

# RECORDS OF A TRIP TO CAMP EUSTIS, VIRGINIA TO SEE PRIVATE HAROLD BATES BEFORE, HE SAILED TO FRANCE, WORLD WAR I.

[SLH Note: Parallel accounts by LaMott and Amanda Bates, Amanda's being the more extensive. Editorial comments below are by Richard Bates.]

LaMott George Bates

Started for Eustis, Virginia August 29, 1918, Mandie, Bion, Ruth and myself. Left Elsie 5 AM. We made the following places the first day: Owosso, Durand, Dexter, Ann Arbor, Saline, Dundee, Toledo, Fremont, a distance of 182 miles.

Second day. We made the town of Sandusky for breakfast. Then on to Vermillion to Upton Darby's. Stayed at the Darby's for dinner. Had a good visit with them and Mac Whitney. From Vermillion we went to Cleveland. Stayed all night at Revanna. Distance traveled, 132 miles.

Third day. Got up at 5 AM and started on our journey. Took breakfast at Jonnystown. We then went to Rochester and Pittsburgh. Stayed all night at Irwin. Distance traveled 124 over some very bad roads. We also had tire trouble.

Fourth day. Sunday Morning. Bion goes by the garage and finds soft tire which we repair, only to find after putting it back on that it had another ailment, so had to take it off again. Got started 9:30 AM and had a most delightful day's ride through the mountains. Passed through Adamsville, Greensburg, Youngstown, and other small towns, arriving at Gettysburg at 5:30 PM, having traveled 52 miles.

Fifth day. We reach Gettysburg, see Gideon Durfee who goes with us over some of the battlefield. Gideon has aged some since we last saw him. He is very much taken up with the place. When he dies he will be buried in the National Cemetery of that place.

Sixth day. Went from Gettysburg to Washington. A very pleasant drive. Distance 84 miles.

Seventh day. We take a train from Richmond for LeMall, which is about three miles from Camp Eustis

where we found Harold was some pleased to see us. We were pleased to meet some of his officers and boy friends. Think the Government made a very poor choice of location for a camp. The camp is situated on a tract of land 16 miles square and when the camp is completed it is said to be the largest one in the United States.

September 6, 1918. Left Alexandria for Washington. Harold took the train at Washington for Camp Eustis at 9:30 AM. We start on our journey at 10:45 AM, pass through Gettysburg which is 84 miles from Washington. Our next town was Fredrick, 54 miles. This was a very nice place. This is quite a nice farming country, much better than Virginia. Our next city was Harrisburg, the capital of the State. We next came to Millersburg where we stopped for the night having traveled 152 miles.

Sunday morning. September 7. We wake up to find it raining, however we get up, get ready and start on our journey. We soon come to the Susquehanna River which we cross by ferry and land at Liverpool, Penn. This is a beautiful country to auto through as it is very, or somewhat mountainous. We pass through Millerstown, Phillipsburg and other small places and finally reach Clearfield, a city of about 8,000, having traveled 132 miles.

September 9. We start on our journey at 8:45 AM over some very rough country with fine scenery. Stop for the night at Albion, Penn. Distance 132 miles.

September 10. We bid good bye to Pennsylvania, pass through Ashtabula, Painswell, Cleveland and finally stop for the night at Toledo, having traveled 212 miles.

Wednesday, September 11. We get up in the morning to find it raining. After a short session of shopping, we start on our journey home. The roads were bad

for the greater part of the journey. Got started wrong in Toledo and went about 20 miles out of our way. We arrived at Bion's about 7 PM, having traveled 160 miles. The whole distance traveled since we left home until we came here, 1,900 miles. We used on our trip 128 gallons of gasoline. [Prices of gasoline ranged from 38 to 25 cents a gallon.]

Amanda Sickels Bates

Left home Thursday, August 29, 1918 for Camp Eustis, Virginia at 6:15 AM. Father, Bion, Ruth and myself. Took breakfast with Bion and Wilma, stopped in Durand to see Clare and Lyda. Lyda has hay fever and asthma very badly. We also called at Howell to see Mr. and Mrs. Martyn [parents of their live-in, Gertrude]. Ate our lunch under the shade of a large maple in front of a deserted house Reached Toledo at 1:30 PM. Left about 2, reached Fremont, Ohio at 5:30. Stayed at the Jackson Hotel all night.

When we came to Edmore, Ohio found the bridge over the river being repaired and we had to drive down the bank and across the river which was rock bottom and the water not deep. However, I was glad to be on a good road again. We were obliged to make two or three detours.

August 30. Friday night at Ravenna, Ohio. We drove from Fremont to Sandusky, 25 miles, before breakfast. After breakfast at a cafeteria we went to Mr. Darby's. May Whitney was there, so we had a good visit with them both. Stayed to dinner. Left at 1:30 for Cleveland, 45 miles. Was glad when we were through Cleveland. Don't like to ride in big cities very well. Made some detours today which always adds to the number of miles. The weather has been fine this afternoon but rained again tonight while we were driving through Cleveland in the most congested part and did not speak — only watched the traffic officer and the autos. Bion asked his father if he wouldn't like to drive. He did not seem anxious.

Irwin, Pa. We drove thirty-two miles this morning to Youngstown for breakfast. It was more than that, for we had to detour through some of the worst roads ever, leaving a brick road for the mud. It did seem as though we never would get through. Such holes. After getting back to the brick road, Bion looked back and said he believed he could drive through there and

if he was not in such a hurry he would go back and try it, but thought best to go on. After leaving Youngstown, we had one more detour, not as bad as the other one. At Beaver Falls, we bought some cards and went into the library and wrote some. It was still raining; the scenery was grand. The place is built in a valley. Great steel mills, and where they were melting iron, the hot fires poured forth and the waste ran down the bank like fire. From there to Pittsburg we were on the Lincoln Highway, but some of the road is under construction and such a time to get through. Ran over a stone and bent a rod under the car that we got fixed in Pittsburg. It seemed as though we never would get through Pittsburgh — a very large city and truly a smoky city. Ran around a good deal to find an Overland repair building, but it was too late to get the car fixed. Nothing serious, so we came on. Up steep hills (or mountains) and down as fast as we could go. The road seemed to be full of cars going and coming all the time. I guess Bion had all he wanted to do to manage the car with two old nervous people in it. Father thinks if the car was home it would stay there. He has no desire to drive to Florida after this trip. [The following December, son Clyde drove a second-hand car to Florida and left it there for his father to have during his winters. The trip took almost a month.] We passed some small places but did not care to stay all night, so came to this place. Truly it has been a day of experiences. I think home would look pretty good to me right now. This town is like all others on Saturday night. I wonder where all the people come from. Colored and foreign. There are some nice cars here, and I suppose the people are not afraid to drive up and down these awful hills after dark. I will be excused. We are at the Brunswick Hotel.

September 2. Monday morning. We left Irwin Sunday morning in the fog, but as we went up the mountain, the sun shone and we had a nice day. But, oh, the mountains — it was like a roller coaster up and down and sharp curves right and left. We saw some terrible auto wrecks by the road side which made me fear and tremble, but Bion said not to look at them. We saw some fine farms along the way. The air was bracing, but the high altitude affected our ears. The roads were fine most of the way. Some places there would be a steady incline for two or three miles, then we would descend the same length. At one place, we had to detour three miles out of our way and some of the

road was quite bad, as it had rained. At some place on the detour, a soldier boy stopped us and wanted a ride. Of course we took him in, although it was some crowded. He had a furlough from Pittsburg and had gone as far as he could on the train, as it was Sunday. He rode 27 miles with US. We were glad to have him, as he gave us a great deal of information, especially on one long climb up the mountains he said was four miles and our engine did not work well. He said it was the atmosphere, and it must have been, for it was all right after we were down lower. His home was on a farm in the mountains. His people did not expect him. I should like to have seen their surprise, but he went around back of the house and we saw no one.

We had one long climb after he left us and at the top we stopped and Bion got some ice cream cones. The view from here was fine. Before reaching Gettysburg, the hills were not as high and the roads were good. We passed about 30 or 40 Army trucks. The boys had stopped for the night. It was quite a sight. Farther on, we passed about the same number of smaller trucks still going. We reached Gettysburg before dark, found rooms in a private home, as hotels are full. Traveled 157 miles. Two naval doctors and their wives are here also. They are stationed in Washington and came out here to spend Sunday on a furlough. The doctors were dressed in pure white.

Father has located Gideon Durfee and will go and see him, then we will go to the battle ground, then start on our journey. Am anxious to get through.

September 2nd. Monday Evening. At Washington D.C. This morning, Father and Bion washed the Ohio mud off the car and we found Gideon Durfee and he was our guide around the battle field at Gettysburg. Sometimes while telling about the battles and the men that were lost, he was nearly overcome with emotion so he could hardly talk. He is 75 years old and quite feeble. The battle field and monuments are a wonderful sight. A great battle was fought there and one that decided the war in favor of the North and which preserved our Union which now is really and truly the great United States. We had dinner and bid our friend Gid Durfee good bye and started for Washington at a quarter to two. Reached here about seven. Had one soft tire on the way which delayed us for some time. More hills, but the roads were good all the way. 87 miles here. Father and Bion started out to

find rooms. A man told them to go to the YMCA building and perhaps they could tell us where to go. And they did, but on the way there we saw a Hotel Bancroft and inquired for rooms there and they directed us to the next house where a lady rents rooms, so we secured rooms there at \$1.50 apiece, to be paid in advance. Father thought that was a little hard, but had to give up. This is the way in old Washington. It is on 18th street.

September 3. Richmond, Va. Left Washington about 10 o'clock or after. Drove through Alexandria and were getting along fine until we had to detour about 20 miles through the worst roads you ever saw. It would be impossible to get through after a rain. Clay, and such deep holes. We passed Camp Humphry down in that most forsaken country, drove to Fredricksburg, left there at four o'clock and found better roads except one detour which was not very good. Here we came to a large car driven by a lady. With her was another lady, a little boy and quite an old lady. In turning a very bad corner she had broken a wheel, far from any help and on a bad road. Ahead of us were two cars with two men in each car. They had stopped to see what they could do, and we drove on as we knew they would take care of them, and we could not. We often wondered what they did with the car. We were anxious to reach Richmond that night so hurried on at high speed. We reached Richmond and found a hotel at nine o'clock, had supper and went to bed very tired.

Wednesday, September 4. We decided to go to Camp Eustis by rail, as someone said the road was cut up by Army trucks. We left at seven o'clock and reached Lee Hall about 10:30, the nearest railroad station, and hired a man to take us to the camp. Just before reaching there, a guard gave us a pass into the camp. We found Harold's barracks and captain, and learned that Harold was out drilling. The officer sent for him and he soon came where we were. Glad to see us and we were glad to see him. He made arrangements with the officer for a furlough of three days, so we came back to Richmond, stayed all night, and started for Alexandria in the morning. It was hot at Camp Eustis, although not as hot as it had been. We ate at the mess table before the boys had come in, only a few. The cook was a jolly fellow and gave us a little extra. The first serving was a soldier's portion: beans with pork, raw onion and pickle, bread. He brought us butter,

fried eggs and pears in milk, so we were royally entertained. We also went up in the barracks where Harold slept and also in the YMCA. It is new there, but sometime it will be better. There are between 30 and 40 thousand soldiers there, and they expect more.

September 5. At Alexandria. One week ago this morning we left home. Seems like a month. Michigan will look good to us when we get there, especially Elsie. We left Richmond about 9:30. We always buy something for our lunch on the road as it saves time and we enjoy it. The roads were good most of the way, but some of the worst roads in places — it would be impossible to go over them with an auto — but we had a careful driver. Sometimes he goes pretty fast but we have already traveled 1,000 miles and it is necessary to improve the time on the good roads. We had five in the car besides our baggage but got along very nicely. We drove into Camp Humphry to see Henry Johnson — found him — but could only see him a few minutes. He looks well and feeling fine. He has been there since April 5th. The camp is more improved than Camp Eustis — better roads, etc. — but is an older camp. Thirty thousand boys there, 1/3 colored.

We reached Alexandria before dark. Found a hotel, or, rather, rooms at the Annex Belvoir.

Friday, September 6th. It rained in the night. I felt lazy and thought it a good time to rest, so while the others went to Mt. Vernon, I stayed in the room. After they came back, they went in the old Masonic Hall where Washington attended lodge and in the old church where he attended church. We sat in his pew also. There is a charge of ten cents to go in the church, but the lady in charge took hold of Harold's arm and let him in the door free. The sweetest lady went into the church with us. We then went to Washington to the Post Office. Received two letters from Clyde, glad to get them. Went to the Capitol, also the library. Miss Logie showed us around. We drove around the City and saw the other buildings, but they were closed as it was late in the afternoon so we drove to Arlington and saw Andrew Linman's [half brother of G. W. Bates, Jr.] grave. Such a beautiful place. We then went back to Alexandria and stayed all night. In the morning took Harold to Washington where he took the train for Lee Hall, the nearest station to Camp Eustis. We tried to give him a

cheerful parting but it was hard to see him go and hard for him to go. God Bless him and bring him back to us.

Saturday, September 7. We left Washington at a quarter to eleven for Gettysburg. The roads are concrete and macadam nearly all the way. There are some fine farms along the way. The corn especially good and such a quantity of it. After leaving Gettysburg we drove to Harrisburg, the capitol of Pennsylvania. Roads good — dirt road. So many nice farms, brick houses and some brick barns and the hills are pretty steep but we seem to get used to them. After leaving Harrisburg we follow the Susquehanna River which we crossed on a long bridge at Harrisburg. We have been through several covered bridges today. Have had to pay toll twice between Richmond and Washington and once between Washington and Gettysburg. The ride along the river tonight was grand. It is hard to describe it — river on one side, railroad on the other, and in some places huge rocks at the base of the mountains. And here we are at Millersburg — not a large place, but a pretty place. The main street is all brick with a little park through the center. As we came in the hotel I noticed seats along by the sidewalk and as it is Saturday night there is quite a crowd, judging by the noise. Traveled 152 miles. Between Richmond and Washington, we traveled through Spotsylvania. The pillar of the court house was still standing.

Sunday, September 8. We have a flat tire and while they are fixing it I will write. It rained this morning — just a gentle rain, but cleared off about noon. The first thing this morning, we had to ferry across the Susquehanna River. Then we have been up and down mountains all day. The scenery has been grand. We think prettier than the Lincoln Highway. The roads have been good most of the way. There is a fence most of the way where it is steep on one side, there is always the mountain on one side. The fence and telephone poles and some rocks are painted white. We passed one toll house but did not see it until after we had gone through and a woman waved her hand and yelled. Bion backed the car and she gave us a great spiel about people going through and not stopping. Bion told her to tell it to the people that didn't stop, not to us. She said, "You are all right". We have seen very few autos on the road today. When we came to Lewiston, a man stopped us and handed us a

card, saying "This is auto-less Sunday", and several times we passed groups of boys and girls and they yelled "Slacker — Slacker!". We did manage to get some gasoline of a man in a quiet place in the mountains after Father had told his story. It makes a person feel rather cheap to travel today, but we are anxious to get home and don't feel that we are slackers at all. We have passed through a great deal of the coal and iron district of Pennsylvania. The soil is red, mostly. Wherever there are farms the corn is very good. The potato tops are green, and some just in blossom. Yesterday we passed quantities of tobacco growing. Apples, pears in plenty. While we were coming through the mountains today we came to a Ford car trying to pull another car that was wrecked. Father and Bion helped them to get up a steep hill. I imagine they would have a hard time to get through. We reached Clearfield a little after five o'clock, a little early for us to stop, but Father has had a headache today, Bion is tired, and we were all ready to rest. Shall be so glad when we get home. We rode 132 miles today. We notice the cemeteries in Pennsylvania are uncared for. Between Washington and Gettysburg we saw girls working on the road, spreading tar.

Monday, September 9. We are at a small place called Albion almost to the Ohio line. We made a mistake that we did not go back through New York, although it would be farther around. We have been over some very rough roads—long mountain hills covered with stone. Up and down, up and down. One hill was the worst we ever saw. As we ride through the country we notice the service flags in the windows of the very best homes and the most humble. Some flags have one star, some two or three, and we realize the sacrifice that is made all over the land, and the sad homes where the thoughts are far away in some camp or across the sea in France. God grant our boys may come back to us; if not, that the sacrifice may not be in vain. 178 miles.

Tuesday, Sept. 10th. We are in Toledo tonight at the Hotel Waldorf. Have made 212 miles but am not as tired as some nights as the roads have been smooth and we had no tire trouble. We stopped in Cleveland a little while, then came on to Emma Darby's. They were not at home, but we learned from a neighbor that their son was reported killed in France, was still alive and the gold star had been replaced by the blue one. [In both World wars, people often hung little banners in their windows with one blue star for each son in service, gold if they were killed.] He had been wounded and in the hospital, but was better, so he wrote in a letter. The ride along the lake shore was cold, and we were obliged to put up the curtains on that side. There were acres of vineyards along the shore and the vines were thick with large clusters of grapes. We bought some, and they were very sweet.

Wednesday, September 11. We left Toledo at a quarter to nine, in the rain. Started out wrong and went about 20 miles out of our way. Where we struck the clay mud, our car slid across the road and refused to go. Bion got out in the mud and put the chains on, then we proceeded on our way. After traveling several miles, we had better roads. It rained nearly all day. We stopped in Durand a little while. Found Lyda still suffering from hay fever. Seems to have it worse than last year. We drove on to Ovid where we had supper and stayed all night, more tired than any night. Think it would be a good thing if Michigan had more good roads.

Thursday morning. Father and Bion washed the car and we came home shining. Very thankful to get back to our dear old house again. Have thought of Harold a great deal — and all the boys in camp. No one but themselves know how hard it is to be so far from home and know they may be called on to go into battle, and perhaps lose their lives. But they try to be brave and to be prepared for whatever is in store for them. Their hearts are sad at times — and there are sad hearts at home, but we must be brave for their sake. How can we let any more of our boys go?