

1951

### HONEYMOON IN NIAGARA FALLS FOR LESS THAN \$300.00?

Many years ago, and still, today, Niagara Falls is considered to be the Honeymoon Capital of the world! It was always one of our dreams to see Niagara Falls, and preferably on our honeymoon.

We were married in Calgary, in May 1951. After spending \$25.00 on flowers, \$20.00 for the minister, and buying new suits, we had less than \$300.00 for wedding and honeymoon. How could we make it to Niagara Falls?

We had a choice; a "lavish" wedding and no trip, or simple wedding and a honeymoon trip. Planning our honeymoon trip was far more important than an expensive wedding. Travel has continued to be our major outside interest.

Now, how to get to Niagara Falls? In those days it was practical to pick up a car at the factory and save the freight costs. The savings was slightly more than a one-way rail ticket for 2 to Toronto. Trans-Canada Airlines (remember it?) was faster, despite 3 or 4 stops, but much more expensive. But we were lucky! The company I worked for needed a new vehicle, so I volunteered to pick it up at the factory and drive it back - "to save the freight". Gasoline was very "cheap" in those days. AND, for the extra savings, we could even afford a compartment or roomette on the train. This would be a very exciting trip for 2 young people.

Three nights and two days, plus a chance to see much of our great and beautiful country.

My bride and I boarded the Canadian Pacific to Toronto. For 3 nights and 2 days our happy porter kept sweeping up confetti. To save money, our parents packed us a picnic lunch which lasted to Winnipeg.

For some reason, we never seemed to get up in time for breakfast. Nor did we adjust to the dining room hours. One night we were famished! During a quick stop at Sault St. Marie, we could only drool at a winking neon hamburger sign about 2 blocks away. But I didn't dare to make a dash for it, for the risk of missing the train with my bride aboard! So we continued, very hungry with growling stomachs. But no matter, we'd be in Niagara Falls soon.

Finally, we picked up the Sedan Delivery. (Older folks would remember those hybrid vehicles - half sedan and half panel truck.) The scenery was spectacular - from Oshawa to Niagara. Vineyards, lush grass, flowers, and finally, - the Falls. We had arrived!

Not that accommodation was expensive in those days, but we decided to economize and "camp" that night in our Sedan Delivery. We picked a beautiful spot in the main park opposite the Falls. Very little traffic and few tourists in those days.

The next morning we drew curious stares from passerbys and especially the police, when they saw us brush our teeth in the fountain! The beautiful surroundings and lovely town was an exciting highlight for us Prairie kids. And everyone was kind, considerate, helpful and accommodating. But we marvelled how anyone could go over the falls in a barrel. (Remember that family? Was it the Hills?) We drove over to the U.S. side for another beautiful view of the falls.

The trip home was uneventful, except for a few funny incidents:

A New York highway patrolman stopped us because he was suspicious of 2 young kids driving a brand new vehicle with those "funny" or illegal license plates that said "Alberta". He didn't know what or where "Alberta" was. After presenting our credentials, registration, etc. he let us go, but not before we gave him a 3 minute geography lesson about Western Canada.

In Sioux City, Iowa, we went to a car dealership to service our vehicle. When we asked him to direct us to a campsite he suggested that we simply park on his used car lot overnight, which we did. Unfortunately, he didn't advise the night watchman. When the watchman discovered 2 young kids in a vehicle (with those "funny" license plates) he summoned the police. The policeman woke us up with his flashlight. It was an agonizing effort to find my trousers, clear the front seat of all our luggage; bags and boxes,

to get into the glove compartment and find our registration, marriage licence and I.D. They accepted our credentials, apologized and wished us "good-night". What we didn't appreciate was they said they would "keep an eye on us" for the rest of the night.

We drove all the way to Seattle and Vancouver. After 3 weeks, the bride was very homesick, especially in Montana when we were "close" to home. A phone call sufficed.

From Vancouver to Calgary we drove the "Big Bend Hiway". Remember that one? We'll never forget! 200 torturous miles of gravel, pot-holes, wash-board and dust! Most of it is under water now; thanks to the Mica Dam.

Then there was "The Last Spike" at Craigalachie, B.C., more beautiful mountains, then home! There must have been some magic in "The Falls" as we have had 42 years of a wonderful, happy marriage. Many years and many trips later, we still think fondly of "our honeymoon trip to Niagara Falls!"

Mr. & Mrs. D.A. Wight  
P.O. Box 3038, Station B  
Calgary, AB  
T2M 4L6

*P.S. Please feel free to edit where necessary etc*