

SUMMER TRAVELOGUE

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With the official daily temperature at 100° (and God knows what it has been in the cars baking in the office parking lot), we've regretted having spent only three weeks away in cooler places. Instead of heading for Europe again this year, we decided to visit New England, combining a great number of obligatory stops to see family in Connecticut and Massachusetts, with some one and two night stands visiting friends there and in nearby states; included also were a couple more nights of genuine tourism at country inns in Maine and New Hampshire.

On the way up we discovered that the temperature in Washington, D.C., was hotter than the temperature we left behind in Columbus. We spent a pleasant night there with an old friend, Bill Monroe (*Meet the Press*); however, the fatigue of a long drive and a succession of gin martinis precluded any serious discussion about the state of the nation or the dangers of a Reagan administration. We were impressed, not only there but also in all the states visited, to find that no real President haters have yet developed. Nearly everyone seems to wish Mr. Reagan well, even if some are keeping their fingers crossed. We also found that the only people concerned about the major league baseball strike seem to be sportswriters and newscasters; the general public showed a marked lack of interest. In fact, the major topic of conversation in all of the northeastern states was the gypsy moth and the unbelievable extent of its devastating defoliation. Driving up, we first began to notice the leafless trees as far south as Maryland, and the barren, winter-like, mountainside forests extended as far north as southern Maine and as far west as middle Pennsylvania. Like the plague of kudzu in the South, the gypsy moth caterpillar was introduced into Massachusetts more than a century ago with good intention by some innocent genius who wanted to mate it with the silkworm. This year was one of the worst infestations ever.

We spent two days in rural eastern Connecticut, two more in the middle lake region of Maine, and then a couple more driving up the Maine coast to beyond Bangor. Unfortunately, it was the season for the mosquito and black fly, but the beauty of the lake area and the coastal peninsulas, along with the fresh crabmeat, steamed clams and freshly boiled lobsters more than compensated for the insect annoyance. We were very impressed with the lovely island of Mount Desert and the spectacular scenery in its Acadian National Park, especially the view from Mt. Cadillac and the magnificent twenty-three-mile shoreline drive. Although we took a passing drive-through glimpse at Bar Harbor, we successfully avoided the tourist trap there and spent the night in a small and homey inn at North East Harbor, a much quieter and much more elegant resting place.

Driving west along old US Route 2, the next day we ended up just across the border in New Hampshire to spend a night at the Philbrook Farm Inn in the shadow of the White Mountains' Presidential Range. The two elderly sisters—who are the fourth and perhaps last generation of Philbrook family innkeepers—are veteran smokers of old fashioned Camel cigarettes, and they were happy to find a medical authority who applauded their choice. Their old-style farm kitchen was a joy to behold. The 82-year-old cook who presides over the ten-burner wood stove (there is also a four-burner electric model in the corner for use only in emergency) fed us a delicious evening meal as well as a monumental farm breakfast.

We spent another night with a niece in Glover, Vermont, and climbed the hills behind her small farm, sampling wild blueberries and raspberries. On the way to Glover, just across the New Hampshire line in Lunenburg, Vermont, we visited and were shown through the Stinehour Press, which is located in an unobtrusive, long and rambling barn with many additions. It is an oasis of quality printing dedicated to the preservation of fine books and the art and craftsmanship necessary to produce them.

On our way south again, we stopped briefly in Connecticut to rescue "Pig," our younger son's dog who has boarded with us many times before, and who was scheduled to spend seven weeks in a kennel near Wesleyan University. He enjoyed the long ride home, which included a wet Fourth of July weekend stop in the Poconos at Beach Lake, Pennsylvania; three more nights in Columbus, Ohio, where we visited the older son and the grandchildren; and another night on the farm of Nancy White in Union, West Virginia. In spite of jumping into the pond after frogs, chasing across the meadow after a couple of white-tailed deer, and scattering a few chickens on the farm stops, Pig, who has been a seasoned traveler during most of his 12 years, was on his best behavior for the entire trip. He was happy, though, to get home and find his accustomed spot on the cool stone floor next to the air conditioning vent.