

Ormand Family Activity

June 2012: Five-State Tour

Sunday June 17: Cedar Rapids, Iowa City, West Branch

It wasn't really in our original plan to visit Cedar Rapids. From what I can tell from the literature, Cedar Rapids is known mostly for the Czech and Slovak Cultural Museum (which appears to be closed right now for repairs), the African American Museum, and some Muslim something-or-other. I would have liked to have seen the Czech/Slovak thing, but not going out of our way for it. Cedar Rapids is also said to be one of the best cities in America for economic growth. Okay, that doesn't make it a tourist destination. In the end, we come here for two reasons: 1, it's pretty close to Amana, and there are more hotels here, and 2, this is the other city in all the world like Paris, France, where the governmental buildings are located on an island in the river.

Arriving in downtown Cedar Rapids on Sunday, we find the streets predictably empty. All the stores are closed. Including the Visitors' Center. But we are here, so we will explore anyways. This corner is right at the river and a bridge that connects the island to both sides.





At the "prow" of the island is this little Statue of Liberty set up by the Boy Scouts. That's the Cedar River down there. No sign of rapids.

It is from this point that we see a big Quaker Oats plant on the east bank further upstream. Part of why Cedar Rapids is a rising economic star, I'm sure.

At the north end of the island is the impressive City Hall, with its golden Eternal Flame ornament on the top. Seems an awful lot of building to administer a relatively small city like Cedar Rapids.





At the south end is the courthouse. Sure feels weird to have the entire place to ourselves. Even the streets are almost entirely devoid of traffic.

It's a pretty place, and a real river on both sides. Behind us, a flock of geese have claimed an apparently permanent settlement on this side of the island, but they don't complain when we walk through them back to the bridge.



Back on the streets, walking back to the car. No point in looking around for unique shops or other urban sights when nothing is open. Pretty looking town, though.

We can now claim we have been in Cedar Rapids. We hop on the south-bound freeway toward Iowa City, where we will pick up the main

east-bound road. As we draw closer, signs of road construction appear. Sure enough, it's a real pain to find the right road, and our attempts include a long drive down a wrong one before we finally turn around. Eventually, we get to the downtown area. What looks pretty easy on the map is a confusing maze of one-way streets through the University of Iowa campus. In desperation, we put the car in a parking garage and strike out on foot to find out where we are. Turns out, the parking garage is associated with a shopping mall right on the main road through town.

Turning to the left, we come to the heart of the University campus. Here at the heart is the Old State Capitol. If we were going to be here a couple more hours, we could get in on a tour, which might be interesting, as we can see some novel staircases through the windows. But I think we've seen enough Iowa State Capitol architecture.



Back to the main street and looking across and down, the old part of town, now converted to a pedestrian mall. They've done a good job of filling the old buildings and store fronts with modern shops and cafes, but there's an unmistakable college-town flavour.

The mall area is pretty nice, but there seems to be less business on the inside than around the outside. Some interesting sculptures, including one of a storybook, and this sweet walk-through fountain.



Our brief look at Iowa City (or, more precisely, the University of Iowa, since there doesn't seem to be much more to the city than the school) is done, and we need to get back on the road. Back in the mall, there is almost exactly NO stores open - it's Sunday in Iowa - so we count ourselves lucky the Nothing But Noodles restaurant is open. After lunch, our path back to the car is easier, now that we know the truth about the parking garage. Soon we have threaded our way back to the interstate, and are en route to West Branch.



Which is just minutes from Iowa City, and soon we have arrived at the National Historic Site Visitors' Center, seen the little film about Herbert Hoover, walked out to the little recreation of historic West Branch, and are standing outside the tiny cottage where Herbert was born.

Two rooms, and all three Hoover children were in this one. They didn't stay here very long, as their father died when they were very young, and their mother died just a few years later, from pneumonia aggravated by (what seemed to me) her demanding role as a Quaker leader.



Outside the cottage is a clothesline ("Yes, Charity, they had clotheslines back then"), a unique-looking well pump that was cranked (rotary) rather than the usual style, and... the outhouse. For some reason, we were taken with outhouses on this trip.

Herbert's father Jesse started off as a blacksmith, but moved up in West Branch to running a business in machinery.



The inside of the blacksmith shop. I don't know how much of the shop was original Hoover and how much was merely recreation.

Hoover was born into a Quaker family and community, so attendance at the Friends' meetings was part of life.

"Worship" seems to have consisted of sitting quietly and waiting for somebody to rise and say something spiritual. The



thing that throws me is the wall of moveable partitions, almost like men and women were separated, but that would not fit in with what (little) I know of Quaker practice. Perhaps just partitions for multi-purpose use, even though both sides are furnished the same.



The Hoover Historical Town Recreation is just south of Historic Downtown West Branch. We peek at it... but there's nothing much to see or even bother walking through - it's Sunday, and everything but the Park Service is closed. I suspect this isn't really the living part of West Branch,

and there's more elsewhere, but that's not what we're here to see.

Having seen the birthplace, there's really only one thing left - the gravesites.



The graves are in a pretty little park next to the Presidential Library. Tables for picnics, pullouts for parking, and some people jogging or walking along with their little kids riding bikes.

And that's all the time we have today to see stuff. We complete our journey across Iowa, leaving the state through the city of Davenport. If we had had more time, we might have looked in on the Rock Island Arsenal on an island in the middle of the Mississippi. As it is, we don't get to Springfield until late. After checking in at the hotel, we take an exploratory trip downtown to scout the sights and see if any more interesting dinner places might be found than the fast-food places near the hotel. No surprise - it's still Sunday. Compounded by being after 6:00. Wendy's will have to do, even if while we sit there eating our empty calories, the television over our head is playing a channel seemingly dedicated to prostate cancer treatments.

Monday June 18: Springfield

The next morning, we head into Springfield for the real show. From the

map, it looks like pretty much everything is in easy walking distance. The car is put in a public garage, and we hoof it a few blocks south to the Lincoln Museum. Inside is a model of Springfield showing the route Lincoln would take from his law office to his home, and when he was campaigning for office, and for the funeral procession. There was also a pretty well-done video about Lincoln's life from arriving as a young man, his courtship and marriage to Mary Todd, his success as a lawyer, up to the time he left for the White House. After looking around a bit, we go outside to join the guided tour of the house.

The Park Service has restored the Lincoln Home to its original 1850s appearance, even to the pink paint. Apparently, the Lincolns expanded the house while they lived here, but it's hard for the architectural



historians to identify where the mods begin. This entire area is a recreation rather like Historical West Branch. Other buildings inhabited by contemporaries are still standing, most of them used by the Park Service, but two others are available for self-guided walk-throughs.



Inside, the first thing we see is the large parlour where the Lincolns received their guests. It was in this room that the Republican committee asked Abraham to be the candidate for president - it seems in those days, the selection of the candidate was made by the party, not by

the candidate seeking it himself. Things have changed.

The room was restored to the appearance it had when the Lincoln family left for the White House. Sketches made of the room guided the restoration, and wallpaper patterns were ordered based on samples preserved elsewhere in the building.



The guides are frequently asked, "How did Mr. Lincoln fit in his bed?" In fact, the bed is a standard size, and Abraham fit just fine; it's only the perspective that makes it look shorter. All the same, the little shelf with the mirror he used for shaving was mounted on the wall, way up where a man of his height would find it

convenient. Fun Fact: Lincoln had no beard until after his election as president; his wife urged him to grow his beard on the theory that it would make him look more "Presidential" (like nearly all his predecessors in the office).

It was at this very desk where he wrote many of his important correspondences and speeches.



Mary Todd was one of three sisters raised in a genteel southern family. Her sisters advised her against Abraham, thinking he was beneath her. However, in spite of her aristocratic background, according to the guide, she delighted to work in her kitchen.

Did I mention our fixation with outhouses on this trip? Cut-off barrel seats were installed particularly to accommodate women in hoop skirts.



Across the street in the little neighborhood was a reproduction "Honest Abe" campaign wagon.

We spend most of the morning in the Historic Springfield area and the Museum. When we leave, the next stop is the First Presbyterian Church. We join a little tour to go into the auditorium and sit on the stage steps while the church member-guide points out the glories of their stained glass windows and the pipe organ and how the building is used for performances and children's halloween parties. Nothing about Christ and His intent for the church, but I asked her - yes, they are PCUSA, and I have come to expect that. Then we find out that the building we are sitting in was *not* the First Presbyterian where the Lincoln family rented a pew - that was over by the railroad tracks, and the church later moved to get away from the noise. It wasn't until we went back to the foyer that we were introduced to the actual pew. The lady explained how renting pews was a means of raising operating funds; I'm thinking it also guaranteed a place to sit in a prestigious

church where the objective was as much or more social connections than honoring God. Apparently, Abraham himself did not often accompany his family to services.

We continue on through Downtown Springfield on our tour - it is a rather more busy and attractive city than the other disappointing Downtown Springfield (Missouri). We could have boarded a free trolley, like this one, but it isn't a very long walk. We stop for lunch in a little storefront cafe - it must be a lunch-only place, because they are closing down for the day at about 2:00 just as we are leaving.



Lincoln's law office has a street presence that it didn't have when he was here - he rented office space from the Tinsley General Store. The building owners are running the tourist business themselves, unconnected with the Park Service. There are apparently plans to restore the General Store appearance of the street level floor and

expand the offices on the third and fourth floors to their original 1850s extent.

There's not much to see in the law offices; they are, after all, law offices. Even the furniture is representative, not original. However, our tour guide is a fast talking fellow who knows and loves his history. Lincoln was involved with *three* law offices in this building; his association as senior partner with Herndon was the last one.



This building also houses the original state court, I suppose before it moved to the newly-built Old Capitol after Springfield was selected as the state capital. It would seem Lincoln himself played some role in the selection of Springfield as the state capital. The guide pointed out the

trapdoor in the ceiling (not visible in this picture) - it was, after all, originally a General Store, and goods were hoisted to upper floors through trapdoors - which was in the floor of some law office occupied by Lincoln, and there was some concern at the time that Lincoln might be listening to proceedings in the courtroom through the trapdoor. Another interesting story of this courtroom (in which Lincoln was not involved): Joseph Smith was tried for sedition and conspiracy in this very room, and the court officers stocked the room with women observers, on the theory that Mormon terrorists attempting to disrupt the trial or rescue Smith would be disinclined to endanger ladies.

The law offices (rather, Tinsley General Store) and other businesses line a city square around the Old State Capitol. Apparently, the building was raised while Lincoln lived here, as he frequently served in legal capacity within.



Across from the Old Capitol is a big bank building. Inside the bank lobby is a stand with a ledger where this very bank (well, before it traded hands a few times) kept track of the Lincoln family finances. Everyone has a Lincoln angle in Springfield!



A bit further north is Union Square. The park is pleasant, with grassy areas and shrubbery and statues and fountains, and the building was apparently a train station ("Union Station"?). Looking through the windows, it is certainly furnished as a train station, or at least, the parts that are not in used as Park

Service offices. We were thinking this was the station from which Lincoln left bound for D.C., and delivered his (locally popular) farewell speech, but I'm not so sure. It really doesn't look 1850s vintage.

Our goal for the afternoon is the Lincoln Presidential Library and Museum. We can't get into the Library, of course, but the Museum is top-notch. Of especial note: In his youth, Lincoln went up and down the Mississippi, and certainly encountered the slave trade. Mary Lincoln did *not* get along with the other society ladies in



Washington. Lincoln suffered incessant and often virulent criticism in the news media of his day - rather like Republican presidents do in this day. There was quite the discussion in the Cabinet about the proper time for issuing the Emancipation Proclamation, and some of the Cabinet officials were quite ambitious for their own interests. There was a nifty holographic or three-D show about archiving and researching historical artifacts - we really couldn't tell if a live actor was behind the glass screen or not! And, most impressively, the Original of the Gettysburg Address was on display, along with other copies with their subtle differences pointed out.

We were in the Museum right up to closing time. Of course, we had to go out through the shop. Yes, they had books... including *Abraham Lincoln Vampire Slayer* (the shop workers recommended it!). And kiddie Abraham Lincoln costumes, and stovepipe hats and Civil War stuff (Faith turned down a pink soldier's cap).



The last thing we do today, now that everything is closed, is to go by the New State Capitol. Very impressive. The Governor's Mansion is also in the city. Of course, we don't take the tours. We do discover that Rod

Blagojevich is merely the latest of a number of Illinois governors convicted of corruption.

I need to mention, after leaving downtown and looking for a dinner place, we went to the southeast corner of the city to where the other hotels were... and found a Bob Evans restaurant (www.bobevans.com). Remember the Nicholson Farms hotels with their tall gable roofs along the freeways? All gone. Bob Evans is similar, presenting "farm dinner" style meals. Very good, but apparently very regional.

Tuesday June 19: Hannibal

Before leaving Springfield, we take one more pilgrimage stop at the Lincoln Tomb. The original structure suffered from a poor design (by an artist, rather than an architect or an engineer) and was settling and cracking. It was also the scene of an almost-successful attempt by counterfeiters to steal the body for ransom. While the structure was being taken apart and properly rebuilt into the current design, the body was moved around to anonymous tomb sites in the cemetery.





The body is now ten feet underground in a steel-lined crypt with the marble monument on top. No stealing *that* body. Other members of the family are also interred in the Tomb. This statue is in the antechamber; dark passages lined with bronze plaques and statuary lead around behind it to the tomb chamber with the stone monument.

Hannibal, Missouri (www.visithannibal.com), is not too far away, and is more or less on the way to St. Louis. It wasn't on our original itinerary, but it's too close to pass up Mark Twain's boyhood home and the inspiration for many of his stories.

Unlike Historic West Branch, Historic Downtown Hannibal is a living commercial district, but it is not the core of the city; we pass through the *real* urban area on our way out. But it is still a pretty town; it might have been fun to look it over in more detail.



Tickets are purchased at the Mark Twain Museum, but the Clements buildings are up the street at the north end. Since it is lunchtime, we figure we will try out the

Mark Twain Dinette for some local colour.

As you might expect from their sign, their specialty is locally-made root beer. We all get frosty mugs with our lunch, and the waitstaff kept them full. Yummy!





On to the sights. The white building is the Clements house, and the Samuel Clements museum is behind it. Seems the Clements family in general were poor managers of their finances. Samuel's father went from owning much of the properties on this end of town to barely holding onto the small house they lived in. Mark Twain himself went bankrupt after his

fame had made him a fortune.

Outside the house is a white slat fence, and a "paint bucket" and brush for people like Charity to relive the *Tom Sawyer* episode.





The little self-guided tour of the interior includes a look at Samuel's bedroom, and the inspiration for Tom Sawyer's habit of sneaking out the window for night adventures.

Across the street was the office used by Samuel's father in his role as Justice of the Peace, a job taken when the money ran out, and which he proved quite capable. In the back was a little tableau of one of Samuel's personal boyhood adventures - playing hookey from school, he snuck into the back rooms and dozed off on a bed. When he awoke after dark, with the moonlight stealing across the floor, he was horrified to observe what he had somehow missed earlier - a dead man on the floor.





The Huckleberry Finn character was based on a real-life person Samuel knew, Tom Blankenship, who lived with his shiftless father in this small cabin. In spite of his lack of education, Tom grew up to some importance in Montana political life.

Also in the neighborhood was the house in which Laura Hawkins lived, the

inspiration for the Becky Thatcher character.

After seeing the roots for Samuel Clement's boyhood experiences, we went back to the Mark Twain Museum. Downstairs were tableaux illustrating his other stories, such as *Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* and *Innocents Abroad*, based on his world travels as a newspaper reporter and budding novelist. Up the stairs was a riverboat wheelhouse and an explanation of Mark Twain's river pilot years and where his pseudonym came from. On the top floor were personal belongings, awards, first edition books and translations into many languages, and an exhibit of the series of Norman Rockwell paintings depicting scenes from *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn*.

Having finished our tour of Mark Twain's Hannibal, we return to the other side of the levee where we parked the car. We take the opportunity to get our first real look at the Mississippi River.



those stairs!

The north part of Hannibal ends at the foot of a steep hill. Jerri the Lighthouse Lady has noticed a lighthouse up there, and of course we must visit it. It's a tall hill, and there are a LOT of steps - the flight visible in this scene is the third of about equal flights. I was amazed at my wife for climbing all

Here she is, evidence of her being at the Hannibal Light. There's no suggestion that this is a fake lighthouse, and it's difficult for casual tourists to get to, so I believe it is a real river navigation aid, or was, anyways.



At the top of the first flight of stairs was an abandoned roadway that came from an earlier bridge over the river. A plaque at the site explained that the former bridge was treacherous in that the streetlights on the bridge attracted mayflies and other riverside insects to such an extent that cars would slide on their crushed bodies, and snowplows had to be used to remove foot-deep accumulations. The bridge was soon replaced by the one we used to get to Hannibal from the Illinois side.



It's quite scenic from the lighthouse. You can look down upon the rooftops of Historic Hannibal.

And to the east, a view of the Mississippi and the Illinois farmlands beyond.



The last thing we visit in the Hannibal area is the Mark Twain Cave, the original cave that the people of Hannibal have been visiting for a hundred years, and the inspiration for "Injun Joe's Cave" in *Tom Sawyer*. By Carlsbad or even Kartchner standards, it's not a very impressive cave, but the connection to Mark Twain (and Jesse James, who hid out here briefly) makes up for it. Along with the macabre story of the medical doctor who bought the cave for experiments in preserving tissues - including the body of his deceased teen-age daughter!



After leaving the cave and driving through non-historic urban Hannibal, we leave for the last leg of our journey to St. Louis. It's a good thing we had our GPS navigator gadget, or we would not have found our hotel in the unfamiliar maze of west St. Louis in the dark!

Wednesday June 20: St. Louis

Next morning, we are ready to begin our discovery of the Gateway City (explorestlouis.com). Our primary objectives: the Gateway Arch, and the scene of the 1904 World's Fair.



But first, a look at our odd hotel while the girls are waking up and getting ready. I think it used to be an ordinary motel with a central courtyard and swimming pool, but later owners roofed over the courtyard. There's not really sufficient

air conditioning, so there are big fans around on the floor. There are couches and armchairs all around, and an indoor kiddie playground... and a video game arcade! But most unique is the festooning of different flags from the roof. American states, foreign nations, and other kinds of flags like the "peace symbol" American flag and the "Don't Tread On Me" flag, and so forth. Unique, to say the least.

We leave the hotel and get right up on I-44, which goes right downtown. As we approach, we can see the Arch above the trees and buildings in the distance. The freeway goes below street-level as it passes through downtown, and the turn-off for the Arch and downtown parking are clearly marked. The car is left in the subterranean garage, and we join the crowds going to the Arch and through the airport-style security checkpoint at either foot. Admission to the attraction is for the ride to the top of the Arch, a riverboat tour, or both. I opt for both.

But the boat ride is boarding NOW. I have to hustle Jerri and the daughters back outside and down the broad flight of steps to the river level and the floating dock. We get there with time to spare and score some seats under the second-deck shade. We *could* have been inside the cabin, with air conditioning, but the view of the river is better out here.



Going north first: the power plant built for the purpose of supplying the electricity for the World's Fair. Unsurprisingly, no longer in service.

It's a beautiful day, with a cool river breeze (and hot sun), and the new scenery and anticipation of adventure is invigorating.



The St. Louis waterfront in its glory.



We have left our chairs on the second deck to come topside for a better view on the down-river leg of the run. This is life; this is what travel and education-via-experience is all about!



Back at the dock, while Jerri pays for the commemorative family photo, Faith and Charity put their feet in America's River.

Then, back up the steps from the river and back through the security checkpoint. For me this is Vindication Time; this is as close to the Arch as I ever got as a child, and then only briefly.

The ride to the apex of the Arch is not a normal elevator, like the Washington Monument or the Sears (now Willis) Tower in Chicago. Rather, it is by little claustrophobic "capsules" that the four of us just fit in. As the capsules move along the sloping part of the Arch interior, their upright orientation is corrected in little unsettling jolts. But Jerri and her kids come through it fine!





I have arrived! Frustrated childhood longing for adventure has been resolved. (Yes, I know that sounds corny, but it still feels great to be here!)

And despite her misgivings and the discouraging advice from her family and friends, Jerri is up here, also!



Magnificent aerial view of Downtown St. Louis, right down the central "mall" to the Old State Courthouse and beyond.



To the left (south) of Downtown is the St. Louis Cardinals' ballpark. Jerri's uncle Clinton worked on the plumbing during the construction.

I have learned that a city's touristy section in the drugstores provide insight to what the locals think of their city. Tucson's drugstores are full of "Tucson" stuff, and

"Arizona" stuff, and "U of A Wildcats" stuff. Drugstores in Huntsville, Alabama have almost nothing of local colour. In St. Louis - it's Cardinals! Cardinals! Cardinals! I guess to live here is to be a baseball nut.

The original Catholic church, from the founding days as a French colony.



On the River side, we can see the boat dock from whence we departed a few hours ago for our cruise. Our boat, the "Tom Sawyer", is normally docked on the outside, and is now absent; the sister boat, the "Becky Thatcher", is the same size. How small it looks from up here!

We get our look-see, and it's getting a bit crowded up here, so we are ready to return to the little capsule and descend. Underground between the Arch feet there are two gift shops, two theatres, and the Museum of Western Expansion. Other than a look through the gift shop (where Faith squashes another penny), we don't have time or interest for the rest of it. Plus, it is past lunchtime, and we are hungry!

We leave the Arch and start walking west through downtown. We notice that the Old State Courthouse is swathed with scaffolding, but it must be open for visitors, because people are coming and going from this side under the scaffolds. Next to the Courthouse is a grill, and it's cool inside, so we eat our lunch and fortify for the next part of our downtown adventure.

While sitting in the restaurant, we notice the fountain visible through the windows appears to be spraying pink water. After lunch, we go over and look at it - as we suspected, it is a breast cancer stunt.



Next to the pink fountain is a St. Louis visitors' office. We go in and get some tips on some other things to see. We also notice that, further west of the pink fountain, there is another fountain with waterfalls and a shallow pool, and lots of native children wading and playing in the water. This is a bit surprising; usually, cities discourage people from playing in the fountains.



The inside of the Old State Courthouse is quite impressive. Given our visit to the Iowa State Capitol and seeing the outsides of the other Capitol buildings and the rotunda seen here, our little Pima County Courthouse and our old Arizona Territorial Capitol seem somewhat puny.

The Old State Courthouse is significant primarily because the Dredd Scott case was tried here on Missouri soil, first. On the ground floor, there are Dredd Scott exhibits, which I didn't really look at, and a terrific "history of St. Louis" exhibit, from its beginnings as a French colony (including those indefatigable Chouteaus), to the handoff to the Americans in the Louisiana Purchase, to its growth as a transportation hub beginning with the Westward Expansion wagon trains and followed by the railroads and the river traffic, to its significance as an industrial powerhouse, to the present day. I was still looking through this exhibit when the Courthouse guard showed up to tell me the place was closing

for the day.

There are stairways up the three levels of the Courthouse. The original courtroom of the Dredd Scott case has long since been repurposed, but on the second level are two courtrooms for viewing, and the more ornate one is stated to be "similar" to the Dredd Scott courtroom. On the top level, there is pretty much just a balcony over the rotunda, which is about as high as you can get. Which is pretty high; the top of the flag hanging in the rotunda as seen above is at the bottom of this picture!





Back outside again, and with things closing up, we head back to the car. Via the Old Cathedral. The original wooden colonial church was replaced with brick, and then later with stone. Even though the "cathedral" has moved further west, this building is still in used by the Catholics. There is a little museum... but it's closed.

After leaving downtown, we take the tip from the Visitors' Office man and go north to Delmar Street and "The Loop", which is a college shopping district. After looking around just a bit at an oddball "Buffalo Exchange" style used clothing store and a comic book store and a few other places, we return to our target dinner place: Fitz's Bottling Company, for junk food and some of the best local-bottled root beer I've had. Between Fitz's and the Mark Twain Dinette, I'm getting the impression that



Missouri must be The Place for specialty regional soda pop.

I took note that Fitz's soda (especially the root beer, creme soda, and orange soda) are available on-line from fitzsrootbeer.com. I will have to get a few cases sometime and share them with my Tucson family.

Thursday June 21: Grant's Farm, Forest Park



Today is the last day of our vacation for sightseeing. We start this day by going to the last of our presidential sites: Grant's Farm. The real Ulysses Grant site is elsewhere, but this is where he met his wife (of a slave-owning family), was given property and developed it (his wife didn't care to live in the little cabin he built for her - "Hardscrabble"), and later, took it over from

his father-in-law and restructured it from a cash-crop plantation to a horse ranch. This is the plantation house, "White Haven".

After looking through the house and peeking outside at the summer kitchen, slave house, chicken house, and ice house, we go back "inside" to the Grant-built horse stables that has been converted to a quite-good museum about Ulysses Grant. The chief things I took away was that he preferred to listen rather than talk, an attribute not usually associated with politicians (even in his day), and that he tended to trust people until presented with evidence that they were not trustworthy - hence, his administration was somewhat scandalous for the corruption of his appointees of whom he refused to think ill until it was too late. There was also a "kiddie korner" with various costumes to try out, such as Faith is modeling here.



Grant's Farm is actually two parts - the presidential "White Haven" site run by the Park Service, and the larger part now owned by the Anhauser Busch company and run as an animal park drive-through style zoo amusement park. We don't bother with this. After leaving Grant's Farm, we go about a mile or two, get lunch at the "Lion's Choice" (the regional equivalent of Arby's Roast Beef), and visit the next Visitors' Center-suggested destination.



Apparently, in the past, this road was Route 66, and Ted Drewes was one of those famous, popular attractions along the "Mother Road". Jerri's sister has been here and recommended it. So here we are.

The specialty at Ted Drewes is the "concrete", or a thick ice cream (or frozen custard) slurry. Yummy!





The next destination is Forest Park, the site of the 1904 World's Fair. Just before going on the Park, I drive by the new Cathedral. Rather more imposing than the old one. This place is famous for its elaborate mosaics. Given

more time, I would have liked to see them.

I notice this near the Cathedral. "Engineers Club". Hmm... Probably more a professional organization than a Maker or hacker club.



Now, Forest Park. Bigger than Central Park in New York City. The Missouri State History Museum, and Art Museum, and Municipal Theatre; picnic grounds, soccer and baseball fields, two or three golf courses; a big lake with canoes and paddle-boats; the St. Louis Zoo. Wow.

It's also a bit hard to find stuff in the park. There are signs at every intersection pointing the way to the various attractions, but the roads are *very* windy. We start at the park headquarters, where a very knowledgeable and engaging volunteer gives us a map to the park and points out the highlights. Chicago and St. Louis had been competing for being the most cosmopolitan, and there was apparently a

one-upmanship game going on over the World's Fair. St. Louis put so much into the 1904 show - extravagant buildings, artificial lagoons, electric lights everywhere... *even underwater in the fountains* - that if pretty much ended the World's Fair business, as everyone believed nobody could top the 1904 show. For all that, there's not much left, other than the landscaping. The glass arboretum, the aviary, and the Art Museum are apparently the only structures remaining. Oh, and before we leave the Visitors' Center, he informs us of the show at the Municipal Theatre - the MUNY. Our first stop after leaving the park headquarters (and quite a bit of feeling our way around the meandering streets) was the MUNY box office, where I got tickets for the family to this evening's showing of *Thoroughly Modern Millie*.



The glass arboretum is a beautiful Art Deco style building set amidst rose gardens, flower beds, and a lily pond. It is named, appropriately, the "Jewel Box".

I was expecting a muggy greenhouse clogged with tropical vegetation. What we found was light, open, airy, and cool. A perfect place to sit and read and enjoy quiet.



Like this! Mommy and Charity are visiting the restroom far underground (strange). The round structure next to Faith is an air conditioning vent.





After the Fair was over, a lot of the structures were removed. This pavilion was built afterwards to commemorate the Fair. I guess this is now used for large parties and such, like the ramadas at Tucson's Reid Park. The aviary is visible from the pavilion, and we start walking toward it down the grassy hill, until I notice... it's on the other side of a road. It's

behind a wall. Ah... it is now part of the Zoo! Well, we aren't going to see it any closer, then.

Looking down the slope on the other side of the pavilion, toward a beautiful fountain.

Perhaps this is also a remnant of the Fair, and in its day was illuminated at night with the newfangled electric lights, powered from the generating plant built on the river bank.





The only large structure from the Fair now houses the St. Louis Museum of Art. The outside is quite imposing. Amazing that the city would build such a building for a one-time event. But I suppose, even now, when a city hosts the Olympics (as London did just this year), after the Games are

over, the facilities remain, to be repurposed for other uses. Not sure what this building was during the Fair. I'm sure it is even more ostentatious inside, but we don't wish to spend the time or the museum admission to see it.

Right outside the Museum of Art, the city's namesake - Saint Louis IX of France, the Crusader King.



We zip back down the interstate to the hotel to freshen up, then zip back. Forest Park is convenient to both I-44 and I-64, the east-west arteries. Unfortunately, Forest Park has no parking facilities, and we somehow get in a long line of cars seeking parking near to the MUNY. I let the girls out to walk over to the MUNY, and wait out the line of cars, and eventually find a spot along the road a good distance away. I arrive back at the theatre just after the show has started, and locate my family. The MUNY is an open-air theatre, and it's a perfect summer evening. I keep wondering what they do when it rains, which certainly happens frequently in this part of the country. The musical play is wonderful (I just wish I had brought the binoculars), a fine way to end our visit to the Gateway City.

Friday June 22: The Return

Our flight doesn't leave until the afternoon, so we have a mostly leasurely morning before we check out of the hotel and look for a UPS Store where we can ship our two boxes of vacation acquisitions back to Tucson. Then we allow the GPS to guide us to the St. Louis Lambert

Airport, where we return our excellent rental car (with my fears of a holiday auto accident thankfully unrealized) and board the flight back to Dallas Fort Worth. There we are at DFW for a short layover, almost three weeks since we were in this same terminal. Arriving back in Tucson, we get back to our car in the Tucson International economy parking lot, where we had so hurriedly left it. Over the next few weeks, settling back into our routine, we are glad to receive the boxes of mementos and the package of jams and jellies from Amana.

Upon reflection on our adventures, we agree: our favorite places, where we would like to return some day, are Branson, Kansas City, and St. Louis. Although I believe that we might have a different opinion if we were to visit in the winter, when all of those places get snow!