

An Aussie's 1969 Assessment of America

By John Sinclair AO

I was selected by the Rotary District 260 in South East Queensland to be a member of a group of seven young men representing diverse backgrounds and interests to spend eight weeks exploring North East Kansas hosted by the Rotarians and Rotary Clubs of that region. After four months of preparation the Kansas part of the trip occurred over 8 weeks in February and March 1969.

It was a Group Study Exchange because in the 1968 that Rotary District has sent a similar team to South East Queensland. That is why it was to Kansas that we were focussed. However Kansas represented the very centre of America, geographically and politically. Its admission to the Union triggered the Civil War and I represents so much of the socio-economic fabric of America.

Because our hosts were so influential and well connected in their respective communities, we were given inside access to the workings of so many community institutions, media organizations, car plants, jails mental health facilities, hospitals, police and legal services, financial research and the whole range of educational institutions, libraries , including that of Presidents Truman and Eisenhower (both from the area and so much more. The itinerary that was followed shows comprehensiveness of the program aimed at giving us the fullest overview of how America works. We had access to places we would have been most unlikely to have ready access to in Australia.

The group spent a few days in Hawaii and San Francisco on the way to Kansa that helped prepare us for our experience and I was able to extend my trip by a week studying community development and adult education in Washington D.C. I was privileged to carry letters od introduction from the Mayor of Maryborough , the Education Minister, Sir Allen Fletcher and the Premier of Queensland, Joh Bjelke-Petersen. (We hadn't fallen out then). As a 29 year-old the whole trip was an eye opener and proved a provided a basis to improve my leadership capacity for the fight for Fraser Island that would take over my life two years later.

Much has changed both in America and Australia since 1969 but I was fascinated to recently review the report I wrote and had run off on an old duplicator machine at the end of the trip. It makes some interesting observations. In the 45 years since this American immersion I have returned to United States more than ten times but my overall assessment hasn't changed much over that time.

Brisbane, January 2016

DISTRICT 260 (Queensland, Australia)
GROUP STUDY EXCHANGE TEAM

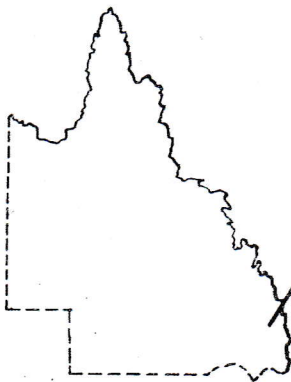


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DISTRICT 571
North -Eastern
Kansas U.S.A.

A Report to Rotary

by Mr. John Sinclair



MARCH—APRIL
1969

Summary Kansas Itinerary

ARRIVE - KANSAS CITY FRIDAY, 28TH FEBRUARY, 1969.

MARCH		APRIL	
Saturday	1st	Orientation — Agricultural Hall of Fame.	
Sunday	2nd	Church to Overland Park and Olathe.	
Monday	3rd	Board of Trade, Midwest Research, Linda Hall, Library.	
Tuesday	4th	Gulf Research, S.M.S. High School, Sears.	1st To Overbrook — Relaxation.
Wednesday	5th	Federal Aviation Authority, Rotary, District Court.	2nd Overbrook Barn Sale Nursing Home School
Thursday	6th	Haverlock Laboritory, Gill Studio, Gill Printing	3rd Crappie Fishing, Lake Pomona.
Friday	7th	Naval Air Base, Hyer Boots, First Snow — Theatre — Motel	4th Lyndon Rotary Meeting, Melvern Lake.
Saturday	8th	To Leavenworth, Reception, K.U. — K State Ball Game.	5th Travel Topeka , Brad Miller's Birthday Party.
Sunday	9th	To Leavenworth — Lunch — Museum.	6th EASTER — Larry Scott's Alta Vista Ranch
Monday	10th	Tour Fort Leavenworth & Local Industries.	7th State Capitol, Governor, Supreme Court.
Tuesday	11th	V.A. Hospital, Federal Penitentiary, Atchison.	8th State Legislature, West Topeka, Rotary.
Wednesday	12th	Flight, Mall, Flood Control, Defense Storage Cave.	9th Washburn University, Tecumseh & K.P.L.
Thursday	13th	Atchison Industries, Rotary — Western Missouri.	10th Theracon, Topeka Rotary, Ec. Development Commission.
Friday	14th	Atchison Globe, Perry Lake, Valley Falls & Oskloosa.	11th Menninger Foundation.
Saturday	15th	To Lawrence, Paul Smart's hog centre.	12th District Rotary Conference.
Sunday	16th	Tour K.U., Museum, CRES.	13th District Rotary Conference.
Monday	17th	Lawrence Industires — Rotary, School Board Meeting.	14th Burlington Rotary, Flint Hills, Wildlife Refuge.
Tuesday	18th	Haskell Institute, Baldwin, Ottawa. Rotary	15th Flight, Emporia Industires, Rotary.
Wednesday	19th	Flight, Ottawa Industires.	16th Emporia Commission Meeting, Police Chief.
Thursday	20th	Garnett Industries Hospital.	17th Council Grove — Cottonwood Falls.
Friday	21st	Mental Hospital, Oswatamie, Paola — Fin & Feather.	18th Yates Center — Community Development Seminar.
Saturday	22nd	To Junction City Reception.	19th Council Grove High School Prom.
Sunday	23rd	Abilene — Eisenhower Centre.	20th Kansas City — Ice Frolics.
Monday	24th	Tour Fort Riley.	21st Kansas City — G.M. Plant, Royals Ball Game.
Tuesday	25th	Junction City Industries, Rotary, Manhattan.	22nd K.C.K. City Commission, Rotary Meeting
Wednesday	26th	K. -State Agricultural Faculty.	23rd Metcalf South Shopping Centre - Farewells
Thursday	27th	Vet-Science, Rotary, ToAlma Rotary.	24th Depart Kansas City for Washington D.C.
Friday	28th	Alma Industries, Ranch.	25th Washington Community Development Survey.
Saturday	29th	Alma Library — TOPEKA Reception.	26th Washington - Capital, Whitehouse, Mt. Vernon.
Sunday	30th	Tour Goge Park Zoo.	27th Bethesda Maryland.
Monday	31st	Goodyear Plant - Stauffer Publications.	28th Washington-Community Development Survey.

Preface

This is a report of my trip to U.S.A. and in particular to Rotary District 571 in Eastern Kansas. Under the sponsorship of The Rotary Foundation and Rotary International. This report is a summary of impressions gained and gleaned and as a result of this tour.

This report cannot be as comprehensive as I would like to make it because so much of this experience is personal and cannot be adequately related. My diary which covered my 10 weeks in U.S.A. and which was written in cryptic form at unusual hours of the night, alone contains 100 pages tightly written at 300 words per page and in many cases the diary was only complementing my own memory, the various brochures received, tape recordings made and letters home.

The experience of a trip like this can never be forgotten. It is a memory to be cherished and nourished by continuing contacts with the many wonderful people I have met and friends I have found. My acquisitiveness for information, particularly printed matter, was the subject of much comment by team members. However I cherish everything I accumulated during my trip because it will allow me to savour, digest, relate and correlate so much of what I saw in 8 crowded weeks in Kansas, over the rest of my lifetime.

To the Rotarians of Rotary District 571, I cannot pay high enough thanks and praise for their wonderfully generous trip so well organised. To the Group Study Exchange Committee particularly the Chairman, Dr. O. L. Plucker. To District Governor Peterson and to the District Governor's Special Representatives and "Mr. Rotary" in Kansas, Mr. Wilbur Lewis am I especially thankful.

The trip was really so wonderful because it was under the auspices of Rotary. Rotary and Rotarians had the Key to open any doors at all that weren't on the schedule. Thus I was able to see everything and meet everyone I wanted to. When I left Kansas I was still stimulated by enquiry about many things but I felt I had a reasonably balanced viewpoint, and that most of the major questions I had asked myself had been answered.

To the Rotarians of Southern Queensland I would like to extend my thanks especially to the District Governor, Rod Veller, Chairman Chas Thomas and members of the Group Study Exchange Committee and especially to Team Leader, Brian Blaxsam. The organisation of the tour from Queensland left nothing lacking. I am indebted to the Rotary Club of Maryborough for for nominating and sponsoring me on this magnificent opportunity to broaden my horizons and gain wider understanding.

The list of thanks would be incomplete without a special mention of my hosts who spared nothing in entertaining us and seeing us entertained. They gave us no room to doubt that Americans are the friendliest, most hospitable and most generous people in the world. For the lasting friendships formed, the easy adjustment to a new environment, the stimulation and enquiry and the good fun and entertainment and for the attendance to every expressed whim, I am indebted.

Many of the most lasting memories: - The K. U. — K State Ball Game at the Allen Field House, the meeting with a Police Chief in Emporia, the Director of the Kansas Economic Development Commission in Topeka, the day at Yates Center with the Team of experts in Community Development from Manhattan, the attendance at the High School Prom at Council Grove, the look at new educational facilities Olathe and Lawrence at 7.30 a.m. and 12.00 midnight and Easter Sunday at Alta Vista, playing baseball and riding, and the..... (The list is too long to reproduce in full) are a result and organisation of our hosts and guides.

Finally I want to endeavour to pay tribute to my six mates — Brian, Rod, Denis, Guelf, Doug and Francis. I would be difficult if I had to pick six better mates myself to go to a foreign country for 10 weeks, to pick six better "blokes" than these for mates. The humour, camaraderie, understanding, and esprit de corps made the whole trip more enjoyable and more meaningful.

John Sinclair.

Maryborough, Qld. Aust., June 1969.

Page 1.

I N D E X.

	<u>Page No.</u>
(1) The Itinerary organised By Rotary.....	2
(2) The American People.....	5
(3) Living Standards.....	6
(4) Way of Life.....	7
(5) Government.....	9
(6) Industry and Research.....	11
(7) Education.....	13
(8) Youth.....	14
(9) Decentralisation as a Concept	
'A'.....	15
'B'.....	19
(10) Why I would prefer to live in Australia.....	22
Appendix.- Extracts from Diary..	13(a)-13(b)
...oOo...	

THE ITINERARY ORGANISED BY ROTARY

The study as organised by Rotary was an extremely commendable one. Eight weeks in a region would be the ideal period to really develop a full appreciation and to get the depth of experience necessary to build a comprehensive picture.

The timing was thought by many to be too early, catching some of the more severe winter weather with temperatures often well below freezing for days at a time. However if the trip had been held in another season we would not have properly sampled Mid West U.S.A. climate conditions. As it was we watched the season change from winter to Spring and this was a revelation showing us at least two seasons. The cold was not pleasant but at least it let me experience snow for the first time in my life and to learn how Americans coped with their variable environment.

The exchange was to District 571 - North Eastern Kansas. Fortunately this Rotary District includes the State Capital, Topeka and we were able to get quite a complete picture of the whole state without seeing all of the State. The District to District exchange is highly commendable but onewonders if many districts could offer as much as District 571 where we visited everything from villages such as Overbrook Kansas, population 800 to Kansas City (1,000,000 population) and we saw a full range of communities, vocations and industries. If any Rotary District in the U.S.A. had to be chosen to give a representative view of America it would be harder to select a better district as containing a sample of everything in which we were interested. Literally midway U.S.A. and the heart of America, Kansas surprised us yet it is doubtful if any of us would have elected to go to Kansas anywhere above priority number 50 if we were given the choice of all the Rotary Districts in the World. So many other Rotary Districts sounded more exciting or more romantic but we were pleased to be in Kansas.

The itinerary was really crowded with so much of our time fully scheduled, so much so, that we were often struggling to maintain schedules. Yet if I had my time over again I would not have done it any other way as it permitted us to see the maximum amount in a minimum time.

There were a few occasions when we had free time and I felt my time was not spent as gainfully as it could have been had some organized agenda been provided. This is not to deny Team members the adequate time to relax and to be by themselves. I felt the itinerary organized allowed adequate time to relax although it was hard to get time to be just by oneself to write up the diary and to sit and muse.

There were ways I think the itinerary could have been improved, including where possible staying with the one host for the total time in any one city. This would have made visits in Johnstone Country, Topeka and Emporia even Kansas City much easier and more relaxing. The strain of packing and moving and readjusting is often more telling than a crowded schedule.

There needs to be more flexibility to enable a person an opportunity to pursue their personal and vocational interests. It is unfortunate that a five day week period was not available to spend towards the end of the tour, to follow up special points of interest located during the study.

The orientation period was very very difficult. In a strange environment it took at least 10 days to start to get the feeling of the country. In this period I slept in 6 different beds and had packed and unpacked so many times as well as maintaining a busy schedule, and coping with a different idiom and so much that is unusual to foreigners including the climate. I would like to see in future tours with something like a two to three day briefing seminar to acquaint team members with the basic fundamentals of the society system of government, education system, history and geography at the outset. This would make much of the remainder of the study infinitely more meaningful.

The travel in the bus could not have been bettered. Too high a praise cannot be offered for this principle and the team members are indebted to Past District Governor Bert Callard of Leavenworth for the supply of the bus. The light airplane tours were also invaluable in relating oneself to Geography, ecology and environment.

It seems that there is a need to meet more people apart from Rotarians. In Kansas of all the Rotarians I met I only met two who professed to being Democrats against the hundreds of Republicans.

Page 4.

This kind of example emphasises that Rotarians tend to be homogenous in character, age and background. They do not epitomize the community, state or nation. There is a strong need to meet more people of the late twenties and thirties age group few of whom are in Rotary. The few people we met of different ages and backgrounds and income levels had different values and more to many Rotarians. The Rotarians represented the cream and not a true sample.

People tend to want to show guests only the best. We stayed largely with the upper 10% of the population in income levels, saw mainly the best farms, the best factories and the BEST schools. It was hard to get a truly representative picture and it was only after talking to several people and questioning them on the subject we were able to draw doubtful conclusion of the TRUE (??) picture.

We saw too many of same things and not enough of others. For example we saw several factories; three hog farm tours were scheduled but not a talk on the law enforcement system with a policeman or a sheriff, and no scheduled visit to an elementary school and yet visits were scheduled to 7 colleges and universities. These are a few problems to be resolved.

The Basic Study Plan we received prior to leaving was exceptionally comprehensive but we did not see all the items which were programmed in that excellent document. Some notable omissions I would have liked to have seen included were something covering the role of the Federal Government, all levels of education including kindergarten and teacher training and a lot more on the Social Services, Health Services and Transportation. The itinerary presented to us on arrival was a very comprehensive plan deserving of the highest praise but if all the items enumerated in the Basic Study Plan could have been incorporated it would have been an infinitely better itinerary.

Finally I believe it is vital to be able to evaluate your study findings by comparing notes with unrelated people outside the district. I spent 10 days in Washington and was able to hear comments like "Kansas is the heart of the conservative mid west".

Kansans differ from Southerners in these respects...." and "Kansas has the highest number of students graduating from college in the United States". All of these things help to give the study less bias and a more accurate conclusion.

The study plan might consider brief stopovers outside the district of the Group Study, preferably under the auspices of Rotarians. The greeting, hospitality and assistance given by District Governor Bob Barwick in San Francisco and local Rotarians was wonderful. This type of greeting does make the trip more meaningful and complements a picture of the district being studied. I suggest that Rotary might include it in the plan because I don't believe that financial resources of applicants should be a criterion in selecting team members. The cost of postage and keeping photographic as well as other records is considerable, but extending the tour to other areas can increase the cost rapidly without local guides and hosts. Experience has shown that the contacts with Rotarians can open more doors than any other contact, and Rotarians are enthusiastic to be hosts.

THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

We saw only a certain section of the people. We met none of the poor, no unemployed people, few negroes and "underprivileged groups". We saw a lot of factories, installations, schools and facilities but it is people who make things meaningful.

People are vastly different individually. People are as individuals different to people collectively. The American people as individuals, as we found them, were warm and friendly; the most hospitable and generous people anyone could meet. They are embarrassed or insulted if a person attempts to reach for his wallet. They are well informed and well educated. They work harder than the average or equivalent Australian. The Americans are tireless when applying themselves to any project mentally or physically.

The Americans collectively seemed to be preoccupied with their internal national problems of civil rights, student dissidence, the draft and the racial question.

This appeared to be at the exclusion of interest in external affairs and international events. Newspapers carried very little news about Europe, Asia, Africa or even Southern America. One wonders whether the nation may not be too intraspactive.

The indulgent diets, the labour saving gadgeting and the application of huge resources of mechanical energy have produced a nation of people with a calorie problem. Perhaps because of climate or commercialization, there is remarkably little widespread participation in outdoor sports which tend to require more exertion than billiards. The increasing popularity of jogging was not appreciably altering the complexion of National fitness.

The fetish with guns, the popularity of hunting and the complex laws which protect the innocent and free the guilty seemed to suggest violence on a much higher scale than we had imagined. The Crime rate seemed exceptionally high and the road accident rate was almost double that of Queensland.

It is hard to generalize about Americans. They are not as united as the name of their country suggests. Americans always identify themselves with their home state first. A person may still be a Texan after he has spent 50 years in Maine and vice versa. The state identity of a person will also yield much information about their personality and attitudes to various questions.

The diversity and dichotomy between the welfare of the different racial groups adds to the problem of generalising. There are 200 million people and it is not really prudent to try to categorise the whole lot.

THE STANDARD OF LIVING

It is hard to generalize because we saw only the best, by and large and there are wide variations of standards in Australia. There are even wider variations of standards in U.S.A.

Page 7.

The normal house was larger than the equivalent Australian would have. It would be equipped with two bathrooms, two cars, more gadgets and automatic washing machine, clothes drier, dishwasher and central heating and airconditioning. These are luxuries which most Australian equivalents would not have.

Housekeeping seems to be easier in U.S.A. with less dust coming into the house and so much packaged food ready prepared. American women consequently have more leisure time and this may explain the higher proportion of working wives.

Salaries and wages are normally twice those of the Australian equivalents. The cost of food though is not twice that of Australians. Food costs are almost comparable as were the prices of automobiles, although running costs are higher. Most items are comparable but where a high labour component is involved, costs skyrocket. The extra income then is largely absorbed by higher scale of taxation and acquiring more items which Australians regard as luxuries. Americans in spite of all live very well, and the standard of living of most Americans would be envied by most Australians.

THE AMERICAN WAY OF LIFE

The American way of life was quite distinctly different. For example the Americans seem to be more religious than Australians or at least much better Churchgoers. This applies more to the top men in industry and commerce. The standards of the churches are also better than Australians architecturally.

Americans tend to live a lot more indoors which is understandable but they eat out a lot more than Australians. The number of restaurants is testimony to this.

American people also tend to have big accumulations of debts, and most extend their credit, which is liberally available over long terms, as far as they can. Credit is a way of life with credit cards being tremendously popular. Credit is over longer terms, but the interest rates were found to be generally higher.

The Americans are great sports spectators but participation in sport is relatively low. The Americans eat basically the same foods but prepare them differently and certainly eat them differently. Char coal brailed steak, deep fried chicken, pancakes and syrup, hot breakfast sweet rolls and the inevitable salad as a side dish were popular items on every menu rarely found in Australia.

Americans drink less than Australians. Nowhere could anything comparable be found with our Australian "Pubs" and the huge expansive drinking bars. The drinking habits are much more sophisticated. Almost no rum, little beer relatively and at least in Kansas little wine are consumed. Bourbon is preferred to Scotch Whisky, although we received due deference in the availability of Scotch to Australians.

The Americans clothing is similar although women and girls would wear dresses at least two inches longer than their Australian equivalents.

Building styles vary in the U.S. from region to region. The basement though is not familiar to Australians.

The Americans are so open and friendly, it could not fail to impress us that we had had lunch with Generals, Judges and personally met leading figures including the Governor. The Americans are remarkably free of protocol and "standoffishness" which appears to be peculiar to certain professions and ranks in Australia. There is certainly social status involved but class consciousness is not as sensitive and aloofness or remoteness is a sin. The middle class apparently includes everyone not a Vanderbilt, a Rockefeller, a Kennedy or a Ford. Doctors are considered middle class. The thought of a working class does not appear to arise. It is certainly smaller than the Australian section.

Income levels though in the middle class can range from \$4,000 per annum to millions of dollars. It seems incongruous that Australia where in 1966-67 less than 3,500 people had taxable incomes greater than \$20,000 should have more class consciousness than Americans and so many more protocol obstacles in what appears to be a more egalitarian society.

Page 9.

The American woman does not seem to be as dominant in the society as the picture painted by contemporary writers suggests. However it did seem that women participated a lot more in activities of their husband than has been the case in Australia. The fewer exclusively "Men only" institutions and the difficulty each is experiencing in surviving seems resultant from men's desire for women to participate.

GOVERNMENT.

The system of a Federal Constitution and states was not unusual to Australians because there is so much which is common to both forms, although the Presidential System is a great difference. Again due to wide press coverage there was nothing unusual to us about the Presidential system and the kindred State Governorships.

The greatest difference though that was noted was the "spoils system" of rewarding political loyalty with patronage in all sorts of political appointments. Fortunately though most levels of local government have now been able to divorce themselves from party politics and also the spoils system. This seems to have aided the growth of a different cadre of local government officials and particularly in the police force which is a function of local government.

We were privileged to sit in on a session of the state legislature. The proceedings were vastly different and would have dismayed an Australian Speaker schooled in the British system of rigid inflexible tradition. For one thing we were able to address the legislature, something which would never be done in an Australian Parliament.

Yet despite the seemingly disorderly debate, one can see a more democratic and flexible method of decision making. The state legislature at least seemed to have more power than the Australian State Parliaments. Not only are States constitutionally stronger but the legislature has a more positive part to play without being plagued by the "ascendancy of Cabinet" as too often is noted in Australian parliaments. The power of the Governor is great, particularly the power of patronage, but he is infinitely less powerful than Cabinet is collectively.

The bureaucracy although small and well developed also seems very subservient to the legislature, and pays due deference to it. Perhaps it is the "spoils system" which makes bureaucrats conscious of not over-playing their role.

We were pleased to meet the Governor and Deputy Governor of Kansas as well as many legislators. The accessibility of policy makers and their approachability also apart from making government more personal also is an important factor in engendering and nourishing the democracy which the Americans have to a greater degree than Australians.

Local Government is bewildering by the numbers of levels at which it exists, for example apart from city and country government, there is school districts and in some cases water districts all working on different geographical areas. Yet the numbers of functions delegated to local government include education, law enforcement, agricultural extension and the district courts. This

- (1) aids decentralisation
- (2) aids the democratic processes by reducing more functions to the level where the people see it and feel personally involved at
- (3) aids community development by eliminating a large section of the population subject to transfer.

There are criticisms to be made of the processes of government. Legislators were underpaid. This meant wealth is a prerequisite. To be a politician political campaigns for both primaries and elections are expensive yet politicians receive only \$25 per sitting day salary and \$10 per sitting day expenses and only \$150 per month for the remainder of the year. This is being underpaid by Australian standards let alone U.S. Since each legislator will be \$1000 per year out of pocket a person needs extensive private means.

Legislation is limited to 100 days or less and this seems to hamper the process of deliberation in legislative procedure. The number of committees though, and the effective use made of them, is useful and better than the Australian committee system, but the inflexible number of sitting days of the session seems wrong.

The number of lawyers in the legislature seems to be wrong. The legislature should be representative of the people yet it seems to be a prerequisite in U.S.A. to be a lawyer to qualify for any major political office. The preponderance of lawyers is so disproportionate that it does not allow a representative sample of people to enter the legislature.

The open presence of lobbyists was a surprise, but again it appears to be very effective although it was alien to our Australian concepts.

Finally the courts are the most different. The advanced legal system of protecting innocents has not deterred lawlessness. The crime rate exalts alarmingly. The courts apparently in dispensing justice are not providing sufficient deterrent.

There was one further factor which intrigued us, and that was the political inflexibility of party allegiances. As Kansas was Republican so is Missouri Democratic. Despite a person's home state political affiliations because of the futility of voting for a Democrat in Kansas people became more interested in the Republican primary elections. There is therefore a tendency for civic minded people to adopt the politics of the State in order to influence primaries. Perhaps this is why we met an overwhelming preponderance of G.O.P. Rotarians.

There are some incongruities that cannot fail to impress one. The Americans resist the machinations of government as far as they can. Telephone services are run by private enterprise cheaper and more effectively than Australia. Private enterprise assumes many roles which in Australia are governmental and public service preserves. Yet Americans submit to carrying I.D. cards, being blood grouped before marriage and having buildings "condemned" under urban renewal programmes. This means the landowners let buildings in downtown areas deteriorate until they are eventually "resumed" by the government, demolished and the land redeveloped. There were other unusual examples such as those of Americans tacitly accepting licences for everything which Australians would not accept.

INDUSTRY AND RESEARCH.

Drawing comparisons on industry one cannot be but brief. The scale of industry is so vast it is staggering. The sophistication of industry and equipment was a revelation. Computers were used on a scale we hadn't imagined. However despite the sophistication of industry there are areas in which Australia has something to offer. This is particularly true of the Industrial labour relations.

Three weeks annual leave is a concept not recognised until employees have worked enough years for the one employer to qualify for it. Long service leave is a concept unknown completely. However very large employers like Goodyear and General Motors had some interesting concepts. Goodyear had increasing annual leave including 6 weeks annual leave after 30 years employment. General Motors pay 90% of salary during layoffs. Fringe benefits cost large employers approximately \$1 per hour above the \$3.50 - \$4.00 per hour factory workers earn.

However overtime is not a universal concept, and industrial disputes are more extensive than in Australia, despite the fact that a much lower proportion of U.S. and Kansas workers belong to Trade Unions, and compulsory unionism in Kansas is banned by law.

The research which is undertaken by industry explains both the wealth and the advanced technology of the U.S.A. Firms expend millions of dollars on research, and establishments like the Midwest Research Institute which undertakes research work on a contractual basis.

Untill Australian industry spends the same proportion of its income on research as U.S.A. industry it cannot be expected to return the same results in total performance and new technology.

Industrial research leads to new industries. Therefore research centres help stimulate industries adjacently. This concept could be usefully applied in Queensland.

Agriculture in the United States does not seem markedly different from Australian agriculture except for the extensiveness. Kansas city 1500 miles from the oceans has a 42 inch rainfall on rich black soil prairie and there is heavy snow preventing evaporation during six months of the year. The result is a rich and abundant harvest.

Agriculture is carried out on an intensive scale across this abundant continent and is not confined to a narrow coastal and sub-coastal area as happens in Australia.

EDUCATION..

Having completed an extensive report on the "Role of Adult Education in Community Development" for the Board of Adult Education in Queensland it is not proposed to reiterate everything again in detail. However I might requote just some of my findings.

"The purely subjective view gained and could not be tested nor confirmed was that the quality of formal education offered in the U.S.A. is inferior to that in Queensland. It appears that the total absence of the examination system and the means to effectively enforce discipline are two of the primary aspects contributing to the apparent deterioration in the quality of formal education. There appears to be a strong case for reinforcing both discipline and the examination system in Australia to avoid the decline in standard and the attendant problems of lesser discipline in schools, colleges and universities. The problems of student and civil unrest appears to be related to both discipline and to social questions which have been inadequately resolved."

"Despite the abovementioned qualifications education is more available and does reach a higher percentage of the population. A much higher percentage of persons in the United States graduate from High School than complete High School in Queensland. The percentage of persons attaining degrees is ten (10) times higher throughout the U.S.A. than in Queensland. The Degree may not rate a direct equivalent in Queensland but the volume of higher educated persons is no doubt responsible for the tremendous development of technology and research in the U.S.A."

"The abbreviated training schedules for trades and certain vocations and the weak apprenticeship system are compensated for by a well developed system of vocational education from High School to University.

The freedom of choice and the number of electives offered at all levels of education undoubtedly allows persons to persevere and to succeed because the flexibility of the system enables him to select subjects best suited to his aptitudes rather than taking a set course which offers minimum flexibility and alternatives.

APPENDIX

Looking back through my diary I find some really interesting notes. I cherish these memories and I will certainly treasure the diary. The following are a few brief glimpses:

DIARY FOR SUNDAY 23RD FEBRUARY - HONOLULU.

After an exhausting day that finished sometime in the late hours of the night on this diary and correspondence, I was exhausted. Worst of all, my watch stopped whilst I was in the process of writing my first impressions so all day Sunday and again on Monday I was without a watch. This added to everything else being back to front makes life confusing. For example, a nickel (5 cents) is larger than a dime (10 cents). There are no 2 cents or 20 cents, but quarters (25 cents). Light switches are upside down and you can see few hanging or suspended lights. Most interior lighting is indirect. The driving is back to front and everything is so bewildering - traffic rules etc.

Well, after a long walk on Saturday, we spent Sunday very quietly. In the morning, I got a few shots of the beach and then came back to the hotel to spend until 2.00p.m. yarning with the boys and becoming familiarised and oriented with each other. We breakfasted at a drugstore - ham omelette \$1.25 plus coffee plus 4% state tax. Everything is loaded with this infernal state tax of 4%.

Language: You know almost all there is to know about the the language except for the accent. It is so difficult to resist talking off the Yank accent because it is so conscious an effort to retain a pure Aussie vernacular and accent.

Shopping: We looked in shops everywhere. Quality is equivalent or inferior to Australian in most cases, certainly no better. However, the marketing here is so enticing. People are really tempted to buy something wherever they turn.

DIARY WRITTEN 26TH FEBRUARY - START KANSAS TOUR.

COMMENTS ON HIGH SCHOOL PROM.

At the outset, let me say it was a wonderful experience. The Juniors in the School stage the party and finance everything for the Seniors. Each Junior Class gets money by fund raising, particularly by selling Magazine subscriptions. They decorated a huge gymnasium by completely building a dyed chesse cloth ceiling only 7ft. high to fit in with their theme of Fairy Tales can come true and most illusions were to "Alice Through the Looking Glass." Each year's Junior Class tries to outdo what the previous Junior Class has done. This Prom, the girls all had mini skirts, amde on the same pattern for this one event and boys had matching jerkins, bow ties and particular type of top hat. The boys waiting carried the trays and the girls waited on the tables. of the Seniors. They did all this last year and they just got waited on. The girls wore elaborate evening frocks and the boys wore white tuxedo's and red carnations. The Junior Class thought of everything and even sent Craig McNeal, my host, and I a White Carnation each to wear with our orchids. Everything that these kids could think of was there - an alcove to pose for a photographer, (His fee for sittings was \$1.75 alone), candlelight and coloured floods, and artificial waterfall, moss tree, and entrance to simulate the appearance of a cave. Speeches were all lone and prepared by the kids. Only the class teachers and respective wives and dates and the School Board officials were invited. Spooching finished at 7.45p.m. after 7.00p.m. start. Then a band came in with 12 amplifiers at full blast and they really began swinging. I got "with it" and had a few dances and was actually invited by a 21 year old Senior who was married at 16, had son, divorced now and back at High School - to dance. I just can't got over divorce here in U.S. It is so common. I blame young marriages principally, but it appears that kids just have to start dating at age 12, and if they haven't got dates they miss most community and social life, so the system is conducive to match making from the outset. The system of pinning, exchanging rings etc. makes marriage inevitable and then, because everyone pairs up so early and so constantly, there is no opening once you try to break off.

Page 14.

The sum result is that the people of U.S.A. are much more educated than Queenslanders. They are better qualified and better suited to their chosen vocations.

I would like to expand further on education because I learnt a lot but space precludes. However I feel that if Queensland can make higher education less exclusive it will result in a better educated society provided that the current quality of education in Queensland is not depreciated.

The overall view of the administration by local school boards is that they result in competitive standards and stable teacher population. However they appear hindered by local pressures and by being reliant on local electors for finance to operate. The question of maintaining a standard statewide is also harder to maintain.

YOUTH.

I would much prefer to raise my children in Australia than in America. This is where the greatest difference between the two societies lies.

The Youth of America have more freedom, less discipline and fewer challenges than Australians. They are not challenged by examination. They are not challenged economically. Parents are indulgent. Even when a youth is working he pays no "board" to his parents. He drives a car from age 14 and will have commenced dating before that period. If a teenager has not got a "steady" he or she is socially left out of it. Therefore the dating is special prelude to going steady, to being "pinned". The progression seems inevitable leading to early marriage.

Sex and playing with drugs are a few of the problems which plague and bewilder the teenagers. Dating in U.S. style is quite different to Australian dating. A group of couples don't socialize dancing with each others partner but they dance exclusively with their date and guard them possessively. The confusion of youth presents a real problem. This may explain why Youth is in revolt.

DECENTRALISATION.

Note: These are two articles written on my return for the "Maryborough Chronicle" and they were published on 15th and 25th May, 1969.

One of the most lasting impressions gained of the United States is the extent of the decentralization of its population.

Admittedly America is plagued by grave problems of urbanisation with the disproportionate growth of cities. However the growth cities are evenly distributed throughout the nation both up and down each coast and right through the centre.

After spending eight weeks in Kansas it is not hard to appreciate why the United States is the most powerful country in the World. If the top of U.S. were laid over Australia it would cover approximately the same area but Kansas would lie over the region of Alice Springs at the heart of the continent.

Kansas has a population of 2,250,000 which is larger than Queensland's yet the largest city, Wichita, has a population of less than 300,000. This distribution of population throughout the State in many smaller cities and towns results from a positive policy of decentralization initiated by Government and stimulated by it.

DECENTRALISATION OF GOVERNMENT

In stark contrast to Queensland, where the headquarters of all government agencies and most government institutions are within a 50 mile radius of Brisbane, in Kansas Government institutions are distributed throughout the State. There are 40 Colleges and Universities in Kansas but only one, Washburn University is in the State capital of Topeka. The two largest Universities Kansas University and Kansas State University are located at Lawrence and Manhattan respectively. Lawrence's 30,000 population is a direct result of the University with a 17,000 enrolment and Manhattan with a 24,000 population plus 13,000 students is also another College Town whose major industry is education and research.

The State Jail is located at Lansing near Leavenworth and provides further employment and income for that community.

Even the State Mental Hospital is located at the small town of Osawatamie (Population 4,700) and The School for the Deaf is at Olathe (population 14,000). The Kansas State Teachers College is at Emporia and swells that city's 19,000 population by 9,000 and the list grows.

State legislation prevents "branch banking" and although this results in the proliferation of financial institutions it also results in all the work of the bank being carried on in its home territory without a big State office branch. Police likewise are responsible to local government and this eliminates a huge State Headquarters. Schools are controlled by school boards which are autonomous in each district. Even the judicial system is oriented towards the country thus eliminating the necessity for a large department in the State capital. Agricultural extension is directed from Manhattan by the University extension and carried into the field by county Agents who are county employees.

As a consequence of these policies the State Capital at Topeka has fewer State Public Servants and each city has a proportionately higher number.

This local employment of bankers, teachers, police, agricultural advisers and court officers results in a better, happier community life where none of the population is subject to transfer for promotion. As a result there is a fuller participation in community life by all citizens who regard themselves as belonging. Transfer is a concept unknown in this sphere.

FEDERAL POLICY.

The United States has a similar system of Federal Government to Australia but the Federal Government likewise decentralises its agencies as far as possible.

Again in contrast to Queensland, with Victoria Barracks, Wacol, Enoggera, Amberley, Greenslopes Repatriation Centre all contributing to the mushrooming of the Brisbane area, Kansas' decentralisation is aided and abetted by the Federal Government.

The Staff and General Command School, the nation's top institution, which all officers above the rank of Lieutenant Colonel must attend to gain promotion, is located at Fort Leavenworth, an historic defence installation with over 9,000 military personnel on post. This together with the Leavenworth Federal Penitentiary and the U.S. Army Disciplinary barracks is a tremendous stimulus and employer for Leavenworth's civilian population of 27,000.

Junction City with a population of 17,000 is largely dependant on nearby Fort Riley to nourish its commerce and its industry. Fort Riley is H.Q. for 24th Infantry Division and has 19,000 men on post. The Forbes Air Force Base outside Topeka and the McConnell Air Force Base at Wichita are both further large defence installations which stimulate civilian industry. Wichita is the "Air capital of the World" and has a large aircraft manufacturing industry including the Cessna and Beechcraft plants located there. Even the Navy has an installation in Kansas. This is the Naval Air Base at Olathe which pays \$4,400,000 annually to its civilian employees. The Coast Guard Station at Atchison for patrolling the Missouri River brings that service also to Kansas.

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers designs and constructs all the major water storages in the State and there is in Kansas alone, already 15 lakes the size of Barumba or Wuruma Dams or larger, with still more under construction, and these are for flood control and recreation only. The use of river navigation and the strategic importance of the inland waterways for national defence, have been recognised by the Federal Government in assigning the Corps of Engineers to all of this work. Every city has some planned flood control measures and all are geared to cope with other natural disasters including the prevalent tornadoes.

The Federal Government further has decentralized its agencies by placing its Federal Aviation Authority Traffic Control Centre at Olathe. This multi million dollar installation controls air traffic in a 400 mile radius, and employs many highly qualified men. The Federal Government is also planning to build the Mid Continental Airport to be the largest airport in the world, in Kansas, but it will not be in or near a large city but 30 miles out of Kansas City, Kansas and it will stimulate new industries.

The Federal Government also has a large Veterans Hospital at Wadsworth. This 724 bed hospital has over 1000 employees on the staff and a \$10,000,000 budget. It is not placed in a large urban complex but rather in a peaceful rural setting overlooking the Missouri River.

The Federal Government is involved in all forms of decentralisation. For example in the nearby city of Colorado Springs huge Federal investment in a communications centre, has resulted in the establishment of a huge electronics and allied industries in close proximity. Similar cases can be cited all over the country side of Federal projects stimulating now allied industries to locate in the vicinity. Likewise Federal projects sometimes locate where there is a project which interests them. The establishment of a new N.A.S.A. centre at Lawrence is a direct result of research in radar communication being carried on at Kansas University and by the Centre for Research in Engineering Science.

Atchison though is a model Federal Project. The Defence Department maintains a huge 65 acre underground storage installation. Here is stored a vast quantity of equipment (\$200 million worth) such as lathes which can help rebuild and reconstruct, if the country were devastated by attack. Private enterprise maintains this facility. However the machinery can be used by private contractors tendering on defence projects and allowance is made for the use of the up to date equipment when entering the tender bid. This utilizes the machinery in storage and allows small firms with limited capital assets to enter bids on government contracts.

B. DECENTRALISATION.

Government policies affect decentralisation in several ways which are probably not well recognised. Deliberate planning begins very early.

I was privileged to spend two hours with the Director of the Kansas Economic Development Commission - Mr. Jack Lacy, to discover what steps are being undertaken to aid and accelerate decentralisation and industrialisation. Kansas has nine economists employed in Jack Lacy's office planning ahead for the future development. The big job then is to match real development to the plan.

Having established a plan, after a lot of economic and social research, the Economic Development Commission then actively canvasses for both government and private enterprise to fit in with the plan.

Basically the plan revolves around stated "growth centres" in various regions of the state. These are regions which are making growth irrespective of outside assistance. However the plan is to combine government resources and industry to stimulate the growth of centres which have shown they have the ability to grow.

I saw the master plan, and it was reassuring to see that whilst every town cannot be stimulated, the distribution of "growth centres" is fairly distributed throughout Kansas. Every city with a population of 10,000 or more is likely to have a full time Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce working to attract new industries. These Chambers of Commerce are well supported financially, and can afford to launch extensive promotions.

The Economic Development Commission works conjointly with the local Chamber of Commerce to positively locate new industry in growth areas.

Electricity and power costs are on a uniform scale throughout the State of Kansas for industrial and commercial purposes. This meant plants in the large cities had no advantage in power and fuel costs, over plants located in smaller centres.

There is naturally a freight barrier which could be a deterrent to investment in the country but this was more than offset by what employers repeatedly referred to as "The better quality of labour" in rural areas.

Freight is all handled by private enterprise and there are no freight concessions which specifically aid larger centres. Government does not interfere other than to plan highway development, which has a tremendous stimulus on location of industry.

The evidence of industry spreading along the freeways and interstate highways was astounding. The rate at which land adjacent to these highways appreciated, was testimony to the value of transportation.

Industrialists constantly referred to distance in time. Topeka to Kansas City, a distance of 70 miles, was more often quoted as one hour in driving time. This is part of the Interstate Highway 70 which runs 900 miles non-stop without a slow down or stop sign. This 4 lane highway has a minimum speed of 40 miles per hour, and a maximum of 75, and there are no traffic intersections. As a result traffic speeds through cities and road hauliers have quick turn arounds.

One Topeka firm had three complete semi-trailer loads of goods picked up in Kansas City and delivered at its Topeka plant and unloaded every 8 hour shift. This fast turn around and super highway system encourages firms to move out.

Telephone and postal services provide further incentives for firms to locate further out in the country. Local service areas of free telephone calls are quite extensive and even the furthest long distance call from Kansas City to either coast - a distance of 1500 miles was only \$U.S. 1.10 at peak periods for 3 minutes or \$U.S. 0.85 in off peak times.

Rail freights seemed to be comparable with Queensland. Kansas is the home of the Peabody Coal Company and freight on 4,000 tons of coal per day for a distance of 120 miles is \$U.S. 2.00 per ton. This coal is all to be used by a new Power Station at Lawrence, which will generate 430,000 Kilowatts, which is almost equal to Queensland's annual power consumption in 1966-67, and this will supply less than one quarter of Kansas' total power requirements.

This was evidence that power stations operating on coal need not necessarily be sited on the actual coalfield.

Air Transportation is playing an increasingly important role in industry. One firm in Colorado manufacturing piston rings located itself on the end of a large airstrip. This means an aeroplane can taxi up to a loading bay and load the entire days products and fly it over 1000 miles to Detroit, the centre of the automobile industry.

All cities seemed to be endeavouring to establish identities for themselves in various industries. As a result Topeka regarded itself as the mental health capital of the world. In the several institutions for the mentally ill over 2,000 persons were employed directly and a further 4,000 people indirectly in helping people who came from all over the world both for treatment and training. This concept of identifying communities with certain industries, frequently results in allied industries, also locating in certain centres.

Decentralisation in U.S. is not just an accident. By government policy aiding community promotional organisation the regional cities are growing. Industry is now trying repeatedly to move out of the huge urban sprawls, with all their social and industrial ills, into attractive country areas with a better quality of labour and a better environment.

The congestion, the pollution, the labour problems and the higher wage structures of the city are encouraging industry to move out. However locating a new industry with 500 new employees in a city of 20,000 people is bound to cause dislocation of services. Therefore industrialists are acutely conscious of prevailing community attitudes when they determine to locate in an area. Industrialists will invariably elect to locate in an area which has a "positive attitude towards change"; a greater toleration of temporary inconveniences caused by something "as dynamic as a huge new industry in a small city".

WHY I WOULD PREFER AUSTRALIA.

Given a choice between Australia and the United States to live in I would have little hesitation in stating my preference for Australia.

America is a great country and has many material benefits to offer. The income levels are higher. The living standards are better and there are many other advantages to living in the U.S.A.

However there are so many social considerations which favour Australian living which I feel more than offset the physical considerations favouring U.S.A.

It is not the racial conflict nor civil unrest, nor the over present evidence of violence which persuades one to prefer Australia.

Climate conditions and the conditions of social welfare and the way of life are three outstanding reasons.

The extreme climate conditions I experienced in the mid west demonstrated just how widespread controlled environment is. Shops, offices, factories, cars and churches all are airconditioned in summer and heated in winter. As a result everybody lives indoors so much of the time.

Indoor living has three apparent side effects not generally recognised. The general lack of space and outdoor environment together with indulgent diets creates a nationwide problem of obesity in the U.S.A. with its attendant health hazards. Americans are keen sports fans but few are participants especially in active strenuous sports. The third effect is the degree of intraspectiveness of Americans. The lack of newspaper space given to foreign affairs of any source compared with the volume of comment on purely domestic situations tends to epitomize the indoor living of the people in the United States of America.

Coming from the most equitable and desirable climate in the world these observations seemed more apparent and contrasted a basic philosophy difference between the two countries.

In social welfare Australia seems to be further advanced than U.S.A.. Our pension system, child endowment, baby bonus, free hospitalisation and long service leave provisions were totally unknown concepts in U.S.A. Our medical benefits system is infinitely superior to the American Blue Cross Blue Shield System. Our provision for automatic three weeks annual leave is another provision most American employees did not seem to appreciate.

Although the trade union movement is weak in U.S.A. there are a greater percentage of man-hours of labour lost in industrial disputes than in Australia because of the absence of an industrial arbitration or conciliation authority.

Working conditions in the United States of America were in many cases superior to what one would expect in Australia, but they were by no means standard.

We saw factories in U.S. which would not measure up to the minimum requirements under which Australian employees would reasonably expect to work.

It was these wide extremes between the best and the worst that defy description. The U.S. has the complete dichotomy of the very best and some poor examples but there is no minimum standard such as a "basic wage" or a "means test". As a result the ranges one experiences in wealth, in working conditions and in all aspects of living makes one aware of the many inequalities and injustices of the system.

Nowhere are the comparisons between the standards of social welfare more contrasting than in the field of health and medical welfare. Hospitalisation is a luxury few can afford. Private rooms cost from \$30.00 per day. There is little to ameliorate the excessive costs of hospitals and doctors although the standard of care is unsurpassed.

There is a very weak system of apprenticeship training so as to be almost non-existent in many industries. This creates problems of training and retraining unskilled and semiskilled workers in a nation which otherwise has the most advanced technology in the world.

This adds further to the problems of the unemployment which is four times higher than the Australian rate.

The system of credit and finance in U.S.A. has many advantages. Credit is so easy and so readily available but Australians are not conditioned to accepting readily the concept of 30 year olds having debts, overdrafts and hire purchase commitments aggregating to two to three times their annual income.

Neither can Australians accept easily a divorce rate so high that on current trends almost half the marriages contracted today will end in divorce. The divorce rate is four times higher than Australia's.

Women constitute over 30% of the total United States work force. Although the proportion of married women in the Australian workforce is increasing, Australians feel it is the role of the man to be the breadwinner entirely without aid from his nuptial partner. The ramifications of such a substantial percentage of women working results in the erosion of the feminine role and the assertion of a greater independence and autonomy by American women.

The pace of living is luxurious but hectic. Most homes would expect to have at least two T.V. sets, automatic dishwasher, automatic washing machine and clothes dryer, two cars, two bathrooms and three telephone sets.

Comparing discipline and parental control over children presents a further contrast. Perhaps to me as a former full time youth worker and educationalist it pointed to the fundamental difference in the two societies. The liberty of children, their lack of respect for elders, for discipline, and their contempt for the established institutions and the widespread licentious of youngsters and drug taking even in Junior High School, both shocked and frightened me.

The lawlessness of the U.S. frightened us. Crime in U.S.A. is apparently more highly organised and more widespread than we had previously imagined. American crime syndicates are big business paying big dividends. This again contrasts with the Australian situation and efforts should be spared in ensuring organised crime is never established "down under" on the pattern and scale it is in U.S.A.

With the lawlessness comes the violence. Violence exists so widely in the U.S. that it is a fact of life taken for granted. Police, security guards, both public and private, and all forms of law enforcement officers wear guns openly. Although we had no first hand contact with violence we could see samples everywhere.

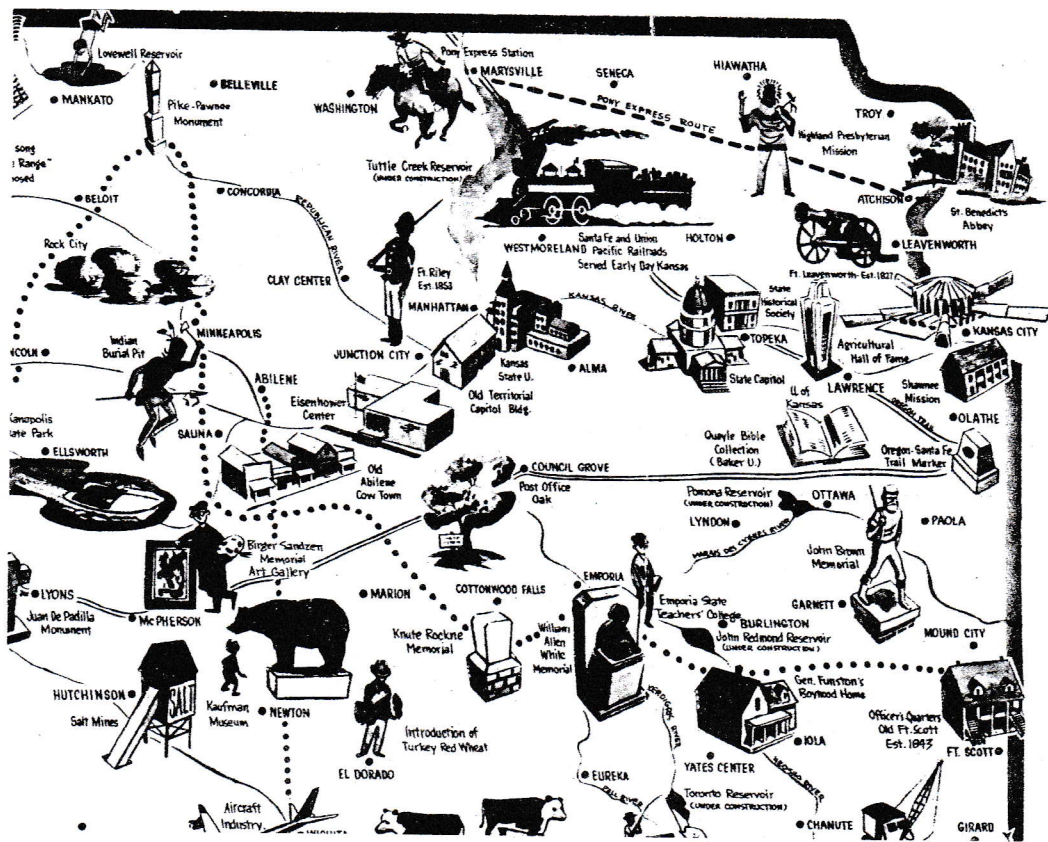
The Americans are "gun happy". Because hunting is a major sport and because of the American heritage of the Wild West and the Prohibition era most Americans take pride in collecting an arsenal of guns, revolvers and rifles. Guns are freely available and too easily acquired. The police respond by carrying a frightening display of weaponry both on themselves and in their patrol cars. Police receive much training in the use of clubs and side arms and they practise regularly. However I learnt to my astonishment that they receive little or no training in unarmed combat.

The Army and National guardsmen are given specific training in riot control. Rioting in U.S. is on a much more violent scale than anything hitherto experienced in Australia, where there are few inadequately trained persons to deal with these problems should they arise.

The dilemma provoked by the unrest and civil disorder on the campuses of colleges and Universities is bewildering to Australians but more bewildering to Americans. The extent of the unrest is unnerving. Here I believe Australians should work to try to avert the situation which is flourishing in U.S.A.

The racial conflict has different implications in different parts of the United States. In some areas there is open discussion of a violent and bloody confrontation. In general this seemed to culminate from regions where there is a lower percentage of negroes. In Washington D.C. where there is a preponderance of negroes I couldn't help feeling that the negroes were over the hump and assimilation and integration were accepted more gracefully; although it will be another 20 years perhaps before the festering of ill-will ceases.

To summarise I can only say that I liked U.S.A. very much, But I like Australia more. With the natural resources of Australia I believe Australia can be as rich as U.S.A. However we should be learning from the U.S.A. We should learn by both the mistakes the U.S.A. has made and avoid compounding the error here. We also need to develop a greater energy to work and learn the lessons of better technology and research rapidly if we are going to close the gap between the relative prosperity of the two countries.



JOHN SINCLAIR: John Sinclair is Organiser of Adult Education in Maryborough, Queensland being a native of that city. He covers a district of 2,000 square miles with a population of 140,000, arranging educational activities and organising a variety of groups and clubs • John, 29, graduated from the Queensland Agriculture College in 1959 with a Diploma in Agriculture and became organiser of Rural Youth Clubs. He travelled throughout Queensland extensively during his 7 years with Rural Youth, becoming actively involved with Leadership training, community development and sociological studies, and informal education. He organised Queensland's first Rural Youth State Fair at Hervey Bay in 1966 • During this time he pursued a University Degree in Economics and is now well advanced towards that goal having completed all studies as an external, part time student • John is married with two sons aged 5 and 3. He likes gardening and farming as hobbies. He enjoys sport, particularly bush walking and fishing and squash and is a keen naturalist and student of all aspects of Australia. He is Secretary of the Maryborough Branch of the Wildlife Preservation Society of Queensland • Active in all aspects of community affairs, he is prominent in Rostrum—Men's Public Speaking Club, Show Society, Community Development Planning Group, Masonic Lodge, the Australian Country Party, Creative Writers Group and Rural Youth. He holds executive positions in each of these organisations.

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