



Our Journey West

By Jean Jeffers, Staff Writer

Want some excitement? You'll find that and a fun-filled adventure as you cross the Northern Rockies by Amtrak.

Blue skies and soft breezes met us as we made our way on this, our getaway vacation. We enjoyed a smooth, relaxing ride across the northern most part of our land to Seattle

Washington, down through Oregon to California and then back through the heartland, the mid-western states. My partner and I watched as small western towns, large cities, and rural scenes rolled past. We rode coach while some of the less adventurous souls opted for sleeper compartments which also provided seating during the day and had the advantage of showers available.

As one of our party related, "I would awaken and look toward Canada, and see the sun rising over the Plain states. The sun cast a golden glow on the flat lands. It was truly mesmerizing." We sat in the sight-seer lounge where coach seats faced panoramic windows with a full view of the countryside. Here were also booths for those wishing to play cards or games. Volunteer rangers provided narratives about the history and folklore of the places we passed.

We left Cincinnati on the Cardinal headed for Chicago, where we transferred to the Empire Builder. This train took us northwest through Milwaukee, St Paul, Minneapolis, Fargo, and then straight west. Going west, we traveled through North Dakota, Montana, Idaho, and then Washington.

There were lush green orchards, and farm lands in Wisconsin and Minnesota, then broad sprawling ranches on the amazing flatlands, where cattle roamed and horses were seen feeding on grass. In these flatlands, the roads we saw were lonely, with few travelers, probably because

it was such a huge territory. Then we were in the mountains, bold and imposing. Because of the terrain, our train traveled along steep slopes, down into green flower-strewn valleys and up rough mountain sides.

The scenic tour took us into the colorful Wisconsin dells, the Glacier National Park, past the "mighty Mississippi River" and of course, into the Rocky Mountains. The further west we went, the more we noticed that the streams were crystal clear. In Washington, we saw the many evergreens for which the state is noted.

A sit down, full service dining car was available for our evening meals. We dined on mouth-watering steak and delicious crusted pork chops. We sat with other travelers and one night our companions were a couple from Asia, who described for us, their wedding in India.

We chugged past the Puget Sound, and then we were in Seattle. In the city, coffee houses are on every corner and boast an international flair. Here we dined on smoked, wild salmon, tasted the famous cabernet sauvignon wine, made in Washington's own DeBrul Vinyards, and had a taste of the rainier cherries. All these taste sensations make Seattle the go-to city.

We visited a new Ballard St, a long standing, traditional fishing area but now buzzing with a new wave of artists. We had a treat at the Hot Cakes Molten Chocolate Cakery, where the whiskey milk shake is the drink to die for. We traveled up Mt. Rainier, (14,410ft.above sea level and part of it is classified as a wilderness) had lunch at a deli along the way, and ended up at a tourist shop.

We found our trip a memorable journey; seeing the countryside from our train was truly a spectacular sight. The richness of the lush, green farmlands, the reverence and awe of the mountains, the sharp contrasting vision of the flat lands through which we rode, all gave us a wonderful closeness to the true beauty of nature.

Visit www.amtrak.com to plan your summer railroad adventure.

Central Kentucky's first sports medicine clinic dedicated to sports related head injuries.



Sports
Concussion
Center

841 Corporate Drive STE 310, Lexington KY 40503
Phone: (859) 475-4566 | Fax: (859) 296-1633
www.sportsconcussioncenterky.com



“

The sun cast a golden glow on the flat lands. It was truly mesmerizing.