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He's visited all world's lands—except 5

By Donald Yabush

JESSE HART Rosdail is a 5th grader in west suburban Glendale Heights. On the blackboard he has written

"The World is Yours," obviously meant for his young pupils. But it also is Rosdail's driving ambition—to conquer the world, as a traveler. A slight, mild-mannered

man of quiet, even voice and demeanor, he has done what no other human has ever managed to do. He has visited 226 independent nations and dependent territories—all the world's coun-

tries, except five: French Antarctica, the Peoples Republic of China, North Korea, North Viet Nam, and Cuba. His feat has been listed in the Guinness Book of World Records since 1968.

Canadian provinces), Australia, and New Zealand. What's the driving motivation behind it all, and how can he afford his travels?

THE 9-AND 10-year-old youngsters in Rosdail's class think he's something special, because of his world travels. "He's real good on geography. He tells us lots of stories," said Jackie Martin, 10, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Jack Martin, of 136 Armitage Av., Glendale Heights.

"I think he's cool, 'cause he's strict, but interesting," confided Patricia Malouf, 10, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. James Malouf, 85 Cambridge Lane, Glendale Heights.

His travels are financed by a small yearly sum from an inheritance and his savings. He has traveled Europe by bicycle, hiked thruout the jungles of the world, sat cross-legged at firesides in Australia's "Outback," in Japan's northern most islands, Brazilian jungles, and on wind-swept Pacific islands. Every nation and territory [except for a few small isolated islands] have felt the footsteps of this five-foot, seven-inch, 145-pound insatiable traveler.

Rosdail, a modern-day Phil-les Fogel, who circled the globe in 80 days, is not racing against time when he sets out on his travels. He plans a deliberate journey, flying to one country or continent, then uses that spot as a base for going elsewhere in the vicinity.

"TRAVELING has always come natural to me," Rosdail said in his white, two-story frame house at 386 Elm St., Elmhurst. "I guess it really began when I was a 14-year-old Iowa farm boy and my

other and grandparents wanted to make an auto trip to Lewiston, Wash., to visit relatives there. My father had died when I was eight and I was an only child. "Since I was the only one in our party who knew how to drive a car, I was named driver. That was in 1929, when America had only a few good roads..."

Rosdail later was graduated from the University of Iowa with a business degree and went into various commercial ventures. But he found their two-weeks yearly vacation schedules too restrictive for his restlessness. Rosdail decided to become a teacher so he could have two months a year for his avocation.

DURING THOSE years, Rosdail has visited exotic and familiar places thruout the world. He keeps a Land Rover truck in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, for his African jaunts. He maintains ties with fishing boat skippers thruout the world who may be going his way. And he knows most of the world's scheduled and non-scheduled airline routes.

His journeys have taken him to such distant spots as Pitcairn Island in the South Pacific, most of the Antarctic sub-continent, all of South and Central America [except Cuba, he said ruefully], all of Asia [except four Communist bastions], Europe, most of North America [except a couple of

ONCE HE ARRIVES at his destination, he manages to travel as cheaply as possible. On some trips across continents, he's managed to keep his expenses below \$1 a day, thanks to the hospitality of locals. But everything hasn't been rosy for Rosdail. Once, while cycling thru a

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Jesse Hart Rosdail showing interested 5th grade students the parts of the globe he visited. Students, from left, are, Mike Kowal, JoAnne Oalmer, Patty Crokin, and Miles Hawkins.

Tribune Photo by Walter Kait



Tribune Photos by Walter Kala

Jesse Hart Rosdail and his wife, Dorothy, looking over an album of photographs of his travels.

small southern Egyptian hamlet, the locals mistook him for an Israeli spy and were prepared to make him the guest of honor at a hanging party. A friendly Egyptian, who spoke a few words of English, came to his aid and managed to help him pedal out of town before the necktie party caught up with him.

Rosdail said he's determined to add those five elusive countries to his "conquests," though he doesn't know how long it will take. His numerous visa

applications have been ignored, he said.

WHEN HE thought he had achieved something of a record back in 1968, he sent his evidence to the editors of the Guinness Book of World Records in England. They took their time checking his claims, then they declared him to be the most traveled human in the world.

Who did Rosdail succeed as title-holder? Robert Ripley, believe it or not.



Tribune Photo by James O'Leary

J. Hart Rosdail discusses his travels with his 5th-grade class at Glenn-Hill School in Glendale Heights.

He's on the road to anywhere

By Michael Hirsley

J. HART ROSDAIL, like most of his Elmhurst neighbors, has never been to China, North Korea, North Viet Nam, French Antarctica, or Cuba.

But he has been to every other country in the world, unlike anyone else known to the Guinness Book of World Records.

Having visited 221 of the 226 countries on the official world list, the teacher is listed in the record book as the world's most traveled man.

ROSDAIL HAD LOGGED 1,464,700 miles in foreign travel as of last September. That's when he returned from Africa and India, just in time to resume teaching 5th grade at Glen Hill School in Glendale Heights.

The school is 10 minutes from his house. "I don't like to go far to work," he said.

His globe-trotting record is not one for which he consciously worked.

"I just like to travel," said Rosdail, standing near the fireplace in his home. With his close-cropped dark hair, the 61-year-old wanderer looked to be in his late 40s.

HE LIMITS his overseas travel to the three-month summer vacation, and admits he switched from accounting to teaching in 1960 in order to get more vacation time for traveling.

"I particularly like waterfalls, deserts, and wide open spaces," said Rosdail, holding a maraca-shaped baobab bulb and stem he brought back from Angola. "I like the countryside much better than the cities."

He has been around the world nine times, he said, and has visited "917 homes, for a meal, overnight stay, or both."

HIS FIRST TRIP abroad in 1934, on a freighter, cost him \$37.50. He said he spent 11 months of that year, "my wander year after college graduation," traveling 11,000 miles by bicycle and on foot in every European country except Albania. The excursion cost him \$300, he recalled, including round-trip transportation.

Rosdail's penchant for statistics motivated his wife, Dorothy, to buy him the Guinness book as a Christmas present in 1967.

One of the first things he observed upon opening the book was that he had outdistanced the edition's recognized "most traveled man." The titleholder was Robert L. Ripley of "Believe It or Not" fame.

WITH URGING from his wife and two daughters, Rosdail contacted the Guinness publishers. His eight passports stamped cover to cover by customs officials helped substantiate his claim to the record.

He has been trying unsuccessfully for years to visit his five "missing" countries. He's been unable to find transportation to French Antarctica in the South Indian Ocean and unable to get permission to visit the Communist countries of China, Cuba, North Korea, and Viet Nam.

"Cuba is the most frustrating," he said. "It is so close I never bothered to go there when I could. I always

thought I'd do it later."

HIS PLANS for this summer call for a 14th trip to Africa and a return visit to Northern Scotland "to see a couple of spots I've overlooked."

Spots he has not overlooked include:

- Two remote Pacific islands, Pitcairn and Juan Fernandez, the former where the "Bounty" mutineers landed, the latter made famous in Daniel Defoe's novel, "Robinson Crusoe."

- The Soviet Union, where Rosdail is probably the first, and perhaps the only, American to ride a bicycle from Leningrad to Moscow.

- French Somaliland in Africa, where a sandstorm sent him stumbling into the camp of Askari soldiers. They thought he was a spy and kept him prisoner for three days, he said, "but let me go because nobody came looking for me and I was using up their food."

Constant companions in his travels, which consisted of plenty of camping, were his black bicycle and an 18-inch long pack for provisions. Relying on them and on local hospitality, he said he often traveled on less than \$1 a day.

HIS WIFE and daughters, Melinda and Maren, accompanied him on only one foreign trip, visiting many European cities in 1954. Adopting his Spartan style, they camped on the cities' outskirts.

He admitted, however, that his hobby gets more expensive every year.

Drawing from his salary and a small inheritance, he spent more than \$4,000 on an ambitious three-month trip recently.



J. Hart Rosdail, Elmhurst teacher who is considered to be the world's most extensive traveler, displays the contents of the single bag he carries while traveling. Among the items is a folded pup tent for shelter. (Daily News Photo/Don Bierman)

To suburbanite traveler, Henry is a homebody

By Clark Bell

Sec. of State Henry Kissinger has developed quite a reputation as a globe-trotter, but even he takes a "back seat" to Elmhurst teacher J. Hart Rosdail.

Rosdail, 62, has visited 222 nations and is recognized as the world's most extensive traveler.

He officially claimed his title

in 1968 when the Guinness Book of World Records listed him as the person "who has probably visited more countries than anyone."

BUD ROSDAIL is hardly one to rest on his laurels.

The Daily News caught up with him Thursday, the day he had returned from New Guinea. He'll hit the road again next week for the Line Islands, 41,100 miles south of

The only countries Rosdail hasn't visited are North Korea, China and the French Antarctic. He hopes for a China journey later this year.

Since he began counting mileage in 1934, Rosdail estimates he has traveled 1.5 million miles. His biggest year was in 1974, when he toted up 70,000 miles.

"I'm afraid to figure out how much money I spend traveling," he said. "I can still get by for \$1 a day for food and lodging. (he uses a sleeping bag and eats a lot of bread) — it's the cost of getting from place to place that murders me."

MEETING NATIVES on the train is never too difficult, and neither is obtaining an occasional free meal or bed for the night.

His favorite place is New Zealand, "a scenic wonder."

HIS WIFE, Dorothy, rarely travels with him, unless a nice ocean cruise is part of the itinerary.

Rosdail began teaching in 1962 after an unspectacular business career. He teaches fifth-graders at Glen Hill School in Glendale Heights.