

## ORAN ABBEY'S DIARY - 1923

April 4, -

Jim and I are leaving Beulah today, for Mont.

April, 5,

Arrived in Killdeer last nite. We got drunk in Zap came near staying there. We don't know yet how we'll get to the main line. The stage is loaded. There is snow on the ground this morning. We slept in the depot last nite.

April, 6,

Just arrived at Forsyth and it's colder than hell, made Glendive yesterday, but then at 4:30 AM, rode a red ball out of there, Boylan got tough and we had to kick the hell out of him. He's plumb meek now. We're having quite a time with Boylan, in Dickinson he went into Dickenson to a Parlor thinking it was a poker parlor and asked them what they had in the hole.

April 7.

Met Loren and Jim in a restaurant the last nite, in Forsythe. They're bums, too. We had a real bedamast nite, went to bed at 3:00 and slept until eleven this morning. Loren and Jim are traveling with us for a ways. We boarded a fast freight for the next division and she sure was a speeder, whenever any of us got cold we'd hop off and walk along side of her 'till we got warm. Had quite a "Crap" game after we left Forsythe. It was Jimmies lucky day tho and he broke the bunch. Our engine stopped at Custer tho and he set 'em up.

April, 8,

Stopped at Laurel Mont. last nite, ate supper with the Hi Brow. Of all the painted women Yah they had 'em. We are traveling along the Yellowstone now a most wonderful valley, there's a great big mountain up a head. We passed a pretty little girl along the track just out of Park City. I yelled at her and she jumped in the air and turned about 3 times when she came down she was a foot from the track, "She said, "Gee, you scared me," then I very politely offered my hand to assist her in the car but the little whelp stuck her tongue out at me but she grins affectionately after we ate and bid us a fond farewell before we passed from her and Bless her little heart.

April, 9,

We made Livingston for supper last nite. Played a few games of 1-15 ball in which Jim and I were Victorious, then we went out and had to move like hell to catch our train. We landed in Butte this morning at about seven bells, Just before we got to the yards a kid of about 12 came out and jumped on a car of coal and began heaving her off to beat hell, about the time he thot he had enough the brakeman came along, and as the train had gone by a ways on the car of coal, they had to uncouple the caboose and load it on again. The kid took a round about way for home.

April, 11,

We waited at Butte for a freight from 10 A.M. 'till 8:15. Landed in Deer Lodge at 12 PM. Went up to the R.R. Restaurant and had lunch, then we sat along the R.R. track on the bank of a river just accross from the Pen 'till 4:15A.M. at the present time - 7:30A.M. we are 43 miles from Missoula

on the bank of another river. Sidetracked for some dam thing. Guess we'll have breakfast about noon if we are lucky.

April, 19,

We arrived at Sam's Wed. April 11, 1923 at about 7:00 P.M. Had a good time there, stayed a week. The first nite we were there Jimmie's socks were so strong we had to lock them up in the closet and then they kept raising hell so, trying to get out jumping against the door, etc. that we couldn't sleep. We hunted Deer & Elk for a day but didn't find anything but a lot of tracks and crap. We also ran the Tractor for over a day. We are experienced Mechanics now. Think we'll go Engineering for the N. P. We left Sam's at 9:00 on foot and walked 11 miles before the stage caught us at 11:30 3 miles from Potomac.

April, 20, 1923,

We left Missoula last nite at 6:45 This morning at Hope Idaho a pair of lady bums joined us but left us at Sand Point. They're from Butte, "Nuff said".

April, 21,

Spokane, Wash. Landed here last nite at 9:00 had supper and an opportunity but was to tired so we went to bed and slept till noon today. The other nite as we sped along in our pullman Jimmie was up jumping around and stomping his feet trying to keep warm, while I lay comfortably sleeping a perfect picture of beauty & innocence. Jim said "Ain't you cold"? Abbey said (drousily) "uh-uh" Jimmie said (very disgustedly) "Oh you son-of-a-bitch you ought to have your ass kicked" Sore as hell 'cause I wasn't cold. We took in a circus today, walked from one end to the other, and Gracious! How we blowed our selves we are becoming regular spendthrifts. We bought two delicious cones of ice cream at 5¢ five cents apiece and went to a most marvelous show which cost 10¢ ten cents per ticket.

Insertion by Jim: - That damn Abbey is one awfull bone-head. Came along the other day and he sez to me, Oh hell, this must be Sunday, ain't it? And I sez - of course you poor bitch, Didn't you know they had a show in Spokane last night.

April, 22, 1923,

Monday Morning. We left Spokane last nite at 7:00 P.M. rode all nite and arrived at Pasco, Wash. this morning. At the present time we are playing in the sand on a cut bank along the N.P.R.R. This sure is the life We haven't a care or responsibility in the world. We still have about \$12.00 and we haven't gone hungry yet. There hasn't been but one night that we haven't slept in a good bed and that was in Killdeer. or when we were riding a red ball.

Continued. Apr. 22,

We are for sure 'nuff damn fools. Here we are 32 miles from town. Decided to go to work on a stone crusher and got transfered to the wilderness. Of all the dirty dusty, filthy rotten places I ever saw this has them all beat. We shook dust off our bedding for 20 minutes after we got here, and still if we snore it raises a cloud of dust that looks like a desert sand storm.

April, 24,

Our work is as simple as hell, all we have to do is to roll out big rocks & make little ones of them. We have had a half day of it.

The other half.

I got promoted this afternoon. I'm assistant drillman now. It's a snap, but it won't last. Poor little Jimmie has blisters all over his delicate, little paddies poor child.

April, 26.

I went down to the crusher this morning about 5 minutes before work. Jim came tearing down the road shortly after, with his face all wreathed in smiles. He had found that the time-keeper was going to town so he told him to figure up our time and we'd go in with him as we had to have a shave.

April, 27,

This morning at 3 o'clock we left Pasco, and landed in Pendleton about 7: A.M. Went thru Hamley Saddlery and down to the Round-up grounds. At 11 A.M. we left for La Grande the next division point. We had to go through the Blue Mts. and it took 'till about 2 A.M. this morning to make the 72 miles. We are going to bed now at the Ronde Valley House and we won't get up till we damn well please tomorrow.

April, 28,

Jimmie is still sawing logs. I just got up, it must be 1, or 2 o'clock. This burg don't look so bad, but I think we'll catch a train out as soon as we have chuck.

April, 29,

Seven of us caught a passenger out of La Grande last night at 9:30, rode as far as Baker Oregon. We stoped there to get work - and I guess we found to much Jimmie, the lazy Bastard wouldn't take any of it, so we caught a passenger at 12:23 and we are at Huntington about 47 miles farther. Just as the train started we made a run for it and the Engineer yelled "stay off, stay off" but we couldn't hear him and we climbed her anyway.

April, 30, 1923

Rode all nite last nite and arrived in Glens Ferry this morning at 9:30, caught a freight out of there at noon. The drag stopped at Shoshone we got a lunch and climbed back on, A dirty shack tried to bluff some money out of us we wouldn't come accross, so he made us get off, but we got back on, he chased us around over the train till we got tired of it and got off. He threatened Jimmie and Jim has been peeved at the world ever since for not beating up on him. It's the first we have been kicked off since we have been on the road. If we ever meet that Son-of-a-bitch off the R.R. we'll buy him a cigar. AMEN

May, 1,

We got a bed in Shoshone last nite. Bought it for just one for four bits then I happened along as Jim's friend, he took me up to his room and I forgot to come out 'till the next morning. We caught a freight from Shoshone and it averaged about 25 per hour. We are now in Pocatello and having a hell of a time to get out, 2 trains left right under our noses today, a shack kept us off the first one and a bull off the other the son's of a bitches. We are still in Pocatello waiting for a red ball.

May, 2, 1923

We caught our drag at about ten bells and dodged shacks till we got to Bringham, Utah. There we got kicked off. We came the rest of the way to Ogden on the highway.

May, 3,

Arrived in Salt Lake City, Utah, last nite got a bed and bath for a dollar. Got up this morning at 11:45. Went through the Capital bldg. Sat in Bringham Youngs chairs. Went thru the Temple grounds. Are leaving to nite. We are about broke. We bought weaners and a loaf of bread, went out in the jungles and roasted the weaners, had quite a feed if the bread was dry.

May, 4,

We caught a frt. Just as we finished our lunch, made two divisions, and are in Elko, Nevada, looking for a job and a square meal.

"LATER."

Didn't find a job nor a meal either. We had 28¢ and spent that for a hunk of dog and a box of crackers.

May, 5,

We found a job this morning, going out to a sheep ranch.

May, 6,

We are 55 miles out of Elko, Nevada. Got here yesterday at 3:30, had dinner prepared by a Mexican cook, then chopped some sage brush and put up our teepee. Jimmie is helping the cook today and I'm herding sheep. The outfit has about 3000 head. There are ten men on the job. Had breakfast at 3:30 Aint it hell.

"LATER"

Walked at least 20 miles this forenoon and had dinner at 1:30 ten hours between meals. "More Hell" Just captured a horned toad, he's a cute little son-of-a-bitch, and all I've got to talk to except a Mexican herder. Of the two I prefer the toad. We are punching woolies in Nevada. Not cause we wanted to, but 'cause we had to. 'Twas a case of being lanky, And it made us awful cranky. And we are still in a rage cause we had to hit the sage. We were to honest to steal. But we tried to bum a meal And the bastard told us, no! And for us to onward go. Also, that times were good, and that we could labor if we would. And that folks would give us work. But they knew damned well we'd shirk. We said Mister that's all well but you can go plumb-straight to hell. We've managed for years, very nice And we never asked your damned advice. You pot-gut of the idle rich. You're a dirty louse-bound son-of-a-bitch

May, 17,

We left old Lewie Yesterday, Sheep herding's out of our line.

May, 20,

Arrived in Roseville, Calif. at 2:30 this morning. 18 miles out of Sacramento.

May, 21,

Started work on a Steam boat running from Sacramento to Frisco.

May, 24,

Left the boat today. Jimmie has hog cholera or colic.,

May, 28,

Got a job here in Frisco today. We are going to work on the high way, \$4.50 per day. Board \$125. We are going to do manuel labor for 20 whole damn days, MAYbe.

June, 4.

went over on the old Country road.

June 5

Worked on the County road again today, took ½ hrs nooning, and arrived home at 4:30.

Left home with	\$60.00
Missoula	10.00
PaSCO	22.00
Nevada	45.00
Frisco	237.00
Army Post	100.80
Gambled and RR made	10.00
Boat	6.00
Butte	3.00
Frisco	<u>18.75</u>
Total.	512.55

We've got enuff of punching sheep  
We hear them blatin' in our sleep.  
Our nites are filled with troubled dreams  
Tryin' to manufacture scheames  
of how we can depart  
Without bustin' the boss'es heart

June, 21,

Yah, we stayed 21 days and made \$130.00 besides \$18.50 I made in a black jack game. We went to town yesterday June 20 and got us a limosene. Now we are broke and back on the same job.

June, 26,

We are leaving the Sky Line in the morning. Jimmie quit this afternoon about 1:30. I've been barn boss on Corvall all buck and Jim has been holding Fresnos.

June, 27,

This morning we are going to crank up the Packard, go to Frisco and purchase the rest of our outfit. We have \$30.00 coming this time.

June, 28,

We purchased an auto tent some provisions dishes etc., and are now on our way to Los A. 443 miles. We are camping out of Frisco about 30 miles. Our Cadillac is working grand.

June, 29,

Left camp at 10 o'clock yesterday, went thru Red-wood, San Jose, Gilroy, and other small towns, and stopped at Salinas about 125 miles out of S.F. drove about 100 mi. or so yesterday. We got a job driving nails at an Army Post 5 mi out of Salinas. 8 hrs per day, 60¢ per hr. and 100 per day for board. We have to wash our own dishes tho "Aint that hell."

Some more

June 29, Yet.

We had a golden opportunity to-day. Leut. Stafford offered to let us work some over-time after supper, but "Calamity Jim" thought it wouldn't be right to work over 8 hours and take the work away from some poor folks who needed the money.

(Insertion)

Since we left Missoula we have only slept indoors eleven nites (since Apr. 19.) There was some more I wanted to say, but I forgot it.

We haven't heard from North Dak. since We left Nevada or I have not. Jimmie got a letter when we first came to Frisco. I've had several letters from Mother and Ruth. If the N.D. folks don't want to write, they can go to hell damn 'em ALL

July, 2,

Had a terrific water battle last nite

July, 4,

No fire-crackers No pink lemon aid, No ice-cream, no nothing but a lot of damn nails to drive, "Ain't it hell," Just before dinner we had a most brain-racking blood curdling battle. We don't know what it was about, but it was Jimmie's falt, I'm sure. Those other Champions Dempsey and Gibbons also are fighting today. Last nite we had an encounter that could you have seen it would have fairly caused your hair to stand on end, your eyes to bulg with horror and your knees to quiver and become wobbly.

"The cause"

James got fully a half inch of his elbow and part of one foot on my half of the bed damn his heart. then he said that I had more than my share, isn't that incredulous Me, with all my innocence and love of peace and good fellowship accused thus. Could any one expect me to accept such slander without offering resistance. The battle then began. All over the tent, from top to bottom from side to side we fought 'till at last I was able to mount his carcas with an air of Lordship.

July, 9,

We are thru tonight at the Army Post and will leave Salinas, Cal. in the morning I guess. We have worked 10½ days. made \$100.80 before deducting our board. Have made \$512.55 or rather have had that much since we left home. Jimmie ate a red pepper the other day by accident. He don't think it was funny but I do. We don't get along very good 'cause he's to ornery and scolds me to much.

July, 12,

We went to Monterey from the Army Post. The oldest city in California. Took in the 17 mile drive the scenery was great, part of it was along the coast. We camped on the outskirts of Pacific Grove. Jimmie became angry with me and threw the axe at me. It accidentally missed me. We came back thru Salinas from Pacific Grove and are on our way to L.A., made 160 miles yesterday on 6 Gal. of gass. Swede is with us. He's a carpenter we were with at the Army P. He is buying us a tire for a ride to Los: We also have three suite cases the tent, bed, two extra tires, our provisions, our clothing, three extra pair of shoes and a lot of other junk, It's about the equivalent of 5 men and then the Ford made almost 27 miles per gal. of gass. Ain't that wonderful. A dog got into our grub box last-nite and ate the cheese bacon, buns and cookies, damn 'im the first fat dog we see we are going to have for dinner.

July, 19,

Well, we arrived in Los Angeles Friday the 13, and hadn't been in the city an hour before we were arrested twice. We were supposed to report at the Police dead quarters within 24 hours, We decided to be independent and let them look us up if they wanted us. They haven't found us yet. One charge was for parking to close to the fire plug, and the other for not having our registration or transfer card on the car. We only came thru one town of importance on our way down from Salinas, Santa Barbara. San Louis Obispo was a fair sized burg We camped just out of their one nite.

July 20,

We went to Signal Hill yesterday to the Oil fields for a job but failed to secure employment. Signal Hill is within the city of Long Beach. We went from there to Watson. They told us there that we might get on if we got up at 4:30 this morning, so we got up at 3:30 this A.M. and came down here. We are still with out a "job." They say we can get on if we stick around. We'll see. I got a letter from Carmichaels' yesterday, the first since we left Nevada. On the way down from Frisco We each ate a box of strawberries about three times per day. Sometimes Jimmie likes salt on his instead of sugar. We had a passenger from Salinas, a big Sweede, Axel Hedburg is his name. Last Tuesday, the seventeenth we went out to the Beach at Venus and took a dip, sure enjoyed it. Haven't cared for any salt in our meals since tho got plumb stocked up.

July, 23, 1923

This is Jimmie's birthday. He's 21 feels big as hell. I think he'll try to vote for some thing or somebody tonite or tomorrow. I'm glad he's of age at last, I won't be compelled to take anymore of his lip, Untill now I've had to submit to his nastiness without raising a hand because California law deals harshly with anyone who abuses a minor. But now I'll sure raise hell with him. We are working for the Shell Oil company, or rather the Bent Bros. (Contractors) I'm dumping fresnos and Jimmie is driving. Started work here July 20. Our hours are from 5 in the morning 'till 3: P.M. We eat breakfast at 4:00 AM: Dinner at 9:30 A.M. and supper at 4:15 P.M. They run two shifts and \$5.00 per day. Board \$1.35 per day. We went over to see the Wrights yesterday, or rather to see

Irene. Jimmie did, I think, but she is married we think. Things are kind of funny over there. We can't figure out who her man is, anyway we aint going back.

July, 24, -23

Jimmie is terribly innocent for a boy 21 years of age. He doesn't understand the anatomy of a goat at all. A Mexican asked me today what state North Dak was in, Colorado or Chicago. I explained that it was a state of it's self. He then asked if it wasn't the other side of New York. We went to church with the folks, a week ago last Sun. and there enjoyed wine women & song. When the wine came by I was dreadfully worried Jimmie would take some and then get a cramp in his elbow.

July, 29, -23

Ancient History

There never was but one time where Jimmie and I worked together that we got along allrite and that was when we fixed fence for 2 or 3 days out at Murrays back in N.D.

Aug. 7, -23

We left the S. Co. because Jim tried to beat up the head corral buck. Consequently special request was the cause of our departure from that job. From the "Shell Co." we went over to work for Martin O'Neil We worked there a day and a half and told Martin's partner we would only work 'till that nite. He said that if that was all he guessed he'd let us go rite then so he wrote her out.

August, 4,

We left Los A. at 5:30 to-day and are camping about 30 miles out.

Aug.11, -23

We are in Arizona close to the New Mexico line, and about 30 miles from Gallup, N.M. It rained too much today we have had some tough roads, mud a yard deep. We've got our bed laid down in the mud. It's nice and soft anyway. There are some other tourists here, too they are sure nice folks. We had a chuck together tonite. They are from Kansas. We slept in the car last nite and the nite before. We stopped last nite about 12 miles the other side of Holbrook, A bridge was washed out and we had to wait till this morning to cross. The other day we passed 7 or 8 big cars that had slid off in the ditch, just the other side of Seligman. Our ford is all rite even if it is ornery at times. We had an awful time at Needles trying to stop our oil from leaking. Just before we got to Topock, Arizona, we gave a garage man \$5.00 to turn on our gass. We broke a spring between Barstow and Ludlow, Cal. I guess we have troubles as well as the folks back home. The other nite Jim went to sleep driving the car and run in the ditch. We just stayed rite there 'till morning. That was 5 miles the other side of Flagstaff, Ariz. There are a band of Indians about ½ mile from where we are camping tonite they are holding a powwow.

Aug. 12 - 23

Tonite we are camped at Blue water, New Mexico about 8 miles this side of the Great divide and 833 miles from LA. We only made 80 miles today, the roads are about as bad as they make 'em. We are still traveling with the same people we were with yesterday.

Aug. 13. -23



Our friends are still traveling with us., Mother is mending my shirt at present. They sure are fine people. We drove from Blue Water, N.M. to-day to Santa - Domingo, NM. The roads have improved a heap. Our good roads started about 30 miles the other side of Los Lunas. Drove 156 miles.

Aug. 14, 23

San Domingo, 5:30 in the morning. We have had breakfast and will soon be ready to ride. Jimmie didn't get up first. We go over Hair Pin grade the first thing this morning. It has 27 turns in a mile and  $\frac{1}{2}$ . an elevation of 2000 ft. 98 miles from LA. Crossed the Rio Grande River twice yesterday. We are now on the La Bajada hair pin Grade. I just took a picture of it.

Later.

We are now in Las Vagas, N.M. 87 cents is our whole capital. We are looking for work. Just left Sheperds They turn off our trail at Trinidad.

Aug - 15 - 23

Well we didn't get work in L.V. Spent 23 cents for stamps and drinks so I guess we'll live cheap for today. We are going to try to make Raton on what gas & Oil we have. It's about 100 miles from L. V. and as we drove til 9 o'clock last nite we are over half way. The roads are fine it's all prairie here and as level as can be. Jimmie is still asleep he won't get up till "Old Sol" warms things up a batch. We could have gone to work for a road outfit just out of Las Vagas good wages too. 11 hrs per day at 30¢ per hr. And maybe sometimes they would let us get in a full day by working over time. We didn't stop by a damned sight. "No Sir." Not with all this 55¢ in our pockets. We have to be almost broke before we'll go to work at common labor anyhow. Well we are about broke, our capital has gradually dissappeared. We found a new two dollar waterbag and when we got to Raton I sold it at a second hand store for four bits so we were able to make it to Trinidad Colorado. We had fried spuds for supper and oat-meal for breakfast. We didn't have dinner, but it wasn't because we couldn't for we had enough oatmeal left for a lunch at least. We didn't care much for it tho 'cause there wasn't any milk or sugar for it. I picked an orange as we came over the Rocky Mt's between Raton & Trinidad. We went up to the Chamber of Commerce and got a job as a couple of ranchers. Jimmie is to work for Hughes and I'm going to work for Walker. We'll be two miles apart and 14 & 16 miles from town. We hope supper will be ready when we get there. Not because we are hungry, but 'cause we believe in the regularity of meals.

Aug. 22, - 23

We left Trinidad the 19<sup>th</sup>, Sun. afternoon, or rather left the ranches. Jimmie worked for Gregory instead of Hughes. We made 213 miles from Trin. to Denver. Came through Pueblo. We are now in Greeley Colo. looking hard for a job. Trying the canning factory. Don't know how we will come out. We had 17 cents to buy our supper with last night, but it only took 10 cents of it. We got bread with that. Not bred - but bread. A half loaf was all there was on the menu. There will be less today. If we work today we will have to quit tonite to get our money so as to eat. We slept in the car last nite on Main st. The day we left Walkers a bee stung me on the little finger, it's swelled yet. Jimmie thinks it's funny, but I don't.

Aug. 23

We went to work at the canning factory yesterday morning at the rate of 30¢ per hour. 10 hrs per day. and more if we wanted to work: Of course we wanted to-like hell. I swiped two cans of peas in the afternoon and prevented starvation and last nite we threw a whole 6 gallon case of cherries out the door, by mistake of course, and later we went around there looking for an old box for a

camp fire and lo and behold, there were all those cherries, They got stuck in the box we wanted for fire and we just had to take them to get the box. We sure hated it too, 'cause they were so heavy to carry. Well one day was enough to can beans. They tried to can 'em all in one day. It seemed that they knew we wouldn't stay long and they were going to do it all while we were there. We got a check a peice for \$2.92 for 9 ¾ hours work and left Greeley, Colorado. We traveled about 50 miles and burned out our lights. We were just 4 or 5 miles out of Cheyenne, Wyo. so we camped 'till morning. We drove on into Cheyenne this morning, and then east to Kimbal, Nebraska.

Aug. 24, 1923

We learned of a couple of jobs from a red headed young heipher. We don't love her much. Our jobs are about 20 miles north of Kimbal rite on our road. Jimmie is working for Nelson and I'm working for Blake. We're farming, also we are getting along fine. We are 3 miles apart tho perhaps that's the reason I sowed wheat today and tonite just as I was ready to quit my team run away and busted the drill all to hell. The team run into a fence and two horses got each side of the fence and "My goodness gracious, land sakes, Well! I just do say." How they did mow down cedar posts, It was most interesting as long as it lasted. They didn't hurt the drill such an awful lot, just busted up the box, bent the axel, broke a wheel, broke the tongue, a single tree, 3 or 4 castings and the harness was tore up considerable. The boss didn't can me yet. I'm going to quit tomorrow nite. We're only getting \$3.00 per day.