

President's Daughter Forms 'See America' Caravan To Publicize Beauty of the Nation

All too many Americans act as though they believe that nearly all that is truly historical or beautiful in this world lies somewhere across an ocean or a foreign border.

They spend precious years accumulating savings for brief and hectic tours of other continents, meanwhile overlooking many wonders in their own national backyard which surpass anything else on earth.

This summer, with the help of the Wally Byam Foundation, a shy 21-year-old girl with an appreciation for history and an eye for beauty delivered an important message of national pride to those Americans. At the same time, she helped her father stem one outflow of dollars from this country.

She is Lynda Bird Johnson, daughter of the President of the United States.

Without fanfare or ostentation, Miss Johnson and her traveling companions spent five full weeks visiting and getting to know places of interest and beauty in Arizona, Colorado, Wyoming, Montana, North Dakota and Minnesota.

They did it in a group of four Airstream travel trailers, informally dubbed the "See America Caravan," arranged for by the Foundation.

Carefully avoiding the persistent press, Miss Johnson lived the life of a typical travel trailerist. Picking remote visits far from shopping centers, hotel accommodations or even hook-ups, she got to know the Grand Canyon, Monument Valley, Mesa Verde, the Grand Tetons, General Custer's Battlefield, Theodore Roosevelt National Park, and finally a National Forest facility near Ely, Minn.

Midway on the tour of the West, Miss Johnson's caravan briefly joined 2590 Airstreams assembled at Laramie, Wyo. for the 8th International Rally of the Wally Byam Caravan Club.

She graciously took part in the WBC's Grand Parade July 4 and greeted the more than 8000 Caravanners from atop an open convertible. She was then presented a bouquet of roses by WBC president Vic Raney and reviewed the remainder of the parade.

Later, at a reception in her honor, she personally met hun-

dreds of the club members.

"I don't like to make speeches," she admitted after being introduced by Andrew J. Charles, "but I like to see America and have other people see America. I think we have the most beautiful scenery, the most wonderful people in the world."

Accompanying the President's daughter on the trailer tour was Mrs. Carolyn Bennett Patterson, chairman of the board of trustees of the Wally Byam Foundation. Mrs. Patterson represented the National Geographic Society as well as the Foundation. She will assist Miss Johnson in preparing an account of the trip for the National Geographic Magazine's December issue.

Preparations for the "See America Caravan" began on the grounds of the white House. Miss Johnson loaded her personal effects into one of the Foundations trailers before flying to meet it in Arizona. There at Grasshopper, Ariz. she went to work with the University of Arizona faculty and students in excavating a pre-Spanish pueblo.

Three experienced young drivers were selected by the Wally Byam Foundation for the caravan. They were Nick Charles, son of Mr. and Mrs. Andrew J. Charles, chairman of the board of Airstream Inc.; Art Costello Jr., son of Mr. and Mrs. Art Costello Sr., president of Airstream; and Dale Schwamborn, son of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Schwamborn. Mrs. Schwamborn is the corresponding secretary of the Wally Byam Caravan Club and executive secretary of the Foundation.

Being of her age group, the three boys shared in many of Miss Johnson's activities during the caravan encampments. They found her a gracious and friendly person with a keen, perceptive mind, as one said later.

The trailers left Grasshopper June 23 and parked the first three nights in the pine forest edging the rim of the Grand Canyon. A park naturalist took the group on tours throughout the area and explained its geologic history.

The caravan next visited the Navajo Tribal Park in Monument Valley, spending two nights amid the nearly incredible rock formations. Several Navajo families joined the group during evening campfires, while during the day

Miss Johnson and the others went on long horseback rides.

At Mesa Verde, Colo., Miss Johnson took an interest in the Wetherill Mesa cliff dwellings, which were excavated in part with funds from the National Geographic Society.

Next, the group joined the mass encampment at Laramie, Wyo. Miss Johnson appeared relaxed amongst the rallying trailerists and asked to be told about the man who had "started all of this," Wally Byam.

Following a one-night stop at the sporting center of Lander, Wyo., the caravan parked in the area of the Grand Tetons July 6 to 13. Miss Johnson and her party were taken on a river boat ride down the Snake River.

During the stay the group held a party at a park service lodge, with many young people from the area invited. An evening of music, dancing and informality made it one of the most pleasant parts of the trip.

Next, the caravan stopped briefly at General Custer's Battlefield in Montana, and the Theodore Roosevelt Memorial National Park in North Dakota.

The caravan's final encampment was near Ely, Minn., where they were able to spend a week visiting the lakes and waterfalls of Superior National Forest. There, Miss Johnson participated with Secretary of Agriculture Orville Freeman in the dedication of a visitor information center which will serve the huge recreation area.

"The 'See America Caravan' was something of a departure for the Wally Byam Foundation," Mrs. Patterson said in summarizing it. "For the past two years we have been doing our part to help foreign service officers with the United States Information Agency and the State Department to understand the nation so that they can better explain it abroad.

"This time we felt that perhaps Americans should be a little better informed about their country, too. Pride in our country, its people, their history and our magnificent natural wonders, is very much needed in these times.

"I am sure Wally Byam would be proud of what we have done to help Miss Johnson on this important project."

State of Wyoming