

August 13, 1950

Dearest Dad and Janet and anyone else who is interested;

I meant to send you a card along the way on our nice trip home; but didn't send any to anyone. The three days that we allotted ourselves stretched out to four, but considering the miles we traveled and the things we saw and did, that wasn't too much of an extension. The first day we drove through Minnesota and Wisconsin, seeing the University of Minn. and the state capitol. We stopped at The Dells that afternoon, then drove on to Madison for the night. The next morning we saw what we wanted to of Madison, another university and another state capitol, then drove across the state to Milwaukee, and along the shore of Lake Michigan to Chicago. Bus said he bet none ever stayed as short a time, spent as little money, and saw as much as we did. We intended to stay all night there in a small hotel or motel near the Loop if we could find one. I didn't care to take the crowd into one of the big hotels, lugging so much baggage, etc.; but we couldn't find a place to our liking; so after driving around a bit doing some sightseeing on our own, we spied a sightseeing bus that was to leave on a tour of the city in 1½ hours. On the spur of the moment we decided to park our car in a garage, eat some dinner, and go on the bus. It was an excellent decision, for we saw more and learned more about Chicago than we could have in days by other methods. I saw things that I had never seen in all of my trips there, including the place where Mrs. O'Leary's cow supposedly kicked over the lantern. Things like that with the attached stories regaled Lance and Charles, who didn't miss a thing. Even Jonnie was a grand little tourist; but couldn't quite hold out, and went to sleep for about the last half hour of the 2½ hour ride. Then at 11:30 p.m. we left Chicago and started looking for a place to spend the night. At that hour of the night it is risky business to trust to luck for accommodations for even two; but for six, and not all the same family, it was almost impossible; but we finally piled into bed at 3:00 a.m. daylight savings time in a very comfortable cabin at Chenoa, Ill. Needless to say, we didn't arise very early the next morning. When we did, we had breakfast with about 30 State Highway Policemen who were on their way to a fair at Springfield. We all enjoyed our visit in Springfield; and in Lincoln's home I pointed out several antiques that have a place in your home and in ours also. Another state capitol building was put down on the list here. Then we drove some out of our way to take the boys to Hannibal, Mo.; to see Mark Twain's home, the museum, Becky Thatcher's home, the cave where Tom Sawyer found the money, etc. It was interesting to us too; and as I had been told, there is much to be seen there, and makes a very nice experience. That night we spent at the Mark Twain Hotel there. Virginia McDonald's Tea Room may mean nothing to any of you. I am sure it does not to you, Dad; but it does to Duncan Hines, to any connoisseur (Oh, oh, I have to run for the dictionary now)- to any connoisseur of good food, and to anyone who has ever eaten there. It is at Gallatin, Mo.; and we had to drive 13 miles off the highway (36) to have our lunch there Friday. Pure nonsense that was to Lance and Charles. They couldn't see any sense in driving that far just to eat; but when we entered the establishment even they changed their minds. It really is a charming place; and the hostess, Virginia herself, is a cordial, fun-loving individual who took a fancy to the boys. Like most everyone does, she made the now almost expected remark, "That Jonnie surely is a character". Incidentally, it was after that that Bus called him that; and he replied "That's what everyone calls me." But to get back to the Tea Room, the surroundings are delightful, and the food and service excellent. She has exquisite taste, and her home is lovely. The bedroom is like one in a swank Fifth Avenue apartment, with rose satin drapes and quilted bedspread, priceless objects d'art; and as Jonnie said, "They sure have a pretty bathroom." After stopping in Dawson and in Humboldt, we finally arrived home around 8:30 Friday night; and the bed surely felt good. It was a very educational trip and will be of benefit to the boys in their school work; and we all had a grand time. You can see perhaps why I didn't have time to write.

Yesterday I was busy all day trying to get unpacked, the house straightened up a bit, and organized for living again. I am still trying. I was invited out to play bridge as