



### Sun-Up Interview: Danny Liska

THEY said it would never happen. Yet, Danny Liska, Nebraska's No. 1 rover boy, may have lost some of his wanderlust. After visiting 65 (or maybe it's 66) countries, traveling 200 thousand miles (outside this country) by motorcycle, boat, truck, land rover, ship, canoe, raft, plane, horse and donkey, he has elected to stop for breath—and to write a book.

For the first time in a long, long while, he has no immediate plan for travel.

Except for lecturing and for work to protect his Niobrara ranch against erosion, Danny has spent most of his time since last October in his wood-paneled attic, laboring over his typewriter.

Large windows under the gabled roof give him "a magnificent view of a lot of the world." To the north lies South Dakota. The Missouri and the Niobrara Rivers chart a serpentine course among the hills to the west.

Once in a while, something out there moves, and the typist will pause and examine it with binoculars.



Danny . . . Stop for breath.

\* \* \*

### Home Sweet Home

DANNY LISKA, whose stories of his adventures have regaled World-Herald Magazine of the Midlands readers for years, says home "looks mighty good" to him now.

"It's good," said the 38-year-old rancher, "to get out on that old porch and fill your lungs with clean air. It's nice to forget for awhile about eating rotten monkey meat and camel meat and all the worms, bugs, amoeba and fungus, and how many months and months you went without a good drink of water. You learn to appreciate home."

Danny's wife, who accompanied him on several of his back-trail treks, is quick to agree.

In fact, Danny said, talk of new adventures is "pretty much of a sore point with her. It's a taboo subject right now around the house . . . Women aren't so interested in conquering the unknown. They're not that sort of bunch."

\* \* \*

### Confession

WHEN Mrs. Liska was out of earshot, Danny confessed that he was in a mood to search out still other worlds—such as Antarctica and the Asian land mass—as late as last fall.

But "circumstances" discouraged him—notably the circumstance of a trip to Washington. He had gone there to ask permission to accompany the next governmental expedition to Antarctica.

Those in charge said they might have approved his going to Antarctica, as a correspondent, but the timing of his request was unfortunate. There were too many similar requests at the moment.

It's possible now to go to Antarctica as a member of a private tour. But Danny has always disdained such organized, nicey-nice travel. "They'd show you an ice cake and let you play with the penguins, but that's all," he said.

\* \* \*

### Nyet!

DANNY thereupon approached the Soviet Embassy in Washington, introduced himself as "just a Nebraska country boy with an itchy foot" who wanted to travel by jeep from Moscow to Vladivostok.

"They turned me down cold," Danney said. "I'm sure they couldn't believe that curiosity alone would make me want to make the trip." He wouldn't mind Intourist accompaniment. Nyet to that, too.

\* \* \*

### They're What?

THE Nebraska country boy next went to New York to see about traveling in Mongolia, whose People's Republic the United States does not recognize.

As he approached the offices of the Mongolian legation to the United Nations, Danny was "surprised to find a lot of 'Indians' around there. I was sure they were Poncas and Santees, like the Indians at Niobrara, and I was about to say, 'Hi, when I decided I didn't happen to know any of them.'"

Danny's surprise increased when he discovered that the "Poncas" and "Santees" had apparently taken over the whole building.

They were, of course, not Indians at all, but Mongols. And they saw no reason "to allow you to travel in our country when we can't travel in yours."

In any case, Danny had lost much of his desire to visit Mongolia. "When you travel, you want to see people who are different," he explained. "If I went to Mongolia I realized it'd be just like walking down the main street of Niobrara."

\* \* \*

### First, the Book

MEANWHILE, back at the ranch, Danny (again in a soft voice) does not rule out another attempt to get to Antarctica or the Soviet Union some day. But he's determined to first finish his book. It's a chronicle of his travels.

He said he had discussed the book with Random House, which seemed interested and encouraged him to write it.

The only one of the four Liska boys who declined to be "sensible" and stay home—his brothers all have ranches near by—Danny said he believes all human beings have a "natural urge" to travel. "I just didn't happen to suppress the urge, as most people do."

He remembers the time when he got a motorcycle at the age of 16 and he "ventured across the Missouri River to South Dakota. It looked like Siberia. It looked like adventure." It was a sight that "started something."

\* \* \*

### Lesson of the Ant Bear

HE GOT the idea of writing a book, he said, by watching the ant bears of Africa. "There's a tribe in Africa, the Kikuyu, that has a lot of proverbs and sayings," he said. "One of the things they say is, 'Don't be like the ant bear.'"

"The ant bear is a little animal that feeds on ants that live in huge anthills 10 to 30 feet high. The bear will dig in one hill a little bit, then he gets curious about another anthill. Maybe it's a different kind of hill. Maybe it's got different-tasting ants. So the bear goes over and digs there.

Then he moves on to another anthill. He goes all through life moving from one anthill to another, without accomplishing much.

"I got to feeling that I was like the ant bear. My curiosity had taken me a lot of places and I had learned a lot of things from a lot of people. It would be a shame not to share some of the wisdom of all these people."

"The book is about the anthills I have seen."