

Hitch-Hiking to Hollywood to Hunt Jobs



Grace (left) and Irene (Billie) Goss, hitch-hiking from Chicago to Hollywood, find drivers of trucks accommodating and gentlemanly. They prefer to ride on trucks that have company names painted on them.

By GEORGE SHAFER

Hollywood, Cal.

THEY hitch-hiked from Chicago to California for the purpose of landing Hollywood movie jobs.

But they didn't get the jobs—that is, at the time this story was written no producers had bargained for their services in the films.

They had thrilling experiences, and on several occasions they found themselves in situations hazardous for girls.

But they got through all right and had a lot of fun on their trip.

Which isn't guaranteeing that the next pair of girls who take to the highway for Hollywood will be so fortunate. That is another way of saying that this story is not written for the purpose of encouraging girls in any desire to hitch-hike across the country. While 999 out of a thousand men who drive automobiles may be gentlemen, there is always the chance that the girl hitch-hiker may meet the thousandth man some place on the road.

But this is not a sermon. It's a story about two Chicago girls, the sisters Grace and Irene (Billie) Goss, who came from Chicago to California via the hospitality of the open road, their passports being a ukulele and winning smiles.

"I played the uke and Billie sang," explained Grace, a state-ly brown-eyed brunette, "and we never had much trouble getting rides."

"Of course, you've got to put a little appeal into it, too," suggested blue-eyed Billie, shaking her blonde tresses as she pirouetted in imitation of the dance she performed at the side of many a road.

"It didn't take most drivers very long to get the idea that we wanted a ride," said Grace. "Sometimes we had to resort to the blunt device of thumb-waving, but mostly we reached motorists' sympathies by our little song and dance. We figured a novel approach would get unusual results, which it did, even if that fellow in Oklahoma broke Billie's glasses when I pulled her out of his car and he tried to pull her back in again."

"Yes, my arms are still sore from that," chimed in Billie. "But he was one of the few toughs that we met. Most of the fellows were really decent, especially the truck drivers and cowboys. They appreciated good music."

The two girls—both only a few years out of an eastern finishing school—are daughters of Mrs. Josephine Goss Dehnert and make their home in Chicago with their mother and stepfa-

Chicago Sisters Find Dangers on the Road

found it awkward at first to hail passing cars, and their first attempts went unrewarded. Their self-consciousness in wearing bulky hiking breeches and woolen shirts did not help them much. A stop for a reassuring cigarette at one of Chicago's outlying intersections, however, changed their luck as a big truck hove in sight and its driver offered them their first lift.

"The business of casually lighting a cigarette was a regular ritual with us after that," said Grace. "Whenever we were going against our luck we always lit up cigarettes, and that usually brought about a change."

Until they hit the western prairie country the trip was uneventful.

Between Tulsa and Oklahoma City one morning a sedan bearing two men in the front seat drew alongside and the driver motioned the pair into the back.

"If you girls don't mind," the driver told them after he had

take their money away from them. Grace heatedly replied, "If you think it'll get you anywhere, go ahead."

"He really got sore when I told him that," laughed Grace. "He stopped the car and again started for Billie, this time without the handicap of one hand on the wheel. I pushed my door open, grabbing Billie by the right arm and shouting, 'Come on, let's get out of here.' The driver hung on to Billie's left arm and we both yanked. Suddenly he quit pulling and got out of the car, circling around the radiator while I extricated Billie. Then he grabbed me, saying, 'I think you look kinda cute when you get mad.' By this time Billie had our bags out of the car and was running up the road. I finally broke loose from the man and started after her. Luckily he didn't follow us, but just stood there and laughed for a while and then drove on."

Occasionally other would-be swains unceremoniously dumped them out in the middle of nowhere. Grace continued:

"If the men got rough we simply asked to be let out, but fellows of this sort were in the minority. We got many of our rides and a lot of valuable advice from the truck drivers, who are real knights of the road so far as we are concerned. We followed the suggestion of one of the first truckers we picked up on our trip. He told us that we'd find the truckers the best fellows on the highway, but never to get into a truck that did not have the name of some company painted on it. Truck drivers get awful lonesome on long trips and pick up hitch-hikers just to have some one to talk to. We always sang for them, and they seemed to like it. At least we never got thrown out for our singing."

"The cowboys were friendly, too. Although grammatically wanting and rough in appearance, they always treated us with respect. After we got into ranching country we seldom had to pay for our meals, because friendly 'punchers' in the eat-



They pose together to show their predicament at the time when joke-playing collegians stole their hiking breeches at the Grand Canyon lodge. Left with only blankets, they had to wait till their garments were returned.

ther, Fred L. Dehnert, a broker, at 6244 North Winthrop avenue. The girls are granddaughters of Fred L. Goss, inventor of the printing press bearing his name. They are making their quarters here temporarily at the Hollywood home of their second cousin, Tom Ricketts, veteran film actor.

"We just got tired of the round of parties and dances at home," 24-year-old Grace sighed, "and decided to get away from it all. The idea of hitch-hiking just popped into our minds. We got the bug at a party one Saturday and were hunting up U. S. highway 101 the next day. The family put up an awful fuss but finally gave in."

Used to the niceties of life in girls' schools (both graduated from St. Scholastica on the Chicago north side, Grace in 1931, Billie in 1934, and from Briarcliff in New York state), the pair

driven a few miles, "I'm going to drop this man off at the institution. Then I'll take you farther on."

The "institution" proved to be the state penitentiary and the driver of the car a state officer who was delivering a prisoner to serve sentence. "This is where I am going to make my home for the next few years," the outlaw joked the surprised girls.

The Oklahoma highway provided an obnoxious host. He no sooner picked up the Chicagoans than he warned:

"Listen, girls, if you get funny I've got a gun, and I can make it talk."

After questioning them about money and their identification he began giving Billie, who was seated in the middle, overfriendly attention. Billie protested and the driver angrily threatened to



Grace plays the ukulele and Billie dances before a filling station. Their music, dance, and smiles win lifts for them across the country. They seldom have to beg a ride. (Photos by Art Carter.)

ing places always insisted on footing the bill. It seems that those who had to work the hardest for their money were the most liberal in spending it. I think one of the reasons we got such a welcome from the punchers was because of the ukulele. Most of the cowboys were musically inclined and had their own 'geetars,' as they called them. Many had never seen a uke and expressed a lot of interest in ours. One night in Roswell, N. M., we ate at a place where a group of cowboys were entertaining themselves with a violin and 'geetar.' I started playing my uke, and we all wound up in a swing jam that lasted until 2 a. m."

The girls found the spirit on

the road a queer mixture of friendliness and distrust. They could always get a ride, but more than once they were "frisked" by their host for guns.

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From Oklahoma on everybody seemed to carry guns. The truckers were armed with rifles, which were always within their grasp on the floor of the driver's seat. On the advice of one of the truckers, Grace almost purchased a gun in Santa Fe, but decided it would be a handicap as much as a help, because people would suspect them when they found they were carrying arms.

Speed is the keynote of a transcontinental highway, the girls found.

"Everybody drives seventy-five and eighty miles an hour," Grace shuddered. "One afternoon a fellow picked us up at Vaughn, N. M., headed for Santa Fe. He said he was in a hurry, and that suited us, for we wanted to get there by nightfall. But when it began to rain, and the driver didn't slacken his speed, we began to think differently. We were on a clay road, and we fairly slid into Santa Fe."

The pair reached Los Angeles almost a month after they had left Chicago. Discounting their stop-overs, they were only twelve days on the road, averaging about 350 miles free riding a day.

Their longest stop-over, nine days, was at Grand Canyon National park. Here they "missed a date with some likable fellows from college" when other light-hearted youths in a nearby cabin stole Grace and Irene's breeches from the cabin wash line because the girls had not dated one of their own group instead. The girls had nothing to wear and had to spend the evening wrapped in blankets. Next day the breeches were returned without explanations.

"Moral," said Billie. "Take two pairs of breeches along if you're going hitch-hiking."

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The girls left Chicago with \$100 in travelers' checks and arrived in Los Angeles with \$10.

The two have hopes of getting into motion picture work. Grace has acted at a film laboratory where commercial pictures are made. Both girls have modeled for two of Chicago's big department stores.

They are still a little shy on the necessary wardrobe for film careers, but, looking at the women in shorts, slacks, and other bizarre apparel on Hollywood boulevard, Grace and Billie think their rough hiking clothes do not suffer by comparison.

If the films don't open for them they threaten to hitch-hike home via another transcontinental route, going the whole way to New York.

The Goss sisters' real names are Grace and Irene Lueders; their father was Walter Lueders and their paternal grandfather was August Lueders, Cook county commissioner. However, at school in Chicago and Briarcliff and at their former home in Evanston the girls were known as Grace and Irene Dehnert following their mother's remarriage. They use Goss for their "professional" name, meaning the name under which they acted as society girl fashion models in Chicago department stores. They have sought Hollywood screen tests under the name of Goss.

They have one younger sister, Marie Louise Dehnert, 13, at Swift Grammar school in Chicago.



They arrive at the edge of Hollywood, to which they have been hitch-hiking in the hope of landing jobs in the movies. The big sign advertising a guide to the homes of movie stars gives them a thrill.

Voice of the Movie Fan

Letters published in this department should be written on one side of the paper. If you wish a personal reply please inclose a stamped, self-addressed envelope.

Dear Miss Tinée: I think your choice of moving pictures is grand, and I enjoy

reading your columns, but I am very sad because you never print a picture or a story about Robert Taylor. I am sure you try your best to satisfy many people, but I am also sure many fans are waiting for a picture of Mr. Taylor.

Now that he is off to England, does that mean we will see no more pictures of him for some time? I hope not.

I think his best pictures were "The Magnificent Obsession" and "This Is My Affair." He is a wonderful actor, in my opinion, and I think in many other people's,

too, so here's hoping a grand person like you won't let me down. A fan, MARGARET W.

Editor's note: "Grand," eh? Here's a picture of Robbie!

Dear Mae Tinée: Reference is made to your review under date of Sept. 6 of the movie "The Life of the Party."

I want to congratulate you for the bold and emphatic manner in which you condemned this movie. I consider it one of the rottenest pictures I have ever seen. It was a source of genuine pleasure to me to note what you said about Joe Penner, words to the effect that he is just nauseating. It has long been a mystery to me why the "powers that be" will continue to ram down the throats of the public a disgusting actor of this type.

Keep up the good work! With kind personal regards, and wishing you a merry Christmas and a happy New Year, I am your truly,

A. G. NICHOLSON.

Editor's note: Same to you, huh!

Dear Miss Tinée: Thanks to you and Gwen Russell for the picture and story of

Nelson Eddy. I am a constant reader of your column and a sincere fan of yours.

How about a little picture and story of Jeanette MacDonald? I would appreciate it very much; so would many other MacDonald fans. So here's hoping. Thank you.

GRETTE G.

Editor's note: Jeanette MacDonald was born in Philadelphia, Pa., June 18, 1907. Was educated in Philadelphia. Through the aid of her sister, then playing in New York musical shows, she obtained a job in the chorus of a Ned Wayburn show at the Capitol theater. Next season she had a

small part in "Irene," and later a better part was given her in "Tangerine." Her first real rôle came during the following season when she was cast for one of the leading rôles in a Greenwich Village theater production, "Fantastic Fricassee," and her work brought her to the attention of Henry Savage, who placed her under contract. She played the lead in many stage productions. Her first screen rôle was opposite Maurice Chevalier in "The Love Parade." Miss MacDonald married to Gene Raymond.

You're welcome.

Dear Miss Tinée: I am an admirer of Ray Milland and would be very pleased if you would tell me something about him. Thank you. ANN EASTMAN.

Editor's note: We are pleased to oblige. Ray Milland, whose real name is Jack Millane, was born in Drogheda, Ireland, Jan. 3, 1905. He's 6 feet 1 inch tall and has black hair and brown eyes. Mr. Milland has appeared in several pictures made in England and many produced in Hollywood. His latest film success is "Easy Living," opposite Jean Arthur.



ROBERT TAYLOR
A fan thinks he is a wonderful actor.



JEANETTE MACDONALD
Born in Philadelphia in 1907