

ROAD GAMES

My father was a civil engineer and loved to drive, any place, any time. As I was dragged along on all rides, I eventually gave in and learned to like to drive too. To prevent me from becoming bored, my parents started what they called car games. To play these games we needed only our mind, memory, and eyes.

The game we played most often was called Cemetery. Everyone played for himself. The object was to be the first one to find a cemetery on his side of the car. Depending on where we were riding, it could be a quick or a very long game.

The next game was Cows and Horses. We each had to count the number of cows and horses on our side of the car. Cows counted one point, horses two. One person, usually my mother, would keep score. The first to reach 100 points won. We played that on longer trips.

In Alphabet Geography one of us started the game by giving a geographic location--a continent, country, state, city, town, river, mountain or anything geographic we could think of (or fake). The next person had to give something which began with the last letter of the previous word. We would end up getting runs on certain letters, like A's, and we'd get silly trying to think of another word beginning and ending with A. We really had to rack our brains for some A's after the most obvious ones were all played.

Next and my favorite was Picnic List. One started with "I'm going on a picnic and I'm going to bring an apple or some other "A" food." The second person continued with the same beginning and ended up with "apple, banana." It kept on like that until someone couldn't remember the sequence. The play then went on to the next person and kept on until just the winner was left. I still play this game when I am alone in bed and can't get to sleep.

Another favorite game was License Plates. The object was to find all 52 license plates, which was impossible most of the time because of Hawaii and Alaska. In advance someone would write out all of the states and Canadian provinces, and my mother would cross them off. This was a good game for a long trip.

If we hadn't played these games on rides, I don't think I would have grown up loving to drive anywhere and any time like my father. As it is, I still play all of them when I am driving on a long trip.

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