

San Diego, Cal. May 28, 1908.

There has just returned from a trip in the back country, an automobile party consisting of R. L. Lewis, Manager of the Susnet Telephone Co., Hartwell W. Gardner and Colonel Ed Fletcher, who while away took in the Escondido Valley, Palomar Mountain, the San Luis Rey Valley and home via Oceanside.

In an interview with a Sun Reporter on Thursday, Mr. R. L. Lewis furnished the following information: We made the trip in Colonel Fletcher's automobile, a Maxwell, and as it was my first long trip by machine into the country, it certainly was an eye opener to me in several ways. I had no idea we had such fine timber, good roads and such a large stream of water during the summer months as is now flowing in the San Luis Rey River. The view from the grade up Palomar Mountain is superb and alone is worth the trip.

That Maxwell machine that Fletcher drives certainly fulfilled its mission. At times we only hit the high places and we made the trip from Oceanside to San Diego in two hours fifteen minutes, including two stops. The roads are good and I believe that Maxwell machine can make the trip from Oceanside to San Diego easily in two hours if forced to do it.

The Escondido Valley is looking beautiful at this time of the year but the hay crop appeared to me to be a little light. In the San Luis Rey Valley however, good crops are assured.

Our running time to the San Luis Rey River, at the foot of Palomar Mountain, via Valley Center, which is something like sixty miles was made without a hitch in about three and a half hours. When we reached the South bank of the river, Fletcher put on speed and

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away we went only to land in the center of the river in about a foot and a half of quick sand. We had to build a corduroy road to get out which took us nearly two hours but it was an enjoyable experience just the same.

We are assisting the Fletcher-Salmons Investment Co. in the construction of a telephone line from Pala to the top of Palomar Mountain, a distance of about 20 odd miles. This was the reason I made the trip but outside of business, it was a great pleasure as well to take in that section of the country.

The roads are fine from Palomar Mountain to Oceanside and I understand there is going to be an automobile service commenced about the middle of June which will take passengers from Oceanside up the San Luis Rey Valley to Palomar Mountain which will be one of the most enjoyable trips that can be found in this section of the country. Palomar Mountain is certainly a delightful place and people of San Diego should make it a point this Summer to make the trip if possible, via train to Oceanside and thence up the Valley by machine. It will be a very comfortable way to make the trip in one day from San Diego to the top of Palomar Mountain; the last ten miles of the trip up the mountain being by stage line. I intend to go up there and spend a couple of weeks this season, if possible with my family.

FLETCHER'S FANCY FLIGHT WITH A.W. TALBOT, GUEST OF HONOR

San Diego County and Mexico--March 26-27, 1944

Talbot and Fletcher left San Francisco at 4 o'clock Saturday, March 25, 1944 by plane. In two hours we had flown 400 miles paralleling the southern Sierra range covered with snow the entire distance and over the Tehachapi mountains still covered with snow. At 6 PM we had landed in sunny Southern California among the orange orchards and grape vineyards. Friends met us at the Airport and in half an hour we were at the Biltmore and away we went in Fletcher's Pontiac Bomber through 50 miles of orange, almond, walnut and lemon orchards via Santa Ana and San Juan Capistrano--the fragrance of orange blossoms filled the air. The San Juan Capistrano Mission is a joy forever to look at. It is here that the Sparrows return each March 19th.

While quietly eating dinner at the cafe on the beach in came 150 Army and Navy boys in three buses--and the war was on!

A drive along the beach in sight of the surf for 50 or 60 miles brought us to the Fletcher home at 10:50 P.M.--tired, happy and ready for bed. (Business subjects for the rest of the visit tabooed!) Fletcher's spare bedroom object of special praise by Talbot.

A 6 o'clock call and what a glorious sunrise from the Fletcher porch overlooking the Silver Gate, Mexico, the Table Mountain, San Diego Bay and City, and serving as a background, Mt. Helix and Grossmont and the mountains of San Diego County. We are 100 feet above the water with a marvelous view overlooking the Yacht Club; with power and telephone lines underground; with attractive homes with the back yards more beautiful than the front if anything and filled with tropical flowers,

shrubs and vegetables--a warm, balmy air in sharp comparison with the wind from the ocean in San Francisco on Saturday.

Ma Fletcher had the breakfast ready at 6:30 and we were off at 7 o'clock to pick up Ed Jr. and Edward III--headed for Mexico. We drove through a city of a half million people with 500,000 more Army and Navy taking possession of the town and county; 2½ miles of buildings housing the Consolidated-Vultee Aircraft Company, which is turning out 25 Corsair bombers a day; the new Civic Center and the 15 mile Harbor Drive with all the government activity of Marine Base, Navy Base and Naval Training Station making the water front and San Diego Bay most attractive.

We picked up Ed Jr. and Edward III at the office. It would take an hour to describe Ed Fletcher's office--his Rogue's Gallery, he calls it--with over 500 autographed, photographs, including three Mexican Presidents, four American Presidents, President Zomosa of Nicaragua, the Peace Commission of World War #1, even Schuman-Heink sitting in the front seat of Fletcher's first big car and she writes "God loves who can laugh, so laugh dear Herr Fletcher--Your Old Schuman-Heink", and Carrie Jacobs Bond dedicated a song to the Senator, a Commission by George the Third in 1772 hangs on the wall, making the Senator's grandfather an officer in the British Army--Capt. Kleaser Fletcher. But he turned rebel and fought the battle of Bunker Hill against the British. A record of the Fletcher family since 1650--the birth and death of every child (three killed by Indians) also hangs on the wall as well as a splendid letter of tribute to the Senator's promotion from the President of the Santa Fe Railroad in the building of the San Dieguito Water System; from the South Coast Land Company a letter about the laying out of Del Mar; there is a most unique

desk owned by U.S. Grant when he was President, given by his son to the Senator, etc., etc.,--but we are off--Mexico or bust!

Down the Harbor Drive, through the Naval Repair Base (the largest on the Pacific Coast) four or five miles in length and following through National City and Chula Vista, past Rohr Aircraft Company with 6000 employees, while Consolidated in San Diego has 67,000 employees. We reached Tia Juan by 8 o'clock, passing through the lemon orchards and celery gardens of Chula Vista, from which a thousand cars of celery are shipped annually. We changed our money into \$2 bills; the Senator handed out his card and we went through three inspections in two minutes, including the Mexican inspection. Tia Juana has burned three times in the last ten years and is just a wooden fire trap, gaudy in color and something different from the United States. It is worth while to see it once.

The Senator was shy on gas; Ed Jr. said nothing doing, we must get gas but we would have to wait until 9:30 so the Senator said go ahead anyway we have enough gas until we reach Rosarita; Ed Jr. protested but to no avail and we went on--past the bull ring and the race track at Agua Caliente on the left. Never could it have been more beautiful than those rolling green hills; the flora unsurpassed--Poppies, Sea Dahlias, Hyacinths, Heliotrope, and above all, the marvelous asparagus-like plants with beautiful sea green blossoms called Maguey plant--as the picture will show.

At the Rosarita Beach we examined the radio station in which Mr. Talbot was interested; we looked over the magnificent Spanish like Casino and resort with its marvelous beach and little island covered with seal whose barking we could hear at all times--a most attractive place for a meal and wine.

The Chinaman raised the price of gasoline on us--but we got it without trouble or coupons! Then we were away over a 50 mile drive along the ocean--its beauty unsurpassed with its irregular beach and bluffs. We past the magnificent home of General Rodriguez, his fish canning plant, olive orchard and the splendid cottages of the Huesongs; soon we rounded the curve into Ensenada--a sleepy town of 1500, truly a typical Mexican village, with ten or fifteen miles of beautiful beach, which at low tide is a speedway for automobiles; a million dollar hotel is nearby, originally promoted by Jack Dempsey; saloons galore with Mexican colors predominating.

The Senator says "Let's go hunting" and soon he picks up Bertram Peterson, who digs up two guns and comes along--a handsome boy, half Swede and half Mexican. Within three miles of Ensenada we flushed up a flock of quail and stayed within a radius of a mile during the hunt. From no where the Senator dug up shells that we had smuggled in--the duty is only 100%. The boys all took turns hunting while the Senator calmly pulled out a blanket and pillow, put his head in the shade and sleeps for two or three hours.

We are 100 miles nearer the tropics than San Diego; there is not a house in sight; the hillsides are most glorious with the yellow and blue coloring predominating; butterflies and Meadow Larks singing--with all a most dreamy, wonderful day. Talbot outdoes himself shooting; Edward III kills a Jackrabbit on the run and in the air; a friendly Mexican gives us an hour's visit; Talbot climbs to the top of the hills to look over Ensenada, Punta Banda and the islands to the west and the snow-capped mountains to the east, 6000 feet in height We were very successful quail shooting. The writer feels that the best part of the trip was the delicious lunch prepared by Mary Fletcher, including jelly nut bread sandwiches, meat sandwiches, hot coffee, milk, a gallon of water from San Diego

(we were taking no chances) nuts, dates, oranges, apples, a most delicious frosted cake that Mary makes—and with tired muscles, what a snooze Talbot had after lunch!

Talbot heard a cry from Seattle "Can you find any silk stockings?" We did. And Talbot bought 7 pair—check up on this Mrs. Talbot. Talbot wanted to make his wife jealous and the post card proves it, but really Talbot was only bragging, although later on he met it in the flesh as the picture will show.

There are four Hussong brothers, educated Mexican boys of German extraction, who went to school with the Fletcher boys—one runs the saloon, another the Del Mar cottages and hot springs, another the gas station and garage and John runs the beautiful Moro housekeeping cabins three miles from Ensenada on a beautiful rocky point overlooking the bay and Treasure Island where Robert Louis Stevenson got his inspiration for his book—the next time we shall eat our lunch on Treasure Island and catch Tuna, Yellowtail and Albacore nearby, with half ton Sea Elephants and Sea Lions, a thousand of them, yelling a challenge at us from nearby rocky islands—the sea life there is most thrilling and a trip down to Ensenada without going to Punta Banda Islands is a new experience that should never be passed up.

What a trip home in the afternoon along that beautiful, rugged shoreline—almost entirely uninhabited—and we would drive 10 or 15 miles without seeing a house; the Maguey plants predominated—thousands of them everywhere, sticking up 8 to 10 feet high like asparagus. It is from this plant that Pulque and Tequila—the favorite Mexican drinks are made. We reached Tia Juana by 5 o'clock; were held up for half an hour on account of the races, but the Senator's card passed us through without inspection. We cashed in our international money and got back American

money again. Then returned home by way of the Silver Strand and Coronado. We saw the marvelous Naval Aviation Base being developed at the south end of San Diego Bay. Thanks to legislation passed by Senator Fletcher in the State Legislature, a new outlet at the south end of the bay will connect the Bay with the ocean. We past through five miles of State Park, with a beautiful sea beach on the west and bay beach on the east. Radar and Navy Defense construction everywhere with thousands of men camped along the shores of the bay and the PT boats on the ocean side. Coronado is as beautiful as ever and from the top of the Ferry crossing the Bay one got a magnificent view of a hundred or more ships in the harbor and the remarkable development of the Bay itself owing to over a hundred million dollars having been spent within the last three years here by Washington for every conceivable use of the Navy.

We said goodbye to Ed Jr. and Edward III. It was still only 6 P.M. We had much to do before bed time so the Senator drove us out to Helix and Grossmont—two mountains 12 miles away, covered with nearly 500 beautiful homes, a residential section similar to Hollywood and Beverly Hills in Los Angeles. One gets a beautiful view of the mountains, valley, a hundred miles of ocean with Point Loma and the city of San Diego etched against the skyline. The El Cajon Valley, 18 miles in length and the San Bernardino Mountains, 100 miles away, covered by snow, is all the more attractive when you consider that you are in the semi-tropical belt, surrounded as we were, at the Fletcher point with orange blossoms, violets in bloom and Spring at its best. The Fletcher Point is unsurpassed, with the lake at one's feet—a two mile lake, built by Fletcher et al and two other small lakes also built by Fletcher. Fletcher held out when he sold the Helix Lake for the hunting and fishing rights and Talbot was mighty jealous of

of the Fletcher reservation for the lake below where the bass are four and five pounds and duck shooting is perfection--all the Fletcher family's reservation.

It was at the Fletcher site that the Senator pounded on the rock, appealed to Allah and out came water; and it was there that Talbot picked a lemon from the tree, the Senator appealed to Allah, kissed Talbot's hand and the lemon was sweet! The Senator says he has only acquired this supernatural power since he was 70, but invites Mrs. Talbot to come down and let another demonstration be made!

The Senator picked up two grandsons on the way to Mt. Helix and they told Grandpa to hit her up. It looked as if we took to the air at a bad curve; Talbot fainted dead away and the grandchildren were in the height of their glory but we landed safely--a thrill Talbot will never forget.

We visited the top of Mt. Helix where the Fletchers had donated 15 acres to the County and the Fletchers and Whites have built a beautiful Nature Theatre holding 10,000 people.

From Mt. Helix we went past the new State College, the San Diego Mission--the first ever built in California--built in 1775 by the Franciscan Fathers. Thence to Camp Elliott where 70,000 Marines are located on 5100 acres--used as an artillery range this 5100 acres was first leased by the Senator to the Government and later the lands that he and his friends owned were condemned and the site purchased. Camp Elliott is probably the most remarkable camp of its kind in existence.

From there we went through Linda Vista City, where three years ago not a house was to be seen; now 58,000 people live there--the land was condemned by the Government and all the improvements, including the houses were built by the Government and the Government is in the lease-

ing business today to War Workers--a city in itself Linda Vista City is within the city limits of San Diego.

From there we visited Old Town--the first town in California, discovered by Cabrillo in 1542 we saw the first adobe house, still well preserved; the first hotel; the place where Ramona was married; Ft. Stockton where Commodore Stockton captures San Diego, disembarking at night with his guns and ready to shoot on the town the next morning, but they surrendered without a shot being fired--in the Mexican War; then, of all things--a Mexican dinner at Old Town, including Enchiladas, tamales, frijoles, tortillas and the like, washed down with a splendid bottle of beer--will Talbot ever forget the party and the beautiful young Spanish girls that waited on us.

We had promised Mary Fletcher to be in by 9 P.M. and were on the minute--ready to hear Alka Seltzer News and to bed after a three-day-in-one trip--and did Talbot sleep nine hours without awakening Sunday night--he did!

The Senator had Talbot up at 7 o'clock--again a most remarkable sunrise and a parade of Aircraft carriers, Cruisers, Destroyers, and Submarines passing in view from our dining room window, with a hundred planes overhead, while we were eating our breakfast. Then a trip to San Diego; a telephone to Seattle to ask about that contract for 16 boats, only to be told that he knew nothing about it; and for the first time Talbot realized it was Saturday afternoon in San Francisco when he telephoned about it and they had not commenced business yet in Seattle!

First we visited the 16th floor of the El Cortez Hotel and got a perfect view of the 1800 acre park, San Diego Bay, the ocean and the mountains from the Sky room--so well named. Then a drive through the Park, past the 22-room house where the Fletcher family of ten lived for so many

years--in time not a chick or child left--all married and today 24 grandchildren and a great grandson--the Fletchers' claim--not a divorce and five in the service, with a grandson as well. That is why they sold the beautiful big home and built a small but happy little place overlooking San Diego Bay on Point Loma, surrounded by five of the ten families and plenty of grandchildren nearby to keep them busy.

But we are off to the mountains, first visiting Mission Gorge Damsite #5 on the San Diego river; then up past the Marine Air Field and Parachute Training Camp, sold by Fletcher to the Government; then through the "S" Tract and farming section now being developed by the Fletcher interests. We were traveling over one of the finest highways in the United States, over the mountains through miles of beautiful country with the purple Lilac in blossom--hundreds of acres of it at a time--a most glorious sight. In San Diego the rainfall is 10 inches annually; twenty miles away it is 20 inches at 2000 feet elevation. We were soon in the apple country, 3000 and 4000 feet elevation, among the oaks; soon we were in the snow amongst the pines at 5000 feet elevation, with the towering Cuyamaca Mountains reaching as high as 6400 feet, covered with Pine timber--another resort owned by the Fletcher interests--Cuyamaca Lake. For 20 years Fletcher owned and operated this water system and when he sold it he reserved the hunting and fishing rights as well as a beautiful island in the lake which is three miles in length. There was four feet of snow at Cuyamaca Lake this March and some years there is splendid skating--a beautiful mountain country, unsurpassed in California, with splendid fishing and duck shooting at Cuyamaca Lake.

Continuing north we saw a beautiful desert view, looking into Imperial Valley and Salton Sea--the mountains milk the clouds of their water and all is barren there within five miles--no trees on the eastern side of the range; a drink of apple cider, made from the apples on the

ranch, as we passed by, refreshed us. We came to Julian, a mining town still in the oak and pines. It was this town that tried to become the county seat and lost out by 14 votes--San Diego city being the winner.

Going via Santa Ysabel we were soon at Warners Hot Springs--Talbot must tell you the romance of it all--the Senator's connection with its development; the Indians' curse on the owners of the ranch and its eventual removal. Let Talbot tell you of the road to Eagles Nest, where the road is so crooked that those in the back seat cannot see those in the front. Then let Talbot remember that he in haste called the Senator a liar when the Senator said he would catch trout at Eagles Nest--let him tell you of the Bird Cage; the water falls, the elm, chestnut, maple and all the Massachusetts plants, flowers and trees--planted by the Fletchers--their Massachusetts, for they were natives of Massachusetts and grew up together there; where we found snow again, but we went up to nearly 6000 feet and down over a narrow road safely.

Then a ten mile spin to Henshaw Lake--Talbot don't forget the T-Bone steak! What a beautiful day it was with the San Jacinto and San Bernardino range of mountains, exposing their snowy heads. Away we went through the oak, down the canyon, following the river, looking up and seeing the Mt. Palomar Observatory, housing the huge Telescope--through Pala and Rincon, still over a magnificent highway, built mainly by prisoners. again in the miles of Lilac, beautiful contour mountain roads, past Lake Wohlford Then we dropped down into the Escondido Valley where 6000 car loads of oranges and lemons are raised annually. Escondido means "The Hidden Vale". The orchards are all on the hillsides with the grape vineyards in the valley below--water from Lake Henshaw, by gravity, irrigates that entire section.

But on we go. Fletcher says we are going to visit Scotland, Loch Lomond--another development where he furnished the hot air, the Santa Fe Railroad the money and they made him president--the development of the San Dieguito Mutual Water Company system--it was truly a beautiful sight--a most attractive peninsula or point in the center of the lake--the Fletchers still own the point. The lake is 8.6 miles long; the concrete dam 130 feet in height and the water was going over the spillway two feet deep, to the ocean. We followed the water down to where it is put to beneficial use, nine miles away, to Del Mar, Rancho Santa Fe and the coast.

Fletcher said we now are going to Spain, and sure enough at Rancho Santa Fe everything is typical of Spain--built with funds of the Santa Fe Railroad--a subdivision in which Fletcher was interested--even the gas stations are most attractive Spanish type--millionaires and Hollywood actors have built up the 8000 acre ranch until it has become nationally known. But on we must go, following down the valley past Bing Crosby's ranch and the race track controlled by Bing Crosby "Where the Surf Meets the Turf"--a most beautiful and wonderful place to attend the races in summer in sight of, and within a half mile of the ocean.

Soon we were at Del Mar, the first subdivision that Fletcher ever made, and under his supervision the hotel was built--the palm trees now 80 feet high he brought up in his two cylinder Maxwell in 1905 when they were only two feet in height. Fletcher built the first house on the hill and the first house on the beach. He still owns the first three houses built on the beach and it was there this picture was taken. Fletcher will have to explain this to Mrs. Talbot as he was the chaperone. After a few minutes visit to Seaside camp and the eleven acre point, unsurpassed on the coast, we were off again for Los Angeles--a trip via Dana Point and Laguna that Talbot will not forget in a hurry.

We kept the schedule, never over 16 minutes late, and arrived at the Biltmore Hotel Monday night at eleven minutes of six--eleven minutes ahead of schedule--two of the happiest days in our lives. Fletcher got some satisfaction out of the parting remark of Talbot when he said "Fletcher, I have met my match--I am tired"--and Fletcher is 71 years young.

Ed Fletcher Papers

1870-1955

MSS.81

Box: 72 Folder: 10

Writings and Interviews - Report on backcountry outing



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