

## Ormand Family Activity

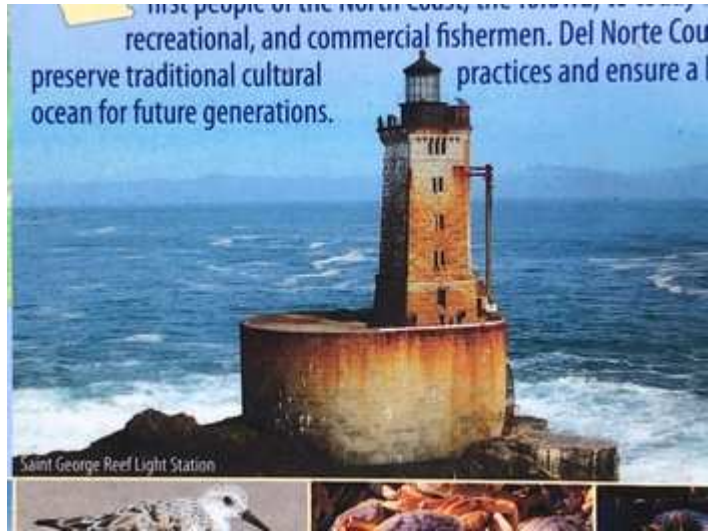
### June 2019: Pacific Northwest Adventure - Part II

#### Tuesday June 18 - Crater Lake

The hotel is pretty nice, and we have a rather large upstairs room. This would have been a good base for a more prolonged exploration of Crescent City, better than just a one-night stay. The breakfast room is a proper restaurant or banquet room, upstairs with a panoramic view of the bay over the marina. Before leaving, I take a quick snapshot of the sea lion-themed fountain.



We arrive back at Battery Point with high expectations of touring the lighthouse, because the causeway is clear - low tide again. However, it is still closed! What the heck? Well, we saw most of the exterior yesterday, so there isn't any point to hanging around. Going back up the street to the highway, we notice the Crescent City Visitors' Center, and stop in. To Jerri's delight, they have the stamps for both Battery Point and Point St. George! Talking with the desk clerk, we learn two things: Battery Point is open on weekends for visitors *if low tide occurs during regular hours*; they can't promise that the lighthouse will be staffed at the start of visiting hours or that people will be able to get off the island if the causeway may not be clear for the entire shift. And Point St. George is *seven miles* off the coast; we were in the right place, but the weather has to be perfectly clear for even a hope of seeing it with good binoculars. Better to fork out \$300 for a helicopter trip out to the reef. Sorry, but no.



Outside the center are placards of local features and the history. This is what we would have seen from the helicopter. Also, it seems that Crescent City has been devastated by earthquake-generated tsunamis including the 1905 quake. There are downsides to living on the coast.

Across the street is the Redwoods National Park Visitors' Center. We get some tips for the day's route. One of Jerri's friends has recommended the Howland Hill Road as a scenic path through the forest, but the way the park service helper describes Howland Hill, it sounds a lot like Cal-Barrel Road. I think we'll pass.

Proceeding north out of town, I am looking for the local route 197 turnoff. After a lot of driving, we enter Oregon! Darn, missed it. Turn around and backtrack, looking carefully. Lost a lot of time. Where 197 meets US 199, there is another park visitors' center where Jerri can get another stamp. The 199 runs through the Jedediah Smith Redwoods Park. Except for the visitors' center, we don't stop; I think we've seen redwood trees now. By the time we re-enter Oregon and reach Grant's Pass, it is lunchtime. The girl at the DQ is a bit snooty about our order, and it takes a while and some prompting before it appears. Delay after delay; we take the burgers and go. Halfway between Grant's Park and Medford, state route 234 leaves I-5, and tees into state route 62 shortly afterwards. Route 62 follows the Rogue River into the hills, all the way up to Crater Lake.

It is a full day of driving. We are trying to get to the ranger station before it closes, but we don't arrive until after 5, and the ranger is already outside taking down the flag. He is a very good sort, though, and he unlocks the door to let Jerri get her stamp. Talk about cutting it close. Then he asks Jerri if she will help him. As they walk back to the flagpole, Jerri takes a bad step and falls, splat, on the sidewalk. I jump out of the car, concerned that she is injured, but no, she is okay. The ranger then allows her to assist with the flag folding ceremony.



There's still a long way at the pokey 35MPH through the park before we get to the visitors' center. Another stamp, and some postcards. In the gift shop is this large stuffed Sasquatch figure, and his little buddy. Apparently, the Sasquatch thing is a regional fixation. We will be seeing Sasquatch-this and Sasquatch-that all the way to Seattle. We also saw, well off the path in a private yard, an iron Sasquatch silhouette at Battery Point.

Just a little further along from the Visitor's Center, the road reaches the summit of the crater, and stretching before us is Crater Lake.



We spend a long time on the rim trail looking at the lake. As usual, there are signs along the paved path with details about what we are seeing. The lake is fed only by rain and snowmelt, and therefore the water has an amazing purity and clarity - a "standard target" can be seen way, way below the surface. It is the deepest freshwater lake in the United States. There are no native fish in the lake, but game fish were introduced in the 19th Century for the enjoyment of visitors (something about those 19th Century Americans that they always had to "improve" things - but that's easy to judge in hindsight).



In theory, it is still potentially active. Wizard Island is a cinder cone volcano inside the main crater, and has its own little crater. There are boat trips to take visitors to the island.



Snow. In June. Not as thick and prevalent as the Sonora Pass at Yosemite, it's still shocking to Zonies to see snow on the ground in summer. There's also not much thought to snowmelt runoff handling, and there are impassable puddles in more than a few places on the path.

Here's our trusty little Dodge van in front of the lodge. It would have been nice to spend the night here in the park, like we have done (and will do) at other national parks, but our agenda does not permit it.

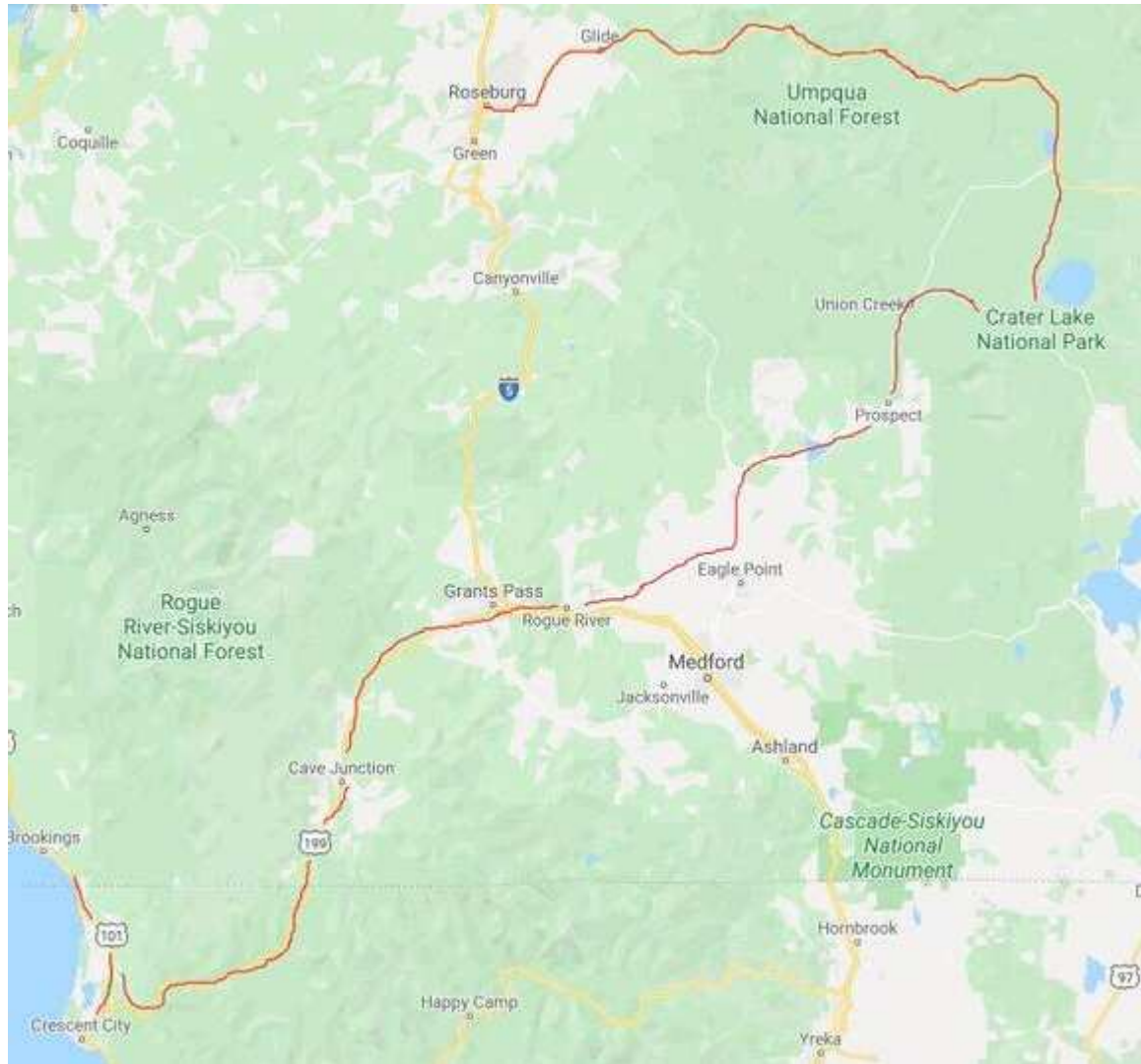


The park road continues on northward. The forest is very dark, and we

have to use our headlights before we get to local route 138. As we continue northward, Mount Theilson looms ahead.



The road winds through the mountains, and eventually enters the Umpqua River valley. We follow this scenic river route for a long, long time before we arrive at our evening destination of Roseburg. Dinner is picking up some Taco Bell and taking it to our unimpressive motel room.



## Wednesday June 19 - Umpqua River

The next morning starts (after the unimpressive complementary motel breakfast) with taking the van to the Sinclair gas station to refuel - and an encounter with a stupid Oregon law. The attendant approaches as I am preparing to pump gas for myself and apologetically informs me that *he* has to pump the gas! Okay, I didn't see that coming, but state law, okay, you pump the gas. Afterwards, I need to tighten the battery clamp which has been acting up. He goes back into the station and comes back with a vise-grip, which I use to turn the clamp nut. So, I can't pump the gas but he won't service my engine. Makes sense. Not.

The road to the coast from Roseburg is a pretty good multiple lane local route, nothing like the road from Boonville. In retrospect, it was probably because this road was intended for the logging trucks to take the harvest to the seaports. We pass (and/or are held up by) numerous



logging trucks. When we reach Highway 101, we turn south to Port Orford.



Interestingly, the lighthouse society includes this historic lifesaving station as an official stamp site. This motor launch is actually from a later time when the Coast Guard took over the lifesaving operations at this station. Jerri gets her stamp from the Vietnam vet volunteer who is running the place, and we look around the museum housed in the former station. Some great models of Coast

Guard ships and Oregon lighthouses we have yet to visit. And a fascinating history lesson: The West Coast *was actually attacked* by the Japanese during World War II! Submarine I-25 was equipped with a seaplane (a submarine with an airplane, interesting) that flew around and dropped bombs. Other submarines surfaced and launched balloons with incendiary bombs. The strategy was to start fires in the forests, distracting American resources to firefighting instead of war; unfortunately for their strategy, the Pacific Northwest forests were (at least at that time) too damp for fires to take!

That was fun! Just a few miles back north on 101 is the Cape Blanco lighthouse. Cape Blanco is a windblown spot on the coast way above the water - and when I say "windblown" I mean "hold onto your hat" windy. The museum/interpretive center has a visitor log, and I notice someone else from Tucson had visited in 1954!



Cape Blanco is the farthest west lighthouse in the United States, on a narrow point of land way above the ocean. There are a few other visitors here today, and the volunteer guide entertains us while we wait for the previous party to descend by showing us photos of the lighthouse keepers in their white work coats cleaning the lens.



Originally, the lamp was fueled by lard - pig oil! Now (still in service as a Coast Guard navigation aid) it is electrified and equipped with this interesting arrangement that, if the primary bulb burns out, the backup bulb automatically takes over. The lens is stationary, and previously, in the lard-burning days, the blink or flash effect was accomplished with a clockwork shutter or blinds apparatus.

Official photo of Jerri descending from the tower.



The lighthouse tour map indicates that the next thing to see is Cape Arago. This lighthouse is off the coast on an island and is inaccessible, but we are supposed to be able to see it from the shore. The road goes through Coos Bay and Charleston up to Sunset Bay State Park. It turns out that the road through Charleston is long, and we poke around in the park fruitlessly. Finally, considering the time, we give up and leave.

[In retrospect, we have another failure to plan. The lighthousefriends site is vague and misleading. The viewpoint is past the RV park and campground near Yoakam Point State Park, before arriving at Sunset Bay State Park, whereas the instructions said between Sunset Bay State Park and Shore Acres State Park (too many State Parks right here).]

The next site on the agenda is Umpqua River. Further up 101, near Winchester Bay, on Lighthouse Road (fortunately well-marked), we find the Coast Guard reservation where the lighthouse is located. In the keeper's house, now a gift shop, we buy some tour tickets and meet Lee - a very engaging tour guide. He is ex-Army, and lives in his RV with his diabetic dog, preferring to spend his time and money seeing things rather than owning stuff.



Lee leads us first to a large convex mirror in the parking lot, and tells us this is a favorite photo spot. We oblige. The lighthouse is in the background, and Lee is to the left.

In the distance, over the hill, we can see the junction of South Jetty and the breakwater. Lee says that the enclosed water has become a location where enterprising oyster farmers operate, using 55-gallon drums as marker buoys.



The land between the lighthouse and the sea is a sand dune recreation area, and we can see (or rather hear) the ATVs roaring around on them. We are told that there is a Coast Guard lookout post on a ridge to the north, but it is out of sight.

Lee explains that this is not the original site, but the first lighthouse was built down near the river; however, as the river moved due to erosion and sediment depositing, the ground was cut out from under the lighthouse and it eventually toppled into the river - but not before they saved the lens. After being built here, supplies (including one of several rotating Lighthouse Service library cases) were hoisted from boats in the river up the cliff.



Lee's wife is also working here, as the traffic director inside the lighthouse. When our turn arrives, we can go in. It isn't a very tall tower. At the top of the short spiral stair is the Machinery Room. A small electric motor does the job of the original large clockwork escapement.

Lee says we can climb up the ship's ladder to look at the interior of the rotating lens. Jerri takes the first turn.







This is the coolest. The original Fresnel lens slowly rotates (electric motor versus the original, obsolete clockwork). The intervening red-tinted lens sections move slowly past, casting shadows from the sunlight from outside. The electric light is blinding.

Lee mentions that, as the light rotates, at night, the patterns of light cast from the clear sections move through the trees or the fog at a great distance. These are locally known as "Umpqua ghosts".

The tower has a brick interior. Down the hall is the circular stair.





Having finished our tour, and as we are leaving, we stop and take a photo of the Umpqua River lighthouse tower. Behind the tower are the barracks now used by Coast Guard servicemen. This is an active Coast Guard installation, and the lighthouse is fully functional.

Backtracking yet again (to take advantage of the different hours at the different lighthouses) to Bullard's Beach near Bandon. The road leaves the highway and leads out along a spit of land separating the Coquille River channel from the ocean.

At the end of the road is the lighthouse. Very breezy. Lots of driftwood up on the shore. Beautiful view of the surf outside the breakwater.





And lots of seagulls.  
Fearlessly perched on every  
object, including this car.  
Probably decorating it, too.

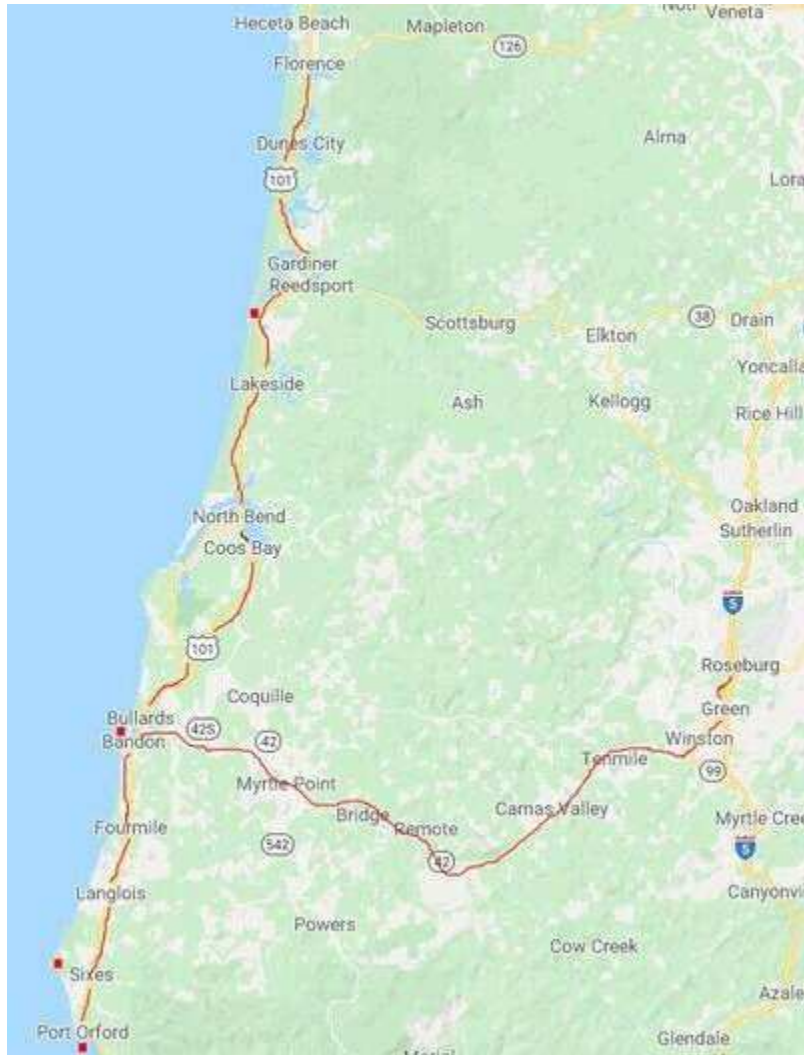
The Coquille River Lighthouse was decommissioned when a newer automated light was built out on the jetty (seen here in the background). It has suffered neglect and vandalism, and is now being restored. The lens is gone, and there are theories that it was dumped in the river and may still be there. The keepers lived in a nice house (now gone) and reached the lighthouse on a boardwalk (now gone). The platform for the water storage cistern still exists. The platform just to the left of the lighthouse is where the oil room was located. We can't go up in the tower, because the stair is detached from the wall - and the volunteers operating the gift shop in the fog signalling house think that the repair people don't know what they're doing.



The time has passed for lighthouse-viewing for today. Our overnight stay is in Florence, some distance north on the 101. The hotel is a bit odd, with multiple split levels (probably because it is built into the south bank of the Siuslaw River). We have to drag our bags up and down multiple long and short staircases. There's a nice restaurant in the hotel, so we can just relax this evening.

[For future reference: As we are leaving Coos Bay the second time, just before the (huge, beautiful, ornate) bridge over the Bay, leaving the town of North Bend, there is a park on the west side of the road. I'm pretty sure I see - and later confirmed ([mercitrain.org/Oregon](http://mercitrain.org/Oregon)) that one of the World War 1 "Merci Train" boxcars is near the road in that park. We've seen the one in Arizona (in the McCormick-Stillman Railroad Park in Scottsdale), and I've seen the one in Alabama (in the Veterans Memorial Museum in Huntsville). It's too late to go back for this one.]





## Thursday June 20 - Heceta Head

This is a nice hotel, not least because the rooms on this side have sliding glass-door balconies overlooking the river. To the west is the bridge that carries Highway 101 over the river.



View toward the east. A different part of green and wet Oregon.



The restaurant from last night has been converted to the breakfast room, with an omelette stand. After leaving and on the way up, I am experiencing intense stomach cramps - the sweet peppers from dinner last night, or bad salmon in the omelette? It is mostly past by the time we get to the overlook near Sea Lion Caves, where we stop with all the other people there and see this:



Note the house off to the right - that's the keeper's house. The road goes down to the sea and through a under-construction bridge to a state park parking lot where we buy a parking permit from a machine. It's a long walk up the hill to the keeper's house and the gift shop where Jerri can get her stamp.



Then more uphill walking to the lighthouse. Due to damage, the tower is closed for visitors, but the oil house is open with some exhibits.

Such as this instance of the Lighthouse Service travelling library. Keepers and their families were remote, stuck out on the coast far away from civilization, and therefore the books were appreciated.







Back down at the keeper's house, we sign up for the next tour, and wait on the porch in view of both the sea and the lighthouse. At many lighthouses, the keeper's house is in view of the lighthouse so the keeper can keep tabs on the automated system.

The building is now a bed and breakfast place, so our tour is limited to the downstairs rooms. Previously, the facility was used by the local community college and the house served as a dormitory for oceanography students. Originally, the building was essentially a duplex. The dining rooms were adjacent, and one of the subsequent modifications was to take down the dividing wall and produce a long dining/conference room. The guide pointed out a status symbol: The Lighthouse Keeper was the senior officer. On the Lighthouse Keeper's side of the dining room, the chandelier has five lights. On the Assistant Lighthouse Keeper's side of the dining room, the chandelier has four lights.

There are many photos from the old days on the wall and over the fireplace. One of these photos was taken some distance south, with the lighthouse framed by a window in the rock.



This is where the photo was taken from. Erosion has destroyed the hole in the rock.

Further up the coast is the town of Newport on Yaquina Bay. There are two lighthouses here.

We cross Yaquina Bay on this exquisite old 1930s-era concrete bridge. Immediately upon reaching the other side, we take the first exit which loops underneath the road to a state park, where the old lighthouse sits above the parking lot.



Another lighthouse that shares the plan with Point Loma. The Yaquina Bay Lighthouse served briefly from 1871 to 1873, but the small light was inadequate as a navigation aid, and the station was decommissioned when Yaquina Head Light was built. Today, a Coast Guard admiral lives in the keeper's house. Note the watchtower and radar mount, which is the active Coast Guard

operation at this site.

Fancy stairway to the lens chamber.



But this is as far as we can go. Still, it's cool that the hatch is open so you know where the action is.



The public restrooms are in the back, and we can get a different perspective of this beautiful old building.



From the parking lot, there is a magnificent view of the bay and the bay bridge.



The Coast Guard is busy in Yaquina Bay. I can't tell if this boat is painted gray, or if the white boat that we would have expected needs a wash.

Yaquina Head is an extension of land into the sea at the north end of Newport. It is literally minutes away. It is also late in the day. We get to the visitors' center and learn that the only way to see the inside of the lighthouse is on a tour, and all the rest of the tours for today are booked up. It's a really good visitors' center, not so much for the gift shop (although Jerri gets her stamp, and that's what counts) as for the

museum, including a great children's interpretive area with museum personnel dressed in period clothing.

The best we can do is to drive down to the lighthouse, discover that there is no parking to be had, drop Jerri off, return to the visitors' center parking lot, and hike down.

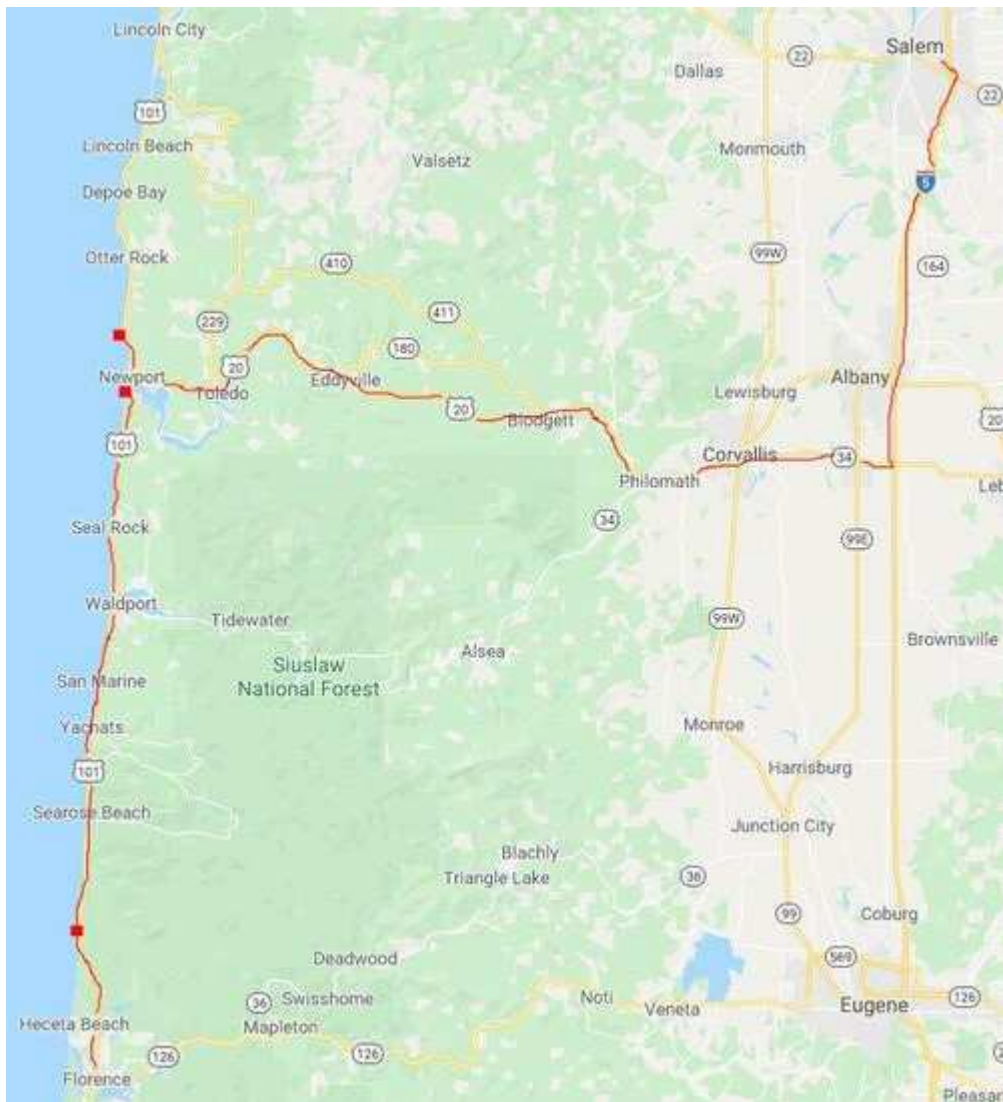


The lighthouse is really quite impressive. Yaquina Bay was sort of tucked up and into the landscape, but Yaquina Head can be seen in every direction from the sea. This is a better view of the top of the tower and the Fresnel lens inside. Doubtless the lighthouse is still used as a beacon, maybe even using the original lens.

After looking around at the outside of the lighthouse, and the huge rocks in the sea below the cliff occupied by seabirds and sea lions, I

hike back up, fetch the car back down, and pick up Jerri. Tomorrow is a break from lighthouses to see Oregon's Capitol in Salem.

Highway 20 runs eastward to I-5, and then north to Salem. Picking up Highway 20 back in Newport, there is a useful directional sign.





## Friday June 21 - Oregon State Capitol

Oregon is another one of those states whose capital city is *not* one of the major cities in the state. As a consequence, it's pretty laid back and easy to get around in. Highway I-5 intersects Mission Street which pretty much ends a few blocks from the Capitol. As always, there are a lot of one-way streets here, so there is some maneuvering before we pass along in front of the building and find a convenient (and free) parking spot not too far away. Entering the building, I am amazed (again) that there are no metal detectors for screening visitors.



Inside the rotunda, there is an info desk next to the gift shop. Jerri gets her stamp, and we get the scoop on the next (free) tour. Our guide is an older Jewish lady, who starts off by explaining a few things about Oregon history:

- Missionaries played an important role in the settlement (that is, Christian missionaries, acknowledged without any judgment).
- The Hudson Bay Company wanted to maintain control in the region, and the directory was instructed to discourage the American settlers; however, the director *encouraged* the settlers - and consequently lost his job.
- The present Capitol building is the third one, built in 1938 after the previous (wooden?) buildings burned down. Obviously, the Art Deco style prominent in that era influenced the unique design.

It's not a dome. It's...  
cylindrical. It's... weird...



As expected, there is a lot of awareness of Oregon's "Oregon Trail" and settlers and pioneer and territorial beginnings. The realistic artwork around the walls reflects this aspect of Oregon history. The territorial seal is above the passage to the legislative wing.

Embedded in the floor is the brass Great Seal of the State of Oregon. The guide points out that the seal has the old motto: "The Union". This was later changed to "She Flies With Her Own Wings" (latinized, of course).





On the tour, we enter the Governor's Office area. Oregon's "moon rock" is displayed here. When the Apollo missions came back with moon rocks, after whatever useful analysis was done, samples were sent around to the states as national mementos. Also in the case is the small Oregon flag that the Apollo astronauts took with them to the moon and then brought them back.

While our tour group was in the office, the governor herself and her entourage passed through the office area. The tour guide told us in a low voice that the government was in a bit of crisis: The Democrat majority was trying to pass Cap & Trade laws. The Republicans want public input which the Democrats want to avoid, and in an attempt to prevent a quorum, were intentionally absent until the recess. Apparently, today was the governor's birthday, but with the tension of the situation, there is no celebration.

In the Chamber of the House of Representatives. Again, as seems to be the pattern everywhere, members of both chambers are selected by popular vote, which means the dense urban areas (which tend to be leftist) have far more input than the rural counties (which tend to be conservative). The names engraved upon the upper surfaces are those of Oregon pioneers and influential citizens.





Now, *here* is something I have never seen or heard of anywhere else. A piano in the chamber! Sessions start with music, and music is played to provide some relief in tense situations. I wonder briefly if the piano is used for that lately, but I suppose less than half of the members wouldn't hear the music because they are hiding. We see another piano in the Senate chamber. We are told that

the Speaker of the House wants to promote collegiality and unity, and sometimes there are flowers, and even candles placed in the chamber. Seems to me, though, that there can be no unity without a shared vision or values, and there is none between the Portland leftists and the minority conservatives of the rest of the state.

When our tour is over, and we have looked around in the gift shop, we leave by the front door to find a junior high school orchestra set up on the steps. Out in the plaza from which this photo is taken, there are markers embedded in the paving - state bird, counties, historical facts, etc. Again, we note the oddness of the unique cylindrical "dome".





On the peak of the "dome" is The Pioneer, the symbol of Oregon and the settlers who came here on the Oregon Trail. I'm led to understand that the state university team is the Pioneers, but there is a movement to change that, because "pioneer" is too imperialistic and appropriative to suit the tastes of the leftist students.



Checking the "visit state capitol" box off our Oregon list, we get on local route 22 westward back to the coast. When we arrived at our hotel last night, Jerri discovered that we had left the power supply for her night-

time breathing machine back in Florence! After thinking of options and even contacting the breathing machine manufacturer to see if there were any suppliers in the region that might have a replacement, we surrender to the reality of a trip all the way back down the coast to retrieve the supply. But we are going to see another lighthouse on the coast before we do so.



We see lots of this kind of logging truck on the roads of Oregon.

After 22 joins Highway 101 at the coast, it is a little ways north to Cape Meares. The road leaves the highway in the small town of Tillamook (famous for dairy products) and runs along the shores of Tillamook Bay to the other side where the lighthouse is. We park and start down the path to the lighthouse.

This is interesting. The lighthouse is on a shelf over the water, and the path goes down to it from above, so in effect we are walking directly toward the lens chamber.





Coming down off the path and walking up to the lighthouse, we can't help but notice how short and stumpy it is. I'm sure the keepers had to rewind the clockwork every few hours, versus a proper tall lighthouse where the weight can drop all night long. There is a crowd at the oil-house (now gift shop), and a little kid screaming his head off. He appears to be part of a large Washington family with 4 or 5 young kids.

It's a nice first-order Fresnel lens with red center elements. The guide points out some pieces broken by vandals before the park service took over the lighthouse.





In the service walkway that we are standing on there are these interesting hexagonal windows.

From up here, we can see a big rock with holes eroded all the way through.







Back down in the Machinery Room, while our group hugs the wall to make way for the next group going up into the lens chamber, we can look up and see the purpose for the windows in the walkway above us.

As we leave the lighthouse, the lady behind the counter talks with us a little while and gives us some tips for seeing the Tillamook Rock lighthouse. Outside, going up the path back to the parking lot, we get a better look at the rocks we saw from the tower.



Now that we have seen Cape Meares, we are ready to undertake our waste-the-day non-stop trip all the way back to Florence after the breathing machine power brick.



Yesterday, someone had told us about the kite festival in Lincoln City. Sure enough, there are some monster kites flying above the beach in the stiff sea breeze.

Going through Lincoln City, we stop for lunch at McDonald's. Just across the highway is a fake lighthouse.

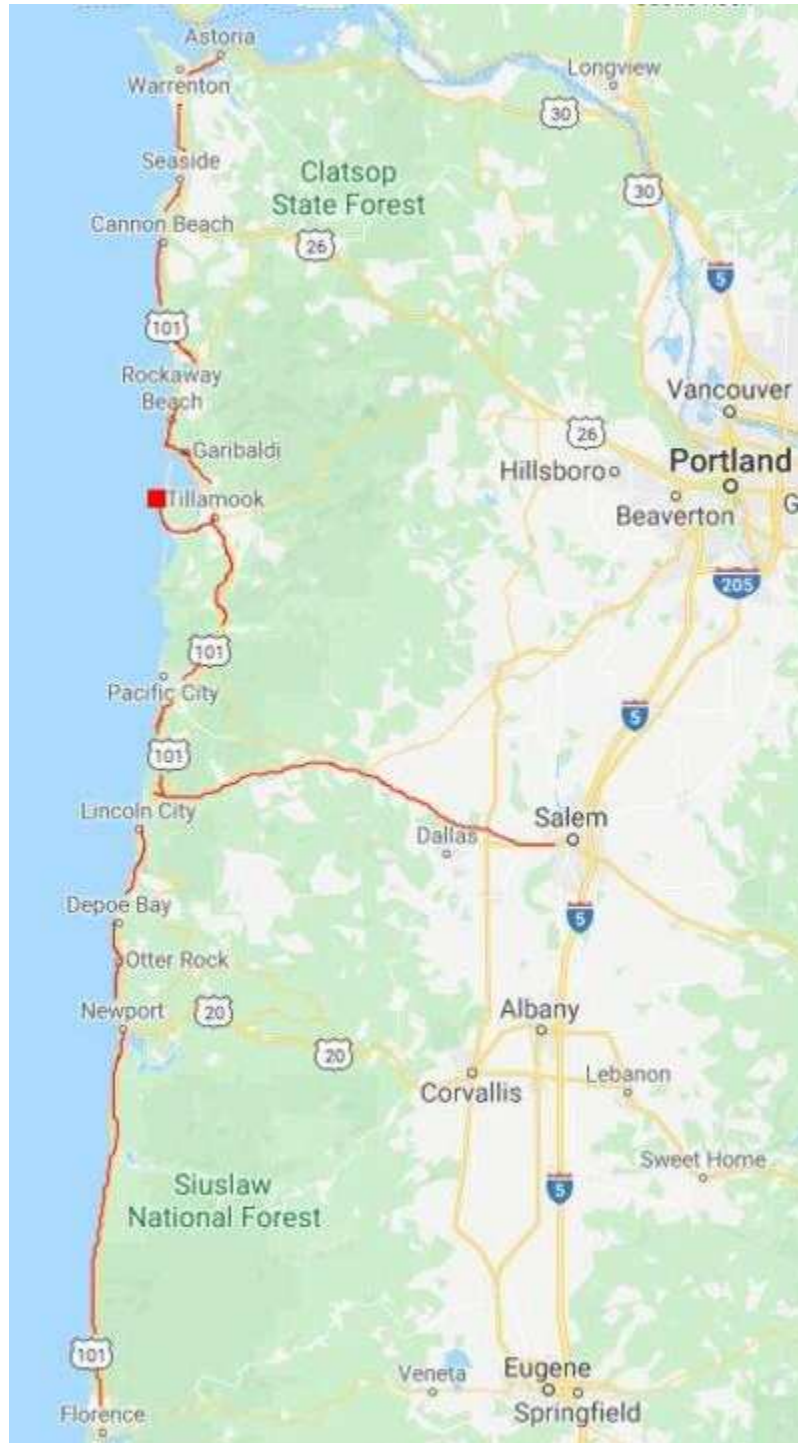


Three hours after leaving Cape Meares, we get to Florence. It's straight to the hotel and up to the desk. Yay, they have it! Straight back to the car, right back out to the highway, and right back up north.



By the time we get back to Lincoln City, it's getting dark. The fake lighthouse is pretending to be a lighthouse.

It is quite dark by the time we get to roads we hadn't already been on. Then our GPS gadget decides it's going to help us out again. If we had been smarter, we would have checked the map *before* blindly following the GPS' directions and stayed on 101 and gone right into Astoria. As it is, we obediently take the GPS directions onto a "short-cut" to bypass the big loop of Highway 101 at the mouth of the Columbia. It's not as bad as the road from Boonville (that experience will be the Gold Standard of dreadful rural roads for a long time), but it is two-lane, dark, residential, winding around hills, and I'm trying to keep the speed up (above the limit) so we can get through this as soon as we can. It's fortunate there is not a lot of opposite-direction traffic. At last, we come out of the forest onto a good straight road. It crosses some long bridges or causeways in the night. It's just a matter of submitting to the GPS' remaining directions to get to our hotel on the far east side of Astoria - four hours after leaving Florence.



## Saturday June 22 - Terrible Tillie

All right, now, let's forget yesterday's silly adventure by going back to see some things we missed - like more lighthouses!

101 southwest is a lot faster than the "short-cut" of last night, and more



pleasant. Warrentown and Gearhart look like they could be interesting little towns to visit. Before long we are in Cannon Beach, that we went through (or, rather, past) in the dark last night. Now, we are following the directions we got from the lady in the Cape Meares lighthouse, and we would not have had a clue where to find the visitors' center otherwise. Jerri gets her stamp, we get some more tips of where to see the lighthouse here, and we look through the Cannon Beach museum. It's a well-done museum in a little town.

The main piece in the museum is the carronade from the *USS Shark* from which the town gets its name. In the early 19th Century, Britain and America were contending for control of the Pacific Northwest (hence the scandal of the Hudson Bay Company director). The *Shark* was patrolling in the area, and hit a reef and sank. This cannon apparently washed up on the sandy beach. It would appear... and disappear. Then the cannon would reappear... and disappear. Ultimately, when it reappeared the last time, its location was marked and it was recovered, and now here it is in this little museum. A local trophy.



Cannon Beach is sort of like Branson, a holiday destination. The town is mostly little shops and cafes and bars that cater to tourists. Today is Saturday, in June, and the streets are jammed with cars creeping along to try to find a parking spot, and masses of pedestrians. I think, fortunately, we are not here to visit the town, we are enroute to the state park to see the lighthouse. And then we arrive at the state park. Bumper to bumper traffic, creeping along. Frequently someone will give up, drop out of line, maneuver around, and go back. We are here to see this lighthouse! Eventually, the line creeps up to the fee station. Most of the people are here to go to the beach, and the line is held up for the next beachgoing automobile to wait until someone else leaves and opens up a spot. But we are going on north to the overlook, and there is no waiting for us. And when we get to the overlook parking lot, we are able to find a parking spot fairly quickly, even though there are a *lot* of locals already here for picnics and family gatherings and hikes. We aren't quite sure about where to go, but we basically follow a stream of people following a path that bends off the the right/north of the picnic area.



At the end of the path is a little dirt patch where we can get the best view of the Tillamook Rock Lighthouse that we are going to get.

"Terrible Tilly" is in a location with hidden reefs and beset with terrific storms. It was expensive to build because ships had to take the materials out and unload in heavy seas. Construction was difficult due to the adverse weather and ocean conditions. It was treacherous to operate, frequently suffering damage from the storms. It is now deactivated, and privately owned. Like Point St. George, it is accessible only by helicopter, but it is not open to visitors.





That's looking to the north. To the south is "famous" Haystack Rock. I gather that the main reason it is "famous" is that it is part of the setting of *The Goonies* movie.

Leaving Cannon Beach is slightly easier than getting into it, especially since we are on the north side of town and can get on the 101 without going back through town. Lunch is a Kentucky Fried Chicken in Gearhart. Now, it wasn't in any tourist literature I saw, but there were booklets and pamphlets in the hotel (we always look at the hotel brochure racks) that mentioned the Astoria Column. As we are driving back into Astoria, we can see it on the top of the big hill around which Astoria is laid out. It's tricky to get to, trying to follow the street signs, but eventually we get there.

Yeah, it's local interest. There are quite a few people here, especially with young children, climbing the stairs inside to the platform at the top. I am interested, but we have more stuff to do today, and Jerri really couldn't manage the climb. In the little gift shop, wooden toy airplanes (biodegradable, of course) are being sold for kids to take to the top and throw off.





The column is primarily a pictorial history of the Lewis and Clark expedition. It's too tall to see all of it, of course, but what we *can* see reveals an amazing attention to detail. The artist used a particular technique that isn't very compatible with the climate, and the column just recently underwent a refurbishment operation.

From up here on the top of the hill, there's a pretty amazing view of the mouth of the Columbia River. That's Washington on the other side, and the bridge that we will see more than a few times in coming days.





After we finish looking at the column, we descend back to the river level. Astoria is characterized by San Francisco-like steep hill roads. It's also surrounded by water. Just outside the city on the southwest side is the location that the Lewis and Clark Expedition spent the winter after arriving at the Pacific. This location is Fort Clatsop National Park. It's a little hard to find, but after a bit we get out at the visitors' center. There's a nice little museum of the Expedition's preparation to return the way they came and their interaction with the local Indians, particularly the Chinook. And of course Sacajawea. The museum has a fine documentary film explaining what the Expedition faced during the winter - such as it raining *nearly continuously for months*. The concept just boggles the Zonie mind. And, like the event at the Redwoods visitors' center, we get to see a Junior Ranger swearing-in ceremony here. This time, the oath ends with something like "and I promise to eat all my green vegetables".

The original fort wasn't built for the years, so this structure on the original site is a more recent reconstruction of what it might have looked like. I didn't really pick up from the museum why they thought they had to build a fort. They were on good terms with the local Indians. Maybe to keep out the bears. Or maybe 18th Century military types were just into building forts.



The officers' quarters contains tables and writing desks, to emphasize that the winter stay was dedicated to recording their findings in their journals and cataloging the wildlife and plants they found.

The destination for tonight is Portland - mostly so we can say we were there. The route starts with going back through Astoria and picking up Highway 30 eastward on the other side. Astoria is a very old city, perhaps the oldest in Oregon, with its roots in the Pacific fur trade. I'm guessing there is a considerable population of Norwegians and Swedes and Danes here, for the banner over the road says "Scandinavian Festival" and there are Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish flags along the main street. Astoria cries for some tourist attention in its own right, but it seems we won't be doing it (on this trip).

Hey, just like the Fox in Tucson, or the Plaza in El Paso! Astoria has their restored historic theatre also!



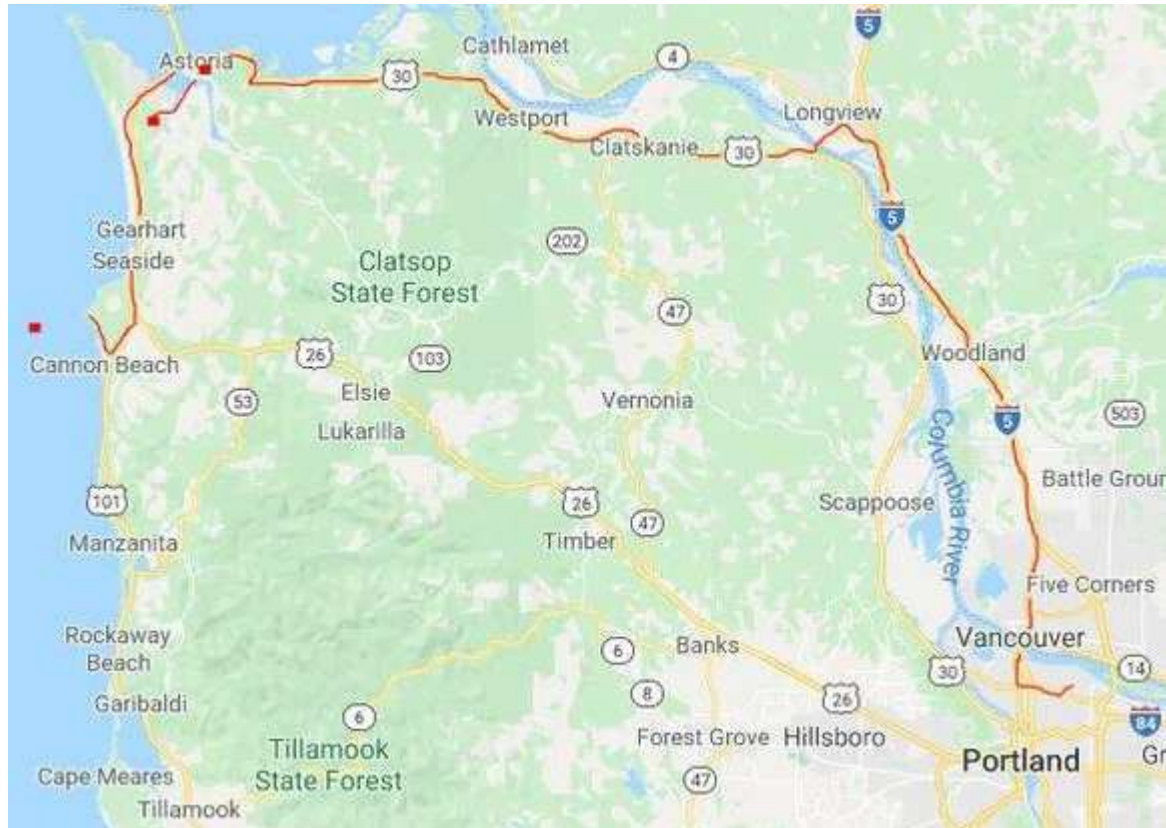
Near the hotel we stayed last night is the old Customhouse. The Columbia has been a major sea route for hundreds of years, and the United States felt the need to establish their authority over trade in the new territory. This isn't the original building, but another faithful reconstruction based on stories and descriptions of the Astoria settlers at that

time.

The route takes us eastward on Highway 30 on the Oregon side, then crossing into Washington and picking up Interstate 5, which reaches Vancouver and crosses back into Oregon at Portland. The airport is right there, and our hotel for tonight is just on the other side of it. Takes us one and a half hours to get here from Astoria. Not too hard. And then Jerri says she needs some things from the drugstore. We dial up "CVS" on the GPS, and it leads us to a shopping district where, as closely as we look, we cannot see the CVS. Then it dawns on us that it must be



*inside* the Target store. And so it is. After this first shopping stop, we ask the GPS for "gas station". Again, it takes us round and round until, in a somewhat seedy neighborhood, we find a suitable station, and again encounter the stupid state law about attendants pumping the gas. Good grief. Returning to the area where our hotel is, we have dinner nearby at "Shari's" ([www.sharis.com](http://www.sharis.com)), which, according to the helpful waitress, is a chain specific to Oregon and nearby states. Kind of a Village Inn place, with (like VI) an emphasis on pies. The Oregon specialty fruit is the *marionberry*, and that's the kind of pie I get for my dessert.



## Sunday June 23 - Columbia River Gorge

The primary reason we came to Portland is to say we did - you can't really come to the state of Oregon and not at least peek into the largest city. It's like going to Illinois but ignoring Chicago. Plus, we figure this large, old city ought to have something interesting to see and do. But then, we sort of thought that about Atlanta and were somewhat disappointed (having the traffic accident didn't help). In other words, we didn't do a lot of research and make an agenda; we just figured, "we'll spend the day in Portland and see what's up". Well... The little bit of looking on-line in the hotel last night wasn't turning up anything keen, and the brochure rack in the lobby didn't have any "must-see"



things, and the tourist picture-book in the hotel room mostly dwelt on restaurants and shopping and outdoor activities like hiking, bicycling, and golf. I guess there are some people who will travel to a far country to hike or bicycle or golf, but we live in Arizona - there just isn't a better place for hiking or bicycling or golf (well, maybe not golf in Tucson. Green Valley or Scottsdale, maybe). The most interesting thing that turns up are some out-of-town things. Like the Columbia River Gorge.

Yeah. The Columbia River is pretty famous, historically. And waterfalls ([www.columbiarivergorge.info/waterfalls.html](http://www.columbiarivergorge.info/waterfalls.html)). Oh, yeah - Multnomah! Okay, we'll do that.

This starts off taking I-84 / Highway 30 out of town eastward, which is convenient because the road our hotel is on bends southward and runs under I-84 and has ramps up to it. Just a little ways out of town, with the Columbia yawning broadly to the left (but we can't hardly see it because of the guard curb) is the turnoff to Historic Highway 30, also known as the Historic Columbia River Highway. Not a bad road, but it is a slow two-lane road that hugs the hills above the river, frequently coming into view of it.

One of the first attractions along the way is the Vista House ([vistahouse.com](http://vistahouse.com)), a beautiful Art Deco tourist structure. It's Sunday, and everybody is doing their local tourism thing. It takes a while orbiting the undersized parking lot before we can get out and explore.



On the upper observation gallery is an unparalleled view of the Columbia River, looking westward toward Portland, Astoria, and the sea.



And eastward, looking up toward where the Lewis and Clark Expedition came from.



The interior is impressively cavernous. Under the stairs going up there are stairs going down - to the "crypt". No, actually, the museum and gift shop. Some lovely photos of early visitors to the Vista House, with their old autos and big hats, and a gallery of the House while it was being built. Seems there was a scandal of how much cost overrun there was in the construction, to the point that there was a

demand to end the project - over an amount (in the tens of thousands of dollars) that would be laughably pitifully small in our day of million-dollar project overruns. I'm glad saner minds focused on what could be carried the day. This was a real treat to visit.

Back on the road, it isn't very long before we come across the first



waterfall - Latourelle.



Another vantage. This was the first waterfall, and so it excited our imaginations the most, even though there were more impressive ones to come. It's an interesting aspect of the geology that the Oregon side of the Columbia River Gorge is so steep and blessed with running water. Apparently, the Washington side is not so picturesque.





The next is Shepherd's Dell, but it's Sunday, and the parking lot is so full we can't get a spot. After that is Bridalveil Falls. Interesting in that it shares the same name as the beautiful falls in Yosemite. It's Sunday, so it is difficult finding parking, but we are more fortunate this time. Or maybe it's because the falls are not right by the road - we have to hike maybe a half-mile down the hillside to get to it.



But it's worth it. It's not *too* crowded here, but there are enough people on the viewing platform (seen to the left of Jerri, here) that we spend most of our (brief) time enjoying the falls from this vantage.

When seen from the platform, the pool it falls into is visible, and more of a straight-on perspective.



Per the literature, the stream for Bridalveil was diverted into a log flume during the 19th Century, by entrepreneurs who didn't value the beauty of the falls as much as the utility of the water. Thankfully, that period of exploitation ended, the flume removed, and the falls restored.

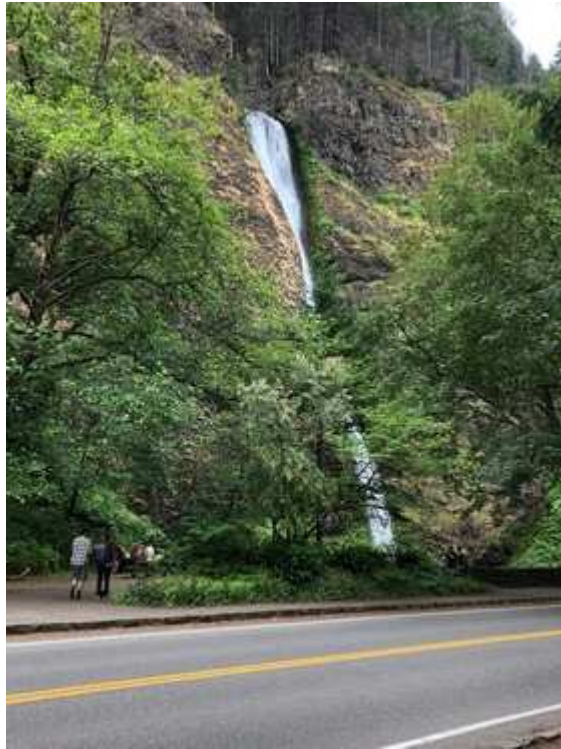
A little further up is Wahkeena Falls, but it's Sunday, and we can't find a parking spot.



The most famous of the Columbia River Gorge waterfalls is Multnomah. Because of this, it is impossible to see. Cars are backed up for a mile in both directions hoping to get a parking spot. Seeing this, we decide to just pass on through, even though we have to wait to creep up to the streetside staging area and then dodge around the final few cars - and ignore the angry yells. Lesson for

any future visit: Don't try to see Multnomah on Sunday.

The last one we look at is Horsetail Falls, which is close enough to the side of the road that you can feel the spray. This one is rather more impressive than the first one, LaTourelle.



There are actually several waterfalls that can be seen, and we have merely encountered the easiest ones. If we ever come back (*not* on Sunday), maybe we can do a more thorough job, including seeing Multnomah. When that stretch of the gorge containing the more spectacular falls is done, Historic Highway 30 merges back with Mundane Highway 30.

A little further up the gorge highway is the Bonneville Dam, which includes a fish ladder, a power-house, and ship locks.



The visitors' center is pretty nice, and fairly elaborate with multiple levels. At the bottom level is an underwater view of the fish ladder. It isn't only salmon that climb the freshwater streams to spawn. Today is in the season for American Shad - and also for lampreys, a whole mess of which are gathered in the corner of a window (not this one), holding onto the glass against the current with their awful little sucky mouths.



Outside, we can look at the fish ladder from above. In the natural state, the fish would have to jump up the falls like we see in movies. Here, while we see some fish jumping over the barriers, the intent is to create essentially a maze, with baffles that slow the water flow allowing the fish to swim upstream in a zig-zag route.



There are two powerhouses at Bonneville, with the later one built slightly differently to accommodate the fish better. The explanation signs lead us to understand that the turbines do not chop the fish up, but rather the pressure can damage the young fish coming back down the stream. Since this is the season for some fish species to be coming back down the river, Powerhouse 2 is running, as it is



designed to be easier on the fish, and this one, Powerhouse 1, is idle. The telltale (confirmed by a park guide) is that the lights on the top of the generators are NOT lit, therefore the turbines are not in service.



Powerhouse 1 is a bit older, built in the Art Deco days, with plenty of accents in the tiles and bricks.

Even though it is already late in the day and the locks visitor area will be closing soon, I figure on taking a chance. After looking around the exhibit area a little while, the on-station guide tells us that we are in for a treat, that a barge is coming down to the locks right now.

It takes a long wait, but eventually, we see the big blue barges nosing around the upstream bend. Very slowly, they move down the channel.



The bridge we crossed to Bonneville from Highway 30 is a swivel bridge, one of only three in the world. In anticipation of the lower lock gate opening, the bridge swings slowly out of the way. A traffic light stops cars on both sides until the operation is complete.

With the barges and the towboat fully inside the lock, the upstream gates slowly swing shut. Almost imperceptibly, the water level drops, lowering the assembly of river vessels. Looks like the cargo is wood chips for a paper mill and trimmed logs.



Almost an hour from first becoming visible, the water level inside the lock matches the level of the river downstream; the gates slowly swing open flush into niches in the walls, and the *Kathryn B* pushes the barges out. We can see the river pilot way up in his wheelhouse where he can see over the tops of the loaded barges, and feel the throb of the powerful diesel engines.

A little while farther upstream is the town of Cascade Locks, and the site of the "Bridge of the Gods". Yep, that's a bridge. It's also a toll-bridge, and so we we are disinclined to cross it just to say we did. Right next to the bridge is a turnabout or parking lot, and next to it is a pretty good classic American-style restaurant, where we can get a late lunch and relax in a booth and watch the





Columbia River roll past through the big windows.

This was a good day: We've visited Portland (in some limited sense of "visit"), seen beautiful Columbia Gorge scenery including waterfalls, the fish ladder, a hydro plant, and a lock in operation. Our day ends with a lengthy drive back down Highway 30 / I-84 to I-5 and follow our route all the way back to our hotel in Astoria. Dinner is some prepackaged salads from Safeway (not much for restaurants on this end of Astoria).



## Monday June 24 - Astoria Maritime Museum

Back in Astoria, our adventures start with a visit to the lightship *Columbia*, which is moored at the Maritime Museum. What we find going inside to get our tickets and Jerri's stamp is a prime destination in its own right. The Astoria Maritime Museum is *great!*

- Commercial fishing in the Columbia, and the beautiful graceful sailboats they formerly used.
- The (now defunct) canning industry that employed hundreds, and many immigrants, in the early 20th century (the period of the Wars).
- An account of the dangers commercial traffic faces on the treacherous Columbia/Pacific interface (the Columbia River Bar - "Graveyard of the Pacific").
- A looping video of a pilot boat and heavy freighters pitching in heavy seas (it almost makes you seasick to watch it!)
- Towboat bridge/wheelhouse simulation.
- Exploration of the Northwest Passage (mapping efforts, sea monsters, secret explorations by Russia and Spain).
- Conflict over the boundary between British Canada and the United States (at one point, Astoria was sold to the British!)



- The whaling industry - and a harpoon gun.
- A hard-hat diving suit used to clear sunken impediments to fishing.
- War in the Pacific - especially of the *USS Astoria*, which participated in Midway, Battle of the Coral Sea, supported the invasion of Guadalcanal, and was fatally damaged at Savo Island.
- A room about the *USS Shark*, including a video of firing a carronade, info about Shark Rock (grafitti by surviving crew), and an Shark officer's sword.



There is a moving exhibit for the Coast Guard, prominently featuring this dramatic posing of boat 44300, retired after many exciting years of service on the Columbia. Placards near the boat describe heroic rescues, sometimes involving the sacrifice of the lives of Coast Guard seamen.

The museum also has a "secret" gift shop with high-end items (jewelry, especially). After spending as much time as we think we can in the museum, we go outside and notice that, next to the lightship, there is a Coast Guard cutter, the *Alert* being fitted for sea by Coast Guard sailors milling about.

The *Columbia* served many years moored at the mouth of the river. It was hard duty, as a lightship, permanently anchored outside a harbor, experiences the sea differently (and much more unpleasantly) than a ship under way. Not to mention the boredom.



Me sitting in the mess room, with padded swivel chairs. Under decks, we also see crew bunks, the officers' rooms, the lounge with a television set (installed not long after television became commercially available), the bridge, and the radio room (still in use by local ham radio operators with permission from the Coast Guard).

Out on the deck, we can look up and see the lights, and more importantly the foghorns, and even more importantly the radio masts.



Check off the lightship. The next part of the day is to hop across into

Washington to see a lighthouse.



The road out of Astoria loops under the bridge and then ramps up to the bridge. It is an impressive sight and a significant part of Astoria's downtown prospect.

It's a long drive up into Washington. For this part of the out-of-Oregon route, we turn right after crossing the bridge and take the faster, straighter 401 up to the 101, bypassing the part of the 101 that gets down into the southwest corner of Washington. The 101 then continues up the coast to Aberdeen. By accident, we cross the Chehalis River into Aberdeen proper and observe that it is a sizeable town with some tall-ish buildings like Astoria, and might be worth exploring in its own right. Returning back across the bridge, we turn right onto our intended route on local 105 along the bay, and crossing over to the peninsula to the town of Westport.

105 turns into Ocean Avenue in Westport, and continues toward the sea. Very soon we see the tall Grays Harbor Lighthouse looming above the trees.



The lighthouse is staffed with volunteers living in their RVs parked nearby. Jerri has a nice chat with the lighthouse lady, who is (of course) retired with her husband and have seen a lot of lighthouses - she has filled *five* Lighthouse Society Passport booklets. We pay for our passes and go out for a closer look at the tower.



There are 135 steps up the spiral staircase.



Another volunteer helper is doing the tour up at the top. In the Machinery Room, we are told that the huge, heavy lens formerly was suspended in a mercury bath. Then OSHA required the lighthouse to get rid of the mercury, and now the lamp does not rotate.

Like Cape Meares, there are skylights embedded in the walkway upstairs, on a different pattern.



In the Lens Chamber, we find a curious arrangement - the lens is an asymmetrical clamshell design, with a smaller clear half and a larger red half. The guide explains that this is to allow more light to get through the red lens that attenuates, so that the red and white light will have about the same intensity when seen at sea. The original lamp is no longer used, and this "modern" LED lamp generates more light. They plug in the original lamp four times a year, including Christmas and Halloween (just because).

After leaving the lighthouse, we continue on 105 south along the coast, circumnavigating the body of land between the Chehalis and Willapa rivers and pick up the 101 again in small Raymond, where we stop for lunch at Subway's. Another long drive back down, backtracking our outbound route. As we approach the bridge over the Columbia from the east, we take note of a historical attraction: The Dismal Nitch. Lewis and Clark and their company spent a miserable *eight days* in this spot

facing heavy wave action and under incessant driving rain (again, the Zonie mind boggles) with their food supplies running out and their buckskins rotting.

Nice view of Astoria across the river.

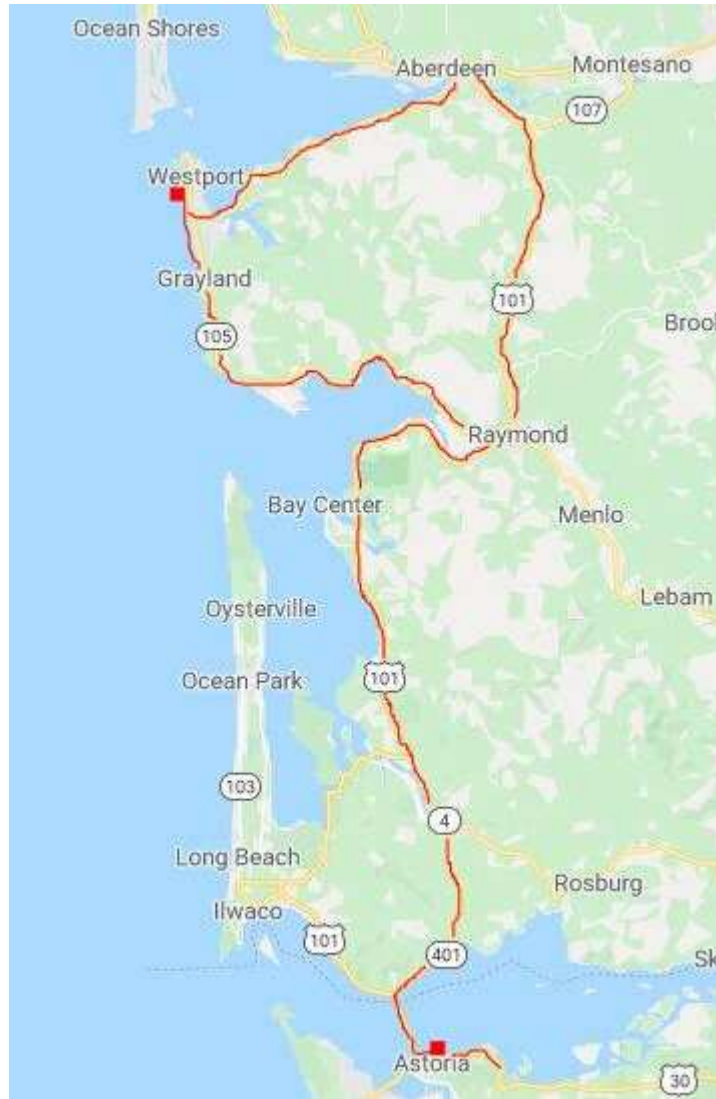


Close-up of this view: On the top of the hill is the Astoria Column.



We return to our hotel for the last night in Oregon, and relax for a bit

before looking for supper. I note in the in-room promo book that there is a Papa Murphy's pizza place toward downtown, so we go there. After a while, the desk server hands us an uncooked pizza! I wonder how many dumb customers they get who don't understand that this is Papa Murphy's business model - you get a pizza to take home and cook in your own oven! Well, that won't work for us. With a stone face, the server refunds our money, and we leave and drive back through downtown. On a side street, we notice Plaza Jalisco. Mexican food in Oregon? That's where we stop, and enjoy a reasonably good dinner (admitted by Tucsonans who have high expectations).



## Tuesday June 25 - Cape Disappointment

The guest laundry is busy for us while we take our breakfast. As we repack the bags, the landscape workers are busy outside with their gas-powered tools.





As we pass the Maritime Museum, I notice a huge stern-wheeler river boat tied up near the dock. One of the things on our "bucket list" is to take a river cruise, probably up the Mississippi, on a river boat just like this one. I knew there were Columbia River cruises; obviously, this is one of them. Nobody seems to be around, though.

This time, when we get off the bridge, we turn left, westward, toward Cape Disappointment. Immediately, we notice "Lewis and Clark Station Camp", and pull over to see where the Corps stayed for a while (after emerging from the Dismal Nitch). Mostly what there is to see is the story of the Chinook Indians - and the raw deal they got from the U.S. government. Also here is the remnants of the settlement of McGowan, formerly occupied by a fishing village until the commercial fishing and canning industry ran out. Now, there is still a Catholic church building that is unoccupied except for a notice for "seasonal masses".

A little bit further is the town of Chinook, and I see hints of a tribal government, but I don't think this is a reservation. Yet a bit further is the town of Ilwaco, and it is hard to figure, but we find the road that continues into Cape Disappointment State Park. Eventually, we get to the (pay) parking lot for the Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center. Here we find yet another Lewis and Clark historical emphasis and a good documentary movie, but also debris recovered from the "Graveyard of the Pacific" and another perspective of lifesaving (wooden boats with oars and a sail, breeches buoy), and the small 1st-order lens from nearby North Head. The Interpretive Center (State of Washington) is staffed by RV volunteers, here also. There are also a *lot* of older people visiting, with many wheelchairs and walkers and attendants helping them. Where did they come from?

The Lewis and Clark Interpretive Center, where Jerri gets her two lighthouse stamps (Cape Disappointment and North Head), is also located at Fort Canby, another WWI-era coastal defense battery.

The visitors' center overlooks the sea, and just to the south, at the end of Cape Disappointment, is the lighthouse. There is a hiking trail about 3/4 of a mile to get from here to there.



The Cape Disappointment lighthouse is in pretty rough shape, and it is not open for interior tours. Here is Jerri's "official" photo.

The paint scheme and the shape of the tower "crown" are as characteristic as the flash signature, used by mariners to determine their location. For being a visible landmark, I would think the Coast Guard could at least apply a little fresh paint.



On the hike back, at the "saddle" between the blob of land at the end of the peninsula where the lighthouse is and the larger body of land where the visitors' center is, the water can be seen through the forest in both directions. There is a chain-link fence with some signs explaining that the reservation to the north-east is a Coast Guard facility for training sailors on the motor launches and the challenging water around the Columbia River Bar.

As we are walking in this forest, it seems there are an awful lot of brown trees. Very disconcerting, for Zonies who are aware of the devastation of the pine forests in Coconino and Apache (White Mountain) counties from the "boring beetle".

When we get back to the parking lot, there is a big tour bus that appears to be loading the old folk we saw earlier. I'm wondering if this tour is associated with the river cruise boat we saw earlier this morning in Astoria.

The road loops back around in the state park with somewhat cryptic signs. At one fork, there is a sign that says "lighthouse", so we take it, and arrive at the North Head facility.



Which seems to be deserted. The keepers' quarters are (again) available for vacation rental, but they seem to be under refurbishment.

The path to the lighthouse continues westward, and there are warning signs everywhere about construction activities. We can't get up to the lighthouse, but from where we stand, it's a very pretty structure.





This is as far as we can go, and the "official" photo for North Head. We encounter a foreign (Eastern European?) photographer on the path, who is also upset about not being able to get up to the lighthouse.



Back in the parking lot, I am looking at the posters under the ramada. One of them explains that southwest Washington is suffering from a drought, and the trees are in stress, which makes them less able to fight off insects like aphids. This is the cause of all the brown spruce trees we have been seeing. I hope things change and the trees can recover.

We have a long journey ahead into the evening. The first leg is to return along the Columbia on Highway 101, back through Chinook and McGowan, then across the bridge and eastward through Astoria to Highway 30, through Svensen (did I mention the Scandinavian presence in this region?) and picturesque Clatskanie. Outside of Longview, Washington, the bridge goes back across the Columbia and the road connects with Interstate 5. Proceeding northward (away from Portland, toward Seattle), it isn't long before we see the signs and the turnoff for Mt. St. Helens. I'm sure this would be an interesting side-trip, but we didn't schedule for that. Continuing northward, we exit I-5 onto US-12 toward Mt Rainier. Jerri needs to make a rest stop, and outside a gas station at a rural intersection is a Port-O-John. Along the road, we see a dead racoon, and almost hit a deer jumping across. At Morton, local route 7 to Mt. Rainier splits off to the left, and runs up to Elbe, where the National Park Highway picks up the route eastward. As we get closer to the park entrance, we see more and more lodges and inns catering to visitors, but our reservation is at the lodge inside the park. Finally, at dusk, we arrive at Longmire and the National Park Inn.

The dining room is about to close, so we prioritize dinner over checking in and unloading the car. The dining room is nearly empty, and so after placing our order, we have a nice chat with our waitress, Dolores, who lives nearby and she fills us in on what it's like around here. Usually, it's okay to get to Longmire, although sometimes snow blocks the road into the park. The roads above Longmire get plowed, so it is usually possible in the winter to get up to Paradise. Snow can stick around through June (and we saw patches of it in the forest on the way up). The Paradise Lodge dining room puts on special buffets at Christmas and Thanksgiving. She tells us that Washington has no sales tax but a pretty stiff income tax, and she knows about Oregon's gas-pumping law and thinks it is stupid.

After dinner, we are let out of the dining room's locked door and attend to our room. \$225 for a room with a private tub (there is a common shower room down the hall). Unsurprisingly, there's no A/C in the room. After fetching the baggage out of the car, across the parking lot, up to and through the front door, up the stairs, and down the hall to the room, I return outside and stand on the veranda, looking at night descending on Mt. Rainier.



## Wednesday June 26 - Mount Rainier



The next morning, while using our special private tub, Jerri slips and falls in it. Fortunately only bruises and a bumped noggin, nothing broken.

After breakfast, we look around the inn and discover the gift shop nearby. The clerk is inexperienced in handling off-nominal conditions; the credit card system is not working and there is insufficient cash in the drawer for change. A long line of unhappy customers is queued up at the counter and into the store until finally some support shows up and the problem starts to clear. Also nearby (behind the gas station) is the Longmire Museum. The cases contain taxidermied specimens of local animals and birds. The story of the Longmire family is presented, who developed the tourism industry before the area became a national park. There are stories and old photos of early settlers and mountain climbers (including a solo 16-year-old girl). And an explanation of the mountain's name: English explorer Captain Vancouver was poking around in the water that became known as Puget Sound, saw the imposing mountain off to the southeast, and named it after his friend, Rear Admiral Rainier.

On the way up to Paradise, we stop to look over the origins of the Nisqually River - springs and snowmelt running through this glacial valley. The sign near the overlook shows measurements of the extent of the glacier as it retreated up the slopes of the mountain over the past decades.



In many places, streams from the summit run under the road, cascading in beautiful little waterfalls. We stop on the side of the road, walk down a little path, and get a better perspective on Paradise Falls.

The clouds that have been hovering over the mountain as we climbed the road close in as we reach Paradise. The visitors' center is rather nice, with a big common room downstairs where the desk is for the rangers to answer questions and trace hiking routes on their topo maps.



Upstairs is the little museum and gift shop, and galleries of big windows to look out on the scenery. Unfortunately, the problem with the credit card system we encountered in Longmire is happening here, as well, and Jerri is stuck in the gift shop waiting to check out. Meanwhile, it starts raining. I can look out the big windows from upstairs and watch the people in raincoats or light jackets returning off the trails. Back downstairs is a confused mess, with all the damp people crowding around. A large group has set up a picnic lunch on the "coffee table" in the center of the room.

The rain lets up a little, and Jerri and I walk across the parking lot to the Paradise Lodge for lunch. There is a magnificent dining room, but it's closed (after 2:00), and the staff (apparently taking dinner reservations) suggests we try the cafe at the other end of the hall. Rustic, dark stained timber beams, tall windows, a huge stone fireplace in front of which is a ranger giving a talk to a crowd of visitors. The cafe sells sandwiches and soup and hot tea over the counter, and we can sit near the window and watch the rain starting back up.

The rain lets up again as we resume our journey eastward, stopping at places to see things. One of these places is a broad pull-out with a panoramic view of the top of Mt. Rainier, shrouded in rainclouds.



On the other side of the pull-out is a view of more snow-covered and cloud-misted peaks.



Coming down off the slopes of Mt. Rainier is a long road through Stevens Canyon. There's quite a view looking down into the gorge, but following (and entering) the fleeing rainclouds is more dramatic still.

At one point, the road goes through a lengthy tunnel cut through the canyon wall.



We are looking for the east-side visitors' center and the Ohanapecosh hot springs. The road isn't well-marked, and we know we've gone to far when we come up to the fee station at the park entrance. Turning about, we take a gamble on the only road opening to the right, and just around the bend, hidden from the road by trees, is the visitors' center. It's about to close, but we pick up a few tips and Jerri gets another stamp for her Park Passport Book, and we strike the trail through the campground that supposedly leads to the hot springs.



Um... I think this is it. It's a spring, and it's... warm. Nothing like the numerous impressive hot springs all over Hot Springs, Arkansas.

Returning the way we came, there is a pull-out or traffic circle (that I don't really remember going through on the way out) for Box Canyon. Leaving the car at the parking lot, we trot across the wet road to the bridge and look down into a deep crevasse. The noise from the stream is echoey, and very far away.







Drawing closer to Paradise, back on the flanks of the mountain, more waterfalls appear. This is Sunbeam Falls, which has a beautiful part from the road, standing on the bridge...

... and an even more beautiful part falling over the cliff directly beneath the bridge.





Our visit is almost complete. We stop at the Inn so Jerri can get the shirt she saw earlier at the gift shop but decided to forego given the credit card problems. Since we're here, we get a commemorative photo at the National Park Inn where we stayed last night.

All the way back through the darkening forest. Finally the gate. We are done with Mt. Rainier. Jerri poses inside the trusty Dodge minivan at the classic park gate.



The route takes us back out on the National Park Highway, past the inns and hotels that are turning on their lights in the damp evening. Elbe is the small town where we left state highway 7 last night; we get back on 7 again, heading north. Following the GPS directions, we take a variety of turns onto local roads, eventually arriving in the larger towns of Yelm, Rainier, and Tenino. The road turns north toward Olympia. After a while, we pass the Olympia Regional Airport. I notice a "Olympia Flight Museum" at the airport with some old airplanes set up in the back; too bad we don't have time for a closer look at some local attractions that didn't make it into the tourist book.

Our hotel in Tumwater has luggage trolleys (good) but no elevator to take it to the second floor where our room is (not so good). There's a pretty nice guest laundry, which we use while planning tomorrow's activities. Which is tough, because the wireless Internet stinks. Another not-so-nice thing; the hotel breakfast ends at 9:30, so we can't sleep

long in the morning.



## Thursday June 27 - Washington State Capitol

It's a bit tricky to get back up on I-5 from our hotel, but once there, it's a fast shot into Olympia and the "Capitol" exit. The government park is very open, with quite a bit of parking on the diagonal streets radiating out from the Capitol.



Yes, the government park is very open. Lots of empty lawn. In the middle of the lawn, just south of where we park on the diagonal street, is a reproduction of Tivoli Fountain, seen here with the Capitol in the background.

It's a bit of a walk yet to the Capitol. Just east of the Capitol is the Insurance Building, which I think is a bit odd for a government building to be committed to insurance. There are many steps up to the main platform for the Capitol, and through the doors (yet another case of no security or metal detectors) and up to the visitors' desk where Jerri can get her stamp. Soon we are with the morning tour, with a friendly guide who was born and raised in Olympia and proud of his city and his state, and who tells Jerri that he is also in the Capitol Passport program, and has gotten most of the stamps.



The broad area under the rotunda is used for official presentations and observances. The stairs go up at either end to the Senate and House chambers. Above us is the classic dome and the magnificent chandelier suspended.



Here we are in the official "signing room", where the governor signs the bills and also makes televised pronouncements. We note the seal of the State of Washington embossed into the leather. The U.S. and State flags are behind the chair, and the (semi-permanent) TV equipment is at the other end of the table. The current governor is an amateur photography, and his best work is hung

on the walls.



The Reception Room has an amazing one-piece Mohawk carpet over the hardwood dance floor (it gets rolled back for dances, such as the Inaugural Ball). The walls are made of Italian "Picture Marble" - the guide has to point out some favorite imaginary images such as "the butterfly", "mouse hanging by tail", and "Santa Claus face". Over the fireplace, one of only five existing 46-star American flags is displayed.



The next level up is where the Senate and House chambers are. Overlooking the main platform, opposite we can see some of the flags of the counties of the state (I don't believe Arizona counties have flags) and the torchiere lamps - very Romanesque. On the opposite balcony is the bust of George Washington.

The guide is keen to point out the many instances of non-native stonework in the Capitol building. It is mostly Alaskan marble. The Senate chamber is faced with German marble, and the House chamber with French marble. Elsewhere we see Belgian marble. In the Office of the Secretary of State, we can see the hand-written state Constitution and the seal press for officializing state papers.

The next level up is for the observation galleries for the Senate and House chambers. Looking out into the main area, the gigantic Tiffany-made lamp hangs. It weighs more than a ton, and is large enough to enclose a Volkswagen Beetle.



Looking up, I can see a gallery up within the dome, like the Iowa Capitol in Des Moines. I ask about tour access, and the guide tells us that they used to include the dome gallery in the tour until a few years back when an earthquake occurred. Enough to cause the chandelier to sway slightly. Enough to trap a group of Boy Scouts in the dome gallery, who alerted rescuers to their presence by flying paper airplane notes down. After that, the fear of recurrent earthquakes has closed the dome gallery.



This concludes our tour. In the gift shop, in addition to the "smushed penny" machine where we get something for Faith's collection, we find a gallery of photos of the building's past: The building of the Capitol started in 1890 but ran out of money. After about 30 years when they were ready to resume, the design had changed, and the previous construction had to be demolished and

the foundation enlarged to support the larger dome. When we're all

done inside, we go back out for a photo. Across the plaza from the Capitol is the "Temple of Justice" (aka the state supreme court building), and from the steps of that building, we can get a pretty good view of the classic form of the Washington State Capitol. During the tour, we learn that just to the west is the Governor's Mansion, and that there is a secret tunnel to connect the Mansion with the Capitol so the Governor can come and go without being harrassed. There are Mansion tours, but they have to be arranged in advance.

At this point, we are done with our Washington State Capitol visit. I-5 picks up Highway 101 that runs northward along the western side of the inland waterway that includes Puget Sound. After a while, we get to Potlatch, which is a small community consisting mostly of RV parks. There is a country cafe where we can get some lunch.

Just about a mile back along our route, south of Potlatch, was something we want to get a closer look at - Cushman Powerhouse #2, a hydropower plant that apparently is still in service.



Highway 101 continues northward and then bends westward along the Juan de Fuca Strait. The skies become dark, and rain begins to fall. Around the town of Sequim, traffic gets heavy. We stick to it, and get to our overnight stop of Port Angeles. After checking into our hotel, we proceed on into town. As in other towns we've been through, such as Crescent City, the main road splits into two one-way streets. Going further westward, I spot what looks like a traditional Italian cafe. We stop and enjoy a real (not take-home-and-cook) pizza. A family is celebrating a birthday; they leave carrying boxes of merchandise. Back at the hotel, we plan out tomorrow's adventures and arrange travel for our daughters to join us in Seattle next week.





## Friday June 28 - Olympic National Park

The hotel breakfast room has a pancake cooking machine (rather than the usual waffle iron) that holds the attention of the youngest guests. The road to Olympic National Park breaks off the main road midtown, and the visitors' center is technically inside the city limits, just up the hill and within the forest. The parking lot is totally full, but after a bit of orbiting, I find a parallel spot at the far edge of the lot. There is a crowd just inside the door. After Jerri gets her stamp and picks out her postcards, the ranger at the cash register tells us that this is nothing; at the peak of the season, the line goes out the door and around the building - but we find that nearly everyone in the crowd is after hiking permits. That's not us. Looking at the park maps, it is apparent that Olympic National Park is very large and diverse - mountains in the interior, the wettest rain forest in North America on the western slopes, coastal tidal pools on the Pacific shore. Highway 101 appears to loop around the park to all these locations. Of course, we can't see all that, we are here for a taste of the park, and that means the mountains.





The road to Hurricane Ridge goes up and up the mountains. The clouds are all around us, and sometimes the clouds are raining. There are frequent pull-outs like this one, but you can't see much except for intermittent views through the clouds skudding by.

At the end of the road is Hurricane Ridge: a mountain slope that is mostly meadows on one side, and a steep tree-covered gap on the other. There are fantastic views of mountain peaks all around, like these.



And, of course, when the clouds lift a little bit, the majestic Olympic range itself. Even a panoramic shot doesn't do it justice.



The visitors' center up here is a pretty nice multi-level affair, with a broad patio at ground level to look up at the mountains across the grassy slope, and a museum area upstairs where the rangers have their hiking-path desk. Also a nice lunch counter where Jerri and I can get a burger and a cup of hot soup, much appreciated at this chilly and damp altitude.



There's a good paved path along the top of the ridge, through the trees looking down the steep slope on the other side. We notice a ski lift, can't tell if it is abandoned or not. As we return to the parking lot, a couple we have seen before have their big dog out and are preparing to go up the path when a ranger, who just happens to be passing by, tells them that dogs are

not permitted on the paths, and they have to leave it in their truck.

Coming back down, we stop at a turn-out where there are a series of streams running down the hillside into a culvert. There is a trailhead at this pullout with a sign posted with the distances to various locations. Quite large distances. Here we observe a young family, the parents putting on their boots and their Camelback water packs - and strapping on their kiddie carrier to take their baby on a serious hike.

Further down, we see two or three scenes like this; A doe and her fawns.



After descending back to Port Angeles, we stop in the parking lot of a ballfield to consult maps and make some arrangement phone calls. Cars slowly gather, releasing young men in ball-player uniforms.

I record here for future use that there is an excellent lighthouse here in Port Angeles, New Dungeness. Jerri could get a stamp, but it is a five-mile walk out along a narrow sand-spit, which would be highly interesting but we decide Jerri is just not up for that kind of exertion.



Returning down Highway 101, we pass through Jamestown. Which doesn't appear to be on the map, so it may actually be a suburb of Sequim. There has to be an Indian reservation, given the casino here. Note the totem-pole decoration. I am interpreting this as an authentic part of local

Indian culture, not unlike the desert symbols around the Desert Diamond casinos on the Tohono O'odham and Pascua Yaqui reservations back home.

The road takes us past the land mass on the west side of Puget Sound that has one of our destination lighthouses: Point No Point. It is late in the day, but we take a chance and drive out there. A long way out there. There is a little state park out here, and there are people still in the park - and a horse-drawn wagon for rides.

Of course it is too late. All we can do is look at the outside.



We will learn that this design is typical for most of the lighthouses in Washington State that line the shores of one of the most active shipping areas in the western hemisphere - Puget Sound. Low so the light can get under the fog layer, emphasis on foghorns.

Point No Point is also the headquarters of the US Lighthouse Society - also

closed. We know we have to come back.



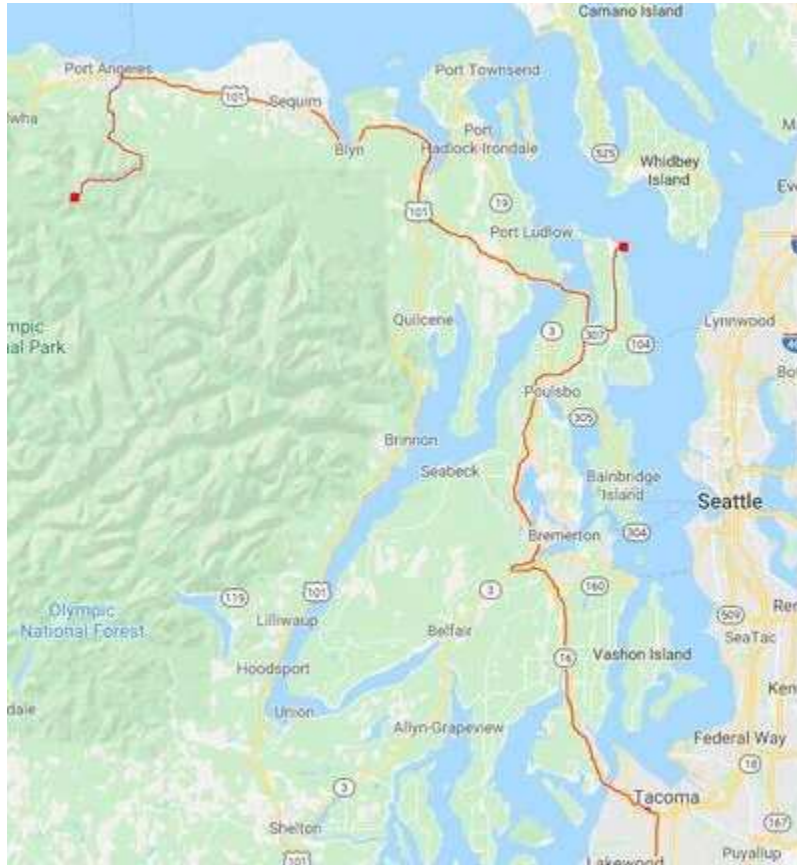
While we are here, we have to take the opportunity to put our feet in the water. Official photo for David.



And for Jerri. Who also (as always) does some beach-combing to find some souvenir shells.

The long drive back down south passes the Bremerton Navy Yards. I note there is a naval museum in here, which would certainly be worth the time to visit, if we had any such spare time. As we approach Tacoma, we come to the Tacoma Narrows Bridge. Every engineering or physics student in my generation has seen the film clip of the old Tacoma Narrows bridge collapsing - it was built without properly attending to resonances excited by the winds. The new bridge replaces the old one. We find our hotel in Tacoma (after struggling through massive road construction on the interstate), and dinner in an Elmer's restaurant nearby. On the wall, over the fireplace in the room where our

table is, hangs a painting of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge that we just crossed.



## Saturday June 29 - Western Puget Sound

The problem with visiting lighthouses is that they tend to only be open a limited number of hours only on weekends, probably mostly because it is volunteers that operate the tours. This makes planning to see them a bit challenging. Today is Saturday, and there is another lighthouse on the west side of Puget Sound that we need to cross off the list before focusing on the east side. We arise early (wait... aren't we supposed to be on vacation?) and get on the same road we were on last night, back up to the point at which Puget Sound opens into the Juan de Fuca Strait - that point past which all the marine traffic into the heart of Washington must pass. There is an important town on the end of this point of land, Port Townsend, and the northern part of the town borders on Fort Worden. This fort was another in a complex system of coastal defences created between the Civil War and World War II and ultimately abandoned when shipboard guns (and then missiles, and aircraft-carried bombs) became more than a match for fixed land-based coastal guns.

It takes a bit of poking around in Port Townsend before we find the correct route on the backstreets to the fort. Once inside, we find something like the classic army base, with the officer's quarters and important structures facing the long rectangular "parade grounds". There are a number of museums along the open space that would be nice to see, such as the Coastal Artillery Museum next door to the visitors' center and gift shop, which is our destination. It is a state park, and I decide to avoid paying at every park we go to for the rest of our visit by just getting the annual Discover pass. The attendant in the gift shop is another RV volunteer here for the summer, and helps Jerri get her lighthouse stamp. There are photos on the walls of the post in former days of glory, such as the World War II era when more than 4,000 troops were quartered here.

It would be nice to look around at the fort, but that's not why we're here. The road forks left at the water and continues north to the very end of the land, occupied by Point Wilson Lighthouse.



It's sad, actually, very dilapidated. It is still owned by the Coast Guard, of course, and there is a wind gauge and a radio mast in the yard. The roof of the keepers' house is sagging and mottled with years of accumulated seagull poop.



The house is fenced off, and the lighthouse is as well, but ineffectively, allowing us to walk right up to it. I can peek through the windows and see traces of refurbishment and some display cases, as if there were low-priority future plans to open the lighthouse properly for visitors. We can look up and see the modern beacon next to the Fresnel lens still housed in the cupola.

There's not much to see, other to say we were here, and look over the sea walls at the water on all three sides of the point. Leaving back through Port Townsend, Jerri spots a fake lighthouse on the top of a hill over a traffic intersection.







Another couple of hours back south (past the enticing Navy Museum signs outside of Bremerton). Once again we cross the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, in daylight this time, so we can get a nicer photo. The bridge is toll one-way, into the city.

Our road runs through Tacoma to the other side, to the port. I'm wondering if Tacoma isn't *the* seaport for the Seattle area. There are modern docks with huge cranes, and smaller, older docks with wooden piers and smaller cranes. Everywhere is the unmistakable signs of Washington's lumber-based economy - piles of logs, piles of wood chips, conveyor belts for moving wood chips, and so forth. The road winds up behind the port into Brown's Point.

Somewhere in this maze of little roads with odd angular intersections is the Brown's Point Lighthouse. By the time we see the road signs for Dash Point, we know we've gone too far. Being more careful this time, we get to what looks like a private drive for the "Brown's Point Improvement Club", where it looks like a wedding reception is being held, but we park there anyways. Except that after we ascertain that we are in the right place, when the opportunity arises, I take the car back out and take every left turn I come to until I end up in the tiny lighthouse parking lot.

At the keepers' house, the volunteer guide ladies wave us in. A young girl gives us the tour of the house; this is her first day doing tours and can't answer many of our questions, but she has her fact sheet and gives it a good try. The gift shop is quite good, and Jerri gets another shirt (and a lot of other stuff \$\$\$). Down in the cellar, there is an excellent museum, not primarily about the lighthouse but about the Brown's Point community. An older lady guides us around the museum;

her parents lived in Brown's Point and she herself attended the two-room schoolhouse that is modeled in this museum. Dash Point used to have a community barbecue on the "old docks", but this tradition has ended. Brown's Point still has an annual salmon bake, but it isn't anything like it used to be - she gets a bit weepy reflecting on how much local culture has been lost forever.

There are a number of little buildings on the Point. An old fellow in the boathouse shows off a rescue boat that was built by a Croatian descendent using Coast Guard blueprints and Scandinavian boatbuilding traditions. It seems the guide in the boathouse, Oscar, is himself a Coast Guard retiree, who worked in the Great Lakes region around Michigan. He informs us that most of

their work was involved with pleasure boats that got into trouble, and their priority was on saving lives, rather than boats (which are insured), and the greatest enemy was hypothermia.



The original "lighthouse" was a small wooden structure built on a farmer's land. In the course of time, this Art Deco-style tower was built to support the automated beacon. There are plans to replace the concrete tower with something more like the original wooden tower.

As we leave, Jerri has a try with the fog bell.



Retracing our route back to the port, I notice that Mount Rainier is visible today from the level of the water.

Having seen our intended lighthouse destinations today, we are going to try to fit in one more attraction - the Washington State History Museum, near the University of Washington at Tacoma campus. This is pretty much right on our path up to the Seattle area and our next hotel. After

parking outside the museum and discovering that there is only another hour of operation for today, our priority changes to a very late lunch in the college Subway just across the street, across the trolley tracks. After that is a look at a wondrous attraction we have read about - the Bridge of Glass.

Which is a bridge across the 705 highway to the Museum of Glass. The bridge shows off glass art, such as these marine life-inspired objects in the transparent ceiling.



Further down is a wall of niches with strange vases.



Towers of large chunks of green glass.



Overall, the bridge wasn't the world-class attraction we were led to believe it was. On the other side is the Museum of Glass, which looks interesting but is (of course) closed now. Outside the entrance is a glass sculpture that is probably also a water work but is under repair.

Out in the plaza are other glass-based art objects, like this interactive piece with water continually running down the outside of the glass posts. Interesting.



Back across the Bridge of Glass. On the side we came from, just off the bridge, is the old Union Station building. We go around in front to see if it is open just to look inside, but of course, it is closed. It isn't really that late on Saturday afternoon, but everything is closed.

That's enough sightseeing for today. Proceeding up Highway 5, we pass the SeaTac International Airport, where the girls will be arriving in a few days. Then the busy highway system passing downtown Seattle to the east. And then into the northern suburbs, including Lynnwood where our hotel for the next several nights is located. Dinner is at the Red Lobster just down the street. While waiting for our table, we sit on a bench outside and watch a family whose small son is running around the lawn perilously close to the traffic.



## Sunday June 30 - Eastern Puget Sound

In the case of Oregon, all the lighthouses were along the treacherous Pacific coast. In Washington, there aren't so many lighthouses on the coast; most of them are along the inland waterway. Today, we see two on the west side of the Puget Sound. First, just a bit north of Lynnwood where we are staying is the town of Mukilteo. and the route there is easy until we get to the outskirts, at which point the rightmost lane turns into a waiting queue for the ferry. Fortunately for us (this time), the left lane proceeds into town and we can turn left into the parking lot for the lighthouse and the surrounding town public park. At this late on Sunday morning, the lighthouse buildings are just opening, and the lighthouse itself isn't available yet, so we start at the boathouse which serves as the Interpretive Center for Mukilteo History - and a photo

gallery for local boatbuilding wood-workers. The keepers' house is now the Mukilteo and Lighthouse History museum (and gift shop).

After poking around a while, the lighthouse is open for visitors. We join a small crowd in the workroom looking at lighthouse miscellanea, listening to the narrative of the volunteer guide, and waiting for our turn to go up in the tower.



When our turn comes, we ascend the spiral wooden stair to the top. The fourth-order Fresnel (with an electric lamp) still serves as a navigation aid. Note the little placards over the windows pointing out the features of the view through each window.



After coming down, Jerri gets her "official" lighthouse photo. It's a beautiful all-wood structure, and the locals are proud of it. Just a bit south of the lighthouse is a structure of sound baffles and an electric foghorn down at the water level.



The ferry terminal is adjacent to the lighthouse property. Several ferries come and go while we are visiting the lighthouse.

The sun is bright and hot on this clear day. There are quite a number of young families with small children about, enjoying the grassy park and the sea views. I notice more than a few have ice-cream cones. This puts me on the lookout for the source, which appears to be Ivar's Fish Bar. This is only my first encounter which is what appears to be a Seattle-area fixture, not unlike Lucky Wishbone back home in Tucson.

[www.ivars.com](http://www.ivars.com)

I should also mention in this context what we see all over the Puget Sound. In every town, or out along country roads, there are little kiosks

or trailers selling... *coffee*. I knew Starbucks came from Seattle. I actually don't see a lot of Starbucks, but I see a *lot* of independent do-it-yourself small-time coffee sellers.

Having finished with the fine little town of Mukilteo, we make our way back to I-5 and head south past downtown Seattle. Just past the Old Rainier Brewery, with the big red script "R" looming over the freeway, the West Seattle Bridge exit takes us on a broad road eastward. Soon the nice road shrinks down to a narrow two-lane that threads through a maze of residential streets. The homes and rentals are narrow two or three-story buildings, and there are cars parallel-parked bumper-to-bumper non-stop. Creeping in a long line of other parking-spot hunters along the street that runs along the waterfront, we pass the lighthouse with no hope of stopping. Continuing out the road southeast of the point, the traffic lightens. More parking appears along the sidewalk and handrail along the waterfront, and we get the first one that is convenient (for parallel-parking a minivan). It's a long walk back to the lighthouse, along the "beach", which is no more than maybe twenty feet of rocks and dried seaweed perhaps 15 feet below the street level, between the sea-wall and the water. Not very attractive, and yet there are more than a few people playing down there.

Like Yaquina Bay and Umpqua River, the Coast Guard actively operates the Alki Point Lighthouse. There is a parking lot, but all the spots are "official", and occupied. We have arrived on an Open House day; after waiting a while with an accumulating group, the automated gate opens and the uniformed CG volunteer auxiliary waits until the previous group exits before waving us in. We get the usual orientation talk and are led back to the lighthouse. "Be quiet", we are told, "The admiral lives in the keeper's house". Oh, so *that's* why the Coast Guard keeps this lighthouse property in a holiday resort town!





Inside is another CG officer who gives us a lot of information while we wait our turn to go up in the tower. The original beacon was a lantern on a pole that the farmer owning the land put up on his own initiative. Later, the Lighthouse Service engaged him as a "keeper" and put up a special-designed lantern on a pole. Then, the Coast Guard bought some of the farmer's land and built this lighthouse. The original had a foghorn, but as the area built up and people started complaining (like they do around here when the fools buy land around the Air Force base), the foghorn was discontinued. He said that some foghorns are operated on-demand from radio signals sent from

ships who want to know where they are. Lighthouses don't need to be tall, like they are on the coast, since the ships are much closer in the Sound than they are in the sea, but shorter towers meant more frequent rewinding of the clockwork that rotated the beacons.

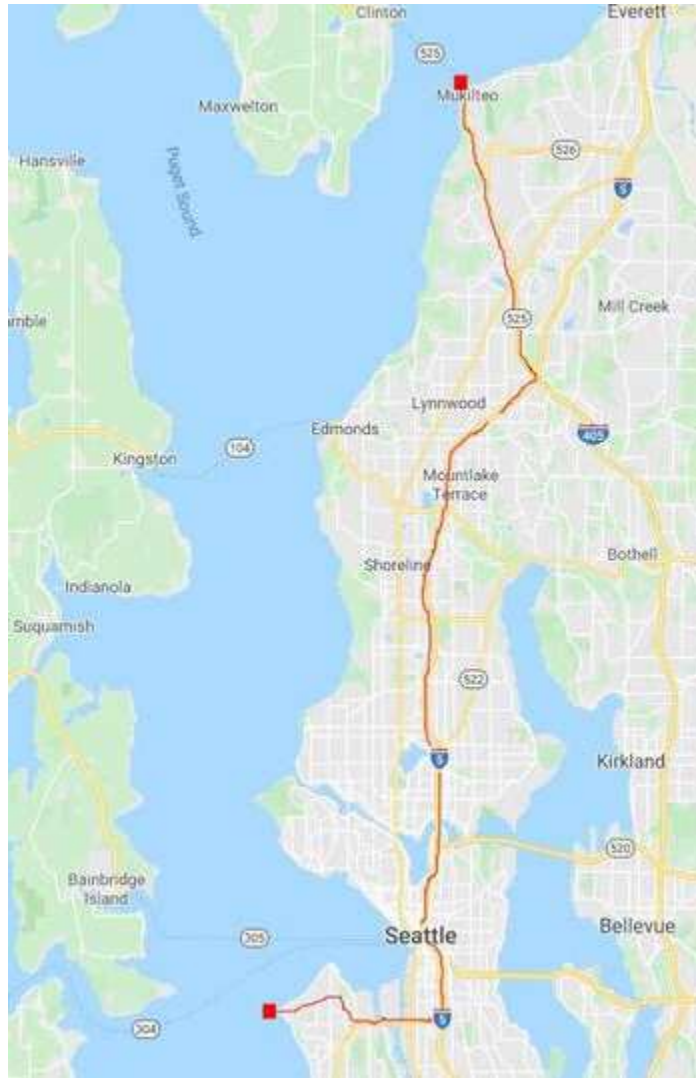
When our turn in the tower comes, we see the unique diagonal window frames and a modern sixth-order beacon. We can see downtown Seattle and the Space Needle from here!



After we leave and walk all the way back to the car, Jerri realizes that she forgot to get her stamp! I drive back to the lighthouse and park illegally in the neighbor's spot while Jerri runs back in. She returns telling me that the auxiliary said she was the only one asking for a stamp today! Since we're already heading northeast, we continue (creeping along with the other cars) along Alki Point's northern, Seattle-facing shore. My suspicions are confirmed: Alki Point is a local holiday destination, like Cannon Beach is. Lots of shops and cafes and bars, a nice wide *sandy* beach, and *lots and lots* of swimsuit-clad pedestrians. I get off the beachfront road as soon as possible.

The original plan was to take the ferry to Vishon Island and see the lighthouse there, but they close at 5:00 and there's no way we can get out there in an hour and a half. The backup plan was to visit downtown Seattle, but I learned last night that downtown is celebrating a "pride festival". Besides, my toe hurts too much for any significant walking. So we just return to Lynnwood. Jerri finds a CVS drugstore there to get a prescription. We were going to use the hotel guest laundry, but it is out-of-order, and the desk clerk directs us just down the main street (196th St.), where we find Darcie's next to Fred Meyer. Fred Meyer looks a *lot* like a Target, and Darcie's is a fairly nice laundry except the machines don't take coins; the attendant tells me I have to buy a stored-value card for \$2 and put money on it. As a result, I still have a Darcie's money card around the house with some funds remaining on it.





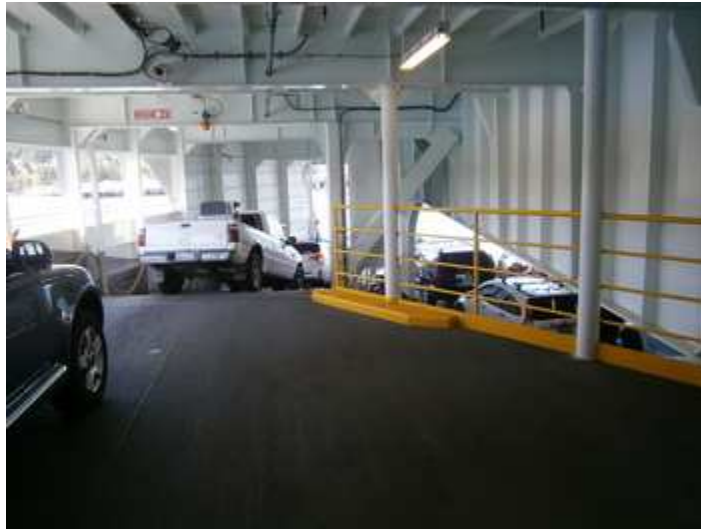
## Monday July 1 - Whidbey Island

Today is less hectic (as in, more vacation-ey) then it has been. We can hang out in the breakfast room until they take in the food, and then leave, retracing our route to Mukilteo. This time, we get in the right-hand lane, knowing more what to expect. It is s l o w, and after creeping along for a mile, we get to the tollbooth, and then get directed to one of multiple parallel lines in the staging area to await the next ferry. We sit peacefully, enjoying the down-time. Many people are walking around, some holding Ivar's ice cream.



Then the ferry arrives. After the mooring settles, a seemingly endless line of vehicles passes by. Then it is our turn. One line after another is waved in by the ferry workers.

Cars are parked closely in every available location. We can get out and find the stair to the passenger deck and explore.



Outside is the observation deck. After all the vehicles are loaded for the trip from Mukilteo to Whidbey Island, the ferry gets underway. We can watch the Mukilteo Lighthouse, where we were just yesterday, receding into the distance.

Midway across, the other ferry passes. It's nice out here, and interesting, but very breezy and a little chilly. Inside are benches and padded chairs and tables. A young man is strumming a guitar. A family with young kids is working on a jigsaw puzzle. There is a snack bar, magazine racks, and a display of tourist brochures. The sign on the wall identifies the vessel as the *Tokitae*.



Shortly before arriving, the loudspeakers inform us to return to our cars, and we join the crowd that leisurely filters out of the passenger area back down to the parking aisles. Just outside we can see the dock embracing our ferry. Soon we bump to a stop, and I can see the ferry personnel running around outside with big ropes, and then opening the gate. Aisle by aisle, the cars are directed outside, and we are following the line of traffic out of the Whidbey ferry terminal. We pass through Clinton immediately, and then the road goes a long ways through small communities until at last we get to the intersection with local route 20. Turning right, we enter Fort Casey State Park, and a little further, arrive at Admiralty Head Lighthouse. Great! I can get out the Washington State Discovery Pass we bought days ago in Fort Worden!



Pretty little building. Inside is a museum - and a very knowledgeable volunteer guide. It seems that the lighthouse was originally built closer to the water, but when the Army expressed a need to build Fort Casey up to the water, the lighthouse was rebuilt here. Nicer, in brick. Later, the Coast Guard decided it was not needed by the newer, better equipped ships, so it was handed over

to the Army who used it for barracks. When the fort was

decommissioned in '44, it sat abandoned until the Coast Guard handed it over to the State Park administration. Refurbishment got underway, including the contribution by high school shop students, who (among other fine woodworking projects, some of which were displayed inside) rebuilt the tower cap - the original cap was taken away and reused at the New Dungeness lighthouse (mentioned above at Port Angeles).

Actually, most of the museum was committed to Fort Casey. The guide tells us that state parks get to keep the money they raise, so the Fort Casey managers are always thinking of fundraisers - like "The Haunted Fort" with actors (from local theatres) dressed in period clothing and uniforms being the "ghosts".

The volunteer workers here are the museum docent and the gift shop operator. There is nobody to manage people going to see the lighthouse tower; Jerri thinks it is odd and inviting to vandals to just have the stairs unguarded.







There's nothing up in the tower but a view and the external door that has been bolted partially open to allow air but prevent people from potentially falling over the rail.

The lighthouse is nice, but the real attraction is Fort Casey, or rather these batteries that have been restored to much better condition than the one we saw at Point Bonita. There are quite a few people, including some families with youngsters trying to fly kites.



Now, this is unique, and worth the trip! Everywhere else are just the fortifications, but Fort Casey has some actual disappearing guns "rescued" from U.S. forts in the Philippines. There are two. This one is in the fire-ready position.

The other is in the "disappeared" ready-to-load position.



Again, fire control was calculated using optical observations and triangulation. Rather than the steel domes flush with the ground, as we saw at Point Bonita, the observation points here are in these towers that peek above the battlements.

This structure with the armored roofs and viewing slits is apparently the battery command post.



Well, that was unanticipated but worth the time. Which honestly could be said of a great many other attractions during our trip that we encountered but decided we didn't have time to stop for. The lady at the gift shop told us some interesting things about Deception Pass, at which the road through the island reconnects to the mainland. We had planned on coming over on the ferry, but we hadn't really planned for the return trip, so this will do. After leaving the Fort Casey park, we strike route 20 on up north. At one point along the road, we pass by the entrance to a naval air station, marked by salvaged jets up on pedestals.

Following the signs, we enter Deception Pass State Park, and take the exit off to the right. It appears to be a campground. There is a trail off to the right, back along the road and northward toward the end of the island, so we park and move along on foot. It's a long path through the forest. A few times we come out on overlooks; there is a beach below, and people playing in the water.



The path gets steeper, hugging the side of the cliff. Now we can see the bridge. Continuing on, we finally reach the end of the path - at a parking area right at the bridge!

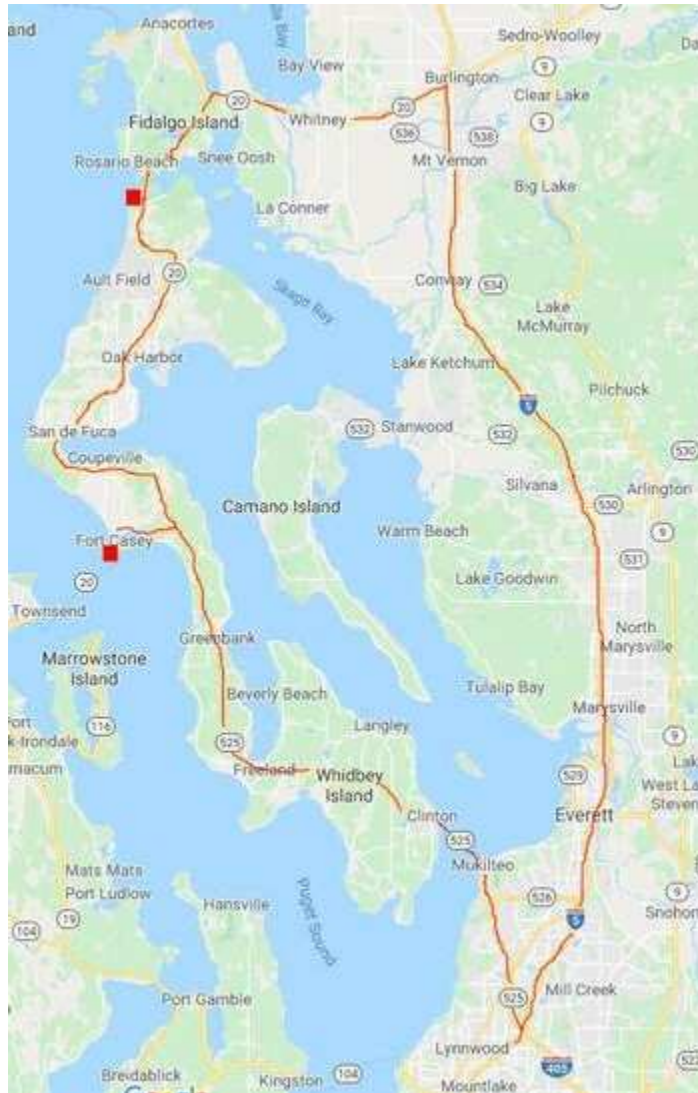
View from the middle of the bridge. Stiff breeze up here; I am careful to hold onto my hat. The geography was given its name by Captain Vancouver, who thought this could be the entrance to the Northwest Passage they were so keen on finding. However, he saw the eddies in the water and didn't want to risk the ship, so he sent a party in a longboat to explore. After about a week, the boat came up from behind - it was an island, and the exploration party rowed all the way around. So it wasn't the Northwest Passage after all!



There is also the story of a woman who lived near the pass and operated a ferry to take people back and forth to the island. There was some local resistance to building the bridge, and it certainly put her out of business, but now there is quite a lot of traffic coming and going to Whidbey Island.

The lengthy hike pretty much did Jerri in, and so I leave her in the parking area and climb/jog back down the trail and through the forest to where we left the car. I can then drive up to the parking area in front of the bridge, pick her up, and we continue on our way. Route 20 goes a long ways inland before connecting with I-5, and then I-5 goes a long ways south before we arrive back at Lynnwood. This is the furthest north in Washington we will be. We find another Shari's in Lynnwood just north of 196th Street on route 99, for dinner and pie.





## Tuesday July 2 - Vashon Island

The problem with ferries is they don't run all that often. They're not like city buses (which, come to think of it, don't run that often in Tucson, either). You have to plan your day around the schedule. Plus, the stops aren't all over the place, you have to go where they are, and to get to Vashon Island, that means south of Seattle. All this means is we have to get up at 5:30 today, and after preparing for the day, we can get away from the hotel at 7:40. There's heavy traffic into the city on I-5, and shortly I realize my gamble isn't going to pay off: We're already running on fumes, so I'm going to have to pull off at a highway community instead of finding a station past Seattle. After that, it's fairly uneventful until after we exit from I-5 at the Big Red "R" onto the West Seattle Bridge road, like we did on Sunday. This time, we continue on the main road as it bends south into a residential area and runs along Lincoln

Park. This is when we join the line for the Fauntleroy ferry. At the tollbooth, we are asked if we are going to Vashon or Southworth, and get put in the line for Vashon. The ferry services Fauntleroy, Vashon Island, and Southworth on the other side mostly as a sequence, and this governs how many to each destination they can put on the boat. When the next ferry docks (from Southworth), a bunch of cars get off but not all of them, and then we get put on.



The ferry boat is the *Issaquah*. As before, we can exit our car and walk around in the passenger area and the outside deck. I can stand here and watch us depart the Fauntleroy terminal.

We don't explore the boat for very long; it's about a ten-minute hop to the island. Back in our car, we can watch Vashon Island approach through the loading gate.



After getting out of the terminal, it's a long drive down through the island. We get to Point Robinson before our 9:00 appointment with the lighthouse guardian and park in the lot. The road continues down a

steep hill, but the sandwich board at the end of the lot says that the parking down below is reserved for resident guests, so we carefully walk down. At the bottom of the hill are the keeper's quarters and a water-side path running off to the left, northward, and we can see the lighthouse in the distance.



We can inspect the exterior for quite a while. After a bit, a young fellow in a State Parks truck drives over, gets out, and starts walking around. Is this "Captain Joe"? Getting in earshot we ask him, and he says, no, Captain Joe will be along shortly. And so it is. He introduces himself and unlocks the door to let us into the fog signal room that has become a museum.

Captain Joe is a real character, and a mine of interesting information that he is anxious to share. He wants it clear that he was a Coast Guard ship captain, formerly commanding icebreakers in the Arctic, Antarctic, and Great Lakes. He retired to "magical Vashon Island" (he has a dry sense of humor, and Vashon Island is always "magical Vashon Island"). Seems to me that the Coast Guard as an organization doesn't really care about the lighthouses, but Coast Guard personnel usually do, and Captain Joe is one of these. He has used his influence to call in favors from his Coast Guard mates when the service decommissioned Point Robinson Lighthouse, arranged to have the original 1880's fifth-order Fresnel optics left in place, and got it wired for electric operation. He has a lot of stories. It seems that when the Coast Guard was formed in 1939 and incorporated the former Lighthouse Service, LHS keepers were given the option to swear into the Guard or remain as civilian employees. There are still a few "LHS" names on the Coast Guard personnel rolls! He tells us that the Coast Guard served in World War II invasions, and he knows a CG coxswain who received a Medal of Honor in Vietnam.

About this time, we notice another family group "looking wistfully

through the window", as Captain Joe puts it, and he invites them in and restarts part of his spiel. They are from Colorado. He tells us all that the Pacific northwest is prone to earthquakes (which we have discovered elsewhere), but the lighthouse foundation consists of wooden piles driven deep into the ground, making the lighthouse practically earthquake-proof... and if we ever get another quake, everyone in Vashon Island can wait it out inside the lighthouse! (It might be a little crowded, so the cows and the dogs will have to stay outside.) He also points out flyers and posters for the "Low Tide Celebration" on July 6, which will be a traditional family-friendly party for the entire island right here at Point Robinson.

[business.vashonchamber.com/events/details/low-tide-celebration-67326](http://business.vashonchamber.com/events/details/low-tide-celebration-67326)  
[www.vashonbeachcomber.com/news/a-beach-full-of-stories](http://www.vashonbeachcomber.com/news/a-beach-full-of-stories)

Back outside, I take note of the multiple foghorns. Captain Joe says they are functional, but not in official service.







The keepers' houses are available for vacation rent. There's a chance they are occupied now, so we don't really get close. Captain Joe says that, when the lighthouse volunteers were refurbishing the facilities, one of the ladies, Shelly, asked for permission to remodel the keepers' houses. The Coast Guard CO said it was fine as long as it wasn't something he would dislike. So she

painted it "baby puke green" - and Captain Joe says he won't let her forget it. He enlists us to take a message for her to the USLHS headquarters, to remind her that he still holds it against her (laughing).

Joe also knows Oscar, the ex-Coast Guardsman we met at Brown's Point.

USLHS headquarters - that's where we are heading next. I climb the hill back to the parking lot, get the car, and drive down to pick up Jerri, and then it's back along our route through the island. We stop for lunch in the town of Vashon, at the intersection of Vashon Highway and Bank Road. There's a lot of traffic here, and it's a bit hard to find a parking spot. On the southwest corner is "The Hardware Store", which obviously was once a hardware store but is now a hip cafe. We have to wait a little bit for a table to free up. The items on the menu are "high cuisine" items, and there is an emphasis on wine (some with Vashon Island labels). The service is slow; we have places to be, and there are other people waiting for tables.

Arriving at the northern ferry terminal, it is not a long wait in the Southworth line before the boat arrives and we are put on, again pointing in a different direction than the cars on the other side. It's another ten-minute cruise to the west side of Puget Sound, where the ferry people direct us Southworth-bound cars to make a U-turn on the boat before getting off. After that, it's another long drive northward on roads we've seen before, past that enticing Navy Museum sign outside of Bremerton, and on up to Hansville and Point No Point. As we drive, it starts raining a bit, on and off, for the rest of the day.

It's early enough on a week-day that we catch the US Lighthouse Society office open, and have a nice visit with Jerry (the ex-Navy tour coordinator), Cassandra (the book-keeper), Jeff (USLHS executive

officer), and Jeff's little dog, Augustin. Jerri gets her stamps, one for Point No Point lighthouse and another for the USLHS headquarters. Jeff is so impressed that a lighthouse tourist has stopped by that he keeps trying to give stuff to Jerri - mostly stuff that she already has. Finally she accepts a book about lady lighthouse keepers and a stuffed dog toy in a little "I Woof Lighthouses" tee-shirt.

As a member of the USLHS, Jerri is given a special private tour of the lighthouse, including a visit to the tower not available to the public. This is why - a treacherous curvey ladder to the lens chamber.



Jerri up in the Point No Point Lighthouse tower with the optics.

Proof that Jerri did indeed climb up and climb down the ladder.



Jeff is passionate about lighthouses. He tells us that the English are even more jealous of their traditions, such as Eddystone Lighthouse, stamped on the British penny. The plan to tear down the lighthouse was vociferously rejected by the public, who then had the tower disassembled, moved to the new location stone by stone, and reassembled. Sort of like London Bridge at Havasu City. Jeff accepts our message from Captain Joe, as he knows both Joe and Shelly and the whole sordid story.



While we were at USLHS headquarters, Jerri also got a stamp for Skunk Bay Lighthouse, which is just a little drive away. This isn't a real lighthouse, but the property owner built it and put a salvaged beacon in it. Then the Coast Guard started getting reports from shipping who observed an unrecognized beacon. The owner was told he either had to stop using the beacon or register it as a navigation aid. He did the latter. Since it is on private property, we don't feel comfortable with doing more than stepping in the driveway to get a little closer and frame it better.

Back on the road out of Point No Point, I stop briefly to get a picture of an interesting dwelling - someone went through a lot of trouble to have the above-deck part of a salvaged ship moved here and installed as a house.



The town of Kingston isn't far from here, and we pick up the ferry to the other side of Puget Sound, to Edmonds which is just a few miles from Lynnwood. The parking lot or staging area is quite large, and I note that there are a lot of foot passengers, or people pushing bicycles, boarding directly to the passenger deck via a covered walkway that looks a lot like a jet bridge at an airport. This says something about Seattle-area residents and their commitment to mass transit that they will commute by ferry on foot.





This trip is a bit longer than the other ferry trips we've taken so far, and we have time to actually explore the boat and actually relax, and get a souvenir photo of the passenger area in a Washington State ferry.

