watch them skimming. Every once in a while the entire flock (over 100 Skimmers, plus several hundred other birds) would rise up, but all that they'd do would be to settle down again a little closer to shore. As long as there was any sand unflooded, they were not about to perform for me. It finally got so late--nearly sundown--that I gave up on them. They did make a beautiful sight out there. When they rose up, the low sun behind me illuminated their underparts perfectly, and the sight of this flock moving together against a background of the breaking surf farther out was lovely.

Sun. p.m., Nov. 4
Jekyll Island, GA

Today we explored Jekyll Island, a gem of a place, which deserves to be better appreciated by people other than Georgians. Its history is interesting. Originally a plantation island like all the rest, it was purchased in the late 19th century by the Millionaires' Club. People like the Rockefellers, the Goulds, the Macys and others who controlled most of the wealth of the nation built "cottages" all in a row on the marsh side of the island. There were no bridges or causeways then; access was exclusively by boat. It was therefore pretty secluded. They also built a huge clubhouse, which looks like an old luxury hotel. I suppose they put up their overflow guests there. When the club disbanded in 1947 due to lack of interest by the younger generation, the state of Georgia bought the entire island as a state park. They paid such a low price (\$650,000) that the purchase has been compared to that of Manhattan Island from the Indians. Since then there has been some development--a residential area of nice, but not terribly elaborate homes; a few motels, a shopping center with just the essentials, a large auditorium for conventions. Most of the island is natural. I could choose ocean front, ocean-front dunes, salt marsh, grassy areas with scattered live oaks and pines, or dense forest with much undergrowth for my birding. All are superb and there's a great deal of each type.

We started out this morning by driving past Millionaires' Row, then taking the birding tour recommended in my *Birder's Guide to Georgia*. By 2:00 we'd pretty well covered the spots and I could choose the areas I wanted to walk through. Since the tide was low, I first walked out on the sand bars at the south end. The assortment was somewhat different than on St. Simons. There were many more gulls, including Laughing, which I had not seen yesterday, though a few could have been there. Fewer terns. Same number of Skimmers. Same species of shorebirds, plus Dunlin. The wind was blowing pretty strongly. It had dried out the sand which the tide had uncovered and was blowing it across the surface. Usually it wasn't about waist-height, but sometimes it got in my eyes. It was cold, too! I was glad for my sweater, jacket and cap. Not at all like yesterday, which was cool and relatively calm.

I decided to spend the rest of the afternoon on the marsh side. It was sheltered by the trees in the center of the island, so the wind did not interfere at all. The land birds were out in force. I kept my left eye peeled for Short-billed Marsh Wrens [now Sedge Wren] in the marsh, and my right eye, for Yellow-throated Warblers in the tops of the pines. Neither showed up, but lots of others did, all of which I've seen before on this trip. It was a nice walk with varied habitat all along the way--marsh, scattered trees, shrubs, and dense forest.

I think I'd have to say Jekyll Island is the best all-around birding spot I've seen on this trip. It has more nice habitat types in the smallest area than any other.

Mon. p.m., Nov. 5
Folkston, GA

The best walk of all on Jekyll Island was not even mentioned in *Birder's Guide to Georgia*. Two young people I met yesterday suggested I might enjoy a walk along the bicycle trail on the other side of the marsh from the fishing pier. I *did* enjoy it. No other people were there, so I had it to myself. The nice black-top surface meant I didn't even have to watch my step as I strolled along.

I got up before daylight, fixed my breakfast, and left Mother to sleep a little later, then get her own breakfast and bathe Mitzi in the nice kitchen sink.

The path I took went along a dike which was just barely above the high tide level. On both sides were salt marsh. On rather frequent bits of higher ground grew shrubs and even small pine or live oak trees. Not too far to the right (northeast) were the barrier dunes covered with trees and shrubs, and beyond them I could hear the muted boom of the surf. As I strolled along, I jotted down what came along:

The chatter of a wren deep in the bush. It sounds like a House Wren's scold, but I know Carolinas are here. Could be their scold. The thing would not show itself despite much pishing.

Tree Swallows are swarming back and forth, their numbers sometimes swelling to the 1000's, other times only a few dozen. They just seem to melt away.

A pair of Boat-tailed Grackles, posturing and emoting to each other in the treetop. Such awful sounds only another Grackle could appreciate.

Suddenly a frightened Clapper Rail flies up almost at my feet and dives into the denser reeds 20 ft away. I've heard many Clappers wherever I've been in SC and GA, but this is the first one I've seen. There's so much nice salt marsh on this Eastern Coast, which slopes so very gradually to the sea. No wonder the Clapper Rails are doing OK here, unlike our Western ones.

Gleaming starkly here and there in the marsh are the white forms of the Great Egrets, which greatly outnumber the Snowys around here.

Loud triplets come from a Carolina Wren over in the trees.

A Sharp-shinned Hawk is patrolling back and forth at tree-top level, while a Marsh Hawk [Northern Harrier] does the same at marsh-top level.

A pair of Louisiana [Tricolored] Herons are stalking their breakfast in a spot of open water not far away. They're a bit wary of me, but hate to leave such a good fishing hole, so they don't.

A Great Blue Heron flaps into view, its flight stately. I'm always amazed at how this huge bird can maneuver through the treetops.

A couple of Turkey Vultures are teetering awkwardly in the strong wind. The wind is broken by the dunes at my level, but they're feeling the full effect.

A flock of Blue Jays suddenly appears and ceases its quarreling long enough to fuss at me.

A Savannah Sparrow pops up and nervously perches on a twig. Would that it were an Ipswich, but the markings are almost as dark as a Belding's; the lores not quite so yellow.

A Belted Kingfisher surveys the prospects from a dead snag.

A tiny bird flushes repeatedly as I stalk it from one hiding place after another along the path. Finally it tires of the game and flies off to a tiny island across the marsh. Could it have been my long-

sought Sedge Wren, or was it just a Savannah Sparrow? I never got a look at it.

A pair of Palm Warblers pops up onto a limb, flicking their tails nervously.

The tide is high--one of those full-moon highs--and the water level is only a few inches below the path on the left. Here and there are pipes under the path to permit the water to enter the marsh on the right, but they can't keep up with the flood. It's after official high tide, but the change won't be felt here in the marsh for a while.

I reached the end of the path. Ahead of me is a piece of old highway which had been flooded by the water. On my left is the ruins of the old highway bridge across the marsh entrance. The young people I met yesterday told me it had been passable to foot traffic until Hurricane David finished it off recently.

I walked back more quickly than I had come, revisiting many of the inhabitants I had met on the way out, but seeing a few new things:

A raccoon and I surprised each other. It was apparently fishing right next to the path, for we both jumped simultaneously.

A loud "scrawk," a flash of red. I was sure I had at least flushed a King Rail. However, when I peered into the bushes across the way, it was only a Brown Thrasher.

Back near the beginning of the path, the same wren was still buzzing away, but this time I caught it on the side of the path where the bushes were thinner. It was a House Wren, and #62 on my Golden Isles of Georgia list.

Back to the apt. to finish packing and leave for Folkston and Okefenokee Swamp. We visited here in 1971, but the only access spot I thought I wanted to revisit was the one near Folkston. It holds out the promise of Brown-headed Nuthatch, Bachman's Sparrow, and Yellow-throated Warbler. Tomorrow morning I'll search their possible habitats.

This afternoon we took a one-hour boat ride into the swamp. Since we were the only ones wanting a tour, the boatman took us out in his three-seater. It had two nice comfortable molded plastic chairs for us passengers and a quiet motor, as outboards go. The boat traveled first along the tree-lined Suwanee Canal, its passage breaking the mirror of the inky black water. Tannic acid from the vegetation gives it that color. Wildlife was not overly plentiful, because it was a cloudy, windy day, but we did get some nice close looks at Sandhill Cranes. Everything else I've seen elsewhere on this trip, but not in this setting! After a while we turned into the "prairie"--so-called because it was open; it certainly wasn't dry. Water was everywhere. (That's where the Sandhills were; I got ahead of my story earlier. Sorry.) It was 4:30 when we got back to dock, so we left the land birding for tomorrow.

Tues. p.m., Nov. 6

St. Augustine, FL

Before I tell you about what we did in the Okefenokee Swamp today, let me describe a bit about the swamp itself. Okefenokee is derived from a Choctaw word meaning "quivering earth," because at places in the swamp there are floating peat islands which quiver when stepped on. We walked on such an island in 1971.

Man's major effect on the swamp occurred in the 1890's when a corporation was formed to try to drain the swamp. They expected to make a fortune from the timber and then the sale of the resulting farm land. Their project was a flop because, no matter how deep they made their "exit" canals, springs kept appearing that produced water which flowed back into the swamp. They finally gave up when the canal walls became so deep that the walls collapsed. Since then the swamp has been left pretty much alone, except for isolated residents on the various islands, who lived off the land. It's now a National Wildlife Refuge, thank goodness.

At one place on today's tour there was a restored homestead and farm buildings. The way of life of the people who settled the swamp is explained in a brochure, on signboards, *and* by the great-granddaughter of the original settlers (1858), who is an employee of the NWR. It was very

interesting.

There are a number of nature trails in the uplands of the NWR. The first one I took showed where the canal diggers finally gave up. It is now a creek bed fed by spring water and has much vegetation down in it. It's a mecca for the wildlife in the area. I was *sure* I heard my Brown-headed Nuthatch in the vicinity, for it sounded exactly like the Pygmy I know so well from Asilomar. But I never got even a glimpse of a bird which looked more like a nuthatch than it did a Yellow-rumped Warbler. (That bird has been the most ubiquitous practically everywhere we've been.)

Next we visited the Homestead describe above. From there I walked the woods on a nice trail, while Mother drove the car. Saw Pileated Woodpeckers several places, plus a reasonable number of more common species. At one point, I heard a loud "Haaaah" in a stage-whisper. It was accompanied by much rustling of the leaves in the tree. As I rounded the bend, I discovered a very frightened young raccoon and a very defiant mother not ten feet away. She had coiled herself protectively around her baby, and both pairs of eyes were staring hard at me. It would have made a marvelous picture, but the camera was in the car.

Next a walk on the 4000-foot boardwalk. I didn't go to the end, for I'd been told by the office that the observation tower was closed right now. Besides, we were pressed for time; it was getting hot in the sun and the boardwalk was in the open; the habitat looked similar to what we saw from the boat yesterday; and I wanted to walk the Songbird Trail in our remaining time. Enough reasons?

The Songbird Trail was pretty good for mid-day, but nothing new showed up. I did learn the sounds of the local Rufous-sided Towhees. They say a clear "treet" with a rising inflection. None of that "Drink your tea" stuff, despite the fact that they live in a swamp full of tea. (Tea contains tannic acid.) They may instruct you to "Drink your tea" in the springtime, though.

I was obviously the first person today to take that trail, because I was continually trying to avoid the mist nets set up by the spiders. Their guy-wires were inevitable.

It was 1:30 by then, and we had a 100-mile drive to St. Augustine, so we left.

Thurs. p.m., Nov. 8

Titusville, FL

St. Augustine was a nice change of pace from all the rural places we've stayed the past several days. Okefenokee Swamp's closest town was the very poor town of Folkston. It had many closed-down motels and others that didn't look too prosperous. Although we did see a few nice homes, most people must be pretty poor. When we left the swamp and drove across the state line into Florida, we were impressed by the immediate change to a more wealthy area. Soon it began to look rather like Calif, with sprawling development, signboards, businesses everywhere.

St. Augustine, the oldest city in the U.S., is a charming place. We had visited the interiors of many buildings in 1971, so contented ourselves with wandering the old streets and visiting the shops. I also revisited the Castillo de San Marcos, the massive old Spanish fort. It was this fort that Oglethorpe with his troops from Ft. Frederica tried to capture, but was unsuccessful. After hearing the English side of the war in Ft. Frederica and the Spanish side at St. Augustine, I'm convinced the English were more at fault than the Spanish. They were abrogating a treaty by settling in South Carolina and Georgia. No wonder the Spanish attacked them.

In the afternoon we took a nice harbor tour. It was pretty cold and we'd been too lazy to go back to the motel after coats. The boat passed by a number of sand bars and pieces of marsh. It was really a good way to see wildlife, but we'd have seen more of it if it had been low tide.

The best sight occurred while we were sitting on the boat waiting for it to go out. An elderly man walked out onto the pier. Immediately a flock of Ruddy Turnstones flew up from who knows where and walked toward him on the railing. He pulled some peanuts out of his pocket, crushed them on the railing with the end of his cane, and those Turnstones ran right up and cleaned them up. I've never seen our western Ruddy Turnstones this tame, have you?

Our motel in St. Augustine was located between the Castillo and the old part of town, less than a five-minute walk from either. It was on the water-front street and had a nice view of the Intracoastal Waterway.

This morning before breakfast I walked over to the Castillo grounds with my scope to see what was on the mudflats behind. They were pretty well covered. Although it was low tide, it was not very low, since it was the wrong tide of the day and the wrong phase of the moon. However, I was pleased that several American Oystercatchers could be seen doing just that on the edge of the beds which were exposed. I watched them as they exerted a twisting motion to open the shells. I've never seen our Black Oystercatchers at work opening shellfish. It was the first American Oystercatchers I've seen since I took a pelagic trip to Anacapa Island many years ago and saw the famous one which lives there.

Today we drove down the coast. Much of the shoreline is built up, some nice, some cruddy, some of it garish highrise. There were only a few natural areas. From the Bridge at Matansas Bay inlet, I saw a good assortment of gulls and terns on a sandbar. Washington Oaks State Gardens was beautiful and reputed to be good for land birds, but I saw very few. We tried to find another spot Pettingill mentioned, but his instructions were too vague. I'm finding both Pettingill and my *Bird Finding in Florida* book to be pretty poor. Route directions are incomplete. Seasonal variations are treated haphazardly. Tell Jim Lane, Fern, that a good Florida book is badly needed. With his books, I can always find the place he means. (The bird is usually there, too!)

We're in a Holiday Inn overlooking the wide expanse of water across from the Kennedy Space Center. Nice view and very reasonable rates here, too. Lots of gulls, terns and a few shorebirds out front. Brown Pelicans and Cormorants, too.

Fri. p.m., Nov. 9
Lake Wales, FL

Shortly after I finished writing yesterday, a loud noise occurred. I didn't respond right away, but Mother dashed outside her room and saw a missile just disappearing from view. All I saw was the vapor trail. Later we heard on the TV news that it had been a British Polaris missile, one of an unannounced (in advance) series we're testing for them.

This morning when I opened my drapes, it was just getting light. There were a few pinkish clouds in the eastern sky. Against this bright background was the dark silhouette of a Great Blue Heron parading back and forth on the seawall out front. When I went out later, he was still there, and I discovered he was not easily frightened off. He must do this every day and be used to people. He certainly made an elegant sight as he carefully placed each foot straight down as though he were wading.

On our way to Lake Wales we stopped at the Tupperware Headquarters. They have a beautiful building and gave a nice tour. Manufacturing is not done here, but the process was explained. They showed their products, of course. Also there was a museum with samples of containers in use through history. Some of their items must have been extremely valuable, for example, a 2000-year-old jade dish from China. Amazingly enough, we were not allowed to buy any of their products there, but they did give us a catalog. I guess you have to attend a party. Ugh!

This afternoon we visited the Edward Bok Singing Tower and Gardens. It is a beautiful garden with a very lovely carillon tower as the focal point. We arrived in time for the daily 3:00 concert. I found a secluded bench and listened to it before walking around. The sound was unlike anything I've ever heard; I really enjoyed it. After the concert most of the visitors left, so I could bird the grounds pretty much by myself. Wood Ducks nest there and live there all year around. Land birds were rather scarce, but I did find one small flock of warblers, among which were Black-and-white and Yellow-throated. The latter was a life bird, and it was in a live oak tree. The book says it prefers pine and sycamore. It was way up in the top where I expected it, though.

The Bok Tower is situated on the highest "mountain" in peninsular Florida: Iron Mountain, 285 ft! It's also on the highest piece of land within 60 miles of the coast from Washington, D. C., to the Rio Grande. That really impressed me with the flatness of this coastline.

3:00 p.m., Sat., Nov. 10
Lake Wales, FL

We went to Cypress Gardens this morning. The water ski show is always professionally done and fun to watch. The flowers in the gardens seemed more exotic than I remembered. So many beautiful and strange tropical varieties. There were crowds of people there; it's a long week-end. Despite this, in the very top of the oldest tree in the park--a 1600-year-old cypress--flitted four warbler species (Palm, Yellow-rumped, Yellow-throated, Black-and-white) and a Blue-gray Gnatcatcher.

We left around 1:30. It was getting pretty hot and muggy--temp. and humidity both in the 80's, I'm sure. Then when we got back to the motel, a friendly lady emerged from her mobile home next door with the greeting, "It's a nice day, isn't it?" I gulped, but managed to respond appropriately, I think. I'm sure I could never be happy living in Florida. In fact, of all the places we've visited, I'd like living here the least. It's not just because it's near the tail end of our trip either, for I remember feeling that way in 1971 and then perking up as we drove north. I think the flat land and the humid heat are what depress me. The sprawling development is a factor, too. There seems to be no way to escape it, as there is in California. It does have some pretty special birds, though. I hope I see a few more goodies before we leave.

A Green Heron flew up on the fence by the swimming pool in front of our motel, which fronts on a small lake. I was struck by how bright the chestnut on its neck was and found I had a penciled note in my field guides that "western races are grayer." They certainly are.

2:00 p.m., Sun., Nov. 11
Lake Wales, FL

We spent the morning at Highlands Hammock State Park, which I had fond memories of from 1971. A "hammock" is a "shady place" (Indian word), and it certainly was. If it hadn't been, we couldn't have stood the heat and humidity all morning. We arrived when it opened at 8:00 and had plenty of time to walk most of the trails before the heat became too bad, but are happy to hole up with our A/C this afternoon.

In 1971 Florida was in the middle of a severe drought. There were fires farther south. We drove frighteningly close to one when we went to Corkscrew Swamp. Now they are in an exceptionally wet period. Cypress Gardens is having to remodel some of their walks to compensate. No one is complaining, though. They needed it. The Highlands Hammock was exceptionally pretty with all the water. Boardwalks lead out over the wet places. I especially enjoyed the Cypress Swamp walk and the Fern Basin walk.

The Cypress Swamp walk led through an area of standing water with huge cypress trees shading it. Protruding from the water here and there are the wierd cypress "knees," which may have a support function for the tree. All sorts of floating plants dot the surface with large and small leaves. We saw several alligators and a large turtle close enough to the path for nice photos. No, Carolyn, the turtle was not laying an egg! [Carolyn Honer and I were trying to get such a picture for the filmstrip series we were making for Sea and Sage.]

The Fern Basin trail also passed over wet ground. Large orchid plants with minute purple flowers were in bloom, but a bit past their prime. They certainly attracted insects, for Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were flitting and "tzeeee"-ing all over the place. This was the most numerous species in the park. I saw very few other birds. A flock of White Ibis through the trees was about the best.

Tues. p.m., Nov. 13
Miami, FL

Yesterday we drove slowly along a lot of back roads and a few unavoidable main ones northwest, west and south of Lake Okeechobee. My main hope was a look at a Short-tailed Hawk, but that rare sight was not to be found. I may have seen a Caracara, but it was on a very busy stretch of narrow road with no shoulder, so I couldn't stop and check. Thank goodness we had marvelous looks at that bird in Texas last year. The only large "hawks" were hordes of Turkey Vultures all over. What was lacking in hawks was more than made up by the marvelous variety of large wading birds. We saw Cattle Egret, Louisiana Heron [Tricolored], Great Egret, Snowy Egret, Wood Stork, Great Blue Heron, White Ibis, Anhinga, Green Heron, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs (together for comparison). The Red-winged Blackbirds here say "Okeechobee," not "congarree." They know where they are! It was a good day to bird from the car, for the temperature and humidity were both 'way up in the 80's.

We rented a motel in south Miami (Kendall actually), since all the birding spots are down this way. Florida certainly doesn't take much pride in their motels. Most have been dirty and/or had ancient broken-down mattresses. Something has been wrong with either the TV or the A/C in one or the other of our rooms nearly everywhere we've been. Only St. Augustine was nice. The mattresses were *much* too soft for our tastes, but they were new enough. Western motels are so much better. Prices average about the same in every region of Florida. Location, not quality of accommodations, dictates whether price is high or low. Cities are higher than rural areas.

Today Mother stayed in the room all day while I went out. She couldn't see putting up with the heat and humidity. (It was 78 degrees and 71% at 7:00 a.m.) I visited three places recommended by Pettingill.

Before breakfast I visited Matheson Hammock Co. Park. It has varied habitat--oaks, mangrove swamp, upland scrub of a type I don't know, etc. It looked like a marvelous place for birds, especially land birds, but I found it discouragingly quiet. Except for a few Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, which seem to have taken over from the Yellow-rumped Warblers and Ruby-crowned Kinglets as the ubiquitous species, there was very little.

After breakfast with Mother I went to Fairchild Tropical Gardens, which is next door to Matheson Hammock. The plants were most beautiful and fascinating. Lots of unusual flowers and strange foliage everywhere. Some of the most lovely were in a special building where their finicky needs could be catered to. The best birding was, of course, in the two corners farthest from the entrance. There the manicuring was rather casual. In one corner there were *lots* of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and Palm Warblers. The other corner (the northeast) was better. I had my 2nd look ever at a Prairie Warbler. (The first was on Cape Cod in 1971.) Then as I walked along I heard a strange sound. At first I thought it was Boat-tailed Grackles, for they make some pretty weird noises. These birds had no variety, though. Over and over, it was a loud, high-pitched nasal "aaaanhip," the pitch and intensity rising. Out of the bushes flew three black birds with long tails. At first glance, I thought they were Grackles. Then I examined their heads and realized they were Smooth-billed Anis, a species I had been wanting to see. They were life birds. They stayed around and allowed me all the good looks I wanted. In fact, I walked off before they flew away.

Another interesting sight was a Little Blue Heron, the first one on this trip. This bird was 50 ft from the nearest pond, in the middle of a hibiscus collection. It peered up into the bushes, craning its neck this way and that. Every couple of minutes, out would dart the beak and down would go a lizard.

My final stop was Parrot Jungle. There is a rather good bird show, but I really wanted to see their large collection of members of the parrot family. Of course, I don't remember them all, but I realize that to identify them, one simply *must* have a good look at the head (crown, cheeks, nape, chin, bill color). With that, ID is possible. Otherwise not. Try and get one of our Santa Ana birds to

show those features!

We've eaten all our meals in Miami at the Westward Ho Restaurant. Last night it was BBQ chicken (very good) and absolutely the best German Chocolate cake I've ever eaten. We went back there tonight. It's time to quit writing and eat another piece of that cake. We were too full to eat it there.

Thurs., Nov. 15
Homestead, FL

Blessed coolness greeted us when we awoke yesterday morning. The slow-moving front finally passed through in the night sweeping the tropical weather ahead of it. The weatherman predicts "below normal" temperatures for the next week.

We moved 25 miles down the road to Homestead, which is the nearest town to Everglades NP. Yesterday morning we went first to Orchid Jungle, where many varieties of orchids are grown and displayed. Some have been placed out in their natural settings on trees and allowed to fend for themselves. Others were more pampered. We were especially attracted to some of the unusual shapes and color combinations of the tiny ones, which had flowers maybe an inch in diameter. We were tempted to order some mailed home, but we know there is a place in Costa Mesa which specializes in orchids, so it would be silly to have them shipped from here. We did get a catalog, though.

In the afternoon we drove the first part of the Everglades National Park road, stopping at all the turn-outs and nature trails as they came. It's certainly the place to see egrets, herons, etc. Anhingas are common, too. They're really a funny bird, quite unlike the cormorants. Sexes differ greatly in appearance, and the tiny pattern of dots on the males' backs is really elegant. I've learned to recognize the species easily in flight, for they always fly with a flap-flap-flap-glide rhythm, sort of like an Accipiter. The voice is really weird. It sounds to me like the nasal twang of a Jew's harp, only much lower pitched. The birds talk a lot. It's surprising Robbins' *Birds of North America* neither has a sonogram nor mentions the voice.

Near the end of our day's drive, we came across an immature *Buteo* perched right beside the road. It allowed us to approach very closely and see almost every feather. I tried very hard to make it into a Short-tailed Hawk, which would have been a life bird. The pictures in Peterson and *Birds of North America* [the only field guides available at that time] were just poor enough to allow my wishful thinking to dominate. However, I decided to check my notebook full of bird descriptions. There was a Jon Dunn article on the immature Broad-winged and Red-shouldered Hawks, both of which are similar to one another and to the Short-tailed. Unfortunately, my bird was a perfect match for the Red-shouldered. It was an interesting lesson in bird ID and valuable for that reason, but not the lifer I'm hoping for.

This morning we returned to the park for the entire day. We took the Anhinga Trail at Royal Palm again, hoping to see more birds than had been out at noon yesterday, especially the Purple Gallinule. It was really about the same, though. Some of the same species were even perched at identical spots--undoubtedly the same individuals. Alligators as well as birds were out both days.

As we were driving through the hammock area back to the main road, I caught sight of a small *Buteo* in the sky above us. Turkey and Black Vultures, as well as Red-shouldered Hawks, are very common, but it didn't seem quite like any of these. Besides I was in the area where Short-tailed Hawks are usually seen. This time it was not a "false alarm." It was my bird, and the cooperative creature flew back and forth low over the road several times. I saw the underwing pattern and the dark tail stripes perfectly. (It was between 9 and 10 a.m.) It was the dark phase [called morph today], which the checklist for the parks indicates is more common. Incidentally, that is the best checklist I've seen. It has a "comments" column for each species where its location is indicated, as well as which months it is most likely to be seen.

In the same spot where the hawk was circling there were a great many small land birds--by far the greatest concentration I saw anywhere in the park. They streamed across the road like a flock of Bushtits--always a bunch more when you think they're all across. Most were Blue-gray Gnatcatchers and Yellow-rumped Warblers. With them were a Black-and-white Warbler, an American Redstart, a Yellow-throated Vireo (the first I've seen since my lifer in Walker, Minn.), and a Ruby-crowned Kinglet. Also present were Cardinals and House Wrens, but they didn't flock with the others.

Later on the Yellow-throated Warbler lived up to its reputation with me of preferring the most touristy places. There was one in the crown of the palm tree right next to the Flamingo visitors center entry door. (Entry is on 2nd floor in case you couldn't figure that statement out.) I didn't have my binoculars, but had the best look yet at this attractive bird. I couldn't have been over 10 ft from it.

At a pond where there is brackish water which is apparently just right for the most succulent of pond weeds, there was a large assortment of puddle birds. Most were Coots. Also present were Common Gallinules and Green-winged Teals. *Best* was a pair(?) (sexes are alike) of Fulvous Whistling-Ducks. You'll remember, Fern, how fleeting a glimpse we got of my first one at Finney Lake, Salton Sea, that August morning. This time they were not far away at all and I could study them at leisure through my scope.

We looked on the Bear Lake Road, where the Mangrove Cuckoo is "occasionally seen." This was not to be the occasion. I got out and started out on the foot path at the end, but when the mosquitos started gobbling me up and smacking their lips over the brand of insect repellent I'd smeared all over me, I decided to save Mangrove Cuckoo for another time. Besides, they could also be on Sanibel Island.

Sun., a.m., Nov. 18
Sanibel Island, FL

We arrived in Sanibel with some trepidation, after being disappointed by the last two long-time stops we'd reserved: Williamsburg, which we put up with, and Charleston, which we moved out of. This time we were delighted, though. Our condominium is beautiful. We have kitchen, living room, two bedrooms, two bathrooms, and screened porch with dining table and chairs. Furnishings are expensive-looking--all in lime green, white and yellow. Many shells and shell-pictures around fit in perfectly with this island, which is world-famous for shells. We're overwhelmed by the kitchen. It has garbage disposal, dish washer, clothes washer and dryer--several of which we don't even have at home. Our view is of the swimming pool area surrounded by coconut palms and other tropical plants. Next to this property is a large (ca. 3 acres) vacant lot with assorted trees. Out front, though we can't see it from our apt., is the Gulf of Mexico. A nice quiet place to relax for a week. Hope the cool weather holds.

Yesterday morning I took a long walk on the beach. The beach is lined with motels and apts, and many people were out walking, too. Shorebirds were everywhere, unfazed by the people. The first flock I encountered was several hundred Red Knots and nothing else. With no size comparison, I was puzzled for a while as to what they were. I've never seen so many of them at once before, so tried to make them out to be something more common.

Sanibel is an island which juts out perpendicular to the Gulf coast at Fort Myers. Its south-facing beach acts as a barrier to the sea currents, so many shell-fish are washed up on its shores. The birds, as well as the people, like these creatures. It's a very popular place to vacation and retire because of its forested interior, fresh and salt marsh, and shelling beaches. The usual battle between the developers and the environmentalists is being waged. The island voted to incorporate as a city five years ago. Between the election day and the date the incorporation took effect, the vindictive county government issued a spate of building permits. It's much more built up than when we were here in 1971, but still very nice--much nicer than most of the rest of south coastal Florida. There is a \$3.00 per round trip toll to enter the island over its long scenic causeway. This keeps the casual one-

day visitors on the mainland. Residents can buy a 20-round-trip ticket book for \$10.00--good for 60 days.

After breakfast yesterday, we visited a few of the shops and, unlike our usual practice in such shops, bought several things. The MacIntosh Book Store was as wonderful as I remembered it. It probably has the best stock of nature-related books I've seen anywhere. Many were bird books. The entire Bent series is on sale, for example.

"Ding" Darling National Wildlife Refuge is on the island. From its five-mile tour road, one can see fresh water on one side and salt water on the other. At low tide much mud is exposed. We went there this morning at low tide and had a ball. No life birds, but two species new for the trip--Yellow-crowned Night-Heron (several) and Reddish Egret. There were Roseate Spoonbills here in May, 1971, but I think they go farther south for the winter.

Last night I cooked hot dogs on the outdoor Charmglow BBQ. It is located 100 ft or so from our building. As I was walking back to our screened porch with the cooked wieners, a Pileated Woodpecker flew out of a tree right in front of me and into another a few feet out in the vacant lot. I hurried into the apt. for Mother. When we got back out, we discovered there were two of them, and they seemed not the least bit afraid of us as they worked the pine trees 30 or so ft away in the vacant lot. This morning as we were driving to the NWR, Mother spotted another on a power pole. It was still there two hours later as we drove back.

Red-shouldered Hawks are very common. They and the Fish Crows announce dawn.

Mon. a.m., Nov. 19
Sanibel I., FL

We're still marveling at the tameness of the birds around our Sanibel apartment. I told you about the Pileated Woodpecker in the last installment. This morning I heard one drumming not far away. (The pattern is distinctive--starts out vigorously, but gradually diminishes in force over a few seconds. Very fast rate of drumming throughout. [Error: studies have shown that it slows down.]) I've seen Red-shouldered Hawks perched in palm trees in front of the various hotels and apts. along the beach front. This morning as we were eating breakfast in our screen porch, two of them flew into the coconut palm right outside. These palms aren't more than 25 ft high. The beach front is always liberally dotted with both people and birds. The birds on the sand are, in decreasing order of abundance, Sanderling, Red Knot, Laughing Gull, Ruddy Turnstone, Black-bellied Plover, Sandwich Tern (3), Snowy Egret (1). As long as the people don't get closer than about 10 ft from them, the birds continue with their business. If approached too closely, they just fly off a short distance. I've seen the Snowy Egret twice--at least, I presume it's the same one. It lopes around among the people like a pet rooster, always preserving that 20 ft interval, though.

This apt. is awfully complicated for our little blind Mitzi. She's forever getting lost behind doors, between chair legs, even once behind Mother's needlepoint frame. Usually if she continues to try all exits, she manages to find her way out. If she's been lost too long, though, she woofs softly and we go get her. There's even a difference in level in the apt. She has to go up a step to get from the screen porch into the bedroom or living room. Sometimes she gets up or down with no trouble at all. Other times she thinks about it too long and decides she can't make it. I suspect she'll be glad to get back to the standard motel arrangement. Even when we have connecting rooms, she knows how to get around them.

3:00 p.m., Tues., Nov. 19
Sanibel, FL

Today was our day for Corkscrew Swamp. We visited the place in 1971, and it was hard to realize we were returning to the same place. This Audubon sanctuary preserves a large stand of

virgin bald cypress. A 1.75 mile walk has been constructed through it, mostly boardwalk.

In 1971, when we drove the 50 miles or so from Ft. Myers to the sanctuary, we passed serene, stunted prairie. One stretch of road was really frightening, for the prairie was afire on both sides of the road and the smoke made driving hazardous. Right next to the road were burning palmettos, and the wind was from that way. We were afraid something would blow loose and set us on fire. Apparently the danger was not as real as we thought, for the road was open and we kept meeting cars. (We took an alternate route back to town!)

This time the road was beautiful. Many open patches of water had attracted herons and egrets. The prairie, pines, and palmettos were all green.

The day was hot in 1971 (May 8), and most of the boardwalk passed over dry land. It was hard to realize why they'd bothered to build an elevated walk. In only a few places was water visible. There we saw turtles, alligators, herons, Limpkins, Wood Storks, plus other things. We can particularly remember walking along the boardwalk and hearing an ungodly clamor ahead. Then we rounded a bend, and there in a tree was a large Wood Stork rookery, with young of various ages on the nests.

Today water was under us from the moment we stepped onto the boardwalk. Everything was lush and green and beautiful. But because there was food available all over the countryside, wildlife was pretty scarce in the sanctuary. I did see 26 species, but no more than a couple of individuals of each. No turtles, alligators, Limpkins or Wood Storks. One very tame Little Blue Heron was hunting on the swamp lettuce right beside the path. Mother had to remove her telephoto lens to photograph it. We later learned this bird is a fixture there and named George, or Georgette. No one is sure which. Land birds were present, but rather quiet. Of course, the sanctuary didn't open until 9:00 a.m., so most of the best birding was over by then. You'd think National Audubon, of all organizations, would open a place early. At least, we didn't suffer with the heat during our mid-day visit. We've been blessed with cool breezy days lately. Temperature may have gotten to 80 degrees, but it was shady most of the time.

3:00 p.m., Thurs., Nov. 22
Sanibel, FL

Today is Thanksgiving, but it's hard to realize it. The trash truck even came by this morning. They collect three times a week!

Yesterday morning, after a long bird-watching and shell-collecting walk, we ate a leisurely breakfast on our screen porch--including country-style southern sausage, yummy sweet rolls from the Westward Ho in Miami (we stocked up and froze them when we got here), egg, toast orange juice, and papaya from a roadside stand. The papaya is *not* as good as Hawaiian. We don't have to patronize a restaurant to eat well. It's been fun to be able to cook our own meals after so much eating out.

After breakfast I visited the Bailey tract of the "Ding" Darling NWR. It was the site of my first Common Yellowthroat and Black-necked Stilt in 1971. The Yellowthroats were still there, but the barren dike was all overgrown with weeds, and the reeds in the pond concealed it, too. Stilts were not around. Of course, it's a different month. Best sight there was two Magnificent Frigatebirds overhead.

Returned to the main NWR and took its tour road a third time. Saw nothing new. This time I also took the short walking trail at the end. Saw zero birds, but the biting flies had a nice lunch. We're really lucky in California to have so few objectionable insects. Spent the rest of the day working on my embroidery out in the yard--only the 3rd time I've had it out on the whole trip.

This morning, since the tide was low (extra low actually), I decided to bird the two islands between the three spans of the causeway to Sanibel. Birds were very few, so I spent most of the morning shelling. There were more shells there than on the beach in front of our apt. Not so many

people, I think. I found some nice ones, and so did Mother. Around noon the tide had come in so far that most of the shells were covered up. As I walked back towards the car, the birds started to arrive--large flocks of them. These islands are apparently more of a high tide resting area than a feeding area. I watched them a long time, for three look-alike pairs had to be considered: Semipalmated vs. Wilson's Plover, Snowy vs. Piping Plover, and Semipalmated vs. Western Sandpiper. I decided all were there but the Piping Plover. In addition, there were Dunlin and Black-bellied Plovers. Curiously enough, they were more afraid of a single Herring Gull than they were of me, and the Gull wasn't really paying any attention to them.

Brown Pelicans are plentiful all around the Florida peninsula. Each one has its attendant Laughing Gull(s), hoping for a fish in a careless moment.

Saw a pretty yellow catamaran on the beach near our apt. Name; "Banana Split."

Sat., p.m., Nov. 24

Tallahassee, FL

Yesterday was just a long day of driving. The first half was mile after mile of gulf coast megalopolis. Ugh! The afternoon of freeway was welcome. The country rolled a little, too, which was nice after the utterly flat southern part of the state. Fall coloring can be seen in some of the deciduous trees here. Most southern trees are tropical and do not lose their waxy green leaves.

This morning we stopped first at the tiny village of Cross Creek, where Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings lived and wrote for many years. Her home has been restored and opened by the State of Florida. We had just bought her book about her years here, called *Cross Creek*, and had both read it while in Florida. It was fun to see the place she wrote about while the book was still fresh in our minds. The house is a sprawling, airy, one-story Cracker house, built around 1890. Nothing fancy, but it certainly looked comfortable.

After driving to Tallahassee and leaving Mitzi in the motel, we spent a couple of hours at Wakulla Springs. We had visited the place in 1971. There is a boat along the river where wildlife abounds, and they've resisted the temptation to install monkeys, pretty girls, etc., to attract more tourists. We probably saw more wildlife there than in any other area of comparable size, including two species which we've not encountered anywhere else on this trip, the Purple Gallinule and the Limpkin. We were tickled by the commentary of the young black boatman. He know all the birds and pointed each species out whenever we encountered it. A couple of the best quotes: "The Common Gallinule is the meanest bird in the swamp. He'll try to whup any other bird three times his size." "There's an Anhinga with its wings spreaded out to dry. They don't have very many oil glands in their wings." We saw countless alligators, some enormous, some a foot long or less. They were all over the place. I heard a Barred Owl afar, but had no hope of seeing it. Can't count it as a life bird until I see it! [That was the ABA rule then, but it isn't now.]

Tomorrow is probably my last chance for a Brown-headed Nuthatch. I hope Mother can locate the one she saw in 1971 at St. Marks NWR. She was the one to locate the Purple Gallinule today, so maybe her luck will hold. I know she wants me to find one, for she's awfully tired of hearing about it.

3:00 p.m., Sun., Nov. 25

Panama City Beach, FL

No Nuthatch awaited me at St. Mark's Nor did any of the other goodies on the refuge list--Bachman's Sparrow, Short-billed Marsh Wren [now Sedge Wren], Barred Owl. I guess they'll have to wait until another trip. Birding was good though. The nature trail passes through a sample of just about all the habitat types there. Between that trail and the road in, I saw 42 species in only 3 hours. Most numerous: Yellow-rumped Warblers. Most unusual: Red-winged Blackbirds in the tops of the pine trees prying pine nuts out of the cones.

The sky was overcast all day, but decided to open up just as we arrived at the huge Holiday Inn here. It's a multilevel thing and we had an awful time finding the lobby and how to get there without getting drenched. Then we drew rooms on the 4th floor. We had asked for them, but the desk clerk "forgot" the elevators were out of order. Back we drove to the rain-free lobby entrance. Finally we're settled in nice 2nd floor rooms with balconies overlooking the stormy Gulf of Mexico. The rain has almost stopped, and shorebirds and gulls are all over the beach right outside: Laughing Gull, Dunlin, Least Sandpiper, Sanderling.

Mon. p.m., Nov. 26
Baton Rouge, LA

We're on our way home. No more sightseeing, for we toured this part of the country pretty well last year. Today we drove 400 miles and saw four states-- Florida, Alabama, Mississippi, and Louisiana. Through Alabama and part of Mississippi we drove through maybe 100 miles which showed the damage done by Hurricane David earlier in the fall. We saw a few totaled buildings, many with damaged roofs. Lots of trees snapped off or uprooted. Almost all signs blown out, especially the plastic ones. Those which were OK have probably been repaired since the storm. We were puzzled by the fact that in a large stand of pines only a few here and there throughout had been broken off. The broken ones were more common on the edges, but not exclusively there. The live oaks and some others we couldn't identify had apparently had all their leaves stripped off, for they were covered with bright green new leaves. The damage we saw was not the worst, for we didn't visit the coastal areas south of Mobile where all the newscasts originated right after the storm.

This will probably be the last installment. We'll just be driving home from now on.

Wed. p.m., Nov. 28
Ozona, TX

I didn't think there'd be another installment, but Ozona inspired me. Perhaps I'd better take things in order, though.

Yesterday we drove from Baton Rouge to Columbus, TX. Baton Rouge had proven to be a disappointment. Last year we stayed in the same Holiday Inn and I had a combination sausage entree for dinner which was most unusual and very good. Louisiana is famous for several varieties of smoked sausages. This year they had a new menu--very ordinary and high priced (\$5.25 for liver and onions, for example). So we decided to settle for a hamburger. When it *finally* came, the French fries were limp and, worse, the meat was spoiled. We refused to eat it and went across the road to Howard Johnson's. (You can see how hard up we were!) Service there was interminable, prices were high, but at least the BBQ beef sandwich and ice cream were edible.

Columbus had not been our destination, but we found accommodations unavailable in Houston. Apparently the place is always full, despite hundreds of motels. Columbus' Holiday Inn was full, but they sent us into town to the Baker Motel, which proved to be quite nice and the cheapest on the entire trip. It was also the first time we've had Mexican food since early Sept. It wasn't the best ever, but it surely tasted good.

Today we drove the Texas Hill Country through Austin to the tiny town of Ozona. Along the way we drove through Johnson City and along the Pedernales River. The LBJ Ranch could be seen across the river. It's a beautiful place--lots of oaks, live oaks, willows, etc. Also open grassy areas. No wonder the Johnsons loved it. The National Park Service conducts tours of the ranch, but we didn't take one.

Gradually the trees have been becoming smaller and more scattered as we move west. It seems good to be out of the closed-in piney woods of the South and back in the wide open West. We ate lunch today in an area of scattered small live oaks. Scrub Jays and Tufted Titmice were both

present. If you want to know where we were, look at the range maps for the two species in the field guide! They barely overlap.

Ozona is in the barrens of west Texas. Plants are scrubbier. Looks like lots of creosote bush. Our motel is in the middle of a huge asphalt-covered truck stop 6 miles east of the town along I-10. It looked nice enough and had a 3-diamond rating in the AAA book, so we stopped. Rooms have no outside outlook, but form a rectangle around a covered pool and garden area. The garden area is heated and quite humid. Landscaping is all tropical plants reminiscent of south Florida. *Very* beautiful. We'd appreciate it even more if we hadn't just come from Florida. We've been thoroughly enjoying being back in the west again.

Tues., Dec. 4

Home

The rest of our drive home was uneventful. We didn't drive very far each day so we could schedule a night in Tucson and, especially, a dinner at Ye Olde Lantern. It was as good as always--excellent hot and cold relish tray, mesquite-broiled steak, and *no* salad bar, just a nice one prepared at the table by the waitress.

Got home about 2:00 Sun. and found our cleaning woman had not been here. We spent all day Mon. cleaning house. Ugh! We have yet to unpack the car.

The trip did Mitzi a world of good. Exploring a new motel every night brought her confidence back. She trots around the house like a new dog, with none of the fear of running into things she had before we left. It almost seems as though she can see better now, but I doubt that.

Life Birds on Trip

1. Yellow-bellied Flycatcher, Agassiz NWR, MN, 9/14
2. Yellow-throated Vireo, Walker, MN, 9/15
3. Bay-breasted Warbler, Brown Co. SP, IN, 9/27
4. Cape May Warbler, Cape May, NJ, 10/8
5. Black-throated Blue Warbler, Spotsylvania Battlefield, VA, 10/13
6. Eastern Bluebird, Glendale Springs, NC, 10/23
7. Seaside Sparrow, nr. Charleston, SC, 11/1
- [7]. Saltmarsh Sparrow, same place [Became a lifer when Sharp-tailed Sparrow split years later]
8. Yellow-throated Warbler, Lake Wales, FL, 11/9
9. Smooth-billed Ani, Miami, FL, 11/13
10. Short-tailed Hawk, Everglades NP, FL, 11/15