

Kingman Museum of Natural History Expedition,
Kicking Horse Campground, Yoho Nat'l Park,
British Columbia, Canada. July 30, 1950

Dear Friends:

'Twas a rather tired quartet of Brighams who climbed into their automobile in the late afternoon of July 6 and headed northward from Battle Creek towards the Straits of Mackinac. This was the climax of days and evenings of hectic preparations, checking and repairing equipment, packing innumerable articles and supplies into the house trailer and trying to see that every necessary detail was done before leaving the city. But, all of us were very happy. . . we were off on another great and thrilling adventure with our cameras to visit some of the most scenic portions of our continent.

Our first night was spent in the Wilson State Park at Harrison, Michigan. Next morning, before breaking camp, we took time to photograph a mother Red Bat with her two well grown babies clinging to her. The family had been brought into the museum the morning before but in the rush of last day activities there had been no opportunity to take the family picture. If you will excuse a pun . . . we were really "batty" when we left home. However, never before had such an opportunity presented itself and we were very anxious to make some pictures. So a box of bats was added to the million other boxes in the trailer, to make the first lap of the journey with us. Mother bat was unusually cooperative and permitted considerable photography before getting tired of the procedure. Finally, she flew away (with her babies still clinging to her) to the top of a neighboring tree. We should have some grand "closeups" of this bat family. The processed film will be waiting for us down at Glacier Park, Montana, when we arrive there in about a week so we can see what we really got on film.

Across the Straits of Mackinac we headed westward on US 2 thru the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, North Dakota and Montana. At Glacier Park we spent one night at our old campground at Many Glacier---one of the grandest spots in the Rockies. The bear grass flowers were glorious again this year, as they had been two years ago when we made our base camp in that region for a while.

But, we were bound for the famous Calgary Stampede so we pushed on across the Canadian border to Calgary, Alberta. The Stampede was more than half over at the time of our arrival (it lasts a full week). At Calgary we met our good friends, Dr. and Mrs. Laurence Nye and son Keven, who had come up from Portland, Ore., to camp with us for a few days and "take in" a little of the Stampede. Dr. Nye is pastor of the First Methodist Church of Portland and knows our old friend Paul Rehms who is now Superintendent of Schools in that city. Quite a few of our Battle Creek friends will remember the Nyes who have visited us twice since our friendship began at a Glacier Park campground three years ago. We had a most interesting day at the Stampede and took quite a good many pictures of the rodeo events. However, it was working under difficulties for the whole week of the Stampede was rainy and the day we were there the showers came intermittently. We took pictures between thunderstorms.

Then on to Banff! Probably our biggest reason for returning to this country this year was the attraction known as the Banff Indian Days. Each year, in about mid-July, seven or eight hundred Stoney Indians and some Crees and Sarcees come to Banff and camp in a large open wooded area near the base of Cascade Mountain. There they erect their village of colorfully decorated tipis and for five days live in about as near a manner to that of their forefathers as do any Plains Indians today. In this picturesque setting near Banff, which used to be their ancestral hunting ground, they hold a thrilling rodeo, participate in games and races, dry their meat over smoking campfires and in the edge of the evening present some of their colorful ceremonial dances. Their buckskin and mooskin garments are decorated with exquisite beadwork and some of them have magnificent feathered head dresses. One of the great friends of these Indian people is Mr. Norman K. Luxton of Banff, who for a great many years has operated

a Trading Post in the city. We met Mr. Luxton two years ago when we were here. He has helped the Indians in many ways and for many years he had charge of the annual Banff Indian Days, the entire proceeds from which go to the Indians. When we decided to work for some Indian pictures this summer, we wrote to Mr. Luxton. His sympathetic cooperation with our plans has helped us tremendously and it is our sincere hope that the films which we procured will help to build a better understanding of these people and promote an even wider interest in the Banff Indian Days activities. Through Mr. Luxton's interest and kindness we were permitted the rare opportunity to attend and photograph a solemn Indian ceremony last Sunday morning. On that occasion Mr. Ernie Kehr of the New York Herald Tribune was initiated into the Stoney tribe as a chief. Ernie has been a great friend of the Stoney Indians for many years . . . he told us: "I love these people and this honor that they are bestowing on me is . . . well, it's almost sacred to them and me". Some Indian tribes have been very free with their tribal initiations, even selling such memberships to certain types of monied Americans who think they can buy their way through the world and get anything their fancy dictates. Not so the Stoneys! They have conferred very few such tribal honors and it was a great privilege for us to film that colorful ceremony.

We found some of our old Indian friends again, among them George Crawler who has such marvellous beadwork on his garments and his horse's trappings that he quite regularly wins first honors in competition in Banff, Calgary, High River and elsewhere. We had a most outstanding experience last Sunday with Chief Walking Buffalo. His costume, which we photographed, was most interesting. His command of the English language and his vocabulary were superb. His grasp of world affairs in this atomic age was little short of astounding and, if his philosophy of life was more generally accepted in the world today, the "white savages" (as the chief half jokingly and half seriously, calls us) wouldn't be doing some of the things which are threatening to engulf the human race in another global conflict. We have pondered much during these last few days some of the words of wisdom of old Chief Walking Buffalo. For days we practically lived with the Stoneys, the Crees and the Sarcees. We made many pictures; we heard Eddie One Spot sing beautifully; we saw Alone Walker of Hobbons dance; we came to know numbers of these people better; we think we begin to see why Norman Luxton has worked for the welfare of these people for many years and we begin to understand why Ernie Kehr says, "I love these Indians". We have made preliminary arrangements to procure some of their typical arts and crafts for the museum.

At the southern edge of the city of Banff along the lower slopes of the mountain and around the Federal Building, is one of the most beautiful gardens we have ever seen. It is known as the Cascade Rock Gardens. In this cool summer climate, with considerable sun and frequent rain, the flowers grow gloriously. I'm told there are about 150 varieties of annual flowers in addition to all the perennials. Streams of water cascade over rocky ledges and miniature falls. Picturesque shelter houses offer the thousands of daily visitors an opportunity to relax and enjoy beautiful vistas in the gardens or of the mountains beyond. Our gardening friends would revel in the colorful experience of wandering through these Cascade Gardens. Needless to say we are giving these gardens pretty full coverage, with our color films.

We are now in wonderful Yoho Nat'l Park, just west of the Alberta-British Columbia boundary, encamped at our old campsite of two years ago in the Kicking Horse Valley. Behind our camp Mt. Stephen and Cathedral Mountain rise thousands of feet above us. The greenish ice of a small glacier hangs over a rocky crag on Stephen. Other high but less imposing mountains surround us. Much new snow lies along the faces of some of these mountains this morning for we have had a heavy rain and cold spell in the last 48 hours. As I write this letter I can hear the labored puffing of two engines pulling a Canadian Pacific train up the valley to Kicking Horse Pass. In earlier years it took four engines to haul a train up over the divide. Then, a few years ago the engineers devised a system of ingenious spiral tunnels through two of these mountains. . . Cathedral and Mt. Ogden-- and now two engines can do the work formerly requiring four.

But, how they do puff! To the north the magnificent Yoho Valley winds up to a group of glacier flanked peaks and famed Takakkaw Falls which drop from the top of a mountain a sheer 1200 feet to the valley below.

In a few days we'll be going up the Banff-Jasper Highway which traverses one of the most scenic portions of the Rockies. Then back to Banff and we'll soon be heading southward through Montana, Wyoming and Colorado, probably stopping for short times again in Glacier and Yellowstone Parks on the way down. We hope to catch a few new areas enroute for entirely new pictorial material. At Browning, Mont. in the Blackfoot Reservation we hope to arrange for some Indian materials for the museum exhibits and Indian Study classes.

Now and then we enjoy surprises on these expeditions. One evening about a week ago, as we were preparing supper in Two Jack Lake Camp, we noticed a car bearing a Michigan license pull to a stop nearby. We didn't think too much about it until a few moments later we heard "Hello, there Ed Brigham, Hi, Elmina!". It proved to be Mr. and Mrs. Farley Tubbs and children from Lansing. Many of you will remember Farley when he was working with Miles Pirnie at the Kellogg Bird Sanctuary a few years ago. He is now chief of the Educational Division of the Michigan Conservation Department. Needless to say we had a good chat that evening. When we last saw the Tubbs family up the Yoho Valley a few miles from here the other day, they were thrilled with the interesting experience of having just seen at close range two large timber wolves. Last Monday Edward and I dropped into the Banff Rotary meeting so that my summer attendance record wouldn't suffer too much. We sat next to a gentleman from Lansing, Michigan, Dr. Wilber Bailey, who is on his way home from Alaska. He knows (or knows of) many of our B.C. dentist friends including Drs. Cannon, Larned, Freeman, Walkinshaw, Owens, Johansen and others. But most surprising of all-- Elizabeth Hosking Binds stayed in his home for a year or so. Small world, isn't it!

The sun is making a feeble effort to come through the heavy clouds overhead so I had better close this letter. We hope that each and every one of you are enjoying a pleasant summer. With best wishes from all of the Brighams, I am,

Very sincerely,

Edward M. Brigham, Jr. (M.L.)

Edward M. Brigham, Jr., Director,
Kingman Museum of Natural History

P.S. For those of you who may be interested in some of our illustrated lectures next year, here is a list of some of our most recent programs. If you would like a lecture folder and complete descriptive information, just send me a note, and I'll be glad to forward such material to you.

1. "Bird Neighbors"... a Kodachrome moving picture of many of Michigan's birds and flowers.
2. "The Four Seasons"... a film of the Michigan outdoors through the different seasons.
3. "Land of Rushing Waters"... a film story of Yellowstone Park.
4. "Moods of the Mountains"... Glacier National Park.
5. "Michigan Naturalist's Odyssey"... Outdoor adventures in Michigan including many birds, flowers, insects, etc.
6. "Yoho Country"... a film story of the Canadian Rockies.
7. New 1950 film... as yet unnamed. A sequel to "Yoho Country".
8. "Some Rocky Mountain Adventures"... Visits to a number of our National Parks.
9. "Along Nature Trails in Michigan"... A Michigan nature study series.