

# **FLYING LIKE A PENGUIN**

**Jimmy Brook**

"Time to find the world. To see what it looks like.  
To just travel with the wind and sea. To walk the  
long miles. To swim the moving depths. To fly like  
a penguin."

A story of my journeys around the world, and the places and  
peoples I passes along the way. Five months on the road in an  
era of great change in the world.

## **FLYING LIKE A PENGUIN**

### **WHERE IT ALL BEGAN**

It was all a rush of last minute packing and checking and re checking, and to be honest I didn't know if I was coming or going. Tonight I would be on a plane, my very first time, and flying away from Australia, away from home. My parents were in confusion, and I wasn't much better. There was so much gear and it seemed to weigh a tonne but it all disappeared into my haversack and airways bag. Well most of it. Some I would have to carry.

Maybe I should put all this in perspective. This year, 2021, is a year of large changes in our world. So I thought back to a time when I had lots of memories. I dug out my trip diaries and decided to tell a story of my first big adventure in the world. When I was packing my haversack, it was in 1967. The story you will read about on the following pages, happened then.

A yell from dad. There was someone at the front door. In those days the family used the front door of our house much more than today. I went to see who, and it turned out to be a neighbour from across the road. The son actually, as the old lady who owned the place didn't walk very much. Surprise as we never spoke that much except to yell hello. There was a phone call, and the caller was

waiting for me. We didn't have a phone in those days. Most people didn't, unless you were in business. In fact, we had never been rung up on the old lady's phone, ever. I rushed over the road and up the front steps.

It was a good friend of mine, Alan, and he was ringing from Canada. I was getting really apprehensive. It turned out to be a well timed "Bon Voyage " call. It thought it a nice gesture. I would be visiting him in the coming weeks.

Maybe I should fill in a few gaps before we finally head for the airport. The plane doesn't leave until 7pm, so I have time.

I was 27 years old and not unlike many people my age, wanted to travel. Somewhere. It was 1967, and most young people, if they did travel, headed for Britain. At this time in our country's development, overseas travel wasn't so common. One was regarded as adventurous or rich. Commercial jets had only been around less than 7 years, but there were stirring's. People no longer had that interesting, but long sea voyage to endure. The age of sea travel to Europe was coming to an end. But not quite yet. Cruises were around for a long time but not as a way of getting from one side of the world to the other.

Nine to Five as a junior clerk at the oil company and life was needing a change. Besides 'everyone' went to London. No need to stay at home now. All you needed was lots of time and the ticket to get there. There were plenty of jobs for Australians and places to sleep at, then you could travel around a bit more. Oh the innocence of youth.

I joined the Oil company some 10 years earlier, and had managed to qualify as an accountant. My friends, Alan and Reg, from scouts, had actually emigrated to Canada. I thought of doing the same, but having to renounce my Australian citizenship to become a Canadian, was a bit over the top.

My parents weren't exactly over the moon about me shooting off to foreign lands where all sorts of perils awaited. I was going, only just exactly when, I had not yet decided. It came in an unusual way.

At this stage of my life, I was heavily into Scouting. I had been to two Australian Jamborees and the desire to make a World Jamboree was smouldering away. Then came the announcement that Australia was sending a contingent to the World Jamboree in the United States. At our local level we could nominate one leader to go. I nominated.

So did someone else, It was a fellow I knew and liked, Bill, a controversial and older scouter, and an announcement by the District Commissioner quickly came. Bill would go. I was disappointed, but I was happy that it was a friend, and I had no hard feelings. I took the dice as it was rolled, and wished him a good trip. I meant it, for it now gave me an alternative plan, which in the long run, was far better.

I would go as a visitor, tour around where I wanted to, and go on to Britain, and maybe even Europe. To dovetail my trip in with the Jamboree, I would leave Sydney in July (1967) and fly to the United States.

Time flew, and in due course, I did all those things necessary to make the trip. And by myself, with no travel agent. Down to Qantas Empire Airways to buy a single ticket to London via the States. Most people went via the traditional route through Ceylon (now Sri Lanka) and not so many ventured to the Americas. How times have changed. Then there were the inoculations, for without that Yellow Card, you wouldn't get into most countries. Those exotic names like Yellow Fever and Smallpox that have today almost died from the memory. The latter made me sick, and I remember telling the boss that I had been bitten by something. A spider, I think. My farewell gift from the company and my workmates was a little unusual, but necessary. A haversack. Not one of the long super models of today with internal frame and twenty five pockets, but the super model of that era. A canvas Paddy Pallin "Explorer" steel H frame with one pocket and less than 60 litres capacity.

That particular haversack was used for many years and finally donated to the scouts some twenty years later.

Into that bag went also a 3 man tent, a Paddy Pallin "Era" japara cotton variety and a methylated spirit stove and a suit for those formal occasions. Goodness knows what else. Probably the most important item, apart from the plastic Australian flag, was the camera. A "Voigtlander Vito CD" 35mm which required both speed and light to be set for each photo. As was the fashion in the sixties, slides were all the go. The tally finally was 750, enough to frighten anyone when you mentioned, "would you like to see my holiday snaps?" The camera was originally my 21st birthday gift from mum and dad. It's still sitting in the cupboard, overshadowed by newer technology, but probably proud that it had seen a lot more than some of the later ones. Oops, time to go, or we'll miss the plane.

Ah, the international terminal at Sydney in 2021, is world famous. Back in 1967 it was still on the drawing boards. Then we had something not so big, but practical. Some converted hangers tastefully camouflaged did the job, and when you were waiting, where did you wait? The Walkabout Lounge of course. The first time I had been there. And I felt important. Somewhere outside in the darkness was my plane. From memory there were only two.

Then I said my goodbyes amid much back slapping and kisses and Tears, and through immigration onto the tarmac. I walked towards the aircraft, a darker shape with lights showing from many windows, stretching the entire length. It appeared to be so huge, I wondered if it would ever get off the ground. I later found out what sort of plane, from the brochure we received on board. We would be flying in a Boeing 707, the latest in civilian jet travel. Like the airport, the Jumbos were still on the drawing board, and would make the 707s look very small. The big 'Flying Kangaroo' tail emblem made me feel important. Each Qantas aircraft is named after something

Australian. Ours was called 'Winton' after the town in outback Queensland where the airline started.

The plane was packed, a fair proportion being Americans and children. I had a window seat and next to me was a girl about my age. Then we were off. That feeling when the aircraft suddenly goes from level to oblique, was a shock. I would get used to it. The lights of Sydney were fantastic. Just a myriad of fairy lights. I tried to pick out landmarks, but at night, it was almost impossible. Then we were leaving the coast and heading out into the darkness of the Pacific Ocean. The girl leaned over and had a look through the tiny window.

"First time?" she asked. I replied that it was.

"My first time also." In all the good films, the plot goes on from here. In my story, it ended here. Anyway, I was still overawed by the experience of flying. There were free lollies and drinks and food, all very nice.

Our first stop was in Fiji for refuelling, some 2 hours out from Sydney. It got a little bumpy as we prepared to land. Nandi was very quiet and we had to leave the plane for the hour it was being serviced. It was certainly warm, after Sydney's winter. I had expected a lot of noise outside, but it was reasonably quiet at the airport. Since Nandi is on the opposite side of the big island to Suva, that was probably why.

The take off was still exciting for me. The screeching of the jet engines and that moment when the plane lifts off the ground and your stomach wonders what has happened. Hardly up in the air and you think your days have come to an end. We hit bad turbulence and bumped up and down for ages. I was strapped in tight. Didn't sleep much, due to the excitement, and a bright day emerged as we travelled into the sun, and then the Hawaiian Islands appeared on our port side. Green jewels in an azure blue sea. Pearl Harbour was laid out below us, as was Diamond Head, then we were down.

With all my cabin gear, and wearing what I had left Sydney in some 10 hours ago, a suit with a jumper underneath for the chilly winter departure, I nearly melted when I walked down the staircase and onto the tarmac. It was only 9.30am but already 27 degrees Celsius, with at least 100% humidity. I quickly shed the jumper and by the time I cleared customs, also the coat. The pack is looking like a grotesque bundle, with jumper, suit coat, moleskin trousers, cardigan and newspaper, all somehow tied to the top. I just could not easily handle it yet, and needed a few more days experience at packing. The local bus into Honolulu with the crowds of people was too daunting with my baggage, so I had to take a taxi.

About 14km and it cost me \$5.30. May be a quick word or two on money. Back in 1967 the cost of living was probably just about the same as it is now, with some things much more expensive than now and some things the other way. But it was all tied to the earning capacity of that time. I was earning \$65 per week then as a qualified accountant in industry, so that taxi fare wasn't as cheap

as first appears. In fact, today it costs about \$40 in a taxi for the same distance in Sydney. The US dollar was then about 90 cents Australian. (Today it's something like \$1.35). This is a holiday, so forget the boring details like money and back to Honolulu.

The apartments I had booked into were made of wood, painted white and whilst comfortable, had probably been around since the 1930s. They had my reservation, yes, but not my money order. I had to pay again for my night's accommodation. Don't laugh, but the daily tariff was \$6.24. I resolved to get my money back from the post office in North Sydney when I returned. The room even had its own bathroom, sort of. It was a share with the room next door. First in, locked the door on the other side of the room. Two hours into my occupation there was a loud banging on the wall. I had forgotten to undo the bolt when I had finished showering.

It was so hot and humid, my shirt was soaked every time I moved. A vending machine outside the units sold Coca Cola. You put coins in and out came a can (I still called them tins then). America was certainly progressive. These machines were as yet unseen by me, back in Australia. I cashed \$20 with a traveller's cheque and headed for the beach. Not exactly Bondi, but Waikiki had a name, and I had to sample it. Now everyone who was sunbaking had a straw or raffia mat to lay on. I understood why. The sand lacked the clean golden stuff we are spoilt with. Into the water. Like a tepid bath and flat. Where were the waves? I found out the big "ones" were on the other side of the island. There was no incentive to lay around, as I was white and they were brown. This has nothing to do with race, just that the Europeans all had great tans, and I was embarrassed. Not to mention my standard issue boxer togs, looking a little skimpy against the prevailing knee length variety. I went back to the hotel, for that was its official title, and changed, and retrieved my money from under the bed. I had been warned not to leave anything wrapped up in my towel whilst swimming. What a pain, as we always did back home.

Honolulu wasn't the Mecca of high rise and shopping malls, then. Difficult to describe, somewhere between a country town and an island resort. A bit like Sydney's Manly, with narrow streets and fairly flat, and a bit like our coastal resort town of Port Macquarie, with lots of people. Then there was a touch of the Gold Coast's Surfers Paradise, the showy side. The population was very mixed. A lot of European, both locals and tourists. A lot of islanders and a lot of in between. Then there were many military personnel.

It was really too hot to walk around the streets, the humidity so draining. I only had brown leather shoes out which were not too comfortable in the weather, but bare feet were definitely out of the question, on the hot pavements. In the end, I went back to the room and rested in the cool. The lack of sleep on the plane and shorter night as we flew into the rising sun, losing some 4 hours, made me tired. No air conditioning in the unit and the perspiration still flows the moment you move. But it is cooler. Then outside again.

The high pitched Yankee accent is still unusual to me, and everyone has one. There are loads of cars, and typically as in the movies, they are big. Yank Tanks we call them back home. I explored the main shopping area, with its large market bazaar called the International Market Place, set out under big ancient fig trees, but found little else to attract me. I wanted a tour of the "USS Arizona", the memorial out in Pearl Harbour, built around the protruding funnel of the battle ship that was sunk by the Japanese on the 7th December, 1941. The ferry left at 9.30 in the morning and I had arrived at 11am, so that was out. Anyway, it cost \$7.50! There were no other cheaper tours, so I decided to take the public bus from downtown, and go to Leani Heights, a residential area up in the hills. You didn't pay the driver, but had to put the exact coin, a quarter (25c), into a slot next to him. He then hit a lever or something, and the accumulated coins dropped down out of sight. I had to change buses somewhere out there in suburbia, but I had a transfer ticket which I showed and finally, the end of the line. I got out but I only had a couple of minutes before the bus set off back down the hill. I wasn't sure when there would be another bus, so I didn't want to be caught.

There were great views of the city below, some 2,000 feet below, I reckoned. The residents were certainly lucky here, and less humidity. A lady told me the bus driver would change bank notes but you had to put the coin in the slot. If you gave him a dollar note and said nothing, he would give you 5 bus tickets. Not much use to me. I looked at the houses as we wound down the hills. Not large, just average to small, most constructed out of brick or weatherboard. We went through Waikiki, about 3 miles out from the city of Honolulu. About 50% islanders here compared to about 80% I saw out in the suburbs. Then we were passing the old Palace of the Hawaiian kings, now the local parliament house. Unfortunately it was too quick to get the camera out.

Don't know why I never knew it before, but discovered that electricity was only half the voltage of home, only 120v and no earth pins on any of the plugs. I also found out that the light bulbs were all screwed in, no bayonets. Being a hot place, about 60% of the blokes were in shorts, like me, but those long baggy knee length Bermuda's you saw in films. Long pants had cuffs, so long gone at home. Of course today, fashions change every year, and seemingly we follow what happens overseas very quickly. Probably what is foisted upon us by stores who take what overseas supplies they can get.

My first memorable experience was sitting down on the beach front just on sunset, about 8pm, watching the sun set off to my right. The colours and the ambience were washing over me. Even the noise of the cars was lost in the surf folding over and dropping down on the sand. I walked along a few streets in the cool. Narrow streets with white washed wooden houses, often with groups of young people sitting outside, talking or drinking from bottles, and playing cards. The students, the drifters and the tourists. Amongst this, the locals also. How long would these houses and streets remain before the inevitable high rises would swallow them up?

I went back and sat in the front garden of the hotel for an hour or so. There were 3 young people there, two 16 year old girls and a 17 year old boy. We talked. It was interesting to hear their views on life and the vastly different lifestyle they had. They were from the mainland, on holiday. Then I went inside and packed for tomorrow.

I had a shave with my new razor, the first such shave in two years, as I had been using an electric one at home. Only 2 cuts. Maybe I was still cranky about having to pay \$5.30 taxi fare or the \$6.24 again for the hotel room! I packed and repacked. I really have too much gear. Extra suit, pants, jumpers. Sleep came easily, despite the heat.

I awoke at 6.35am. Early you might say. Not really, as I had to leave at 6.45am to catch the airport shuttle bus, down the road. Panic. I managed to grab the gear and rush down the road to the nearby Moana Hotel where the Grey Line bus would pick up for the airport. I made it with time to spare, and we got to the airport at 7.40am, and the fare was a reasonable \$1.50. There are custom and plant quarantine checks in and out of the Islands, but they didn't seem to worry about my haversack. Maybe they saw me arrive yesterday.

You leave the terminal building and get into a small bus that drives across the strip to the waiting plane, then climb the stairs to the aircraft doorway. The same as yesterday when I arrived. The good thing about here, was not having to walk to and from the terminal in the heat or rain, unlike home. Although they do give you an umbrella, so I was told once.

The plane was a Douglas DC8, which looked exactly the same as the Boeing I left Australia in. We left at 9.25am and headed directly out to sea. Great view of the reef and the surf hitting it, but little of the island itself. Lucky again for me, as I had a window seat, and could see bits of island for a short while, then just ocean and cloud. The stewardess's are dressed in sarongs with big printed hibiscus flowers all over them. Since I had changed planes, I was now flying on a United Airlines machine. No doubt about the Americans, we had an in flight movie to while away the 4 hours to San Francisco. "Africa, Texas Style" was the attraction. It helped pass the time. I took it for granted when the cabin crew pulled down a film screen, and the projector at the rear, gave us the movie. Something for our plane from Sydney to think about.

Then lunch. It was a hot meal and it was needed, as I had missed breakfast. Above us the sky was dark blue, meaning there is little air. We were at 33,000 feet and at another 10,000 or so, it would probably be black. If we could breath. I sat back and thought of my brief visit to the islands. Different to home and full of things to sample and explore, but at another time. Onward to the mainland. So much change. I remember in Woolworths in Waikiki, they had car radios with a built in tape recorder, and it was in stereo! Would have been nice to have one to show off at home, and at only \$60. Then the thought I would have to buy a car first to put it in. The old 1961 Ford Falcon ute went last week.



The mainland! At first just a smudge then gradually getting more perspective. Green and brown then buildings, and look at that, the Golden Gate Bridge. Then down to land. The stewardesses had already changed into something more European, a traditional black skirt and coat with the service cap perched on top.

Through all the formalities and then outside. The era before shuttles. I caught a bus (I'm an old hand now after Honolulu) for \$1.10 into the city terminal and walked around a bit, up and down a few streets to get the feel of the place. The temperature is so different here. A cool 19 degrees C, and no humidity. I stopped at a phone box and checked the book for the address of the YMCA, the recommended place to stay. Some more walking and there I was. I got a newly refurbished room for \$4.10 on the first floor (or as the yanks say, the 2nd floor) which still had the painter finishing up the window sills. He said he would leave me to it and come back tomorrow. In later years, the Village People gave a new dimension to the YMCA, which was probably there back in 1967, but for me, it was just a cheap and reasonable place to stay. There were other hotels about advertising rooms from \$3 a night, but the 'Y' had class.

I went for a walk around the city streets. Not unlike Sydney in some respects, and they still had trams (called street cars) which was a good plus for me, as Sydney had taken hers off 6 years back. I had tea at a cafe, the hamburger costing more than home, at 75c. The meat, as in Hawaii, was highly seasoned, and seemed off. Even the butter like on the islands, was rancid.

To move around the States, I had purchased before I left home, A Greyhound bus ticket giving me unlimited travel in the United States and Canada for 99 days (just over 3 months), all for US\$99. Since bus travel is the norm here, nearly every town had some long distance service connection. All you had to do was book ahead. I found the Greyhound depot and booked tomorrow night for Spokane, up in the east of Washington State, near the Canadian border.

Then some window shopping and some real shopping. In a supermarket/drug/clothes shop, I purchased some razor blades which were cheap at 37c. It was Sunday but the shops were open. Not like home when dead on noon, Saturday, they locked the doors. And this shop would be open until 11pm tonight.

Lots of picture shows (movie houses here, but I will call them cinemas like today) around. The big ones were expensive, around \$3 a seat, but there were plenty of second rate theatres at \$1 to \$1.75. Many theatres had 3 or 4 movies on the one programme. Food is dearer here than home, as is travelling costs. Clothes seem to be on a par or even cheaper.

At 9pm the streets were still very busy with people and cars and electric trolley buses and trams. Long trams to what we had in Sydney a few years ago. The fares on these were: short journey:15c and long journey:25c. I saw the famous cable trams and planned to have a ride on these tomorrow. Couldn't afford a haircut here, not at \$2 plus a tip! Even the sandwiches are a little on the high side,

at between 50c to 90c for a cheese/beef or ham. San Francisco is much like Sydney in many respects. I like the feel of it and feel at home. Of course there are no pubs, just cocktail bars and the prices I saw from outside were extortionate. The exception was beer, I noticed, which was only about 25c a glass. Probably not very potent, but at this stage in my life I didn't drink yet. In fact I had never been into a public bar.

I planned my itinerary for tomorrow and just wanted some sleep. I had a nice refurbished room here at the YMCA and every one very pleasant. The later era of the 'Y' being one of the centres of what is now known as gay culture in San Francisco wasn't evident, or at least to me. I suppose it was some sort of magnet for probably the last 20 years, but discreet. Then came the 'Flower Power' revolution and for a while, nothing was really discreet. But 1967 was still the era of traditional family values, and football for men and whatever it was considered appropriate for the females.

Apart from adjusting to jet lag, there was daylight saving to get used to. We didn't have it back at home, but here you had to allow for it in timetables and open times. Confusing, as some cities and some organisations use standard time zone and some daylight.

It was now Monday 31st, and a cool but clear summer day. I wondered if the city, subject to the cold ocean currents, ever got hot. Out there, one could see wisps of fog across the bay. I slept in a little, due to the journey and a whole new set of concepts, and left at 10.15. First stop was to put my haversack into the bus station. I wasn't going to carry that around all day. I walked to Powell Street and caught a cable tram. It was fascinating watching the driver work the lever with the jaws attached. They told me these jaws are replaced every 10-14 days. People joined from both sides and if no seats, crammed into the small compartment, or hung on the outside in very precarious positions. The fare collection was interesting. The conductor registered his fares by pulling a lever near the roof which tripped a meter. In addition to the jaws lever to pull the tram along on the continuously moving cable, the driver had another big lever to work an independent brake. And you need it for the steep hills they travel down. Also, the conductor has a brake as well. At the end of the run, driver, conductor and willing passengers would literally push the tram around 180° on a turntable. We went down to Fisherman's Wharf, and I got off to walk around this famous icon of the city. Very cosmopolitan with outdoor markets and loads of stalls selling seafood, particularly lobsters which were cooked in large pots in the street. Old sailing ships lined the dockside, many open for inspection. Famous restaurants like Aliotos and Fisherman Grotto faced the water.

I decided I would take a Bay cruise for an hour and view the city from out on the water. It was very cold and blowy but still a great trip. We went to the Narrows and sailed right under the massive Golden Gate Bridge. It is really huge from underneath and painted a Tuscan red colour. You could not see the top of the bridge as it was hidden in cloud, as were the hills to the north around Sausalito.

Then across the Bay and under the Oakland-San Francisco Bridge, or 'Bay' bridge as it seems to be called. This one is 4 miles long and is part suspension and part cantilever with a tunnel in the centre where it goes across a small island, called Treasure Island. This island houses a US naval station. The bridge is double decked, with north and south bound traffic on top of each other. We sailed close to Alcatraz Island, still a prison but soon to be closed. Not many escaped from here as the treacherous currents usually prevented it. Back in the city, I walked for a while covering a few miles. I found the crookedest street in the world, Lombard Street, vibrant with colourful flowers. Across the way was Telegraph Hill and nearby, Russian Hill, so named from the early wild days of sail and gold. I walked down Market Street, one of the main business thoroughfares and poked in and out of government and civic buildings (always free) and parks and fountains. Hollywood was not far away, in a visual sense. In the grounds of the Opera House, I was able to watch a scene of the TV series, "I Spy" being made. (Today I can't remember the series, only the name. It starred Robert Culp.)

A long walk to the Dolores Mission. I had wanted to see one of these Spanish Missions and this seemed to be in all the tourist brochures. It was just as the photographs depicted it. Built in 1776, it was typical mission with a well preserved church and cemetery and pleasant outbuildings. I walked back to Market Street and caught a tram. My legs were feeling a little tired and away from the water, it was fairly warm. After all this was summer. The tram was smooth and quiet, unlike our old trams. More like a train. As with the buses, there was no conductor and you put the exact money in a slot next to the driver.

In the downtown area of the city, I spent 85c and went into a movie house to see 3 movies! I was a bit sunburnt today and my face was red and a little sore. UV cream was still in the future. Found some food to eat and then went to the bus station to collect my gear and catch my bus. I was finally starting my mainland trip, deep into the real America.

## **INTO THE UNKNOWN**

This first leg was some 700 miles and to take 24 hours. The Dollar a Day for 99 Days ticket was going to be well and truly used. I was heading for Idaho, right up near the Canadian border. Specifically, I was aiming for Lake Pend Oreille where I hoped to find the World Scout Jamboree in full swing.

We pulled out at 10.30pm and swung out of the main street onto a ramp and a freeway, which took us over the Bay Bridge to Oakland and east towards Sacramento. I don't recall this city, the State Capital,

perhaps as it was night and I was asleep. We stopped for a break at Redding in northern California, just below the Shasta Dam. This is volcanic land, as is most of the west coast, and whilst I had heard of the Lassen Volcanic Park, the darkness prevented any view.

At dawn, we crossed the state line (the border) into Oregon. The name conjured up visions of the wild west and the Oregon Trail. The country is very pretty and green with farms and lots of timber (presumably Oregon pine) in the forested hills. The highway is fantastic. We did not yet have roads like this at home. I slept on and off and finally we arrived at Portland, the capital city on the Willamette River which is a tributary of the Columbia River, and which separates Oregon from it's northern neighbour, Washington State. It was noon. Some quick lunch but not moving far from the bus depot. There was a reason for this. 1967 was the start of renewed equal rights demands by the African American population. The day before I arrived in Portland, guess where the early demonstrations (the media called them riots) started in the USA? The bus driver advised us not to stray far from the depot in case we were attacked!

Before we left, I bought a film, then it was eastward along the Columbia River. Pleasant and green for some 60 miles. We passed the Multamah Falls and turn offs to some dams built across the river. The country was now turning to grass then semi desert, as we passed hills that stopped the rain blown in from the Pacific Ocean. Stony patches and salt bush and areas of what appeared to be just dust, were now the norm. At Yumatillah, still in Oregon, we had a tea break. Here the temperature is hot, around 85-90°F. We had stopped briefly at the Multamah Falls beforehand.

Around the river, we are surrounded by stark hills, not unlike the Rio Grande River I had seen in films. This small town is a remanant of the wild west, with Indian relics and pioneering junk strewn all around. At about 9.45pm we arrived at Spokane, in eastern Washington State. I quickly picked up the pronunciation of the 'kane' as 'cann'. On the bus there were 2 boys sitting near me, and it turned out they were going to visit their grandparents and the World Jamboree. I think they were around 14 or so and the eldest was named Randy, which at the time seemed a way out sort of name but became more common as I moved around. Their aunty and uncle met them at the bus station, and I said goodbye, and started hoofing it down the street looking for an hotel.

Did I look a sad case or were people just nice? The family (their name was Griffins) pulled up alongside in their big car and offered me a bed if I wasn't organised. I thought that was nice, but pretty useful, at 10pm. We squeezed into the car (one of those big things with no window frames on the doors) and ended up at a house in the leafy suburbs, a 2 storey built with split levels making it effectively a 4 storey. It seemed to be made out of wood and fibro (Hardiplank), like so many others. After 24 hours in the bus, I was tired and with a shower, slept soundly.

Next morning was breakfast and a cup of tea. But would you

believe it, made from a tea bag. This was a new experience also for me. I also was given instant tea, which was worse. Last night I had coffee which I thought was terrible. Maybe I'm too picky. The milk and butter both had a rancid taste also. Oh for home cooking. We talked a while then drove to the shopping centre for food and some supplies. Back at the house they packed the car and we were to head for Lake Pend Oreille, where they were building a cabin by the lake. The site was near the Jamboree at Farragut State Park.

As we were leaving the house a siren sounded in town. I thought it was a fire alert. I was told it was the town warning system practice. What for you ask? Would you believe, in case of attack by the Russians! We drove to Coeur d'Alene, a large town in Idaho (about 40 miles), then north for about 26 miles to Farragut Park. It was very hot. Inside, we parked the car and took a camp bus to the area which contained the Australian contingent. It was in Camp Moisson. I was in scout uniform and wearing the green Australian scarf I had been issued with from State HQ in Sydney, for individuals going overseas. It was just so good to hear Australian accents again. Cooking fires were all elevated on small stands and every one was densely packed in.

I met Bill, the fellow scouter from near me in Sydney, and Jim C., a fellow I knew from the Pennant Hills Scout Training Camp Staff, where I was a member. It was great meeting them and felt just like home. A decent cup of tea this time from a billy. Jim explained that security was so tight that he couldn't manage to let me in, even for one night. Each scout had 2 identity cards they had to carry and an identity label plate they had to wear at all times. They were not allowed to leave the Jamboree site at any time except on a tour. Visitors were only allowed in from 1pm to 6pm each day. The system was a shock to us Australians as we had never experienced this at home.

The rigmarole to go swimming was just as bad, so that no one bothered, just a cold shower up on the hill where the sides of the shower screens started about 2'6" from the ground. You didn't drop the soap in visiting hours. There was no firewood. At each mealtime, the boys were given a bag of charcoal to cook on. Sanitation was poor by any standards with no visitor's toilets, and the Aussies had their toilet only 10 feet from their kitchen, the limit of their allotted area. And smell! From the international aspect, it was breathtaking and a memorable experience.

But for those who had been to an Australian Jamboree like Lansdowne or Dandenong, I felt our Australian Jamborees were just as good, if not better. Besides this one was 26 miles from the nearest town and hundreds from a capital city. I wandered around the Jamboree site with the family that had taken me in, then it was time to go. The family were pressing on to their cabin, so I asked them to drop me off about ½ mile from the Jamboree entrance, in an area of thick bush. They said goodbye and drove off. You do meet some good people. I hid my pack and other gear in the bush and decided to take up the offer of Jim C. for dinner. I raced back to the entrance, but as it was 5.55pm, they wouldn't let me in! Visiting hours were to 6pm.

Disappointed, I walked back to my gear, some 40 yards off the road and set up camp. The timber made it easy to put up my Paddy Pallin Era wall tent and my billy can is full of water, but I have no food. I read and wrote up my diary whilst listening to lots of mosquitoes buzzing about my ears. Fortunately, I had repellent. It was a long night.

Light planes and helicopters flew overhead, even at night. I stayed out of sight, as I didn't want to attract attention. There were State Police everywhere, and I began to wonder at what sort of country this was. At 8.30pm it was still very light. I wasn't particularly worried at the natural dangers. I had been told there were no snakes, except rattlesnakes which are very rare up here, and no spiders except Black Widows (red backs) which meant I should avoid putting fingers in damp places or cracks. I had asked about bears, as it seemed to be the only thing that would worry me, but was assured it was unlikely. Still better not to leave food around. In fact, the only interesting thing seemed to be the air raid warning every Wednesday in Spokane!

I slept fairly soundly, and lived on Life Savers lollies. One of the helicopters last night, had a search light and I had heard that the Coast Guard had two boats patrolling the lake. There were two squirrels in the tree above my tent making a bit of noise and some snorting which brought visions of a grizzly looking for dinner. It turned out to be an elk. It was now Thursday, and I lazed around until nearly midday before heading back to the entrance, gear safely hidden.

Inside the entrance was the Friendship Tower, an impressive collection of about a hundred large poles with the various flags of the countries attending. The sign saying the "12th World Jamboree" was in silver.

I was given a ride to the main Jamboree area and then walked around taking photos and visiting the Skil-o-Rama section where various obstacles, made a challenging time for the contestants, and a fun time for the spectators. Then I found myself back at the Australian camp, with its 5 foot high statue of an aboriginal with raised spear, welcoming visitors. I met Jim C. again and as it was hot, we had a cold shower and then a shave. I met Bruce Garnsey, the NSW State Commissioner for Training back home, and I think, contingent leader. A nice and a very forceful person, and very outgoing. We had met a couple of times before at the Pennant Hills Camp and he had a soft spot for us camp volunteers. For ten years he kept promising my mate, Alan a cloth badge. The badge never materialised and now Bruce is gone. But not the memory and happy booming voice.

There was a tea party, so it was full uniform and lots of invited guests. It was so good to feel a bit of home around you and people who spoke like you. Mind, some of the boys had already picked up an accent and believe me, it is not hard to do so. It just comes so naturally. You notice the American accent less and less when listening to the yanks speak. After a few days, an accent helped as

this was the time when all Australians were still labelled "British", and us tourists were far and few between.

Time to move on. First problem was to get me and my gear back to Coeur d'Alene so I could get a bus. The spirits smiled upon me, for as I headed for the main gate, still a mile away, a car pulled up and a middle aged lady with 3 scouts offered me a lift to the entrance. "Would I like a meal?" A quick stop which puzzled them, whilst I dived into the bush for my gear, then to their place in town, where I was offered also a bed. Very nice people, the Lyons's. They had 4 children and he was a doctor. For years afterward, we would correspond but then they moved and they became another happy memory. I ended up staying some 2 and a bit days.

After tea that night, the local scoutmaster, came around to meet me, and we went through the Potlach Sawmill near Coeur d'Alene, the largest in the state. It was very interesting. The family has 2 cars, a Mustang and a Buick station wagon. They were terrific people and pleased to have me. Fairly well off but not over rich, maybe upper middle class.

Next day, Friday, Dr. Lyon took me to a rodeo in town put on for the Scouts. Had to give a bit of a sob story to get admission, but with his help they let us in. It was really interesting as I had only ever been to one before at home, and this was really American with all the show hype. Buck jumping and Brahma bull riding with singing and riding whilst standing in the saddle or on the backs of 2 bulls. There was pole sitting and clowns and Rex Allen. Who was Rex, I never found out, but suspect some hero in the trade.

Back at the house, I played with the kids in the back yard whilst Mrs. Lyons took out wives of the visiting scouters on a boat trip. One of the lady's was my friend Bill's, wife. We played baseball and catchings and then I introduced French Cricket, which went down very well. Maybe today, 50 odd years later, there are children all over Idaho who play this funny game with a bat and ball and have no idea where it came from!

When Mrs. Lyons came back, it was still fairly hot, so we went swimming in Lake Coeur d'Alene. The water was nice but a bit dirty for my liking, as was the sand. Their youngest son, Jimmy, had never been keen on swimming, so she said, but as we mucked about, he wanted to swim with 'Australia', and soon I was holding him and he was kicking, and Mrs. was over the moon.

Some of the houses are huge and look terrific. Many have big sweeping lawns. There are not many fences around the residentials, and the street where they lived looked like one long vast front yard. Kids rode bikes across people's front lawns and every second house had an American flag flying either on a pole or attached to the house.

The family were going to buy another house but only wanted to spend \$30,000. The owner wanted nearly \$80,000 so it was look again. Their colour TV/radio/record player unit was a dream. We didn't have colour TV in Australia, so this was a real treat. I

watched the 'Spiral Road' one night, with Rock Hudson. Quite an interesting story although the film version didn't do the book justice I was told. The town has its own radio station which plays FM stereo music non stop, without commercials or talking. So many new and modern things.

We ate dinner out in the back yard as it is cooler, and the sun does not set until around 9PM. They were fascinated by my accent and when I left, I had the kids using some of my accent and a few slang words. Mrs. Lyons rang a local fellow around my age to get him to come over, but he wasn't interested. I can't blame him. She was just trying to entertain me. That night we went down to the basement (all north American houses seem to have basements under the ground), and as Dr. Lyons was out on some business, I brought out my Central Australian slides, and I entertained them with my trip to Ayers Rock (Uluru), from the year before. They were fascinated and I felt lugging around all these slides was worth it. These went on to 12.30 in the morning and I'm sure half the time they didn't know what I was talking about.

Mrs. Lyon just loves my accent, she says. She is very dynamic and most informal. I have some difficulty in picking up the slang I hear. I guess this takes time. Their house budget is around \$1000 per month, and the doctor is taxed some 40% of his income by the federal government before the state takes some more. I gave some figures from home which were much less in proportion.

The next day I pottered around and borrowed the kid's bike for a trip to the shops. Beef cube steak is 97c lb. and most expensive. In the afternoon we all drove out to Farragut Park for another visit to the Jamboree. We were stuck in a traffic jam which went for 5 miles. Took in a good tour of the area and another visit to Skil-o-Rama. A quick visit to the Aussie contingent, then home.

Had dinner in the back yard as usual and then said goodbye to the kids who were most upset to see 'Australia' go. So was I. I wonder today, where those kids are. Are they still with us? Particularly little Jimmy. I watched some more colour TV then after a shower, Dr. Lyon drove me to the bus station. As we pulled out at 12.10 in the morning, I looked back at him waving and returned it. Very sad at leaving such warm and open people.

It was now Sunday 6th August, 1967, and after changing buses back in Spokane, headed for Seattle. The scenery is magic with towering peaks and cascading streams and endless pine forests. And it was wet. A breakfast stop at Wenatchee on the Columbia River, then passing the turn off to Leavenworth (a federal prison is here from memory), we arrived in Seattle at 9.20am. The city looked cold and wet, but the huge tower was impressive from the bus window. I wouldn't stay here, although years later wished I had spent some time. There was something about the hills and waterways and the cooler climate that appealed. Although labelled the wettest city in the USA, it did have some fine periods which the locals were want to point out. Boeing aircraft are made here.

It was into an express bus and through the rain to the Canadian border. There was a customs and immigration check for me and all the



time the bus sat there with its passengers, waiting for this 'alien' to get his clearance to move into 'British' North America. The bags weren't checked here, just a declaration, then it was back on board, and shortly later, into Vancouver.

It was so different to the United States, almost British. Gone was the casualness to be replaced with more, what would you call it, order and preciseness. Even the accent was a cross between American and British. I first had to think of accommodation. There was an uncle, but I felt a little awkward, as he didn't know I was here, so I opted to try the YMCA. That was until I found it was ten blocks from the bus terminus. So, I walked two blocks, and the third hotel I found, took me on for C\$4. Yes, it was a new currency as well, brightly coloured notes, and so much more interesting than the all pervading olive green of their next door neighbour.

I rushed back to the bus depot and caught a sight seeing bus, I had seen advertised. This would be a good way to see the city. It was \$3.75 but offered a 3 hour tour. Despite my tiredness it was good value. Vancouver is a nice city with a good feel to it. Similar to San Francisco in many respects (hence Sydney), but not so fast or crowded. There were lots of beautiful parks and gardens, and flowers seemed to be everywhere. This was summer, of course, so it had to make up for the long white winter. A much more conservative place.

We drove to Stanley Park on the water way and found wide open grassy areas interspersed with trees and greenery, keeping apart the city from the inland ocean called the Strait of Georgia, the wide waterway that separates the mainland from Vancouver Island and thousands of other islands. There was this large cedar tree, standing all alone. Recently a 'love in' was held here, and young people and not so young, all came in their hippy gear and sat about reciting poetry and making love. We drove past the Queen Elizabeth Hall, very modern, and walked around the Queen Elizabeth Gardens, built on the site of an old quarry. I couldn't remember Sydney having so many 'Queen Elizabeth' things. And not so far away were the mountains. All a nice feel. Sadly, the harbour lacked the charm of Port Jackson, but still pleasant. Being so far removed from the actual ocean, there is a twelve foot tide rise here so low water meant some mud about.

The city itself seemed to have lots of trolley busses, and I thought of Sydney's now defunct trolley buses that used to run from Rockdale to Sans Souci. So quiet and no diesel fumes. I was feeling quite tired as I slept little on the bus and I also was upset in the stomach, some gastric problem from something I drank. Little Jimmy Lyon was like this, so I probably picked up the same bug. No wonder, with so many new foods and changes of water. In the bus coming up, I was over the back wheels and it was very cramped. I had some food and decided a long walk would help. It did a little. I could have done with a shower, but the hotel only had a crude bath, so I stripped off in my room and had a basin wash.

You can feel this is Canada. I cannot put my finger on it but it just feels different, and you feel a bit closer to home. Maybe it is the British influence, or maybe that the city is like Sydney in some

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