

## "Seattle to Boston—1916: Diary of the Trip," by Margaret Rumsey

*June 5 [1916] Sunday*—When we got to St. Regis Pass we really had trouble. The snow was about five feet deep and the mud was up to the hubs. . . . We helped four other cars through. We were the only ones with a shovel and blocks and tackle. Crossing over into Montana . . . we met and saw several cars of drunken people with women in them who were smoking. About five times we kept seeing the same man on horseback. We would pass him, then he would pass us when we would get stuck. . . . Drove in chains today and only made 27 miles so you can judge for yourselves the state of the roads. We were told we were the best equipped car that crossed the Pass. . . .

*June 28, Wednesday*—The boys are fixing a blow out, so I'll write my diary so I can mail it home when we get to Butte. Yesterday . . . we had an accident. We were coming down a steep hill and onto a little low plank bridge with no sides; a sign on the bridge read—"Condemned"—. . . . A car coming down the hill on the other side just kept coming on down and drove right onto the bridge too, altho everybody could see the bridge was too narrow for passing, so we stopped and he glided right into us with a cracking sound. He told us he had put his brakes on—on the hill—but that when they did not hold, he had no place to go but onto the bridge and that he had purposely hit us dead center, otherwise both cars would have been sent off the bridge and into the river. By this time our radiator was leaking everywhere, our fender injured and several rods were bent; his front axle was broken. Our new radiator cost us \$22.00 in Walker, but we had a dandy dinner in the burg and a wonderful hot cake and sausage breakfast. . . .

*July 1, Saturday*—. . . For 20 miles at sunset we drove beside mountain streams thru the Rockies and the scenery was beautiful. We took a wrong road out of Basin, so had to back track back to Basin where Mother and I could get a room in the hotel but the boys had to sleep in the car. . . .

*July 6, Thursday*—Cousin Lottie said she would like to go through Yellowstone Park with us and we all thought that would be fun too having her along. We all had a little shopping to do. . . . We bought new tires all around for we had had so many blowouts we wanted to play safe in Yellowstone. \$14.00 per. . . .

*July 18, Tuesday*—So as not to scare the horses who have never seen autos, the coaches have a schedule and the autos have a schedule for touring in [Yellowstone] park, called Control. When Control leaves camp, if you're not packed and ready, you have to wait over for the Control the next day. . . . If you were late coming into camp because of a blowout or engine trouble, the fine was \$25.00 for having a car on the road which might scare a horse who would rear and cause the other Coach horses to run. Our Control left camp at 6:45. . . .

*July 19, Wednesday*—Had fun feeding the bears last night before going to bed in the moonlight. In the Park gas is 50 cents a gallon, a loaf of bread is 25 cents!!!! At 4 p.m. we got in line and left for Old Faithful Camp. . . . At 10 P.M. we all went to Old Faithful Geyser, and she went off on schedule at 10:10, 200 feet in the air. The search light shining through the spouting waters in the sky created thousands of beautiful colors. . . .

*July 28, Friday*—By 8 o'clock we had made our way [to] Miles City. . . . After we left town, the roads were a fright and we waltzed all over them. The dirt in this part of the country is “gumbow dirt,” and you can imagine with a name like that how sticky the roads are. At Terry we stopped at the garage to have a new tire put on. . . . There they told us that “gumbow” was easier to drive on when wet, for when it got drier, a car would really get glued to the road. . . . After we got about a mile out of town we returned to the Kempton Hotel for the night, Ham could not hold the car on the road. . . .

Source: *Margaret Rumsey Wright Diary 1916. Small Collection 703*. Montana Historical Society Research Center. Archives. Excerpted in *Not In Precious Metals Alone: A Manuscript History of Montana* (Helena, 1976): 206–207.