

Danny Liska and his motorcycle move across the River Terraba in Costa Rica. The canoe was borrowed from a native.



This highway maintainer and crew helped the Liskas cross the River Volcan. Mrs. Liska is up above with the motorcycle.

Hmm! Cycling in Costa Rica -:- -:- Nebraskan and Wife Cross 39 Wild Rivers

(Editor's Note: Danny Liska, the Richard Halliburton of Niobrara, Neb., is on a motorcycle trip to the southern tip of South America. The September 26 issue of The Magazine of the Midlands reported his eyewitness description of a Communist-inspired uprising in El Salvador. Mr. Liska's wife, Arlene, in October decided to join him for part of the trip. She flew to San Jose, Costa Rica. From there, she, Danny and the motorcycle headed south to Panama over the still-being-constructed Pan-American Highway. They reached Panama City in late November and Arlene returned to Niobrara with photographs to give this report to The Magazine.)

By Mrs. Arlene Liska

DANNY once told me that when some one tells him he "can't," that is when adventure begins. I guess my husband knows what he is talking about. We recently had quite an adventure, skidding across Costa Rica, during Central America's rainy season after everybody told us it couldn't be done.

I had wired Danny to meet me at the San Jose Airport. It was raining when I arrived. We spent three days making arrangements for our trip.



Mrs. Liska

Every one from Government officials to highway construction people told Danny that the Pan-American Highway, now under construction, was impassable. They pointed out that there were 39 bridges still to be

built and that during the rainy season most of the streams were at flood stage. But we started anyway. Our trip from San Jose to Cartago was easy because the road was in better condition than we expected. In fact, I was quite optimistic.

We went to the top of the famous Irazu Volcano, still active, 11,322 feet above sea level. We looked into the steaming crater and then took the mud-splattered ride back to Cartago. Danny nearly skidded off the road twice but I was to learn this was just the beginning of our adventure.

Some of the women readers may wonder what a girl wears while traveling with her husband on a motorcycle trip through Central America. I wore a leather jacket and a culotte sun dress.

Oh, for a Bridge
SOME 45 miles below Cartago the highway reaches Cerro de la

"peak of death." It was very cold as we passed "above the clouds."

We continued our journey on to San Isidro del General. It was there that the most difficult part of our trip began. We still were 137 miles from the border of Panama. It was necessary to get permission to move onto the unfinished highway grade.

It was easy to cross the first five rivers because there were planks on which Danny could drive the motorcycle. But when we reached Rio Volcan, there was no bridge and the current was as wild as the Niobrara River during a flood. Danny decided to test the depth of the stream by wading while carrying a big rock. "This will keep me from being washed away," he told me.

"Be careful, honey," I advised. His walk to mid-stream proved that the river was too deep to attempt to cross with a motorcycle. We didn't know what to do.

"Shall we go back?" I asked. "I'm not going back," said Danny.

About one hour later a large maintainer for a highway construction company appeared. It was already loaded with 11 workers, a construction supervisor and oil and gas drums but the supervisor told us that he would take us and the motorcycle over the river.

We loaded onto the maintainer and went across with ease. In fact, this same maintainer took us over six more streams until we reached Buenos Aires, Costa Rica.

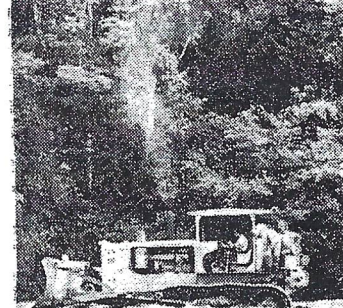
The Best Hotel, but—

THE next three days were spent arranging the rest of our travel. We stayed at the best hotel in town

but I'm afraid Nebraskans, if they saw the building, would think it looked more like a corn crib. We were permitted to park our motorcycle in the lobby.

More help was needed from highway workers after we left Buenos Aires. A large scraper helped us cross the River Platanarios. This same vehicle, normally used for construction in the jungle and mountains, led us to a workers' camp where we spent the night.

In the camp we heard many stories about Indian legends. Danny had been



A caterpillar scraper crew permitted the Niobrara couple to join them for a ride across the Platanarios River.

in Central America long enough so that he could converse in Spanish with every one.

The following day we experienced our most difficult task—trying to cross the River Terraba. This large river was at flood stage and the only possible way to get across was by boat. Danny borrowed an Indian canoe, which was nothing more than a hollowed-out log, and we moved through the water. The current was very strong but Danny, having spent most of his life on the Missouri and Niobrara Rivers in Nebraska, had no difficulty making it.

Farther down the highway we came upon a landslide. It was impossible to drive the motorcycle so Danny left it with an Indian family and we went on.

I neglected to mention that Central America is full of snakes. Some are poisonous, others are not. While we were walking along the road, I came within inches of stepping on a coral snake. Danny said they are very poisonous and that I was lucky I had missed it.

On to South America

OUR next stop was at the Indian village of Rey Curre, where Danny asked the village leader if we might stay overnight. Permission was granted and one family allowed us to occupy their dwelling made of bamboo and palm leaves. The only foods we tasted were oranges and bananas.

I want to say that most of the people we met in Costa Rica were friendly. They asked questions and we asked questions. They couldn't understand why Danny wanted to cross Central or South America on a motorcycle. Most everywhere we were made to feel welcome.

Before reaching Panama, we stayed in a banana camp owned by the United Fruit Company. From this point, we were able to travel the rest of the way to Panama City by rail.

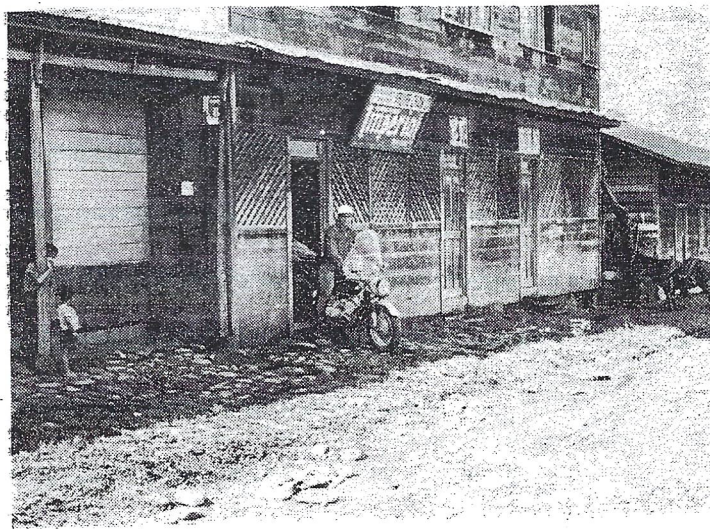
I spent several days with Danny in Panama City while he made arrangements to go through the jungles to Panama on a route which eventually will be the Pan-American Highway. This will be his greatest ordeal before he reaches Argentina.

When I left for home, Danny returned to Costa Rica and retrieved his motorcycle. The landslide had been cleared and he was able to get back to Panama with his machine.

He now is moving through Panama's Darien Jungle. This is a real adventure. Many have started out only to resort to the ocean or turn back. You can be sure that Danny won't turn back.

His biggest problem going through this dense area alone is that some of the natives do not appreciate visitors.

My husband's ambition is to reach Argentina by February. Knowing



The Liskas stayed in the "best hotel" (above) in Buenos Aires, Costa Rica.