

1929 Colorado Adventure

1929 Colorado Adventure Part 3—July 14-19, 1929 by Marcia Rabideau

It was July, 1929 and Adrien Richard had just graduated Summa Cum Laude from St. Viator College in Bourbonnais. He was expecting to start work soon for a bank in Chicago, but with the unsure economy of '29 he had the summer free. Travel had always been his dream and he found two friends willing to venture across the continent with him.

As Adrien and friends, Leon and Denis Drolet, set out in a Model T Ford for the west, Adrien found time almost each night to write to his parents, Nellie and Fredric Richard. Often written on small index cards and filled with their experiences, the writing sometimes made a path around the edges of the card.

Following are excerpts from those daily letters:

Staying near the Hotel Cassells "A Summer Resort Among the Pines" Adrien began writing on paper with a picture of the Hotel and described the area and the Hotel.

Cassells, Colorado July 11th 1929 8:30 p.m.

Dear Folks:

Thursday, exactly one week gone and we've certainly not had much time to loaf. The picture on this letter is that of the hotel near us. This is where we eat every night for supper. The inside is very quaint. If dad saw it, he would say it looks like Canada. The dining hall is just like the one at Rome City. Our cabin is in a very pretty spot, up the hill from the hotel. There is a small lake along side the river and a mountain in our backyard where we can find fire wood. Rather primitive, is it not?

It's sure great sleeping out here, we have to cover up with two blankets and a comforter every night and how we do sleep. We've just closed the door and D.D. is building a fire in the fireplace. Sure cozy.

We played horseshoes until 3 p.m., when we washed the breakfast dishes and had some lunch-beans, bread and butter and cookies. Went fishing again late this afternoon. Leon and I got nothing, D.D. caught a small trout, just enough for one. Supper at the hotel was roast beef, baked potatoes cooked in onions as a salad, peas and carrots mixed, coffee, bread and butter and jello covered with whipped cream. Some meal for 75 cents.

There is only one thing I miss out here. That is a daily paper. I saw one today and had to brush up on my baseball. (Adrien was a lifetime dedicated Cubs fan and wrote a chapter in his book, "Tales of Another Day", about his first time attending a game with his father.)

Well, Leon is waiting to use my pen, so I'll have to say goodnight. Will be with you in about a week and a half.

Adrien

P.S. Say hello to Dick for me. I'll be anxious to see him. (Dick Rivard was Adrien's 3-year-old nephew and son of Lou, Adrien's sister and Roy Rivard.)

Cassells, Colorado July 13th 1929 9 p.m.

Dear Folks, 9 p.m. again; it seems to be writing hour around here. As I begin making my daily "confessions" we are having our daily rain, but it doesn't stop us much. It always seems to wait for night to come around. Mrs. DeMoulin baked some beans this noon and we bought some for dinner. They were sure good, but not quite as good as the "wash day" beans I get at home. After the great task of washing two cups and glasses and three plates and a couple of knives and forks, D.D. climbed up the side of the mountain "in our front yard".

He was gone half an hour to reach a spot and when he got there we couldn't see him with the naked eye. He brought a pillow case along and that was practically all we could see of him. In the afternoon we went to Shawnee, a small village (a grocery store, a garage, and a gas station and a couple of cabins) for groceries. It's about five miles from here. When we got back, Leon borrowed some golf sticks from the hotel manager, Mr. DeMoulin, and we tried the course that's also in our front yard. We played two and a half holes; Leon cracked one of the clubs and lost a ball, so we quit right then and there. It's awful rough and full of chipmunk holes.

After supper, we had to wait for Charlie, the groundskeeper, to finish milking the cow so we could get our milk. It made me think a lot of home. Tonight, all we can do is sit around the fire; it's raining cats and dogs and I think our roof leaks. So, it'll need proper attention. So, good night until tomorrow night. Adrien

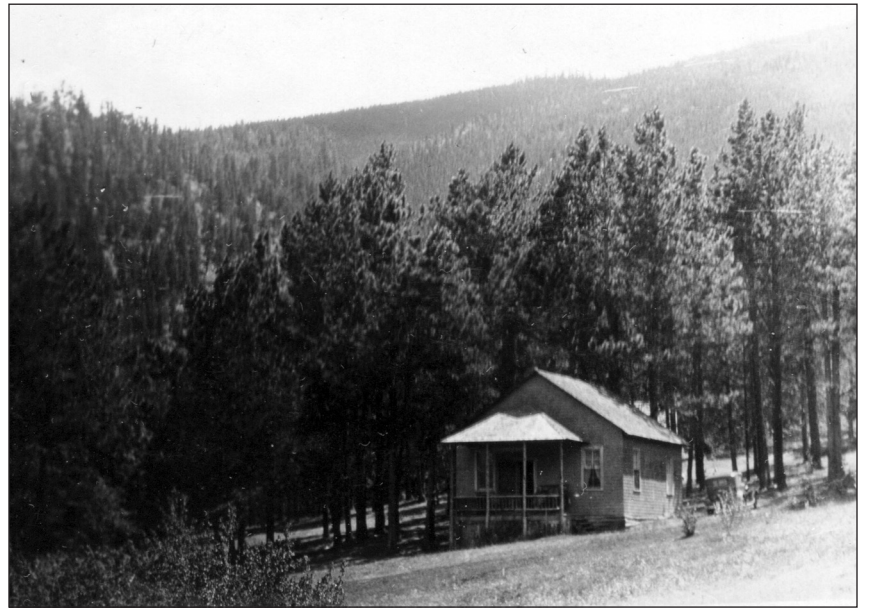
Cassells, Colorado July 14, 1929 9:30 p.m.

Dear folks,

The mailman was kind to all of us this morning and gave us each a nice letter. You're getting rather extravagant, I think; going to Chicago for supper. Here a trip to Denver is the same mileage as that from home to Chicago, but here such a trip is considered practically an all day round trip. The road between here and Denver is very twisty and hilly. We rose at 6 a.m., had breakfast and went to 8 o'clock Mass in Baileys. Baileys is less than the quarter size of Bourbonnais, yet the largest town between here and Denver. I simply can not get over that chapel. It was so rough and rustic, yet so neat, especially inside.

We came back here before the rain and I cooked French toast (pain d'air) for dinner and it was sure good. The boys thought so too. After dinner D.D., Leon, Billy (the boy next door that reminds me of Francis) and myself went to Troutdale, 40 miles from here in the mountains (what direction, heaven only knows) to see a real honest to goodness western Rodeo. It was the real stuff, not fake. We saw some real bronco riding, bareback riding, calf roping, relay races, steer riding etc. Thrills were all around us. No grandstand, just stood around the pole fence like you see in the movies. Cowboys in bright color shirts, "10 gallon" hats, chaps, spurs and lasso ropes and a lot of pretty

Photos courtesy of BGHS
In 1929, Adrien Richard took a road trip to Colorado with Leon and Denis Drolet. They stayed in a mountain cabin in Cassells (right) and even went to a rodeo (below right). A steam locomotive passed through Cassells station (below), 60 miles west of Denver by rail or auto in the famous Platte Valley. Also pictured is one of Richard's letters on hotel letterhead "Cassells, A Summer Resort among the Pines." (bottom right).



cowboy ponies. Dad would certainly have enjoyed this.

Supper was waiting for us at the hotel when we returned. Had chicken (fried) steak, peas and carrots, mashed potatoes with gravy, biscuits (no bread, it's a scarce article around here) and home made ice cream and cake. Some meal, eh?

It was late when we got here, so we made a fire in the fireplace and played cards. We leave here for home next Monday morning July 22. After that I can get the news when I get home. My paper is getting short and the other boys want to use my pen, I think, so I'll have to put it off until tomorrow night.

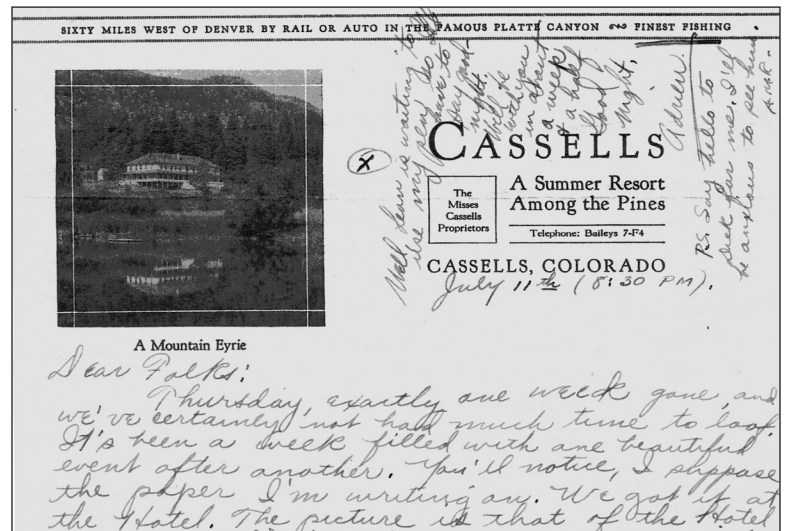
Good night, Adrien

Adrien returned to begin working at the First Trust and Savings Bank in Kankakee as a clerk. He married Anne Raymond in 1935 and took her to Colorado for their honeymoon. During World War II he was an accountant for Florence Stove Co.

He had always wanted to write for a newspaper and submitted a few articles and cartoons to the Kankakee paper.

While his children were in school he became an active member of the Notre Dame Academy school board in Bourbonnais. In 1945, he made a return trip to the Colorado area with his family. After 35 years with the Roper Co., retirement gave him the opportunity to express his deep love of his Bourbonnais home and its history.

He published "The Village", a history of Bourbonnais and later wrote a collection of memories in "Tales of Another Day". Preserving history became important to him and he was one of the founding members and first president of



Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society established in 1975. He often gave talks to school classes, the Rotary Club and other groups on the history of Bourbonnais and Bradley.

An interview of Richard can be seen on Kankakee Community College website <http://frenchcanadians.kcc.edu/>. An interview given by his grandson, Paul Rabideau, can be viewed at the Letourneau House Museum in Bourbonnais. The Gardens of the Letourneau House are dedicated to Adrien M. Richard.

The Bourbonnais Grove Historical Society is dedicated to preserving and

promoting local history.

Monthly meetings are held at 7 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month March to December. Museum hours are 1 to 4 p.m. on the first and third Sundays of each month, March to December or by appointment.

Do you have a topic or story related to local or French Canadian history?

Contact the BGHS at bourbonnaishistory.org, on Facebook at [facebook.com/bourbonnaisgrove](https://www.facebook.com/bourbonnaisgrove) or call 1-815-933-6452.