By: Ann Bianca

Author of this story is my Aunt Anna Bianca Holst (1920 - 1971). She lets a teenage girl tell you about a trip from New York to Miami. In the fifties. The story was among the photos and other papers Aunt Daisy saved. When she died, I took care of these documents. I publish it so that Anna Biancas descendants can enjoy it.



booksie.com/Ann Bianca

Copyright © Ann Bianca, 2013 **Publish your writing on Booksie.com.**

Table of Contents

<u>Dear Diary - A trip from New York to Miami Chapter 1</u>

Table of Contents 2

Dear Diary - A trip from New York to Miami : Chapter 1

I had known for some time that we were going to move to Florida but when we were finally all set to go, I was unprepared. I had been on a date with my favorite boyfriend, Marvie, and I had come home late.

"Where have you been?" Dad cried. "We've been waiting and waiting for you to get home."

Mom was relieved to see me and didn't waste words. She handed me a suitcase and said, "Take this down and put it in the car and then comeback up for the rest of your things."

Lily was excited. "We are going to Florida!" she exclaimed happily. "We are finally going!"

"No kidding?" I was surprised and glad and sad all at the same time. Leave New York! And Marvie and my friend, Gloria! I hated to do it. And yet I wanted to go to Florida, too. I was thankful that I had something to do so that I had no chance to dwell on my unhappiness.

We put all we could into the trunk of the car and then piled the rest in the back - on the floor. Lily and I sat on the back seat with our feet up on the boxes and suitcases. Dad laughed and Mom said something about "unladylike position" and that we would be uncomfortable. So we each settled in a corner with our feet up un the seat.

"That's better," said Mom. "Then you girls can go to sleep, if you like."

"Sleep?" cried Lily, "I'm too excited to sleep."

"You'll sleep," said Mom. "You'll see."

It was 9:30 my bedtime. I'm sixteen. Lily is ten and she is usually in bed by nine o'clock. No doubt we would soon fall aslepp from habit.

Dad wanted to drive at night because there would be less traffic. He was just about to get into the ear when there was a cry of distress from Mom. She had locked the front door and had caught her coat in the door. We all began to giggle. Dad wentto her aid, He was the only one who had the keys.

Mom got into the front seat next to Dad.

"We're off!" cried Lily. "Goodbye New York! Goodbye!"

"We're going to see Mr. Leed first," said Mom. Mr. Leed was Dad's boss, or rather, his former boss. He owned a fleet of trucks. Dad had worked for him as a truckdriver. Then Dad hurt his back and began to have pains in his right leg and he couldn't do any heavy work or lifting after that.

Mom and Dad said "Goodbye" to Mr.Leed and his wife and then we wereoff.

We went through the Brooklyn - Battery tunnel to Manhattan. (We were in Brooklyn,) Then we went through the Holland tunnel.

There was a sound behind us as if someone had dropped a tin can. Dad stopped the car to investigate.

"We lost part of our muffler!" he said.

My heart sank. "Now what?" I thought. "Aren't we going to go after all?"

But, Dad got back into the car and we continued. It was noisy with a pipe hanging down and banging as we went along. But, evidently Dadwasn't worried.

We got on the Jersey turnpike. We saw the Statue of Liberty from the back.

I thought of the reason we we re leaving New York, that wonderful magical city - because Dad suffered so and thought the hot sun in Florida would help him. A friend of ours had been there and had said it's the life. "People take things easy down there. They swim and fish and go boating. They lie on the beach and look at the blue sky and the water - water that's so clear you can look down deep into it."

"That's the life for the idle rich!" I thought. "He's got to work. And Mom's going to work, too. Maybe, even I can work." I have working papers and worked as a ward maid last summer in a hospital. "And would we enjoy working in a hot climate? No." I thought. "I probably won't even enjoy going to school!"

The oil tanks in Elizabeth were brightly lighted. It was January and cold. Mom told us to put blankets over our legs. She covered her legs with one, too. Dad has his "longies" on and claimed he was comfortable.

"Marvie! Marvie!" I thought. "I'll miss you!"

Mom had talked me into accepting my fate, "We've got to go, so take it in a good spirit," she said. "Your father fee1s that a few months in the sun in Miami will do him some good. After that we may come back to New York. Who knows?"

"Good!" I said.

"Don't you think you will like it down there?"

"No."

"Look, if you go, you can say you've been to Florida.Won't that be something? It will be an experience, Laura," she said. Don't reject experiences." Then she started off on another idea. "Anyway, you'll be getting married in a few years."

I made some strange sound and she laughed. "Well, it's true, isn't it? You allways said you wanted to get married young. In just two years you will be eighteen." She shook her head as if she couldn't believe it.

"Well. if we - your father and I must stay in Florida, we will. But, you, when you find the man you want , will go to live wherever he wants to make his home. See? So what difference does it make where you spend the next few years?"

I want to be near Marvie,I thought. I didn't want to admit to Mom that I was afraid that that big flirt, Abigail, would get Marvie. She was always makingeyes at him. He was so good-looking. A lot of girls acted silly over him. It burned me up! He's mine!

We got on U.S. Route 40 and then we crossed the Delaware Memorial Bridge. A clock on the toll booth at the end of the bridge told us it was 12:45. Lily Was fast asleep.

Delaware was full of motels, diners and road houses- all brightly lighted.

On to Maryland and through Baltimore. This was a very clean, neat town. All the buildings seemed to be three stories tall and made of brick with three or four steps leading up to the front door. There were some taller buildings also. We got on Route 301 here. The place was deserted.

Dad said, "I'm glad I'm driving through here at night instead of day. The traffic is very heavy during the day time."

We went over a bridge and then we were in Virginia. Early in the morning the sky in the east became pale blue, gray and a pearly rose. Then the sun itself became visible. It was a red ball surrounded by pearly patches of clouds, Mists lay over the few open fields we saw. For most of the way through Virginia there were tall, tall pine trees on both sides of the highway.

When we got to North Carolina we sang, "Nothing could be finer than to be in Carolina in the mo-o-orning!"

We stopped at a picnic spot to eat boiled eggs and sandwiches which Mom had prepared and packed in an ice chest. There was coffee in a thermos jug, too.

I had slept a little during the night. Lily had slept all through. Mom had wanted to stay awake and watch the road with Dad. She said occasionally during the night she had realized that she was beginning to doze when suddenly her head would snap back and she would be wide awake - a very uncomfortable sensation, she said. Then, about 4 O'clock Dad had

pulled over to the side of the road to sleep for half an hour. Mom hadstayed awake then. "Someone had to be awake," she said

We girls felt fine. We felt sorry for Hom and Dad.

We continued on our way refreshed. All through North Carolina we saw nothing much besides filling stations motels and tobacco fields. We turned the radio on and got station WCBT. We heard news from New York.

When we got to Battleboro, Dad removed his heavy winter jacket. Weather was warm and pleasant.

I saw the cutest boy! He was in a dark blue car with a U-Haul behind it. That's a sort of trailer that is hooked on to the back of a car to carry a lot of luggage and things and is covered with canvas. We stopped at a gas station at the same time. (But, 1'11 remain true to Marvie.) Dad and the boy's father talked about the pipe hanging down under our car. I guess everyone thinks we'll never make it to Miami. Most of the other cars on the highway seem to be brand new snazzy numbers.

We stopped at a motel that was three miles south of North Carolina and three miles north of Dillon, South Carolina. It was four o'clock in the afternoon and we had gone 650 miles! The motel is clean and luxurious. We feel like royalty. There are two big double beds in our unit with central steam heat (nights are a bit chilly), and television. We ate and took showers and watched a few shows on television. Channel 8 here is the same as Channel 2 in New York. The only thing wrong with this place is that hot water came out of the faucet marked "cold" in the shower and cold water-from the hot water faucet.

Dad and Mom read "The Charlotte News". We were all fast asleep by seven o'clock.

We got up at eight o'clock and ate at a restaurant. A boy about twenty years old with sideburns a la Elvis Presley came in and put some money into a juke box. The place reverberated with the loudest, noisiest

rock-and-roll music. I loved it. Mom was disgusted. She said she thought the boy looked intelligent .He should have out.grown that "noise".

Later we stopped at Bamberg for a big dinner. For one dollar per person we stuffed ourselves with hamburger steak, candied yams, green peas, salad, little rolls, fruit cup, fruitcake and coffee for Mom and Dad.

The waitress asked Lily in a real southern drawl., "Would you like some milk to drink?"

Lily said, "Huh?"

I could have made the same remark. It sounded as though she hadsaid, "Would you lahk some malk to drank?"

Mom settled it. We got milk to drink.

Through South Carolina there were many swamps, marshes, creeks and cotton fields. Moss hung on most of the trees.

We went over the Savannah River bridge and then we were in Georgia.

Dad wanted some coffee and I handed him the thermos jug which we filled every chance we got along the way. He drank some and said,"This tastes like perfume! Phew! I can't drink it!"

Mom took a sip of the coffee and said, "It tastes like that soap we had at the motel." She turned to Lily. "Did you use soap to wash out the thermos?" she asked. Dad had asked Lily to clean it out thoroughly. It developed that she had used soap but only on the top part out of which we drank the coffee. We had to wait then until we came to a filling station where there were clean rest rooms where we could rinse off the soap. We were thirsty for quite a while!

That boy in the blue car with the U-Haul passed us. We were so surprised. Dad said we would see many cars again and again along the route to Florida.

Lily yelled, "Hey, you -all! With the U-Haul!" I could have hit her, but restrained myself.

He waved and Lily waved back. "Where are you going?" Lily cried.

"To Florida."

"So are we!"

"Were in Florida are you going?" he asked.

"Miami"

"We're going to St. Petersburg," he said, "Bye!"

"Goodbye!

I was a little sorry that he wasn't going to Miami. That was the last time we saw him.

We cross ed the border and entered Florida at 5:20. Lily couldn't believe it. "we're in Florida?" she asked twce, amazed.

"Yes" we said.

She jumped up and down on her seat and clapped her hands. "Wowee! We're in Florida," she cried. "Wowee!"

Dad said, "We've still got a long way to go to Miami."

After we reached Callahan we got on Route I. We went through Jacksonville, a big beautiful city. The very air seemed different as soon as we crossed the border. It was balmy and smelled of flowers. We sniffed and sniffed delightedly. There were more and more of those signs we had been seeing through Georgia: coconut candy, pecan fudge, guava jelly, tropical fruits ("We ship anywhere") and tupelo honey.

We went through St. Augustine which is the oldest city in the nation. we were sorry it was nighttime because we couldn't see much of the city. What we saw was quaint and charming.

I fell asleep then. Mom said there would be nothing to see anyway. I know we got on the Sunshine State Parkway ("108 miles of driving pleasure") at Fort Pierce.

I woke up when our car stopped. A boy about eighteen years old had flagged us down with a flashlight. Motorists aren't permitted to stop other vehicles on the Parkway and ask for help. But I guess the boy didn't know the rules. What he should have done was to place a white handkerchief or a white piece of cloth between the glass and the frame of the driver's (left front) window" and await police aid.

Dad was sympathetic and got out to help him. But he was cautious and flashed his own flashlight all around to make sure the boy was alone. It was pitch black and there was practically no traffic to speak of. We are all avid watchers of the "Higway Patrol" series on television and right away we were suspicious. Even Lily got tense and anxious. Robbers, in cahoots with the boy, were lurking behind some bushes nearby, we thought, ready to hit us over our craniums and take our car and everything in it. But, to our relief, the boy really was alone and in distress. He had a flat tire and was unable to remove it. The studs on the wheel were so thoroughly rusted that they couldn't be budged, Dad tried to help and then, seeing that it was no us e, he suggested that the boy smear oil over the studs and then perhaps they would loosen in time. We were sorry we couldn't do more for him.

We continued on our way and got into Mami at 8 o'clock. We stared at everything the housing developments, the tropical greenery, the palm trees, orange trees and the pelicans.

We had been on the way three nights and two days a record for a trip by car from New York to Miami. We had wanted Dad to get more rest on the way but he had insisted on rushing. Time was money, he said. We couldn't afford to take it easy.

Luck had been with us, we all agreed. The car hadn't broken down. Without the car we would have been stranded somewhere.

We stopped at a turquoise and white hotel with a red tile roof and rented a big room with a kitchen and a bathroom. This cost us \$30.- a week plus 90 $\hat{A}\phi$ tax (always 3% tax on hotel bills) much too expensive for us. But, there was nothing else available. It was during "the season".Out of season, the rate would have been half what we paid.

We stayed in our "apartment" because it suddenly began to rain. In fact, for three days there were showers that began suddenly and ended as suddenly. It was annoying and frustrating. Dad wanted to work. We wanted to go bathing and those fine sandy beaches and we wanteded to see Miami too.

I read that Miami Beach is on filled land. It was once a mangrove swamp. They pumped bay bottom sand into it and then it developed into a famous resort. Miami Beach is different from Mimai. It is nine miles away.

The sun came out finally. Dad has a good job in a big, big, bigfood store. And Marvie wrote that he is coming to visit me during thesummer!

This is the place to live. The sky is blue and the water is so clearyou can look deep down into it.

I love it here.

Created from Booksie.com

Generated: 2013-12-12 13:52:32