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JUN 19 1979

This Is Summer for Staying Nearby

OKLAHOMANS have traveled all over the world. This may be the year for more of them to travel all over Oklahoma.

It is amazing how many people have been in all 50 states and several foreign countries, but haven't seen their own state.

The call of far-away places seems to cause them to whiz right by scenic and historical points closer to home.

Granted, Oklahoma does not have snow-capped mountains like Colorado, ocean beaches like California, crowds like New York, geysers like Yellowstone or big fish like those in northern waters.

But there is much to see. We do have mountain scenery, lakes and fishing. Talamena drive in southeastern Oklahoma is an enjoyable experience that gives an illusion of much greater heights. In the Panhandle you can almost see forever across the prairies.

You don't have to go to Texas or North Carolina to see a historical drama. The outdoor theater at Tsa-

La-Gi, Tahlequah, is presenting "Will Rogers, the Cherokee Kid" this summer.

Many Oklahoma Cityans who have visited museums from coast to coast have never been inside the National Cowboy Hall of Fame and Western Heritage Center. Folks come there from all over the world.

Nearly every county in Oklahoma has a museum or historical point of interest, many of them good. You can get a list from the Oklahoma Historical Society.

During the next few weeks, Oklahomans have a rare opportunity to observe harvest of a record wheat crop that can be sold at good prices.

Jet planes and interstate highways are great for getting from one place to another, but they're not very good for seeing who lives in between and getting acquainted with the country.

State and county roads aren't as wide as the freeways, but they may be as smooth, are less crowded and are easier to drive. At 55 mph you can get along about as fast and see

a lot more.

Oklahoma is undergoing many significant changes besides the rebuilding of downtown Oklahoma City. Tulsa already has a new skyline and many smaller cities have developed industries to keep them thriving.

Probably no other section of the state has undergone as great a change as has occurred in the southeast corner. Idabel and Broken Bow have almost grown together as the lumber industry has brought jobs and new patterns of living to a scenic area.

Add to your Sunday adventure by visiting a country church and eating at a small town restaurant. Visit with some of the local folks. Not all the interesting people live in big cities.

Travel writer Kent Ruth has proposed a "77 Club" for Oklahomans who have visited each of the state's counties. This seems like a good idea, perhaps with a special category for those who pause long enough to stay overnight in all of them.