



This is the photograph we had taken on our arrival in Los Angeles in 1906.

WE GO TO CALIFORNIA IN 1906

by
Elizabeth N. Boyd

My father was of an adventurous nature and my mother hated intensely the cold winters in western Pennsylvania, so there was much talk of moving to a warmer climate. Dad had saved up \$400.00, which was a large amount of money for us, and he thought it would be adequate for a trip to southern California.

The group was made up of my parents with us three children - Nellie, 12; Vera, 10 and I, just past my 7th birthday. Along, too, were my mother's oldest sister and husband, who had just sold their farm, and a grown nephew. A move to California in those days was quite an undertaking. Our relatives seemed to think they would never see us again and a good many tears were shed at our departure.

Each of us had his or her responsibility for luggage except for me; I was too young to be trusted. My father carried our food in a big wicker telescope nearly as big as a foot-locker trunk. I remember the baked ham, the big piece of cheese wrapped in a vinegar cloth to prevent mold, bread, cookies, apples, a can or two of fruit and a pie for the first day; also, a few necessary tin plates, cups and eating utensils. I remember my mother had a little blue and white granite coffeepot, and there was a stove on the train where she could make coffee. At some places along the way, where the train stopped long enough, it was possible to buy food.

My sister, Vera, carried a small gray telescope containing clothes and Nellie, a satchel. My mother had me by one hand and a satchel in the other. In the baggage car were our two big trunks; the huge metal-covered one contained bedding, cooking utensils, towels and Dad's clothes. My mother's smaller curve-topped trunk contained our clothes and a very important item: the family album with pictures of all our relatives. At least we would have pictures to remember them.

I do not remember all the railroads over which we traveled, but I think it was from the Denver & Rio Grande that I saw in amazement the high, Rocky Mountains. In Pennsylvania, our mountains were low and forested and I had

Continued on following page

Continued from previous page
 never seen anything like this. I remember well a trainman going through the car calling: "On your right, the Royal Gorge," with its rushing water beside the tracks; and, "On your right, the Mount of the Holy Cross." Most of the passengers were making the trip for the first time, too.

We had one section. Mother and I slept in the lower berth and my sisters in the upper one. Dad slept in the chair car except sometimes when he could get a berth for a night from the conductor. There was a detachable table between the seats of our section on which we ate our meals. The trip took eight days. My father wanted to see Brigham Young's grave with his wives, so we stayed overnight in Salt Lake City. Not many people we asked seemed to know where he was buried, but we finally found it in a grown-up picket fence. Here lay one of the Mormon founders with seven of his wives. We could not enter the Temple but were shown into the Tabernacle where we heard a lecture.

The train climbed up into the snow-covered Sierra Nevada Mountains, then descended into Oakland, California. We had to take a ferry to San Francisco where we stayed overnight. We visited Chinatown. The great earthquake was not long past and articles damaged by the intense heat were on sale. I remember a small, discolored dish we bought on which were fused sand and pieces of shell by the fire. The next day we took the Coast Line to Los Angeles. One of the first things we did upon arriving in Los Angeles was to have a family group picture taken to send to our relatives back East.

Some elderly acquaintances from Pennsylvania lived in Lordsburg (now LaVerne) so we went first to their house to get help in finding a place to live. My parents rented half a furnished house and here I had my first bath in a bathtub. Dad earned a little money by chopping wood. Coal, which cost almost nothing in Pennsylvania, was very expensive; it was bought in a gunny sack for about 75c a bag. The one-story houses looked queer to me, for in Penn-

The Old Trail



It used to be a narrow trail
 That only wild game used;
 It wandered up and down the
 countryside,
 The Indian on the war path,
 The trapper after hides
 Made it wider for the pack horse
 and the guide.

The gold rush brought the miners,
 Also, the two-gun man
 Who used the trail to ambush and
 to steal,
 Then settlers and their families
 In wagon trains passed by,
 With oxen pulling hard those
 heavy wheels.

Now the trail has broadened;
 Its surface has been paved
 With scrapers, dozers working
 night and day;
 All traces have long vanished
 Of the old familiar trail
 As travelers race along the new
 highway.

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sylvania they all had two stories. There was no electricity or gas and only oil lamps. Here there was no paper money, only silver dollars and 5, 10 and 20-dollar gold pieces.

Chopping wood was too hard for my dad, not being used to manual labor, so he got a job on the washer at the "lemon house" in San Dimas, about three miles away (pay \$1.80 per day). San Dimas claimed to have the largest lemon packing house in the world. We moved to San Dimas and rented a three-room house on a large, bare lot for \$8.00 per month.

Army worms were very plentiful that year and we could hardly keep them out of the house. It was very hot in the summer and there were no trees on the lot. Often we sat in the shade of the house. To cool drinking water, we had a porous jar called an olla. We filled it at night and set it outside and the evaporation through the porous jar cooled the water for drinking the next day.

I never saw an automobile in our valley in Pennsylvania but here they were not uncommon, and the mother of a girl friend of mine gave me my first car ride.

A story about the first automobile in our valley in Pennsylvania comes to my mind although it is irrelevant to the California trip. One of the more well-to-do farmers in our community bought an automobile. This was a rarity and I never saw it. Of course, there were no gas stations so he had gas shipped in and put into a car on a siding on the branch railroad coming into our little town. Then the farmer hitched up his horses to a wagon and went to town to haul home the gasoline for his new automobile.

There seemed to be no natives in California so the first question everyone asked was, "Where are you from?"

My father's job at the lemon house was temporary and when the season was over he was laid off and our money was really low, so he bought a lot on the outskirts of town and he and a neighbor boy (Jimmy Patton) built us a little two-room house. This would at least eliminate the rent. There was no other house in sight and

the lot was covered with horehound, a weed that grows about a foot high and has thick, light green, hairy leaves. It all had to be pulled out by hand. My dad had never built even a chicken coop before, let alone a house, but he borrowed the money and he and Jimmy built the house. One room was kitchen, dining room and living room combined. The other was the bedroom, divided by hanging a curtain from a wire across the ceiling. The roof was too steep for appearance but that was a small matter. The sides were vertical boards.

At the back of the lot was poison oak. My dad didn't recognize it and soon his face swelled up so big I hardly knew him.

One day a snake stuck its head up through a knothole in the floor. We were glad my mother saw it and tacked a piece of tin over the knothole. It was probably a little rattler.

At the back of the lot was a steep cliff below which was an expanse of land - whitish, sandy, dry, with sparse vegetation such as sagebrush, scrub oak and cactus. This was called "the wash" and extended a couple of miles to the foothill boulevard to Los Angeles. From our house we could not only see the foothills, but Mount Baldy, always covered on top with snow and forty miles away. At night we could hear coyotes howling far back in the wash. Not far from our house a crude road led into the wash, since a few people used it as a dumping ground.

About a mile back was a small black, wooden cottage occupied part of the time by a famous character, called "Old Maid Eccles". The children were all afraid of her for she had something of the reputation as a witch. Only once did we children venture as far as her cottage. It was black, vacant and padlocked. There were animal hides tacked to the door and nowhere we could even peep in.

We were surprised to have her call on us late one evening. We were glad our dad was at home for she was all dressed in black and looked like we imagined a witch would look. She talked long and loud. It was dark and Mother thought she wanted to stay all night but got no invitation. Of

course, we had no room for her even if we hadn't been afraid. Dad stayed at home until she left.

My parents had never belonged to a church or been especially religious as far as I knew, but they became close friends of the pastor of a small Baptist church and his wife. They were baptized, joined the church and thereafter we attended every service, including the prayer meetings on Wednesday evenings. Mother and Dad both sang in the choir, helped clean the church and did everything possible for it.

The members called each other Brother or Sister; e.g., Brother and Sister Yarborough or Brother and Sister Boyd. It was customary for members to carry their Bibles to church so the audience could read responsively with the pastor. One time Sister Yarborough started to read only to find she had brought the dictionary instead of her Bible.

My father was really a good-natured, fun-loving man. He liked nothing better than to sing or go on a picnic. Sometimes the church would have an ice cream social with tables in the churchyard and all members invited. My father especially liked these. There were blocks of ice to be pounded up in burlap bags, tables to erect, chairs to get out, and the freezers to churn by hand. The Sisters mixed the cream with strawberries and baked cakes. I especially liked these socials for I was allowed to scrape out the almost empty ice cream cans when the social was over.

Belonging to the church had some advantages, too, for a wealthy member often employed my dad picking oranges or to help with the irrigation.

Across the road from our house was a blue gum grove. These trees grow faster and were used for firewood. Also, when a few were cut, we could make faggots of the remaining sticks and leaves to burn in our cooking stove. Of course, there was no water piped along our street, but there was an irrigation stand across the road. By putting a gate into the stand it would fill with water and we could get a bucketful almost any time we wanted it. We children played "hide in the grove" with

Continued on following page

Continued from previous page
the water stand as base.

One time I was hurrying to get to home base and fell on the mound around the stand and broke my arm. By that time my mother had gotten a job packing oranges in the "orange house" and was not at home. A neighbor woman went for her and frightened her by making the accident appear much worse than it really was. I missed my mother greatly during the day and each evening about time for her to come home I would walk to the top of the little hill on the road and wait for her. She rewarded me by a big, luscious navel orange.

One night when Dad was away looking for work, we were awakened by a shower of sparks coming toward our house. A huge, old live oak stump that had long been smoldering was fanned into a blaze by the Santa Ana winds which arose suddenly. My mother feared for our little house. She got us all up and dressed and sent my two older sister for Mr. Ellis who owned the blue gum grove and lived just on the other side of it. He soon put out the fire.

My sister, Vera, and I went to the public school in San Dimas across the railroad track and about half a mile away. I was in the second grade. The second and third grades were in a small building on the school grounds commonly known as the "chicken coop". I had trouble sitting still, and whenever I turned around in my seat, the teacher came back, and after giving me a shake, turned me around. I don't remember studying.

Most of the time I listened to the third grade reciting. The object seemed to be to see how fast you could say the multiplication tables. I remember one very freckled-faced boy standing up in front who could say them so fast I could hardly follow him. I remember one time the teacher stood a dirty boy up in front of the class and washed his face with soap and water.

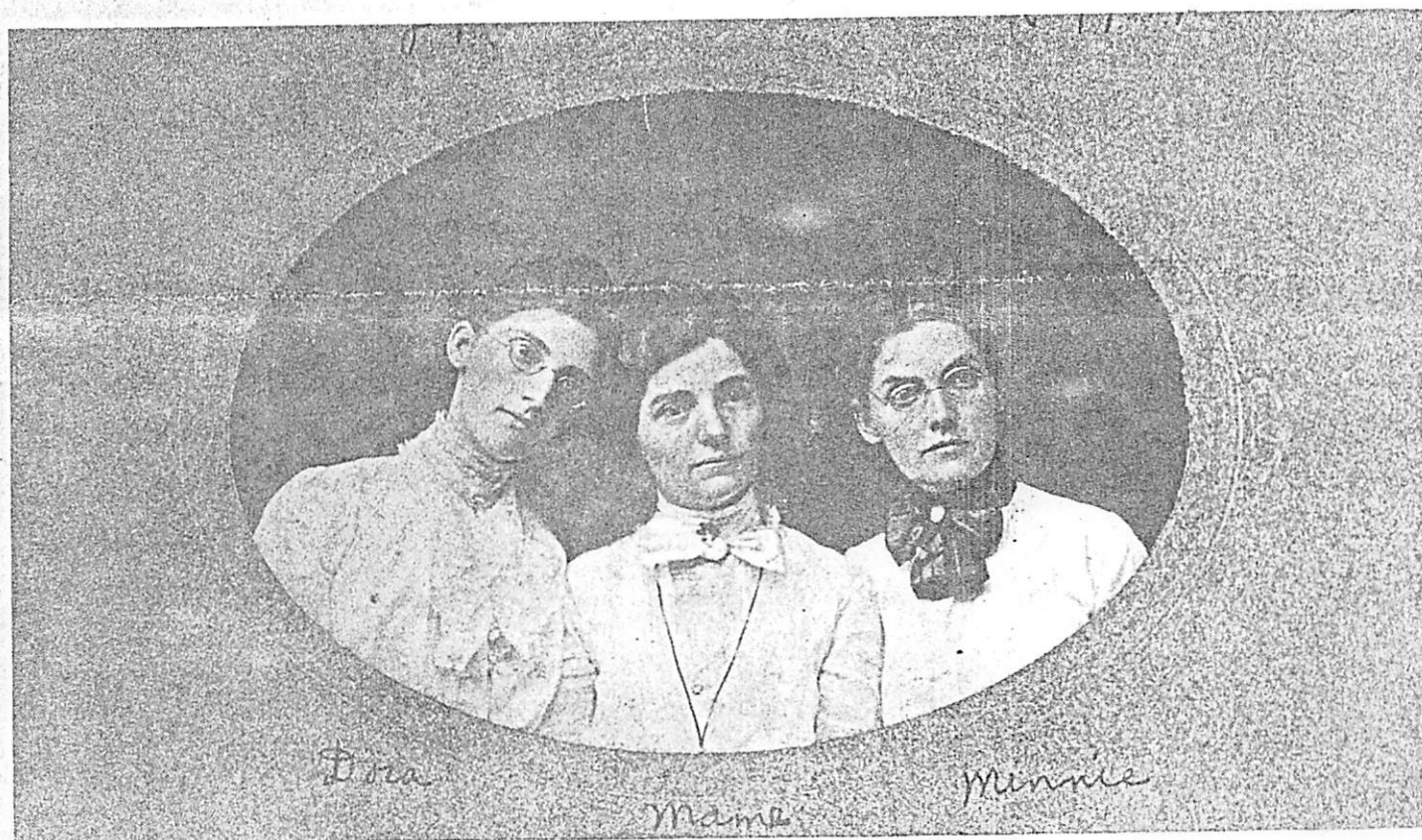
My sister and I took our lunch in a tall, cylindrical lard bucket with a bail that sometimes pulled out at the sides. We usually went off to eat where no one could see us for most pupils had red lunch boxes, but we had plenty of sandwiches, cookies and fruit. My

mother was an excellent cook and manager but my father's work was never satisfactory. I could see that he looked more and more discouraged every day. He no longer sat by the window, singing the notes from the hymn book used in our church. He had gone to the Claremont Nursery and worked for them for about a week, but selling citrus groves was new to him and his sales were few.

My mother worked too hard. After packing oranges all week, I can see her pulling big loaves of golden brown bread out of the oven on Sunday. During our two winters and one summer in California, her father had died in Pennsylvania. Two of her sisters' husbands had died, including the one who had originally accompanied us to California. They had not stayed long there. They said they had it more comfortable in Pennsylvania.

Therefore, my parents decided to return to Pennsylvania where my father could always make a comfortable living in the nursery business, so we sold our little house and left the Golden State without ever hearing of Hollywood.

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My father's three sisters, about 1906 - Dora, Mame and Minnie.