

# Colorado Adventure, July 8-10, 1929

## Part 2, July 8-10, 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:

### Cassells, CO July 8, 1929, 8 p.m.

Dear folks: Here we are at last settled at our camp for a couple of weeks. I only wish you could see us. I'm writing under the light of an oil lamp and here at my feet there burns in our fireplace a nice warm fire built from spruce & pine logs. We have a nice cottage of four rooms and a small kitchen. We have all the utensils we need in the kitchen. We have this cottage at a very reasonable price \$10 a week in all.

And the hills I've never seen anything like it. We are situated in a valley with mountains whose peaks are hidden by mist and clouds most of the time, all around us. The ground is covered with pine cones and the air is filled with that fragrant pine and spruce odor.

I had one of the greatest thrills and sensations of my life early this morning in Colorado Springs. At 1:30 a.m. a bus driver woke us up in our cabin at a camp in that city to begin our journey up Pike's Peak. The sky was very clear and it was cold. We started up the Peak at about 2:14 a.m. The roads twisted and turned up and down with precipices on the side of the road that were thousands of feet down. One in fact was called "Bottemless Pit". On the way up at about 9,000 feet we passed through clouds and it got awfully cold.

At the entrance of the road that leads to there they rent sheepskins for those who want them.. We were heavily dressed. The further up we went the colder it got. At the top 14,109 feet it was about 29 degrees above zero. The air was thin; it was very hard to breath.

When we got off the car, a big Pierce-arrow touring car, we could hardly keep our balance walking, a very funny sensation. There at the highest point on the Peak we had coffee and cup cake. At 4:30 a.m. we saw the sun rise above the clouds. It was the most wonderful sight I ever beheld. The city of Colorado Springs 15 miles away was seen only because of its lights. The whole city looked about the size of a dime. On the way down we went through a very severe snow storm, just like a January blizzard. How it was cold. At about 7 a.m. we started out for Denver.

Before leaving we went for our mail but there was none. We will write to Col. Springs and ask them to forward it here if we have any. I didn't stop to see Betrice Senesac in Denver but will do it when we go back there probably Sunday for Mass. We are about 64 miles northwest of Colorado Springs in the heart of the mountains along the Platte river, a small trout stream. It certainly is a very beautiful spot. Believe me we're going to sleep tonight.

Its been a long but interesting day. If you write, address your letter to the address on the back of the envelope. Good night and don't worry we're enjoying ourselves very much.

### Adrien Cassells, Colorado July 9, 1929 8:30 p.m

Dear Folks, How's everything in Bourbonnais? Everything is certainly great up here. We just about froze last night here. Plenty of blankets but it was unusually cold. Today though, the weather was grand. The sun was warm but there was a nice breeze blowing.

The first thing this morning we went for provisions in Bailey, a small town 17 miles east of here in the mountains. That's where we will go to Mass Sunday. The church is small and built of logs. Even the altar was made of rough wood. Certainly a rustic country. There's a convent adjoining the church where some nuns spend the summer. We did some trout fishing this afternoon. Lots of fun. Leon caught three of them. Two were about four inches long. The other was about seven inches long. Within the limit but he thought it was too small and threw it back in.

There is a couple staying at the hotel here, the man is about 55 years, so is the lady. He is a doctor in Denver and just sits around all day. His wife fishes all day. You ought to see her dressed in hip boots and big straw hat, rigged with everything the well dressed fisherwoman will wear. She fishes for fun. She caught one today and gave it to us. The people are just wonderful around here. All so accommodating. We're just sitting around to-night, all tired out. Write me here at Cassells, CO.

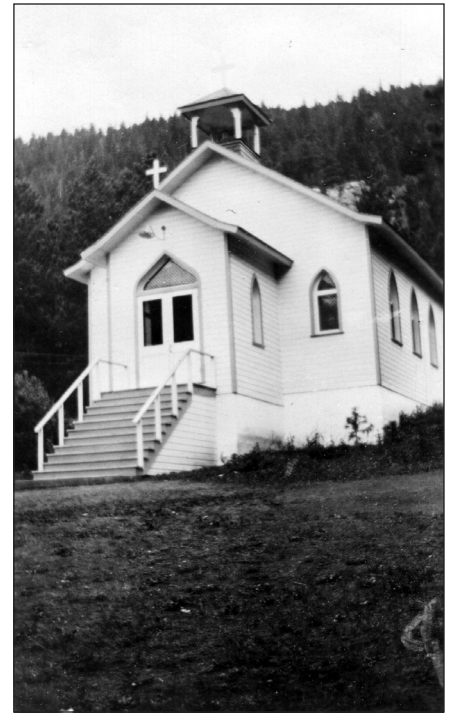
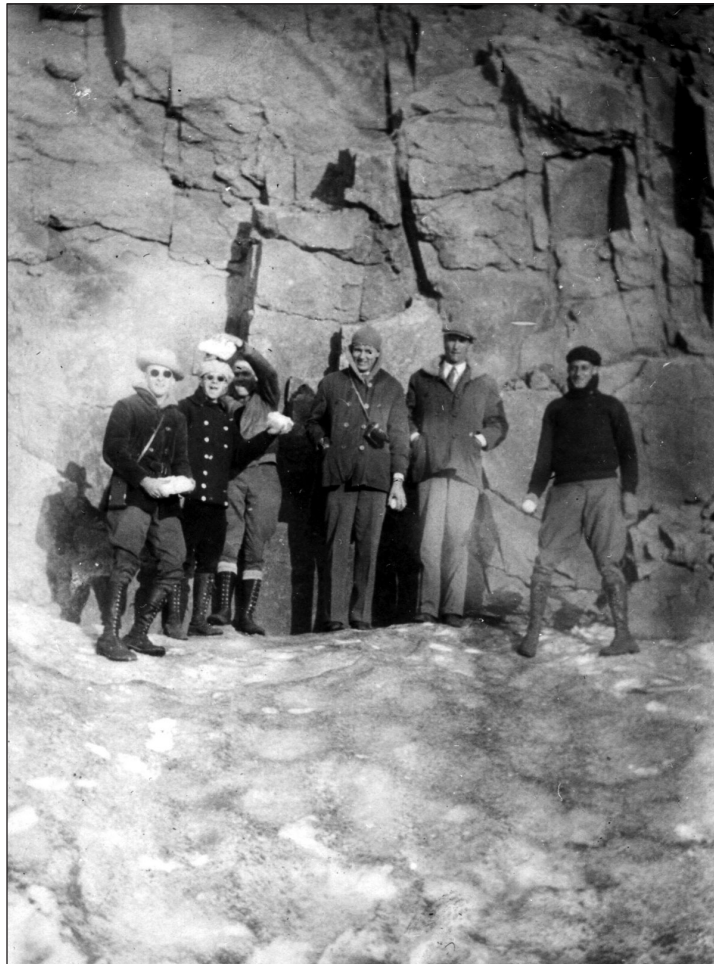
Good night  
Adrien

### Cassells, Colorado July 10, 1929 10:30 p.m.

Dear Folks: Just a word before we go to bed. We've just got back from spending the evening at the neighbors, Mrs. Ferguson, a very fine lady and Catholic too. She spends the summer in a cabin back of us with two girls of about 16 and a boy about 12 years old who reminds me very much of Francis and looks a lot like him too. (Francis Marcotte was Adrien's cousin) We had a very fine visit. They are all so hospitable.

This morning we got up at about 8 and we cooked our own breakfast and dinner. Went fishing again today. DD caught a small one and the best I could do was get a strike. But we still have confidence.

The lady fisherwoman at the hotel told us tonight that she didn't even get a bite. We went for a hike this afternoon up a



Photos courtesy of BGHS

Adrien Richard and Leon and Denis Drolet near top of Pike's Peak 1929 (left). They also took photos of the mountains on the way up to Pike's Peak (top photo) and of St. Mary's Church in Bailey, CO, (above) where the Bourbonnais travelers went to Sunday Mass.

mountain in our back yard. Sounds queer but its true. Went up about 1,500 feet which consists of about 2 1/2 miles hike. We were gone three hours and now we're sure tired. We make our own breakfast and dinner and have our big meal, supper at the Hotel. We eat like bears. Well I guess I've told you all about today.

Good night  
Adrien

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

## Dr. Polk named Hall of Fame winner

Dr. Patricia A. Williams-Polk was presented a plaque as the Miss Illinois 2018 Hall of Fame winner.

Dr. Polk was the first African-American to be a local director for the organization in the midwest in 1976.

She has produced a Miss America, Marjorie Judith Vincent, three Miss Illinois' and many preliminary talent, top five and swimsuit winners.

Dr. Patricia Polk is a native of Saint Joseph, MO. She has organized many pageant across the midwest in Illinois, Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri and Kan-

sas. She has been affiliated with the Miss America Pageant, Miss Black America, Miss National Teenager Pageant and Hal Jackson Talented Teens International.

Dr. Polk has been an alderman and currently serves as a Kankakee County Board member. She was an educator for more than 30 years and taught special education for 12 years.

She also produces the Bourbonnais Friendship Festival Idol competition. She has managed talent as well as taken people to the Apollo Theater in New York.



Dr. Patricia Williams-Polk

**News Tip?**

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