

University of Montana

ScholarWorks at University of Montana

Mining the Internet for Metadata

Mansfield Library

6-3-2018

B. 4:30 PM, October 3, 1937

Robert W. Lankston

University of Montana, Missoula

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarworks.umt.edu/mmp_metadata_research

Let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Recommended Citation

Lankston, Robert W., "B. 4:30 PM, October 3, 1937" (2018). *Mining the Internet for Metadata*. 2.
https://scholarworks.umt.edu/mmp_metadata_research/2

This Book is brought to you for free and open access by the Mansfield Library at ScholarWorks at University of Montana. It has been accepted for inclusion in Mining the Internet for Metadata by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks at University of Montana. For more information, please contact scholarworks@mso.umt.edu.



Montana Memory Project Photo umt016627.

Initial Metadata Title: James E. Murray with Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Initial Metadata Date: Unknown.

4:30 PM, October 3, 1937

My wife, Marian, sent this cryptic request to me from her office at the University of Montana, Maureen and Mike Mansfield Library in April of 2016. The text of the request was “photo with minimal metadata”. The metadata Title field for [umt016627](#) in the Montana Memory Project (MMP) digital collection, initially, was, simply, James E. Murray with Franklin Delano Roosevelt. At the time, the Description field stated “James E. Murray in a car with Franklin Delano Roosevelt at Fort Peck Reservoir, Montana.” The date field was originally “Unknown”. As a result of my research, some of the MMP metadata fields have now been edited from what they originally stated.

The car has a driver, a man standing on the passenger side running board, someone sitting next to the driver, and two people in the back seat with the president. The president may be obvious to most people. He is the man waving a hat. However, of the five other people in the scene, which one is Murray?

Franklin Roosevelt was a famous president, and I thought that learning when he would have visited the Fort Peck project, which was one of his big dam projects in the west during the 1930's, should not be too difficult. Identifying Murray, then a young senator from Montana, might be a little more difficult. One might guess that Murray was not the driver of the car nor

the man on the running board. Most likely, he was the only other person looking toward the camera, i.e., the passenger behind the driver.



Figure 1. James E. Murray. MMP photo [umt011358](#).

An internet search on James E. Murray will bring up a Wikipedia article with a photograph of the senator. Searching MMP itself will return several hits. [Figure 1](#) is a portrait of the senator and confirms that Murray is the person behind the driver of the car.

Because the photo shows people in a car, I first attempted to bracket the date of the photo based on the make and model of the car. Because I am not an expert in identification of vintage automobiles, I turned to the internet and began looking for an image that resembled the car in the MMP photo. Without too much trouble, I decided that the internet images suggested that the car was a 1937 Cadillac. Many automobile manufacturers introduce a model year in the fall of the previous year. That led me to speculate that the photo could have been taken as early as the fall of 1936. I anticipated that the president would not ride around in a car that was very old, and I speculated that the photo was probably pre-1940.

I did a search with a phrase something like "Roosevelt at Fort Peck". One hit from the search was from the [Glasgow \(MT\) Courier](#)

newspaper (Gilluly, 2013). In 2013, the newspaper reprinted a photograph (Figure 2), which it had published long ago, of the president visiting the Fort Peck Dam project. The photo was dated August 6, 1934. This picture was clearly not of the same visit as in the lead photo. First, the date is too early given the age of the car in the lead photo. Moreover, in the newspaper's photo, all of the men in the scene are dressed for summer. In umt016627, all of the people are dressed for much cooler weather.

With more internet searching, I found a site that is essentially President Roosevelt's [appointment book](#) (Pare Lorentz Center 2018). The page for October 3, 1937, gives the president's itinerary for the day. He was to be in the Fort Peck area for a little more than an hour in the late afternoon to inspect the dam and to give a speech. The October date fits with the apparent cool weather clothes.

That would seem to provide information for the Date field in a detail rarely available. The hour is not captured in the Date field in MMP, though. James E. Murray is definitively identified. The driver and the man on the running board were probably Secret Service agents, and the face of the man in the front passenger seat is obscured.



Figure 2. President Roosevelt at Fort Peck Dam Project in 1934 (Gilluly, 2013).

That leaves just the person in the middle of the back seat. One might wonder whether that was Eleanor Roosevelt. The answer to that is no. Mrs. Roosevelt wrote a daily newspaper column called "[My Day](#)" (Roosevelt, 2017). Mrs. Roosevelt had traveled by train with the president for part of his tour of the dam projects in the Northwest. However, Mrs. Roosevelt was not at Fort Peck because she flew back to Washington, DC, from Seattle after the president's visit to the Bonneville Dam and before the

president's visit to the Grand Coulee and Fort Peck projects.

The research leaves us wondering just where was the photo taken. The car is alongside a distinctive rock wall. This wall may still exist in the vicinity of the dam or in the town of Fort Peck. This is the sort of thing that one might see out the window of the Virtual Car. However, Google Street Views has limited coverage in Fort Peck.

References

Gilluly, J., 2013, Letter to the editor of the Glasgow Courier, accessed 5/31/2018, URL: <http://www.glasgowcourier.com/story/2013/08/07/opinion/revisiting-a-photo-of-fdr-visiting/455.html>

Pare Lorentz Center, 2018, Franklin D. Roosevelt day by day, accessed 5/31/2018, URL: <http://www.fdrlibrary.marist.edu/daybyday/>

Roosevelt, E., 2017 "My Day, October 4, 1937," The Eleanor Roosevelt Papers Digital Edition, accessed 5/31/2018, URL: http://www2.gwu.edu/~erpapers/myday/displaydoc.cfm?_y=1937&_f=md054763.

9/15/2022