

# OUR PUBLIC LANDS



## Breakfast in the Big Horns

This oil painting by artist Shorty Shope is of a camp scene on the summit of the Big Horn Mountains where my survey party spent the night of August 12, 1912. The painting is based upon a photograph I took of the camp at breakfast time the following morning. The artist painted me in place of the teamster.

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**THE COVER**  
A way of life when the century was young is shown in this painting. The author had it painted from a photo taken in 1912. The painting honors his late wife who was camp cook for early government land surveyors.



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
Rogers C. B. Morton, Secretary  
BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT  
Burton W. Silcock, Director

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Please give appropriate credit.

# BREAKFAST IN THE BIG HORNS

By WILLIAM ROY BANDY  
Retired Cadastral Engineer  
Helena, Mont.

## ***Continued from Front Cover . . .***

I had been employed by the U.S. General Land Office to assist in surveying the remaining unsurveyed public lands in the outlying areas of the mountainous West. Such a survey was necessary to enable the homesteaders to locate the boundary lines of their claims and to obtain title to them. That was a free service furnished the citizens by the Federal Government to promote the settlement of the Western States.

The job was a somewhat nomadic one, requiring much moving from one district to another to meet the needs of new settlers coming to look for homestead land. My party consisted of five survey aids, a teamster, and a camp cook.

*Sixty years ago William Roy Bandy was a freshman bridegroom camping on the Big Horn Mountains in Wyoming as head of a cadastral surveying crew. Although Mr. Bandy was only 27 years old, he was already a veteran surveyor who had served the General Land Office and other employers in posts of increasing responsibility since he had been 20 years old. He used his camera to capture the breakfast scene in which his young bride was the central figure. The story of how Mr. Bandy came to take the photograph and what happened to the picture ultimately is the subject of his reminiscences in BREAKFAST IN THE BIG HORNS.*

My wife Inez and I had not been married very long when I got that survey job. We saw it would take me away from home for months at a time, camping throughout the mountains. Inez wanted to go along, stay in camp where she could be helpful to me, and incidently see a lot of new country. Regulations prevented anyone from living in a government maintained camp unless they were employees of the Government, so she volunteered to give the cooking job a try.

I was glad to find her willing and desirous of sharing in the camp life, which meant living in a tent with a dirt floor, sleeping on the ground, with the wind flapping the canvas and kicking up dust all day long, together with many other inconveniences foreign to a Missouri girl fresh from home!

She was a little dubious as to whether she could please the men with her cooking, because she had never cooked before except to help her mother. I encouraged her by saying the boys would be easy to cook for because they were always hungry. The field men took sandwiches every work day for lunch, and they put up their own lunches while at the breakfast table, which made it easier for the cook.

So I bought her a White House Cook Book and she was in business. It worked out fine. She stayed with it for three summers, while we had no children.

Because she was raised in Missouri, camp life in a tent on the western frontier presented many problems she had never heard of, most of which arose when she

Elsewhere in this article is part of the text of the Distinguished Service Award which the U.S. Department of the Interior conferred upon Mr. Bandy. For details about his career before he joined the General Land Office, Mr. Bandy wrote this to the Editor:

"I live alone . . . take my noon meal out most of the time, and get my own breakfast. I belong to the Kiwanis Club, Masons, Baptist Church, Engineers Club, Surveyors Club, and Shrine. So I get a good many meals out with them.

"I was born on a farm in Missouri on February 12, 1885. Walked 1½ miles to a country school. Never went to high school, but graduated from a business college, took a correspondence course in Surveying, and after I was 30 years old, got a Bachelor's Degree in law from the Blackstone Institute of Chicago, I am a Fellow and Life member of the American Society of Civil Engineers, Life and Fellow of the Registered Land Surveyors of Montana. Member of the American Professional Civil Engineers.

"I was fortunate in working for engineers who took time of evenings and weekends to teach me how to survey, run curves on ditches, cross-section canal, figure velocity of stream, and volume of water in a ditch. I was always anxious to learn, was the big thing.

"In 1911 I married Inez Estes, also a Missouri farm girl.

"I started with the U.S. General Land Office as cornerman in June 1905 at Garland, Wyoming. That was during the contract system of surveys. In 1906, I was appointed a U.S. Deputy Surveyor by the Surveyor General for Wyoming, with a contract to survey six townships jointly with Arthur Brunt, a contract surveyor.

"In the winter of 1907 I got a job surveying tunnels for the Big Horn Basin Development Co. south of Cody, Wyoming. My job was to keep the men on line, and the tunnels had curves, so I was under pretty big responsibility to keep them on line as they worked from both ends and came together under the mountain. I had to figure my way alone, for there was no engineer to ask and there were curves on each end.

"Luckily, the two headings met within ¾ of an inch, believe it or not. During construction, when the two headings were within 300 feet of each other, the blasting on one end sounded to the

fellows on the opposite heading like it was off to the side. They would kid me, saying, "The other fellows are going by us. We had better cut across."

"We completed the tunnel job and I went to Boise, Idaho, and got a job surveying ditches on Snake River until winter. In 1910 I returned to the Idaho job and was construction engineer for a year.

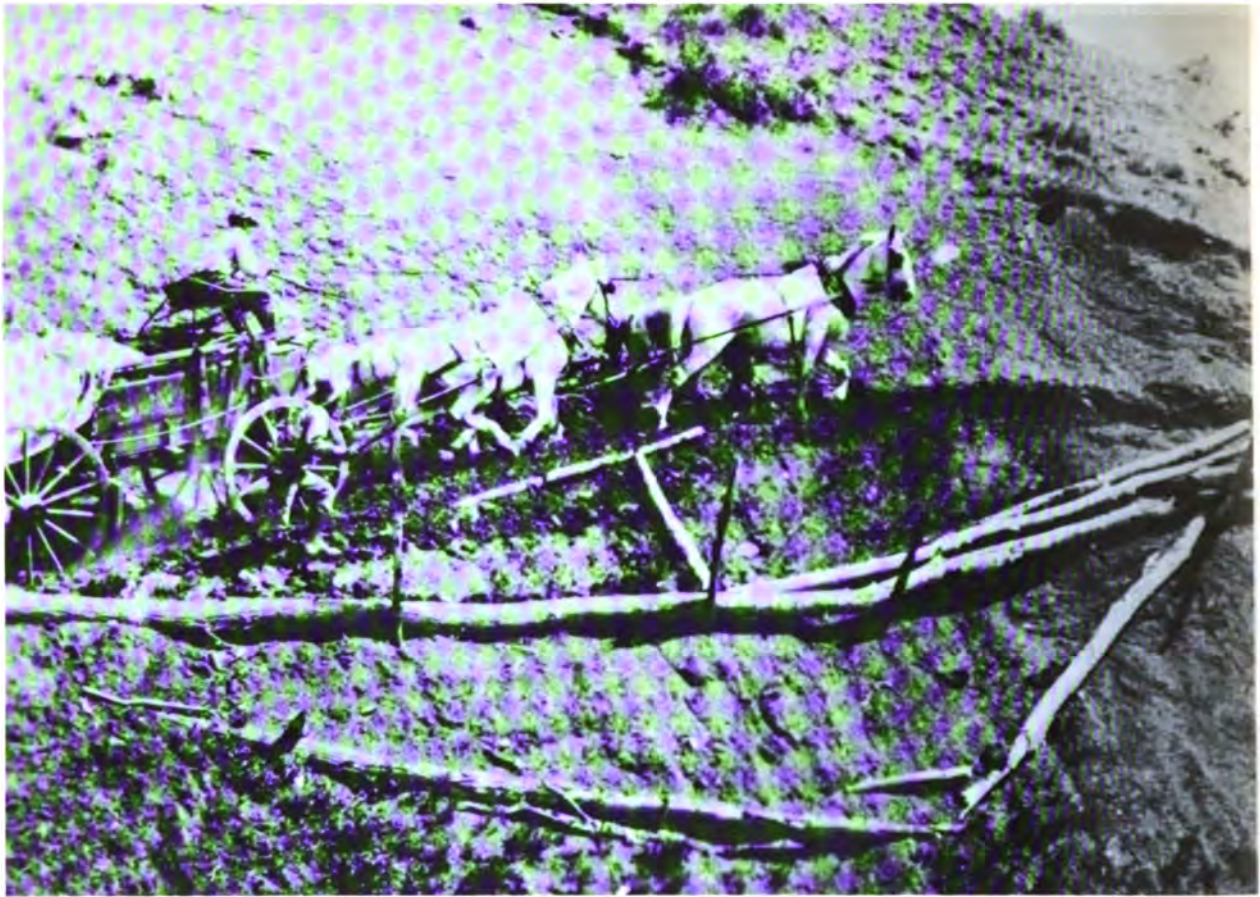
"In spring of 1911, I joined the General Land Office again at Cheyenne and stayed until I retired December 21, 1954.

"My wife was always cooperative, no matter what job, she was right in there pitching.

"After I retired, I continued private practice. Had a boundary case where Sun River was the boundary. The river channel changed 1,500 feet. I held to stay in the old channel. It was carried to the State Supreme court and my side won. It was a "Land Mark" decision written by the Chief Justice, Jim Harrison. I was one of two expert witnesses for the Confederated Salish and Kootenia Indians in their suit against the U.S. Government for more land because of an alleged error made by the original surveyor in locating the reservation body. We won in the U.S. Court of Claims."

William Roy Bandy,  
a 1970 portrait.





Public land surveyors pursued their quest over almost trackless wastes. The helper at the front wheel was a necessity. (Additional pictures on pages 22 and 23).

was alone in camp and had to cope as best she could. A windstorm might swoop in and flatten the tents, or the wind sometimes worked the stovepipe loose from the stove with a fire going. At such times she would have to grab a gunny sack and fit the pipe back on the stove before the canvas caught fire—soot flying all over and settling on the table and dishes. There was seldom a dull moment, it seemed.

Her most vivid recollection was her first encounter with a pack rat, which she had never seen before. One morning while washing dishes at the stove, she looked back at the cupboard and spied an animal watching her over the edge of the ginger snap keg. She said its big ears, bug eyes, and long whiskers looked pretty savage to her! We were all in the field at the time, leaving her alone in the wild and unknown land. She remembered the old revolver that I kept under my pillow. Although she had never shot a gun, she hurried to get the pistol.

Taking rest on the table, she fired at the beast. When

the smoke from the black powder shell cleared away, up popped the head again, its eyes glittering and its tail slapping the side of the carton. She shot the remaining shells with no result except to riddle the messbox. Not to be outdone, she courageously wrapped a gunny sack around the ginger snap box and nailed the package tight in an empty egg crate.

When we returned to camp, she proudly pointed to the egg crate and asked us to take a look and name it! She enjoyed telling that story to her wide-eyed grandchildren. When a rattlesnake coiled up between the stove and the sugar sack one day, she knew how to deal with it. On the plus side, it was not long before she acquired a pet magpie that learned to squawk a few words. Later on she picked up a “bum” lamb that would stand at the oven door wagging its long tail for biscuits.

The journey when we camped overnight on the summit of the Big Horns and I took the photograph was after we had left the Martin Ranmael homestead. Mr.

Ranmael had homesteaded about 10 miles southeast of Cooke City, Montana, not far from the northeast corner of Yellowstone Park.

When Mr. Ranmael had built his house, the nearest road to his place was at Cooke City. He was a man of unusual dexterity, and had built his house, unlike the typical homesteader sod shanty, all with smooth shingles and weatherboarding, entirely from native logs, using only a broadax, foot adz, and handsaw. It was a real show place.

Now we were on a long move overland to the W. T. Broderick homestead and the Hilton Lodge in Wyoming, east of the Little Big Horn River and south of Wyola, Montana.

Although from Cooke City to our destination was only about 120 miles, and the Broderick homestead scant miles from the Montana-Wyoming border, we had to go as far south as Cody, Wyoming, and loop back across the border once to get through the almost trackless mountains with our wagon and crew. This made the journey 150 miles long.

As was the practice in those days, we carried with us food supplies, horse feed, tents, bedrolls, dishes—everything we needed to live off the country for weeks at a time. There were no swank motels or garish hamburger stands dotting the landscape as there are now. It was the custom throughout the West then for travellers to stop overnight wherever darkness overtook them. They thought nothing of pitching camp on the edge of a town rather than go to a hotel or rooming house.

Bad mudholes and steep hills sometimes made the trial almost impassable. Once we got stuck with the bedwagon and had to carry a part of the load by hand ahead to dry ground. In Sunlight we met Forest Supervisor R. W. Allen, now President of the Shoshone National Bank of Cody, who gave us helpful advice about roads.

We passed over Dead Indian Hill, the famous landmark where one going west must drag a good sized tree with the limbs still on it to keep the wagon from getting ahead of the horses. The first night out we camped on the head of Pat O'Hara Creek at the foot of Hart Mountain. There the wolves kept us awake with their blood-curdling howling.

The second night out we were at the Cody bridge. There we replenished our supplies and also soaked ourselves in DeMaris Hot Springs, the outdoor bathing pool of bubbling sulphur water located on the bank of the Shoshone River west of the bridge.

We did not expect to see much of interest on our trip east from Cody across the Dry Creek basin, a wind-

whipped desert of salt-sage and greasewood. Several native inhabitants of the basin greeted us, however. One was a happy yellow-breasted meadow lark with a black spot on this chest. He was singing from his perch on a greasewood. Another was a bob-o-link, a black bird with a white spot on his wings. He did his usual "thing" by flying straight up 30 or 40 feet high, then gracefully floating down as he sang his standard song, which the poet quotes as "bob-o-link, bob-o-link, spink-spink-spink." We saw lots of prairie dogs barking from the side of their holes, their short tails bobbing with each effort.

We crossed the Big Horn River at Kane, Wyoming, and camped at the foot of the mountain. The next day Inez and I took a shortcut and walked ahead while the men doubled up the teams and pulled each wagon up one at a time. It turned out more of a climb than we had anticipated.

About noon we got hungry and discovered that we had inadvertently left our lunches in the wagons. Seeing a sheep wagon over by a spring, we swung over to it. There was no one home, but a part of a mutton hung in a tree wrapped in a flour sack. It looked like "manna from heaven" to us. Inez fried some mutton chops, opened a can of tomatoes and of corn, and we had a feast. We left a thank-you note for the nice

Mr. Bandy was always a leader, always a man to take to the field and get the job done. When he retired after nearly 44 years of continuous Federal service, the text of the Distinguished Service Award conferred upon him by the U.S. Department of the Interior noted several highlights of his career:

*" . . . Entering the former General Land Office soon after the contract system of executing surveys was superseded by the Federal system, Mr. Bandy played an important role in establishing procedures to effect this transition.*

*"During 1931-33, Mr. Bandy was in charge of the survey of the revised boundaries of Yellowstone National Park . . . in virtually unexplored and inaccessible areas.*

*" . . . In October 1947, Mr. Bandy was appointed Regional Cadastral Engineer with jurisdiction over public land surveys in ten states. He introduced the practice of marking distances on reference monuments and witness corners so that the true corner point was readily available without referring to written records."*

shepherd. About 4 p.m. we joined up with the wagons again and climbed aboard joyously. It was a great relief to settle ourselves in a spring seat again. We could enjoy nature's interesting scenes much better from that comfortable vantage point.

Our caravan was then travelling northward along the summit of the Big Horn Mountains, following a deeply-worn trail which was probably pounded out first in ancient times by the hooves of those early road engineers, the American Bison.

Those animals which we know as buffalo are renowned for their uncanny ability to choose the most practical route when travelling between grazing grounds. I've read that the buffalo inhabited the Eastern States and that buffalo jumps found there contain bison bones dating back 10,000 years. Trails, or traces, pounded out by those animals are said to have led early settlers to the discovery of famous Cumberland Gap.

My brother, Willis, spotted a covey of grouse after we rejoined the caravan and bagged a few of the young birds for our breakfast with his .22 caliber revolver.

It was getting near sundown before we found water for an over-night camp. We had begun to wonder if we would find water before darkness closed in on us in that vast solitary wilderness. We were at an elevation of 9,500 feet above sea level. Then we saw a big snow drift ahead, which looked promising.

Karl Suhr, our teamster, pulled down and parked the wagon on a level spot below the snow drift by a small trickle of water seeping from beneath it. Everyone was tired and hungry, so we lost no time in getting supper started. We dug the groceries out of the wagon in a hurry. Some of the party got the stove out and set it up while others got wood. Inez peeled potatoes and cut ham.

It was not long before the fragrant smell of frying ham filled the mountain air. We wiped road dust off of the granite dishes and supper was ready, with plenty of gravy and hot biscuits. My wife's tent was put up, Karl had fed the horses their oats, and after supper the horses were hobbled, a cowbell put on one, and all of the animals were turned loose to graze during the night. The men slept out beneath the star-studded dome.

Waking up during the night and hearing the gentle tinkle of the cowbell, I turned over and went back to sleep with the comfortable feeling that everything was well. At least we still had a saddle-horse. The next morning the stream had quit running, the pools were frozen over, and there was ice on the water pails I had thoughtfully filled the night before.

It was a little breezy, so Karl put a piece of striped

canvas under the edge of the wagon box to protect Inez from the cold north wind, "the fierce kabbabinokka" of Hiawatha fame, while getting breakfast.

After breakfast we all went up on the snow to frolic so the boys could write home about snowballing in August. The snow was too hard to make snowballs—it was even hard to stand up on.

Although we were well above timberline and it froze ice every night, many alpine flowers and shrubs were growing along the edge of the snow bank, struggling to live out their life cycle in spite of the many handicaps. As soon as the snow edge moved slowly upward, uncovering the dormant plants, the impatient buttercups, clustering rock asters, snowdrops, and other alpine flowers lost no time in doing their best to brighten their part of the world.

Even with an inch or more of snow yet to go, the sun's life-giving rays penetrated the icy pane, causing the struggling bulb to push up through the ice, straighten up, and unfold in all its glory. We stuck some of the flowers on our hats. How else could those little flowers get up in the world? That was their only chance to add their bit. Had it not been for our visit those beauties might have lived in vain. They probably would have had a long, long wait before other visitors came.

The idea to take a picture of the breakfast scene came to me on the spur of the moment as I glanced at the busy camp there at the foot of the huge bank of last winter's snow. As I stood there downwind from the outdoors kitchen, waiting for breakfast and enjoying the aromas of frying mountain grouse and the coffee pot, the rising sun at my back cast its warming glow over the colorful scene ahead.

I then snapped the picture, catching a perfect view of my wife Inez as she stood, rosy-cheeked that frosty morning. Standing between the cook stove and the red and green painted wagon, she dominated the scene as the center of attraction, a scene so aptly emphasized by the skillful artist. With the stove loaded with frying pans and skillets, she deftly speared herself a choice piece of grouse with that ever busy left hand of hers. So intent was she that my picture taking went unnoticed. It was that unforgettable scene that I wished to record for the admiration of future generations.

It was 58 years later in 1970 that my daughter Zoe and I requested artist Shope to execute an oil painting of that memorable scene in nature's unspoiled wilderness. We have dedicated the painting to the memory of her mother, that Missouri girl who cheerfully braved the rigors of camp life on the wild frontier to be with her husband and his nomadic survey party, assisting him and sharing their exciting experiences and fun. □



A month after the cover scene, the surveying party was camped at the Broderick homestead in 4 feet of snow.



The Bandys with their Indian guide, Big Corral, on the bank of the Big Horn River in 1912.



This is a compilation of the most up-to-date information possible on up-coming sales of public lands by State Offices of the Bureau of Land Management. For details of land descriptions, prices, and other information pertinent to sales, you must write the individual State Office concerned. In most cases, there are adjoining land-owners who have statutory preference rights and may wish to exercise them to buy the land. Sales notices will point out, insofar as possible, problems relating to (1) access, (2) adjoining owner preference rights, (3) small-tract sales limitation of one per customer, and other pertinent information. When possible, all sales are scheduled far enough in advance so ample notice can be given in Our Public Lands. Sales listed can be canceled on short notice for administrative and technical reasons. A listing of BLM State Offices with addresses is found on the opposite page.

#### ARIZONA

2.5 A, identified as A-5423, 1 mile south of Cave Creek, 22 miles north of Phoenix. Access available. Mostly flat, slope on western boundary. No appraisal.





Inez brought home the evidence, a rattlesnake with 13 rattles and a button. The party killed 99 more rattlers on the trip.

5 A, identified as A-6140, 4 miles west of Cave Creek, 24 miles north of Phoenix. Access available. Land flat. No appraisal.

26.05 A, identified as A-6723, 3.75 miles south-southeast of Sierra Vista, 1 mile west of Highway 92, contiguous to Ft. Huachuca Military Reservation. No legal access, utilities in area. Land flat to gently sloping, elevation 4,700 feet, desert grassland. No appraisal.

#### CALIFORNIA

111 A, identified as S 4433, in southwest Monterey County about 18 miles southwest of King City. Very rough, brushy terrain. No water, no public road access. Appraised at \$2,775.

#### COLORADO

24.80 A, identified as C-14408, approximately 19½ miles south, 7 miles west of Punkin Center (est. pop. less than 25), Lincoln County. In range livestock area of large holdings, surrounded by privately owned land, no public access. No improvements on land. Gently rolling, sandy loam soil. Appraised value \$990. Sale approximately mid-August.

40 A, identified as C-12186, approximately 9 miles southwest of Leadville, 1½ miles north of Twin Lakes Reservoir, in Lake County. Access via County road across northwest corner of property. No surface or subsurface water, no improvements or utilities. Extremely scenic setting, panoramic view of mountains, timber, and valley bottoms. Southeast portion relatively flat, northwest portion lies on sidehill, about 20 percent slope. Elevations from 9,425 to 9,575 feet. Appraised value \$9,800. Sale approximately mid-August.

#### MONTANA

154.81 isolated A, adjacent to Savoy, approximately 11 miles southeast of Harlem in Blaine County. County road corners.

Gently rolling hills, intervening shallow draws. Soils are Beaver-ton gravelly loams. Vegetative cover native grasses, thin scattering of silver sagebrush. Grazing capacity estimated 5½ acres per AUM. No water storage or water source. Appraised \$2,900 plus advertising cost. Sale Aug. 24, 1972.

40 isolated A, 12 miles south of Lewistown in foothills of Big Snowy Mountains in Petroleum County. No legal access, no surface water, but good quality underground water available throughout area. Hilly with steep side slope adjacent to east side. Thin gravelly clay loam underlain with limestone rock. Major portion covered with Ponderosa pine interspersed with Douglas fir. Appraised \$1,800 plus advertising cost. Sale Aug. 24, 1972.

#### WYOMING

40 A some 48 miles southeast of Worland in Washakie County. Surrounded all sides by privately owned lands, no legal access. Contains a small spring, topography gently rolling. Query Wyoming State Office for costs and other details. Sale after August 1.

40 A some 21 miles northwest of Pinedale in Sublette County. Surrounded all sides by privately owned lands, no legal access. Nearly level, crossed by New Fork River. Query Wyoming State Office for costs and other details. Sale after August 1.

720 A, two tracts some 15 miles northwest of Wheatland in Platte County. Surrounded on all sides by privately owned land, no legal access. Topography rolling. Query Wyoming State Office for costs and other details. Sale after August 1.

#### BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

ALASKA:  
555 Cordova St.  
Anchorage, Alaska  
99501  
516 Second Ave.  
Fairbanks, Alaska  
99701

ARIZONA:  
Federal Bldg.,  
Room 3022  
Phoenix, Ariz. 85025

CALIFORNIA:  
2800 Cottage Way,  
Room E-2841  
Sacramento, Calif.  
95825  
1414 University Ave.  
Riverside, Calif.  
92502

COLORADO:  
1600 Broadway  
Room 700  
Denver, Colo. 80202

IDAHO:  
Federal Bldg.,  
Room 334  
550 W. Fort St.  
Boise, Idaho 83702

MONTANA (N. Dak.,  
S. Dak.):  
Federal Bldg.  
316 North 26th St.  
Billings, Mont. 59101

NEVADA:  
Federal Bldg.,  
300 Booth St.  
Reno, Nev. 89502

NEW MEXICO (Okla.):  
Federal Bldg.  
P.O. Box 1449  
Sante Fe, N. Mex.  
87501

OREGON (Washington):  
729 Northeast  
Oregon St.  
P.O. Box 2965  
Portland, Oreg. 97208

UTAH:  
Federal Bldg.  
125 South State St.  
P.O. Box 11505  
Salt Lake City, Utah  
84111

WYOMING (Nebr.,  
Kans.):  
2120 Capitol Ave.  
P.O. Box 1828  
Cheyenne, Wyo.  
82001

ALL OTHER STATES:  
Robin Bldg.  
7981 Eastern Ave.  
Silver Spring, Md.  
20910