



David's Web Wonder

Ormand Family Activity

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Background:

This summer, we took a "Whirlwind" tour of TEN states and SIX national parks in TWO weeks. Call us insane (we probably were when we got back)!

Day 1: Sunday afternoon. Travel to Las Cruces

Day 2: See White Sands National Monument en route to Aunt Roxie's place in Canyon Texas. Going the "back way", it is easy to get lost in New Mexico towns, where the route is not clearly marked, e.g. Roswell and Clovis.



Glaring whiteness, not at all hot!

Day 3-5: Travel through Amarillo ("Amarila" in TexSpeak), through Oklahoma, around the City, through Tulsa, and finally Pryor, where we stayed with Bob and Yvonne for a few days. They are planning to sell the farm soon and move into town, so we wanted to visit before the Era ended.

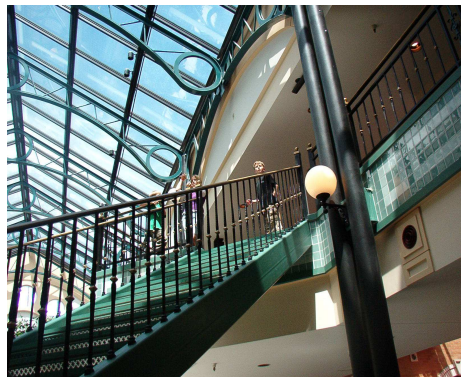


Traditional Ormand game of "42" with the Aunts and Uncles



Kids playing with Tasha on the hay bales

Day 6-7: Travel through Kansas and Nebraska and eastern Colorado to Ft. Collins, where we stay with John and Becky Lee for a few days. We visit downtown Ft. Collins (would that Tucson could get our downtown act together as well) and a day in the Rocky Mountain National Park. We intended to picnic along the Big Thompson River, but it turns out it was an anniversary of the Big Thompson Flood, so the place was packed.



Characters peeking from the balcony of the Galleria, where we had lunch at the Spicy Pickle.

Day 8-9: Long day through Wyoming and southern South Dakota. We visited Badlands National Park and Wounded Knee, and got to Keystone in the Black Hills quite late. Mount Rushmore, Crazy Horse, and Wind Cave National Park occupied the next day. No pics of Wind Cave, sorry. Turns out Jewel Cave would have been prettier. More surprises: Every year, there is a big Harley Davidson motorcycle rally at Sturgis, SD. Guess which week we picked to visit?



Mud mountains. No way these are "millions of years" old. More Flood geology (we saw a lot of that on this trip).



Interesting, patriotic, but not really breath-taking. We were led to believe there was a laser light show in the evening; turns out it was a patriotic show with the faces illuminated. Still worth the visit!



Inside the sculptor's studio at the Crazy Horse memorial, with the scale model in the patio, and the mountain beyond. Incredibly, one man moved most of that mountain during his lifetime. His family carries on the work. I don't see the Indians who commissioned this helping much...

Day 10: Following the bikers, we visited Devil's Tower en route to the North Gate of Yellowstone. We also stopped by Little Bighorn Battlefield, but were too late to get a stamp for Jerri's National Park Passport book (a key feature of this vacation).



More Flood geology. The ancient-earth geologists have a hard time with this one, and keep changing their minds. It took an hour to walk around it, and saw some climbers halfway up one side. The other side is closed to climbers June/July because the landform is sacred to the Indians, who put prayer cloths on the trees and bushes.

Day 11-12: Yellowstone. Waterfalls and geothermal sights. A week here would be the visit of a lifetime; a couple of days was only a taste.



Old Faithful, erupting (slightly late). One of those Great American Tourist sights, practically iconic.

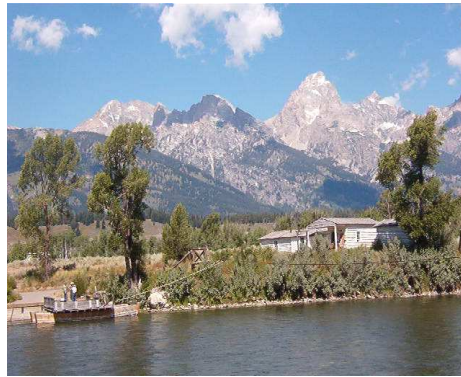


Old Faithful, not erupting, with some Great American Tourists not watching it.



The Lower Falls in the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone River. It's a credit to Jerri that she got all the way down (600ft down switchback trails) and back up. The Upper Falls was perhaps more picturesque, but less impressive.

Day 13-14: We went through Grand Teton National Park too late to enjoy the view. We then discovered that our hotel was not in Jackson (a tourist town, which for some reason was sold out), but in Teton Village (another tourist town, too pricey to be completely sold out. Ouch). So the next morning, we found it would be faster to re-enter the Park (and get our stamp!) and get back on the highway back through Jackson! So we saw the majestic Mountains by day. Idaho Falls is much more impressive than Wichita Falls, TX. And we stopped by the Great Salt Lake before arriving (late) at our hotel in Provo. THAT was a long day!



View from across the river ford.
Really, pictures don't do them justice.



The falls are long, like an oblique angle to the river. There's an artificial dam to slow the river... and improve its looks.



Three girlies. The water at this point is 2 feet deep. There are brine shrimp and brine flies living around the lake - fortunately the flies don't bite. The greyish sand in the lake is shrimp poop pearl-ized by the minerals!



Interesting. We did the tourist thing. Check the box. Looking forward to a shower in Provo.

Day 15: Zion National Park. Incredible place, definitely worth a repeat visit, but lots - lots - of serious hiking. Lots of foreign tourists, also (eco-tourism?). A shuttle picks you up in town, you switch shuttles at the visitor center (after getting your stamp), and ride up the canyon until you get to your drop-off point. After dinner, we wend our way through the windy roads from Zion to the Arizona border, crossing Glen Canyon Bridge quite late. And it's still a long way to Flagstaff. I was driving too fast, but not as fast as a truck that whipped past us. Later on, we saw that truck pulled over on the side by the Highway Patrol. But half an hour later, that truck whips past us again!



Weeping Rock. There's a spring layer in the rock above the alcove, and the water seeps out continuously and irrigates the clinging paths. It's like it is always gently raining. Gorgeous.

Day 16: Leave Flagstaff, go through Phoenix (mile upon sprawling developed mile of Phoenix). We decide we have lived in Arizona, well, practically all our lives, and we have never seen the Casa Grande ruins. Surprise! It's not in Casa Grande! It's in Coolidge!



Big House of Adobe. Mostly ruined by American settlers who had the all-too-common 19th Century American disregard for historical preservation. That's why Tucson doesn't have much left.

Finally back in Tucson, we can unpack the dirty laundry and vacuum out the pearlized shrimp poop. Lucky me, I get to go to work tomorrow!