

Peninsula Diary Mayo Hayes O'Donnell

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The American of Booth Tarkington

For three days we have thoroughly enjoyed riding over the marvelous eastern freeways and turnpikes and marveling at their beauty. We paid toll upon toll over toads and bridges alike, but that expenditure is well worth while when one considers the ease with which the motorist may travel over these wide, one-way highways.

The sides and center parkways of these freeways are planted with clipped, green grass which is kept clean of papers and rubbish. Many varieties of trees and shrubs also beautify the landscape and there is plenty of additional beauty to enjoy – rolling hills, farm lands and many well kept homes. Here and there the tall white steeple of a village church rises above the tree tops.

From Harrisburg, Penn., we traveled over the Pennsylvania Turnpike, an east-west highway across the southern part of the state. This was the first long-distance artery in America to embody advanced principles of express highway design. It bypasses all towns and utilizes seven tunnels through the Allegheny ridges. These seven tunnels, totaling 6.7 miles in length, save approximately 9,000 feet of vertical climb over former routes. The Turnpike totals 327 miles in length. The last section of the road to Ohio was opened in 1951. The toll charge on the road averages one cent a mile.

We were surprised to come upon the colonies of Amish, "the Plain People" of Pennsylvania, although we knew they were there. Another branch of these "plain people," the Moravians, settled in Lititz in 1743. In this community is the grave of Capt. John A. Sutter. Capt. Sutter was the founder of Sacramento, and the discovery of gold on his property near that city started the gold rush of '49. Sutter lived in Lititz while fighting in Congress to keep title to the land, but his claim was declared invalid.

From Pennsylvania we entered West Virginia near Wheeling. On the site of city the last battle of the American Revolution was fought, September 11 to 13, 1782, when the fort was attacked by a force of 40 British and 260 Indians under British officers and carrying the Union Jack.

In Ohio we passed through Lancaster, the birthplace of Gen. William T. Sherman, who was also well known in Monterey before he became a famous general. The story of his love affair with an attractive Spanish maiden and the planting of a rose in the garden of the Bonifacio adobe on Alvarado street, has become a legend in California. The "Sherman Rose" home, now on Sherman Rose Lane in the Mesa, is on the Historic Route, marked by a History and Art Association marker. Sherman's birthplace in Lancaster is now known as the Sherman State Memorial and is open to the public.

In Indiana was the boyhood home of Abraham Lincoln, and the natives tell you that it is the most typically "American" of the 48 states. The rolling countryside, attractive cities and towns and colorful history of this state have been immortalized by many famous writers such as James Whitcomb Riley, Lew Wallace, Booth Tarkington and Joaquin Miller.

Richmond, founded in 1806, was one of the first Friends' communities in the state. The Madonna of the Trail monument erected in honor of pioneer women is one of 12 which the Daughters of the American Revolution have placed along pioneer transcontinental trails.