

Ormand Family Activity

June 2019: Pacific Northwest Adventure - Part III

Wednesday July 3 - Seattle Lighthouses

Breakfast is taken with a light rain falling on the glass roof of the dining nook. Today we are actually, finally going into the city of Seattle. After we leave the hotel and descend again on I-5, we take the Mercer exit following the route I researched last night. The Mapquest directions are almost right: When it says "turn left onto Dravus", that's not exactly how it works; Dravus is an overpass, and one must get onto Dravus via an exit from 15th Avenue, and by the time we figured that out, we were already past the exit. It took a while and seeing some parts of upper Seattle that we hadn't intended on seeing to get back on 15th southbound to pick up the exit in the other direction.

After that, it was an easy drive the rest of the way to Discovery Park where we made our next unpleasant discovery. There is limited parking at the lighthouse, and they make permits available at the visitors' center for those in need as first come, first served. As we approach the counter, the helper hands a permit to a young mother pushing a stroller. When it is our turn, we find that was the last permit. The helper apologetically traces out the walking route on a map. Of course, immediately upon trying to follow that route, we start walking in the wrong direction; after consulting the cellphone compass, we get turned around right again.

It's a fine park for walking and playing in, very large with diverse settings - forest, meadows, grasslands, coastlines. It is also very long. I think the helper said it was 2.5 miles to the lighthouse. Halfway there, we stop and rest at this cliffside spot and look down at the low-tide mud flats and Alki Point across the water.



The map is somewhat vague, and the little signposts along the path are ambiguous. We are following the "loop trail", but it becomes apparent that the "loop trail" doesn't go to the point. We ask a jogger if he knows the path to the lighthouse. He isn't sure, but he makes a suggestion, and we take it down a steep hill. When the road bends around the Sewage Treatment Plant, we know we are in the right place.



A little further are the keepers' quarters and out on the end of the land is West Point Lighthouse. It's a sad affair, closed off, abandoned, boarded up, tagged with graffiti. It is still a working navigation aid, judging from the modern light placed in front of the original cupola. The foghorn is still present, but probably not operational.

Not much to see. Other than a sign posted for visitors to control their dogs, which have been known to maul seal pups on the beach. It was all Jerri could do to walk the 2.5 miles (more, actually, given the mis-steps) out here, so I leave her here and quick-walk through the park - along the road, not the "loop trail" that we used (partially) to get here - back to the visitors' center, get the car (the permit is for *parking*, not for *driving through*) and return to fetch her. Along the way, I note parts of a decommissioned military base - Fort Lawson - and some of the officers' homes have been converted to vacation rentals.



Leaving the park, I try to retrace our route, but somewhere along 15th Avenue fail to pick up the right corner. Poking along in the residential maze, we finally give up and let the GPS have a try. After a few more unobvious turns, we find ourselves back out on Mercer Street headed in

the right direction. Along the shore of Lake Union, there are paid parking lots, for which the posted signs say can be used til 4:00. What happens after 4:00? I'm hoping it is like Tucson, where the parking becomes free after 5:00 and all day on weekends.

We can see the Museum of History and Industry, or the "MOHAI" from where we park. As we approach, we see teens in swim trunks and bikinis jumping off the concrete platform into the lake, or congregating along the path chatting. Jerri is thinking she saw a sign saying "no jumping off the bridge", and we're fairly sure we saw them jumping off the bridge.



As we come up to the MOHAI, we notice there are lots of chairs and some pavilions set up, and workers taking them down. Apparently some big event happened earlier today. It's past lunchtime, and we spent all morning hiking around Discovery Park, so the first stop is the cafe where we can still get sandwiches. Then we can pay the admission and go into the museum.

mohai.org

Unfortunately, we have arrived one and a half hours before closing. We try the best we can. This is really quite a good museum, and we learn a lot about the area.

The top floor covers the maritime aspect of Seattle and Puget Sound. This includes Seattle's shipbuilding industry, famous naval architects, the Foss tugboat company (www.foss.com), and the thriving ferry industry.





The optics salvaged from the Smith Island Lighthouse are located here.

The second floor is committed to the history of the Seattle area, including such topics as:

- The original settlers, some of whom have streets named after them, such as Mercer and Denny,
- Alki Point was settled optimistically to be "The New York of the West Coast"... and how "alki", in the Chinook trade jargon, means "someday",
- The Indian Wars that threatened Seattle-area settlements, until Chief Seattle endorsed the Elliott treaty ceding land to the white settlers,
- The impact of the lumber industry,
- The Great Fire of 1889, and the subsequent rebuilding and relayout of the city,
- Seattle's role in the Klondike Gold Rush (which was great commercially for Seattle traders, but impoverishing for all those hopeful gold-seekers),
- The origin of the Boeing Aircraft Company and its economic influence in the area (Boeing has its fingerprints all over Seattle),
- A very progressive perspective on urban planning, including such aspects as utilities (water delivery) and mass transit,
- Large-scale labor strikes in the area,
- The Great Depression and the impact of Roosevelt and the WPA (such as the Grand Coulee Dam, on the Columbia River in Washington State).

On the main floor are lots of large display things, such as an amphibious mail airplane hanging from the ceiling and this intriguing "toe truck".



(Not my photo.)



And this nifty interactive display of Seattle-area fixtures, such as the Old Rainier Brewery (that's the big red script "R", as seen above I-5 at the exit to south Seattle) and Eddie Bauer. The boxes do different things as the handwheels are cranked, such as the gunfighter drawing his pistol.

(Also not my photo.)

At this point, the museum that has been announcing the impending closure now is asking the visitors to leave, and so we do. Now, the reason we are even here is to see the Lightship *Swiftsure*, and here it is (not part of the museum) (and currently under refurbishment and therefore not available for tours). Jerri got the Passport stamp first thing inside the museum earlier.

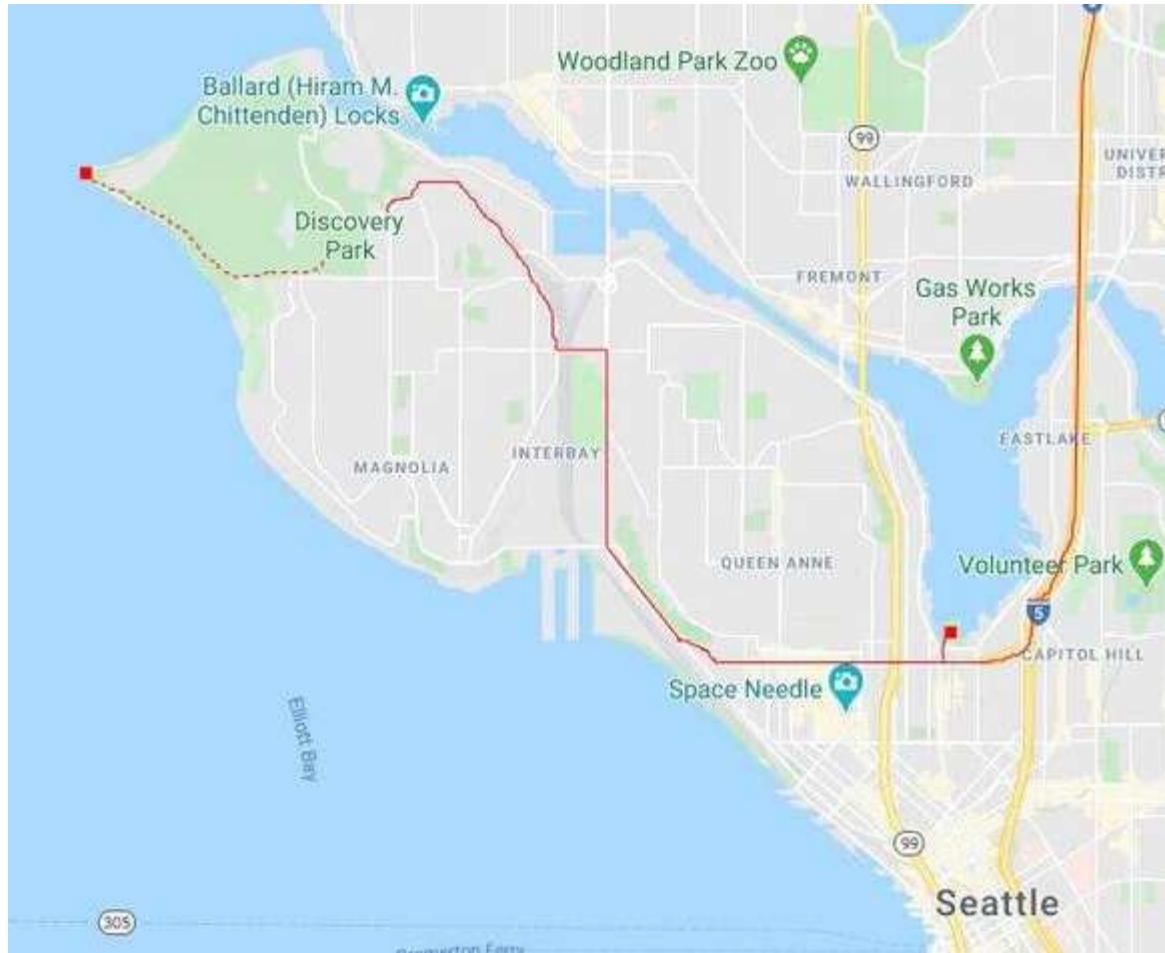




There are several interesting boats moored here, such as this fireboat.

I notice that right there near the MOHAI is the Center for Wooden Boats (www.cwb.org), which I think would be great to see (or, rather, experience, as it is looking, AND building, AND sailing), but of course it would be closed by now. My original plan for the end of the day was to go down and see some of the waterfront sights, but we're tired and my toes are hurting, so we just depart downtown and return to our Lynnwood base. Dinner is leftovers from last night. Then Jerri sends me out for distilled and drinking water. Locally, this means Fred Meyer, just down the street next to the Darcie's laundry. As I expected, Fred Meyer is like a Super Target - a very large department store with clothes, furnishings, electronics, sporting goods, etc. And groceries, including water. Fred Meyer is apparently part of the Kroger empire, because my Fry's discount card works here.

Into the evening, it is time to go fetch the children. I have arranged their travel so they could both travel in adjacent seats on the last leg, and arrive in Seattle together. The trip down I-5 to SeaTac is not bad, but entering the airport is ridiculous. Bumper-to-bumper, crawling along, cars (especially taxicabs) making dangerous abrupt lane changes. This induces me to abandon my original plan of waiting in the "cellphone lot" until they arrived and pick them up at the curb; instead, I just go on into the terminal parking and walk inside. Huge. Cavernous. Lots of Alaska Air counters (even a special counter dedicated for Amazon employees!). I hang out near the American baggage claim, and lo! In the tourist literature rack, an Arizona promo mag! After a little while, two happy girls appear, and we return through the terminal and the parking garage and I-5 back to our hotel.



Thursday July 4 - Space Needle

The entire family can enjoy the not-so-bad hotel breakfast this morning, although the dining nook is crowded today - being the Fourth of July. When we're ready to go, we traverse the now-familiar southbound I-5 to the Denny Street exit, down Denny Street straight, and turn right on Broad. We are in the shadow of the Space Needle, and there is a lot of pedestrian traffic. Looking for a parking area. Ah, there's a sign. It takes us down into a multi-level subterranean parking structure. We park, and look around for an exit. Ah, there's a "Stairs" and an unlocked door. Up the stairs to the top and through the door. We are now in an office hallway. Uneasy, expecting a public walkway. Look at the door we just came through: "Emergency Exit". Well. Good thing it wasn't alarmed. We all go down the hall to the lobby and smile faintly at the receptionist as we go outside. Whew. Silly. But I'm thinking she sees clueless tourists all the time. Maybe that's why the emergency exit wasn't alarmed. Looking back, I see we have just emerged from the KOMO-TV offices.

Charity was here a few months ago with her friend and room-mate, who is more into hiking and outdoors stuff than museums and tourism sites, so she didn't get to visit the Space Needle. That - and the fact that the Space Needle is exactly the sort of touristy thing we do on our vacations - is why we are here today. However, Charity also has read up on and recommends the Museum of Pop Culture, or the MOPOP. The way the Space Needle works is you buy a reservation for a certain time, and then show up for admission at that time. So I get the tickets for a couple of hours from now, and then we can spend some time at the MOPOP. It's just maybe a hundred yards away. It's also a bit hard to figure; there are several doors and none of them is obviously the entrance. Turns out the one we pick is not the entrance, so we have to wander around a little before finding the admissions desk.

We've been in the Planet Hollywood restaurant in Downtown Disney in Orlando. There, the interior is covered with display cases with movie props or musicians instruments or articles of clothing associated with celebrities. The MOPOP is like Planet Hollywood on Steroids.

www.mopop.org

From *Empire Strikes Back* - Luke's lightsaber and cut-off hand, which he lost in Cloud City.





Captain Nemo's jacket from *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea*, as worn by Roger Mason.

There was an entire room filled with *Wizard of Oz* memorabilia, such as a uniform of one of the Wicked Witch of the East's Winkie Guardsmen.

"You... you killed her. She's... she's dead..."





There's another entire room with *Lord of the Rings* memorabilia, such as the weapons used by the Fellowship of the Ring.

"You have my sword."

"And my bow."

"And my axe."

There is also an entire room for *Princess Bride* stuff.

"Hello. My name is Inigo Montoya. You killed my father. Prepare to die."





There was a Sci-Fi room with various props and costumes, such as the uniform of Mork from Ork, played by Robin Williams on the television show *Mork and Mindy*. It's weird seeing stuff like this and knowing what it is when your Gen-Y kids don't have a clue.

"Nanu Nanu"

"Shazbat!"

They know what a second-generation Cyberman is, from *Doctor Who*

"Delete! Delete!"



Lot of stuff in here. Charity pops her head into the "Queen" exhibit - costumes for female characters designed by Alexander McQueen. I take a quick stroll through the Indie Games exhibit, featuring video games designed and marketed by individuals, not the big game software

houses - and there were peeces and consoles available for trying out the games. We didn't bother with the Prince (the Artist Once Again Known as Prince) or Jimi Hendrix or Nirvana exhibits. The one that I missed was the travelling Marvel Comic Universe exhibit, but it had already moved on by now.

That was worth the visit. Exiting the museum, we get ice cream from a Ben & Jerry's cart and sit eating it and watching silly young people taking cellphone selfies against the undulating metallic walls of the MOPOP.

Now we're ready for the Space Needle. It's time for our admission, and after the ticket inspectors wave us through, we stand in a line to the elevators, looking at the advertising materials standing along the queue. The Space Needle was the centerpiece of the 1962 World's Fair. It was built within two years (!!!) to coincide with the Apollo space program. The advertisements ooze Modernist confidence. It's also clearly pointed out that the Space Needle was the inspiration for the spire-buildings of the *Jetson's* cartoon show. Our turn to board the elevator arrives, and up we go - the elevator has windows, of course, so we can see (or rather, those of us in the sardine-packed elevator who are close enough to the window can see, or those of us tall enough to look over other folk's heads can see) the progress of the ascent. Not as long as it took to get up the Willis Tower in Chicago. We come out of the elevator into a spacious deck with tables and chairs of a cafe, and beyond those, beyond the tall windows, is the observation deck.



There are Space Needle helpers circulating in the crowd, helping to take photos. I suppose we could have gotten a full-family photo, but we didn't. Here are two sisters, officially at the top of the Seattle Space Needle, with Puget Sound and Alki Point behind them.

And the official Space Needle photo of the old folk.



Looking northeast toward Lake Union. It's funny/weird; the promo materials at ground level mentioned the Elvis Presley movie filmed at the 1962 World's Fair, and the scene shot in the Space Needle. At that time, the observation deck had a waist-high rail. Now there are plexiglas panels taller than anyone can reach. I get dizzy to think of being out here with only a waist-

high rail.

Looking southeast at the monorail track. Stand here long enough, and you can watch the monorail train creeping along the track.



After enjoying the view for quite a while, we return inside and order our lunch and sit at a table. Yes, we dined up in the Space Needle! After finishing, we venture down stairs to see the rest of the attraction.



This is relatively new. In the Elvis Presley film, this area was a revolving dining room. The dining room has been replaced by a glass floor, but it still revolves. Charity and Faith sit on the glass, watching the world orbit beneath them.

The structure of the Space Needle is visible through the floor. I don't know why it is, but when I visited Calgary a few years ago ([fam_calgary15.pdf](#)), I went up in the Calgary Tower and tried to stand on the glass floor - and it was hard to work up the nerve. Here, I had no problem.



Eventually, we all decide we've experienced the Space Needle to satisfaction, and take the next elevator back down. Walking away, I take a photo of where we were.

The next part of our adventure today is to see some of the waterfront attractions I intended to see a few days ago. There are two ways we could get there. We could walk down Broad Street to the waterfront and pick up the free trolley that runs along the piers, or we can take the

monorail to the Westlake station and walk down from there. It looks like its about the same walking distance either way. But I'm not positive the trolley goes all the way to Broad Street, and... well, it's an actual working monorail! How is this even a question?

The monorail station at this end looks like a Disney ride terminus, but more "real". We get the tickets and stand on the boarding platform for a little while until the train comes in. The doors on the other side open to allow the riders to exit, and then the doors on our side open to allow us to board. It's pretty full. Not unlike a city bus. Then the train starts to move along the track. The ride is very much like the Disney monorail, a little bumpy but speedy. The buildings flash by, and we can look down and see the tops of trees going past. Presently, the train starts slowing, and comes to a stop at the station carved out of the third floor of a tall building in the Westlake shopping district.

The elevator is full, and there are a lot of folk waiting there, so I lead my group down the stairs. Three flights to the street. Step outside, and we are in downtown Seattle.

Across the intersection for the monorail station is an interesting shop with all these old Singer-style sewing machines on shelves in the streetside windows. Seattle streets are nice, with many trees, some of which are reflected in the window captured by my non-polarizing camera.





If the streets were relatively level, it wouldn't be so bad, but there is a definite slope down toward the sea. Jerri is struggling. We come down to the famous Pike Market place. We really should have stopped and looked around in here; instead, we buzz past it, down the alley "famous" for the walls that people have been sticking their chewing gum to for years, and down a long

flight of stairs to the pier level. We hobble over to the pier where the Great Wheel is.

There's actually two attractions here, the Ferris wheel and "Wings over Washington". Not sure what that is, but there's a discount for getting both, so I do. The Great Wheel is okay - I'm not sure that the big Ferris wheel at the Pima County Fair isn't just as big, but you can't see the tall buildings of Seattle looming over you from up the hill, or out over Puget Sound, from the Pima County Fair wheel. Mostly, we are aware of Faith's discomfort. She is being a good sport about being on a big Ferris Wheel, especially in which the cars, even though enclosed, are still free-hanging and rock a little. We try to be still until the ride is over.

Then we go over to find out what "Wings over Washington" is. After going in and being entertained briefly by talking animal heads mounted on the walls like trophies (think "Bear Country Jamboree" in Disneyland), we are led into a dark room in front of a screen and strapped into seats. We have to put purses and water bottles and hats into the retaining pouches under the seats. And then the show starts.

It's very much like "Soaring" in Disneyland's California Adventures park, except that instead of being in a hang glider, we are in an airplane. We "virtually" fly over Washington State glories such as waterfalls, forests, Mount St. Helens, flower farms (at this point scented oils are squirted into the air), speedboat races in the Sound, seaplanes, fly past the Great Wheel, and into a fireworks show. It was a great experience, better than the Great Wheel ride.

As is typical, before going into the "Wings over Washington" show, the staff takes our portrait to sell for additional income. There are several possible (fake) backdrops to replace the "green screen". Jerri decides

this one is best. It will be our family adventure image for a while.



This has been a quick taste of the attractions on the Seattle waterfront, but we will be back in a few days. We all walk off the pier, across the parking lot, up the staircase and up the street sidewalks back to 5th and Pine and the monorail station.

On the walk back, I get an opportunity to see some of the urban core of downtown Seattle, including the tall buildings.



Here's one under construction.

As in Denver, there's a mix of new and old buildings. The Seaboard Building has been here a long time.



An old-time street clock that appears to be working. I sure wish "someone" would repair the Daniel's Jewelers clock on Church Avenue back home.

The train arrives at the Westlake terminal. The doors open on the other side of the rails around the boarding partition, and the riders have to move all the way forward or aft to get to the open doors.



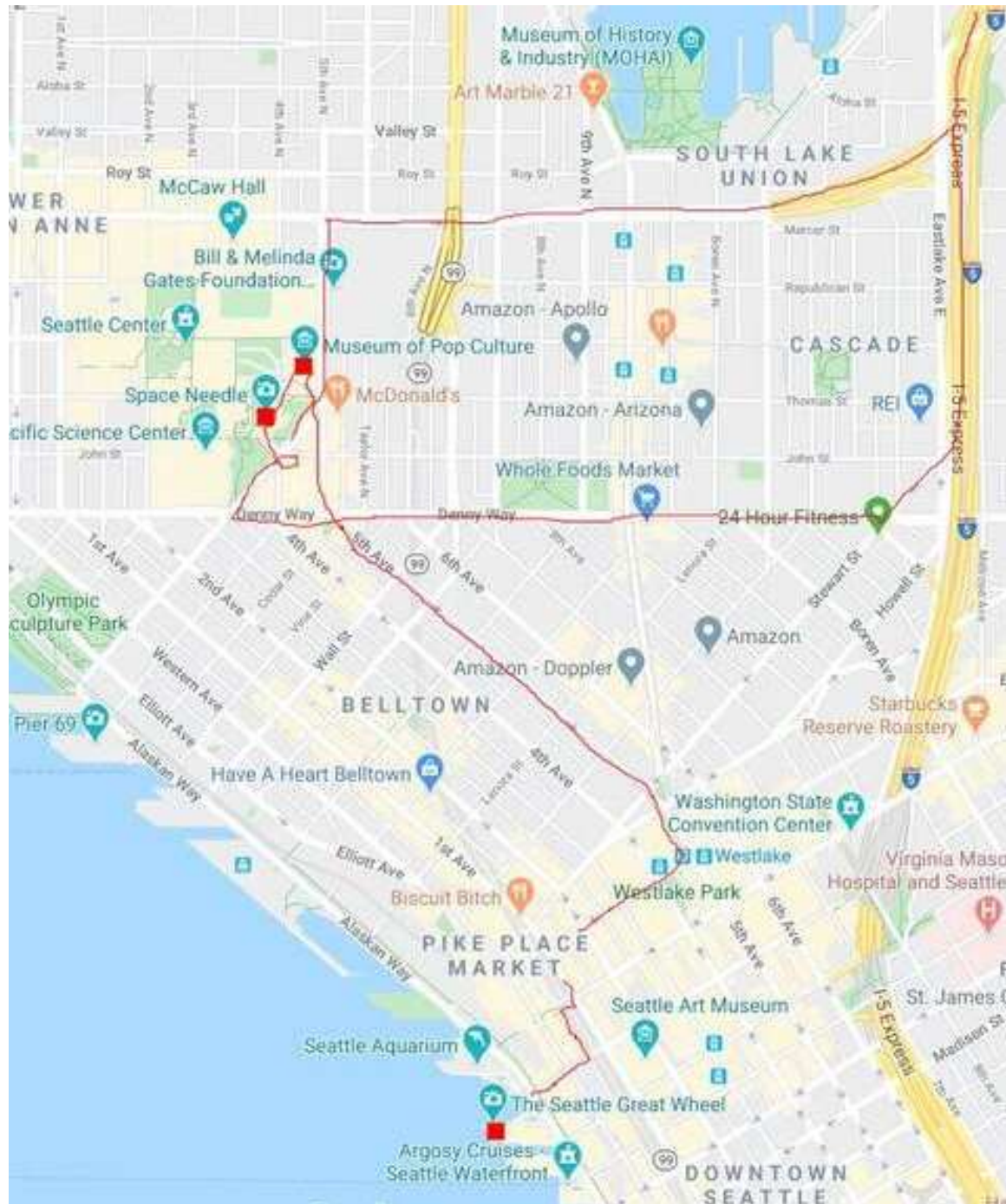
Then those doors close and the doors within the boarding partition open. Here we are entering the monorail train for the return trip.

Two sillies enjoying the ride back. Most of the train is empty for the return trip. Probably it will fill up later in the evening, after the firework shows.



Speaking of fireworks, I have scouted out some possibilities. The

fireworks show over Lake Union is legendary, and so is the difficulty of getting in a good place to see it. The park around the MOHAI is reserved for paying visitors, and "adult beverages" is part of it. The most popular place is the Gas Works Park on the north side of the lake, but it, too, is a high-demand location; you are advised to arrive early in the day and stake out your claim. That doesn't work for itinerant tourists. Some other local lifestyle websites I check advise the hiking trails around Gas Works Park, especially the pedestrian walkway over the bridge from Fremont. I've got a mind to visit Fremont anyways and see some of the ad-hoc public art, such as the "Troll" and the "Rocket" and maybe some shops. However, when it comes down to choices, no matter what we do will involve a fair bit of walking, and mommy's feet (and mine) are already shot. So sad to say, the choice is to skip the legendary Fourth of July fireworks show in downtown Seattle, return to our hotel in Lynnwood, and get carry-out pizza.



Friday July 5 - Downtown Portland

Day 1 of Charity and Faith's visit was the Space Needle and the MOPOP. Day 2 will be seeing some of Portland, so they can say they did. When we are ready to start the day, off we go again down I-5 through Seattle toward Portland.



Just south of the city, I can see the Boeing plant through the trees.

As we enter Tacoma, we encounter awesome terrible traffic, apparently due to construction, but it doesn't start easing up until we are halfway through Olympia. Then we start making good time. Charity is driving. At one point, Charity and I hear a "ding" from the car. This car has a history of telling you it has engine trouble when it really doesn't, and I lean over to see if the "Service Engine" light is on. It is not. For some reason, neither Charity nor I think to look at the gas gauge or the "Low Fuel" light. Which *is* on. When Charity notices we have lost power, she coasts to the shoulder, and we all discover together that we are out of gas.

Fortunately, we are just past the exit to a little community with gas stations. I jog back to the exit, and then into the exit. There is a supermarket there with a gas station, but they don't have gas cans. I am advised to try this independent station down the road. They *do* have a gas can, so I get it and fill it. I am unwilling to carry it all the way back to the exit and then all the way back



up to the car. Between the community and the interstate is a chain link fence. I can carry the can up to the fence and drop it over, so at least I don't have to carry the heavy can all that way. Then, thinking about it, I climb up the rickety fence and jump down on the other side. My pants get torn, but it could have been my hands.

Standing next to the car with semi trucks thundering past, Charity and I

figure out the silly security features on the can, and manage to get most of the fuel into the car's tank. Then we are on our way again, with enough gas to get to the station at the Cowlitz Indian reservation.



A half-hour later, we are coming up to the Columbia River crossing outside of Portland.

Our destination is downtown Portland, specifically Burnside Street. It seems there is no direct way to get from I-5 to Burnside, so we rely on the GPS (yes, risky) to take us all over the east side of the river and past the inconvenient one-way streets to get to the bridge (on the east side, Burnside itself is a one-way street away from the bridge; the two-way traffic on the bridge splits perhaps a half-block from the bridge entrance). It's an interesting old bridge, and we can see the White Stag just ahead. Continuing on Burnside, just past a park, there's a pay surface lot, and that's where we park. On the way from the bridge, and especially in the park, we see lots of "homeless" people, and tents set up on the sidewalk.

Our first objective is Powell's City of Books, a gigantic new-and-used bookstore that Jerri and Charity have heard about (how come I hadn't heard about this? Where have I been hiding?). Powell's is on Burnside, about two blocks from our parking lot. No, actually, our first objective is a lunch spot. Wandering into the maze of streets south of Burnside, we come upon Kenny and Zuke's Delicatessen, an authentic Jewish-styl deli. Of course, I have to try the Reuben sandwich. Rye, pastrami, sauerkraut, and thousand-island; correctly done. Lots of people walking around outside, a view of the fancy old building across the street. Nice.

After lunch, we return to Burnside, and Powell's. This is one end...



... and this is the other end. It's a full city block. We find it extends nearly as far away from the street. There are three or four levels, divided into genre, with a mixture of new and used books on each shelf. There is a computer inventory system that customers can use to locate books by title or author. At the top is a "rare books" room. We spend quite a long while in here, and leave with our

arms full of book-bags. It's like Bookman's back home, but x5 larger.

We leave Powell's and return down Burnside, stopping at the car to stash our new treasures. Good thing this is a road trip; it would be quite costly to mail all these books home. As it is, the Coloradoans are going to have to pick out a few favorites for their return flights, and get the rest when they drive to Tucson for a visit in the future.

Now it's time for some sightseeing. Continuing on down Burnside, the sidewalk goes through a long, narrow park. In former times, this would be a place for families to gather and children to play, but now, there are "homeless" people lying in the park everywhere. I notice castoff clothing and blankets everywhere. A syringe and a condom are in the grass by the road.

The old gate to Chinatown is here on Burnside. Looking down the road through the gate, there's no obvious Chinese emphasis. Possibly this was a Chinese ethnic enclave in the past, but it's not obviously so now.



Onward we go, stepping around the "homeless" people sleeping on the sidewalk, in or on or halfway on sleeping bags, or just on the concrete. We carefully step over the partially smeared poop on the sidewalk, and around tents. Flies buzzing around. At the end of the sidewalk, the path goes on to the bridge or down a stair to the level under the bridge. There is a Portland Rescue Mission here with several somewhat more lucent men sitting around chatting. They watch us as we descend the stair.



Underneath the bridge is a train station. There is also a drinking fountain that runs constantly (we don't trust it). On the other side of the tracks, and just out from under the bridge, is an historic "arcade".

There is also the Skidmore Fountain, donated by a successful Portland citizen in the late 19th Century.



Maybe the smaller basins served as horse troughs in the day. Now, I suppose doggies can get a drink.

This area is the Ankeny Plaza. Another arcade or colonnade. This was (by the inscriptions on nearby walls) the heart of commercial Portland when the fountain was dedicated. Now, it is a pedestrian walkway from the Burnside Bridge and the light rail station to the riverfront.



Just outside the plaza is a fire station, or perhaps a fire fighters museum. Sort of like the amazing Hall of Flame in Tempe, but on a much smaller scale. Peeking through the roll-up garage door, we can see some old fire equipment.

On a lamp-post just outside the plaza is this police notice about an "illegal campsite". There is official recognition of the "homeless" problem, and this is apparently as much as they will officially do about it.



We step into a wide semi-circular paved area with steps or seats around it, as if it were used for performances. This is part of the riverfront park. Stepping up to the rail above the water, we can get a good view of the Burnside Bridge that we crossed to get here.



It's a drawbridge! And the turrets are apparently the control rooms for the bridge.

A Portland Fire Department fireboat cruises past.



And a party boat. There is a "party bike" in Tucson, in which the riders all pedal while they drink their liquor served by the bartender in the center platform, moving the bike along slowly. There is a "party bike" in Flagstaff, too; we saw that on New Years Eve. This appears to be the equivalent for river-based Portland. Apparently, the partiers pedal to operate the paddle-wheel at the

stern.

Looking upstream, there are more bridges, a whole series of them.



And downstream is a railroad bridge. Clearly a different sort of drawbridge. Auto traffic is running on the lower level, and as we stand here enjoying the view, a light-rail train runs across the top level.

We walk a ways up down the riverside (northward), looking for the Japanese-American Historical Plaza. We get pretty close to the steel bridge before realizing we must have missed it and turn back. All along the way, there are "homeless" people sleeping on the benches or in the grass, while Portlandites jog past, or bicycle past, apparently oblivious to the human wreckage in their park. On the way back, we notice a small sculpture and some stone blocks with inscriptions. This unassuming installation must be it. Looking at the inscription, and the bronze plaque on the other side, we learn that this public memorial recalls the forced incarceration of Japanese-American citizens during World War II.

That's about all there is to see along the river park this side of Burnside. We try going south, looking for the battleship that I've heard is down here somewhere, but we don't go very far before running into a crowd. Apparently, we have chosen the weekend when a Blues Festival

is being held. I think we're done with the river park.

Back at Burnside, we start approaching the city north of the bridge. This is a pretty good place to see the famous landmark White Stag sign.



This beautiful old building is next to the White Stag building. This is the old part of Portland.

Jerri's feet are played out, so I leave the girls here and proceed into the city on the streets to fetch the car and pick them up. There are some fairly steep grades from the river level up to the city, and there are quite a few unsavory men drifting around. I recover the car, return down the route I walked up, and pick up the ladies, and continue south on the riverfront street. I can't go very far before running into the masses of pedestrians milling around the Blues Festival, so I turn right and pause behind a delivery van while we dial in our hotel address on the GPS. Under machine direction, we drive through the downtown area until we pick up Highway 405 northward.

I didn't notice it at the time, because I was so focused on driving and following the GPS verbal directions, but in the maze of streets of old downtown Portland, there is a welter of cafes and shops and parks, all very walkable. Away from the river, there seems to be fewer bums I

mean "homeless" people and more city denizens walking. My impression from our first visit to Portland that there's not much to see or do is apparently quite false. But I think someone would have to stay here a while to give the city a fair shake. And overcome the intimidation of driving in a very old and built-up city. The same is true about Seattle - you just can't do it justice in a couple of days. But then, that's true of my native Tucson as well.

The GPS takes us to our hotel on the Oregon side of the Columbia. There is a Shari's across the parking lot, so we can walk to dinner. Sad to say, neither Charity nor Faith are inclined to give marionberry pie a trial. Back at the hotel, we use the guest laundry till after midnight to restock our suitcases.

Saturday July 6 - Downtown Seattle

The next day starts with a giant breakfast at the Elmer's, next door to the hotel, and then we start on our way back up to Seattle. This time, Faith is driving, and all goes well until the outskirts of Olympia, and then traffic becomes insane. Bumper-to-bumper, stop-and-go for miles. At one point, we take an exit to a service station looking for a restroom. There is a long line at the ARCO (but strangely enough, not at the Chevron). Then mom takes over driving, and after a *l o n g* while we get to the outskirts of Seattle. Jerri is feeling hungry, but when we ask the GPS for nearby eating places, it takes us off into a residential area east of I-5, and we find nothing. I suggest that we just continue into the city per our plan, where we are much more likely to find a place for lunch.

Now I am driving. Our adventure today is the lower part of downtown Seattle, starting with the city's first skyscraper, the Smith Bilding. Taking the James Street exit off I-5 and continuing downtown, we are on the lookout for a parking lot, and find a strange triangular two-level structure right across the street from the Smith Building, and are fortunate to find a spot.

Across the street is the main door to the Smith Building, and just to the left of it is Shawn O'Donnell American Grill and Irish Pub. That sounds like an adequate lunch spot. I send Jerri and her girls across to get a table while I settle the parking fee.



It's a decent place to eat, and we get to watch a fakey WWF "wrestling" match on the TV over the bar. After finishing lunch, I notice that, besides the street door we came in by, there is another door into the Smith Building lobby, so I lead the crew out that way. There is a doorman there, and he instantly figures out what we are (as we gawk around, taking in all the marble and the antique brasswork) and tells us that the Smith Building tour ticket office is next door. Next door we find a gift shop, a counter where I pay for the tickets and Jerri's postcards, and the start of a museum and tour orientation. We select a role-play card (I become an engineer, imagine that) and get a taste of being a tenant of the Smith Building in its 1920's heyday.

www.smithtower.com



Charity finds some costume stuff and gets into the Roaring Twenties role-play a bit more. This is what a 1920's working girl in Seattle might have been like.

The tour route goes up a flight of stairs and down the hall to the elevators.

Through the window are visible some of the historic buildings associated with Seattle's oldest district, Pioneer Square. The placard by the window explains that the triangular plot of land to the right was formerly occupied by the historic Seattle Hotel, but it was torn down (to great protest) and replaced with the parking lot known derisively as "the Sinking Ship". That's where we parked.



As we wait for the elevator to the top, we take note of some of the interesting architectural decorations, the sort of thing that would never be seen in new construction in our day.

Nor the elaborate brasswork of elevators, or the beautiful lighted signs indicating the range of floors served by the elevators.



A face-on look at some of that exquisite brasswork adorning a 1910-period elevator door that is still in use more than a hundred years later.

There is an actual elevator operator inside the car, mostly as tour flavor and partially to control which buttons are pressed. He jokes with us on the way up. It's quite a ways up. The top floor has been converted into a "speakeasy" style bar or lounge.

But that's not why we are here. *This* is why we are here: The Wishing Chair. The superstition is that young women who sit in the chair will be married within a year. Charity boosts her chances.



And then Faith does. The chair is supposed to have been a gift from the Empress of China to L. C. Smith, the entrepreneur behind the construction of the building named after him.

Actually, *this* is why we are here. In addition to the Wishing Chair and a visit to a wonderful turn-of-the-century skyscraper, we can step through a sliding glass door onto the outside observation deck, which was *the* high-altitude viewing platform for 1920s Seattlites. But not quite what they would have seen: By the time the Smith Tower was finished and opened for tenants, the



core of Seattle's commercial area had already started migrating north. Those are some of the tall buildings we had walked among two days ago. The placard out on the deck describing the view says that one of those tall buildings is jokingly referred to as "the box that the Space Needle came in."



Down there is the Great Wheel. We had a glimpse of the Smith Tower from the Wheel, when we were cautiously looking at the view while trying to avoid rocking the car.

Directly south is CenturyLink Field. There's clearly something going on today, as we can see the crowd of people inside.



Off to the left a little bit is the King Street Station and its clock tower.

Next to it is Union Station. When I was doing my tourist research, I saw that the interior is quite impressive and worth looking at, so that is the next stop on our downtown visit.



To the northeast, dwarfed by the tall buildings that have grown up around it, is the Rainier Club, Seattle's premier private social club founded before statehood and now housed in this elegant building constructed before the Smith Tower.

Looking up through the safety bars of the observation platform, we can see the pyramidal cap of the tower. There's apparently a penthouse apartment inside there.





Here's my crew, delighted to be 35 stories above the streets of downtown Seattle.

That's all there is. Returning inside, we catch the next elevator down and exit the historic building. Turning south, we walk down the diagonal 2nd Avenue. This part of the city is gritty, much different than the clean urban core we walked through earlier. There is a crowd of "homeless" men standing outside the Gospel Mission. A woman is rolling back and forth on the sidewalk, uttering strange noises.

2nd Avenue runs down to the King Street Station. We cross at the light and turn left, noticing that the railroad tracks are running in a channel below street level. There are policemen in their cars outside Union Station, apparently keeping an eye on pedestrians (and maybe threatening "homeless" people). I go up to the doors of Union Station without much hope at this point, because there's nobody else going in or out, and there's no signage indicating sightseers are welcome. Sure enough, the doors are locked. Phooey.





The next best thing is to walk around to the east side of the building and look at the "gate" to Chinatown. We probably could have stepped through to look around, but Jerri's feet are already sore. There is more evidence of the ethnic heritage here than there was in Portland. At least, the street signs are in Chinese.

Close-up of one of the dragons twined around the lamppost.



Leaving my family there in the very public plaza outside Union Station, I proceed to return to the "Sinking Ship" and get the car. On the way, I get to see some more of this part of Seattle, such as the Fire Department Headquarters.

With the detail on the corner of a firefighter with a fire-orange glowing lamp behind it.



Further down the street is a building porch with a horse figure on it. Reminds me of the OK Feed Store on Fort Lowell, back home. Somewhere down there is another attraction - the Klondike Gold Rush National Historic Park. Seattle, like Portland, has a tremendous wealth of things to do and see, but you would have to spend some serious time here. All we have time for is a brief

taste.

Looking up 2nd Avenue is a marvelous view of Smith Tower.



After taking the car out of the lot and cruising back down 2nd Avenue to where I left everyone, we continue on south, looking for an opportunity to get down to the waterfront and find Alaska Way that runs along the piers. There's something else going on today, for we are prevented by policemen directing traffic from turning west until at the corner of T-Mobile Park. There are mobs of pedestrians, many in "Seattle Mariners" shirts. Poking along with the traffic, and being directed away from promising routes by the policemen, we take our first opportunity and drive through a very industrial area, but succeed in finding our path onto Alaska Way. This route takes us across the intersection at which a long line of cars is waiting to board the downtown Seattle ferry. Just a little ways further is the public parking lot across from Pier 55. It isn't overly crowded, and as soon as we park we are crossing the street and getting our tickets at the Argosy office on the pier for the last cruise of the day.

There's a bit of a wait to board, and we are standing in line taking in the sights. Up the hill looms the tall city. To the north, just visible over the roof of the adjoining pier, is the Great Wheel. To the south is a dinner candidate: Ivar's Fish Bar (it seems that Ivar Haglund, the eccentric entertainer and entrepreneur who came to wealth through his fish restaurants, briefly owned the Smith Tower). Out on the curb is the incessant pounding of a ("homeless") street performer banging his repetitive rhythm on his plastic bucket drums. I observe the waterfront shuttle drive up to and stop at a sandwich sign board on the other side

of the street. Eventually the cruise staff opens the gate and snaps portraits of the groups of boarders behind a steering wheel prop.



We find a set of four chairs outside on the top deck with a good view over the starboard side - which turns out to be optimal.

The boat gets under way, and the designated Argosy employee, Shaheen, comes out on deck with his radio microphone to narrate the voyage for the entire complement of tour-takers. He's very good, knowledgeable about what he's directing our attention to, and humorous.

The first sight is the water-level view of the Great Wheel. Faith seems more comfortable in her chair on the boat than she did up in the Ferris wheel car.





A little further along is the Edgewater Hotel, built for the 1962 World's Fair but finished two weeks too late. It struggled for years, trying schemes to attract guests, schemes like allowing guests to fish from the windows - even though the housekeeping staff complained about fish guts in the sinks and tubs. Sometimes celebrities stayed at the Edgewater, including the Beatles in

their early days, and yes, the Beatles fished from the windows. Later, when the Beatles became a "thing", the Edgewater tried the scheme of selling scraps of carpet "from the hotel where the Beatles stayed". This generated enough income to rescue the hotel from bankruptcy. I'm thinking this would have been a very cool place to have stayed, but probably quite costly, and probably inconvenient for parking.

The narrator points out this interesting sight along the waterfront. The Post-Intelligencer was an important print newspaper for the Pacific Northwest... in the days when print newspapers were a thing. Like many newspaper publishers, the Post-Intelligencer fell on hard times, and has since gone digital-only. The company had to sell its high-value waterfront property, including the iconic "P-I" globe. I think a university now owns it. (Not my photo.)



Presently, most of the land along the water is green, and we can see large modernist "art" "sculptures" - the narrator explains this whole strip is a public park with popular hiking and bicycle trails.



This bulk freighter is loading grain via a conveyor.

A bit further down is the largest cruise ship dock, used especially by the ships doing the Alaska cruises. Maybe some day we will be putting off from here on our own Alaska cruise.

At the end of this forested point of land is a marina that the narrator tells us is the Seattle Yacht Club. He adds that there is a highly-regarded restaurant at the club. I think briefly that this might be a candidate dinner spot, but it's a long drive from where we parked.



At this point, the tour boat turns away from the land and cruises back south in the center of the bay. The narrator tells us to be ready for great views of the Seattle skyline as we move past. He isn't wrong.



That's the Smith Tower at the right, dwarfed by the modern tall buildings north of it. The tallest is the Columbia Center - which also has an observation floor (like the Willis tower in Chicago), but we chose the oldest. You can't do everything in a finite amount of time.



Downstairs in the cabin is a bar/snack counter, where I can buy some sodas and a water bottle for Jerri. When I come back up, I can get a photo of mom and her girls enjoying the approaching evening. Behind them is Alki Point. The narrator provides a perspective we hadn't heard before. During the Prohibition years, the northern shore (the holiday destination we were at just a few days ago) was the

"Coney Island" of the Pacific Northwest. Roller coasters, Ferris wheels,

dance halls, and illicit liquor for those who knew how to ask. With the changes over the passage of time, all that decayed. Now, there is still Salty's, a popular and well-regarded seafood restaurant. Again, I think this could be a potential dinner destination, but again, I realize it's too far away.

At the south end of Elliott Bay, the boat turns toward land and steams across the entrance to the harbor. There is a fleet of tugboats, some designed to move ships in and out of the docks, and others to push around the oil barge - a river barge (like we had seen days ago on the Columbia) modified to safely hold fuel oil. The land mass beyond is "Harbor Island, a large artificial island formed by dredging the Duwamish River to a usable depth.



There is a pair of ships in dry dock for repairs. One is a Puget Sound ferry, like we've seen already (and travelled on). The other is the *USS Manchester*. We perk up our ears at this. Grandpa Norton spent time in the Navy in his youth, serving aboard the *Manchester*, but that one was a light cruiser, and this is a "littoral combat ship", LCS. Afterwards, we find that the original

Manchester cruiser was decommissioned after a distinguished combat career and scrapped, and this ship was named after her in her honor. I also learn later that some of the original crew of the light cruiser *Manchester* were invited at the christening of this ship, but somehow Grandpa was overlooked.

The cruise boat now enters the shipping harbor. We pass a couple of monster container ships moored at the docks, and then move closely past this one that is being unloaded.



The narrator explains that being a "stevedore" or "longshoreman" nowadays is a highly skilled job that pays very well (~\$100K) but is very stressful - the crew that includes the crane operator and the people that attach the cables to the containers have to move very fast (to unload a ship within 36 hours) and very carefully (to avoid dropping or dumping any containers).

He goes on to explain that with the tariffs on imports from China that were to go into effect soon, most of the work has been to unload ships, to get the product through Customs before the legislation passes. There are 10,000 to 30,000 containers on a single freighter!

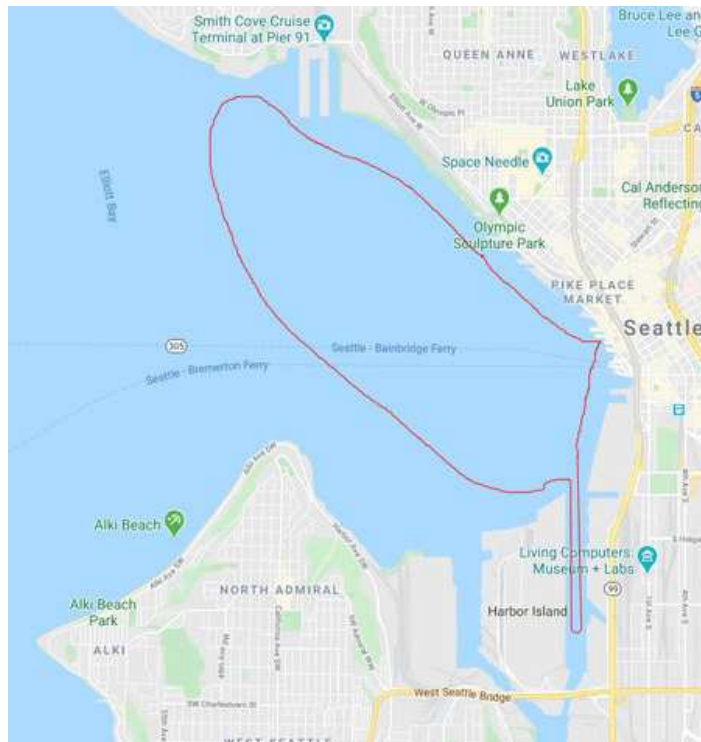
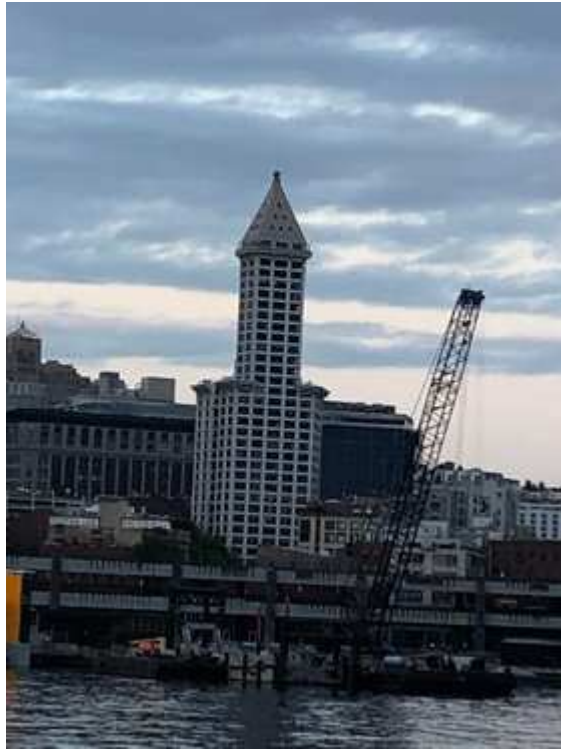
Coming back out of the harbor, we pass the Coast Guard station. There are two vessels moored at the dock; one is a research ship, the other is a retired icebreaker being stripped for parts.



The narrator draws our attention to T-Mobile Park; "Seattle's Mid-Life Crisis", as he calls it - it's an expensive convertible (the roof rolls back). This is the place we saw all the baseball fans crowding into earlier. The neighboring park to the north is CenturyLink Field. It is not convertible but 70% of the seats are covered, and the acoustics are amazing. He tells us that the noise from

the fans can cause measurable artificial earthquakes!

And lastly, another view of the Smith Tower from down on the water.



This was my impression of the course of our harbor cruise.

After the boat returns to the Argosy dock and we debark, we take a quick look around the touristy shops on the pier, including a candy shop, where Jerri and I stock up for the return trip, and this knick-knack shop, where Charity and Faith make acquaintance with their new Sasquatch friend.



When we were getting off the boat in the dusk, we could look over at the adjoining pier and see a fancy dining place with outdoor seating and flaring gas lamps. I decide that looks pretty good, and we don't have to drive halfway across the city to somewhere else. Elliott's Oyster House. Seafood (and non-seafood for those who aren't so inclined). Of course, I get a half-dozen raw oysters, and Charity screws up the courage to try a few. The food is good, but the service is incredibly slow, like they're understaffed.

After dinner we return to our car and head back down Alaska Way to James Street. It was steep coming down earlier today, and it's steep going up in the dark. It's worse, because you have to goose the gas fast to avoid rolling backward into the cars behind you. At least that's what Faith is nervously telling me. I notice more interesting shops on the way up; it's really a shame we couldn't spend more time exploring this interesting old city, in spite of the "homeless" problem. We get back on I-5 and proceed on now-familiar roadways to the hotel we were staying at for days in Lynnwood.

C **D** **E** **F** **G**

EARL, J. W. 1963. The life history of the European spruce sawfly, *Pristiphora abietis* (L.), in the Pacific Northwest. *Forest Science* 9:1-14.

Portland yesterday, I forgot my TOW jacket on the back of my chair. Not willing to leave it, I called the restaurant yesterday and confirmed that they found it and were going to hold it for me. This changes our travel plans slightly. So now, instead of heading to our next destination through Washington State, Jerri and I return - yet again - down I-5 to Portland. The insane traffic of the last two days must have been due to the holiday weekend, for the travel is not bad. Except for sporadic stop-and-go occurrences that seemed to have no cause. Annoying. Back in Portland, the restaurant host gives me back my jacket (hooray!), and because it is now lunchtime, we get something at the Burger King nearby. While we sit and eat our burgers, we can watch some "homeless" younger people in the seating area outside. We're not sure that there's not some sort of drug deal going down.



Our path is down the Oregon side of the Columbia River. On the way, we catch a fleeting glimpse of the awesome Multnomah Falls. But... yes... it's Sunday. Signs along the way say the parking lot is already full.

There are some potential visitable sights along the way:

- Hood River is a sizeable town with freeway signs advertising its "historic downtown" and its connection to The Oregon Trail.
- The Dalles is another sizeable town with an interesting name (that's its name, *The Dalles*; I later learn it's named after local geological formation, "daelz") and freeway signs advertising "Historic Fort Dalles and its connection to The Oregon Trail."
- A few more dams across the great river, some with hydro plants, some with navigation locks.

Towards evening, we leave I-84 on the "shortcut" US-730 directly to the

river crossing, through the small towns of Irrigon and Umatilla. Picking up I-82, we cross the river and ride through the undulating arid grassy hill country of western Washington State. Before long we enter low-density Kennewick. It's dinner time now, but it seems that most places, like the buffet restaurant we stop at, are already closed. But then, it is 8:30, after all; you just couldn't tell with this daylight-savings time nonsense. We have to settle for a Wendy's.



Monday July 8 - Idaho State Capitol

It's an easy day, a late morning, and we are the last ones in the breakfast nook. When we check out, the parking lot is empty. We proceed through Kennewick to Clover Island to see the last lighthouse on the list.

Yes, it's fake, intended to attract guests and investors. I find it interesting that the US Lighthouse Society includes a fake lighthouse, way inland, in their Passport program.



Close-up of the tower crown. There is a beacon in there, but there's no indication it's registered. I suppose it provides some use for the holiday sailors who keep their boats in the marina here, and the Clover Island Yacht Club. We parked on the other side of the boat launch ramp to walk over to the lighthouse.

While we're here, we just look around at the Columbia. Small picnic area here. A view of the fancy bridge just downstream.



We have to go to the hotel at the other end of the island to get the stamp. Driving slowly, we pass some other bits of public art, a lounge, and a closed-down restaurant (with signage promoting "an opportunity"). The hotel is nice; we should have stayed here last night instead of our generic hotel in a boring location in the city, but it's an independent place and therefore not on any of Jerri's loyalty programs.

Our business here is done, and we can now leave Washington State by backtracking along I-82. Once again in Oregon, we merge onto I-84 and continue onward toward Idaho. We stop in Baker City for our last exposure to the silly "attendant has to pump the gas" law, and pick up some Subway sandwiches for the road. Occasional rain showers along the way. Snow-capped mountains in the distance to the north. A party of horse riders just off the freeway. After a long but pleasant drive, we cross the river into Idaho. Hey, the speed limit is now 80MPH! Almost immediately we enter an extended urban area, that continues for miles and miles until we get to the city limits of Boise. We get on the road to the Capitol, and the dome stands out through the high-rise buildings. It isn't hard to find a parking spot near the capitol and walk up to it.



Again, no guards or metal detectors. Once inside, we get a surprise: I had calculated that we would arrive by 4:00, but we are now in the Mountain Standard time-zone (and had even seen the sign well before the border), and it is really 5:00. This means that when we can enter the building, the gift shop is already closed and Jerri can't get her stamp. A sign on the deserted counter says that tours are from 10 to 1, but you have to request a guided tour two weeks in advance! But there is a rack of brochures for a self-guided tour, so that's what we do.

The tour starts with the gallery of history displays around the room underneath the main Rotunda floor. Idaho is characterized by northern (mountainous, timber and gold mining) and southern (agriculture) regions. At the time, the gold mining was the more important activity, and therefore Lewiston became the territorial capital. When Idaho was admitted to the Union, on a close vote, Boise was made the capital. This did not sit well with the northerners, and the new governor "stole" the official seal and fled to Boise. The outraged northerners were somewhat placated when the University of Idaho was established in the north. I'm thinking this sounds similar to the contest between Phoenix and Tucson for being the capital, but not quite as dramatic.

There were several iffy treaties made with the Indians, but they were not effective after gold was discovered and miners poured into the region. The early governors were stinkers, and often stole everything out of the state treasury. There is a long-standing conflict between allocating water between hydropower and agriculture. The state stood up against federal plans to dump spent nuclear fuel here. Tribal governments are a key part of the state government structure. There are binding voter initiatives in Idaho, just as in Arizona.



On the floor is the mosaic Great Seal of the State of Idaho.

Going upstairs, we can see up into the classic dome. Lots of electric lights and broad windows makes it an open and airy space.





The House and Senate (this one) chambers are similar. They are semi-circular, and have a wraparound gallery. The senators can see the observers watching them and holding them accountable for their votes.

Very ornate shallow dome over the Senate with a large circular skylight.





At the back of the gallery seating are tall windows. Looking out northward, we can see this large skylight set in the lawn.

There is a nice lounge for visitors. Right now it is empty, and when the legislature is not in session, people can come in and sit and watch the Idaho promotional videos. Otherwise, this room serves as overflow seating for the Senate and House visitor galleries.





This chamber was formerly used by the Idaho State Supreme Court. The Court now has its own building nearby.

On the top floor, you can look over the rail into the rotunda all the way down into the ground-level area where we started our fine self-guided tour.





Also on the top floor are some art treasures of the state. The replica of the *Winged Victory of Samothrace* was given by the French government and arrived on the Merci Train (we keep coming across this Merci Train).

The other prominent statue on the top floor here is a gilded wood image of George Washington.





Wait... what is George holding? Jerri thinks it is a telescope, but no way! Any geek could tell this is his lightsabre!

Our self-guided tour is basically done. Instead of leaving by the front door, we go out the underground side door. On the way, we walk beneath the skylight we saw earlier from the Senate gallery. Up through the glass, we can faintly see the Capitol dome.





Out on the lawn is a Civil War coastal defense gun, brought here from Vicksburg by officials in the early 1900s.

We leave downtown Boise down the one-way 9th Street which runs parallel with and eventually merges into Capitol Boulevard (Capitol Blvd is a one-way north-only street downtown) which turns into Vista near the picturesque Boise Depot (another place I would have liked to have seen, but it wasn't on the agenda). Vista crosses the I-84 to the airport, but just before it does, Elder turns to the right and we find our hotel at the end. There were a number of dining places along Vista, but we both have a hankering for a steakhouse. A quick search turns up a promising candidate near the Vista/Elder intersection, but it turns out to not be there anymore; now it's an Indian cuisine place. The next candidate is down I-84 a ways, the Buckhorn at a truck stop. But when we get there, it's not the Buckhorn, it's the Country Pride, a fairly large and nice restaurant reminiscent of the TTT back home in Tucson. Tired of looking and being misled by our apparently out-of-date GPS, we just tuck into a steak at the Country Pride, and are not disappointed.



Tuesday July 9 - Craters of the Moon

The next morning we have our breakfast in the dining area in our nice hotel. There is a family with a very active little curly-headed girl prancing about the dining room. Above our heads is a television displaying a tennis game, and we can look out the window at which we are seated and watch people playing tennis in the park across the street. After checking out, we return downtown and park near the Capitol and go back in after the stamp.

This time, the gift shop is open, and while getting her stamp, Jerri has a

nice chat with the store clerk. It seems that Capitol visitors are so infrequent that they implemented the two-week reservation policy so they would have time to line up a volunteer guide. Then we can leave Boise, returning back down 9th to Vista to I-84 and then east. At the town of Mountain Home, we get off I-84 onto US 20, and then it's a *long* drive eastward, through the small towns of Fairview, then crossing local route 75, then Pecaño, and then the larger town of Carey where we get gasoline. Continuing northeast along US 20, we skirt desolate lava fields. Finally we reach the Craters of the Moon turnoff, and the visitors' center just off the road. It's crowded today. Jerri gets her stamp and some postcards, and then we have a look at the little museum.

There are different kinds of lava rocks: cinder (we have a lot of that in Arizona), pahoehoe (Hawaiian for "rope") and a'a (Hawaiian for "cutting"). There's the usual story of 100,000s of years; the area of high-intensity volcanic activity drifts across the "Great Rift" in central Idaho, between the mountains, to Yellowstone where it is now. When it was here, the volcanic activity produced the landforms we see now.

After leaving the visitors' center, we can drive around the loop road. At our first stop is a path out into the lava flows. These huge rocks were "floated" to this location.





A closer look at a "pahoehoe" formation.

Further around the loop road is Inferno Cone, a cinder cone that can be walked upon. There's quite a few people walking around on it, but it's quite a ways over there, and Jerri ops to not do that.



At pretty much the back end of the loop road are the "spatter cones", smaller volcanic vents that have kept their shape. This path goes into the crater of this cone.

At this cone, we can look down inside and see a mass of snow. I guess this is how ice caves form.



We have a good look around and stop at several places, many of which show the kinds of vegetation that like the volcanic soil. We have to put up with the "climate change" narrative that seems to pervade the national parks any more, as well as being scolded about the air pollution that drifts in from the cities. I really can't see how there's much air pollution from the likes of Boise which is the largest city in the sparse Idaho wilderness, but whatever.



After leaving the park and following the road back to Casey, we stop at this water hole. Melting snow seeps into the porous volcanic rock and emerges in this perpetual pool. This was a lifesaving feature to the settlers taking a detour through this area to avoid the hostile Indians on the main trail.

It is nearly 4 by the time we leave the park. We probably should have brought a picnic lunch. As it is, we stop at a little cafe in Casey, run by two women. While we are eating our sandwiches, a local girl comes in with her big dog and gets a meal to take outside. When she comes back in to get something, we are watching from the window as the big dog gets up on the table and starts sharing her food. She has to run back outside, shouting at the dog.

We get ice cream for the road - Huckleberry Ice Cream! On the road through Shoshone to Twin Falls, we observe that most of the flat land is being used for farming, and there are *lots* of irrigation sprinklers. Drawing up to Twin Falls, we notice a great bridge in front of us crossing a tremendous gorge or canyon. Before crossing, I notice a pullout on the right side. Leaving the car, we can walk closer to the edge and see part of the Canyon of the Snake River.



That's quite a river gorge!
Mighty sheer walls! A little
closer and a ways to the
left, we can get a better
view. There appears to be
habitations down there, or
at least a golf course.



Entering the city, we locate our hotel and unload. I am looking at the local tourist info in the guest book. "Balancing Rock". Not too far out of town. It's still fairly early. I pitch the idea to Jerri, and she's game. Off we go, south through town and then east on the major road which turns out to be US 30. A fair bit of driving later, and we encounter the small town of Buhl. Highway 30 bends off to the right, but the road we want continues straight. The route instructions said "N 1400 E". I guess roads in rural areas are just their grid numbers. We find "N 1400E" and turn south. A long ways later, the road tees into "E 3700 N", and we turn right/east. A *l o n g* drive through flat farmland - again, with lots of sprinklers, many of which are throwing large jets of water a long ways. This Zonie is just impressed with how free they are with water around here. Flat, flat, flat... and then the road bends and abruptly descends into a canyon. The road wiggles and waggles and then hits the bottom where there is a stream and what appears to be a county park. Then up the other side. As we emerge from the canyon, there is a rocky ridge off to the right, and a rusty sign announces our destination.

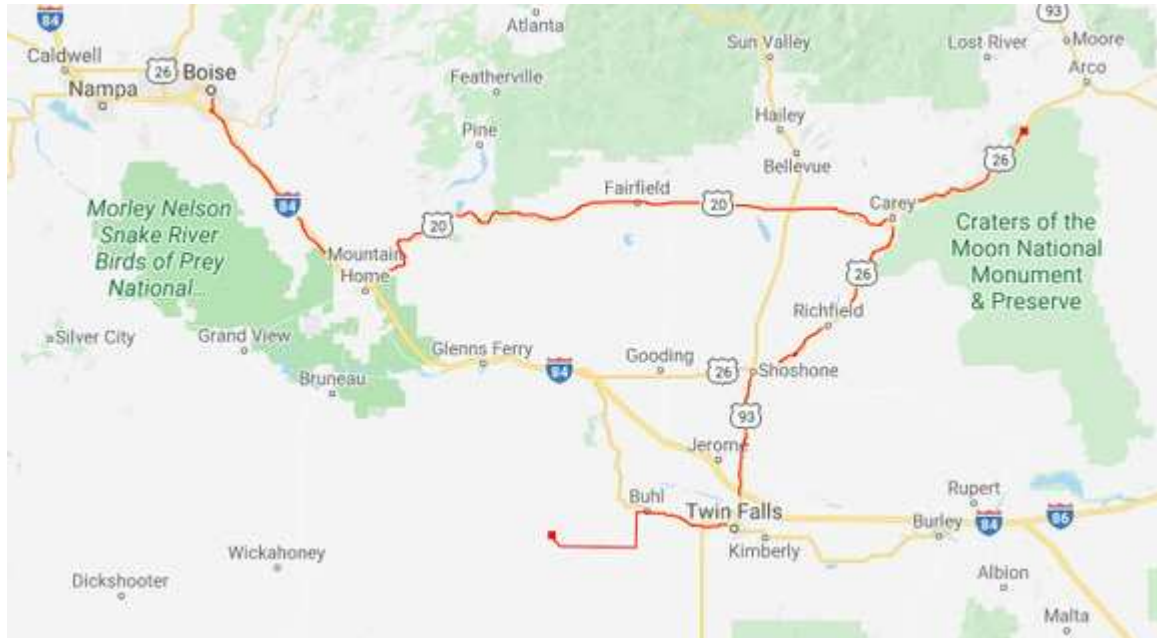


There it is. Pretty hard to miss. Bigger and more oddly shaped than anything in the Garden of the Gods outside Colorado Springs.

There is another car parked here. Looking closer, we can see some people who have hiked up there for a closer look.



For us, it is enough that we have visited a local attraction that we probably would never have known about until we got to the locale. That was fun. After the long drive back to Twin Falls, it is getting late. and we elect the easy way for dinner and walk to the Mexican place next door.



Wednesday July 10 - City of Rocks



This hotel has a tiny, overcrowded breakfast room with a big map of Twin Falls and other Idaho stuff hanging on the wall. It is also in the same area as the checkout counter, so people dealing with the hotel clerk are in the way of people carrying their soggy paper plates of food to their table. On another counter are tourist brochures and gospel tracts. Jerri picks up a local map.

Now, when we planned our route, Twin Falls was just a convenient overnight spot between Boise and Craters of the Moon and the next national park places. But... "Twin Falls". There's got to be waterfalls here. A bit of research indicates potential for local attractions that calls for stopping in at the city visitors' center, which is just at this end of the big bridge we crossed yesterday. We go there first.

Inside is a gift shop and a desk with maps and helpful volunteers. We are greeted by a friendly and voluble helper who tells us stories of the town and some tips for what to do and see. Perrine (Ira Burton) was a

pioneer businessman who joined with some eastern investors to obtain rights for Snake River water way upstream. They built a dam and canals to transport the water and irrigate farmland in Twin Falls and "the Magic Valley". (This must be why we've seen so much sprinkler irrigation.) This arrangement has been challenged in court many times, but because Idaho has a "First Comer" principle, the water rights stand, and Twin Falls gets surface water while Idaho Falls and Pocatello have to drill for it. Our adviser tells us he was a schoolteacher, and had Perinne's great grandson in his class, who incidentally still lives on the family farm. He acknowledges there are falls on the Snake, such as the famous Shoshone Falls (and tells us how to get there) and the Pillar Falls (which aren't all that great), but strongly recommends the Perinne Falls just a little ways away.

Outside the visitors center is a lawn, a bronze statue of I. B. Perinne, and a terrific view of the Snake River. Way down there are boaters on the water. The water is greenish due to agricultural chemicals. Apparently, a popular sport is parachute jumping from the bridge; a man is packing his parachute spread out on the lawn.





This bridge. The Perinne Bridge. Yeah, that's tall enough to jump off with a parachute. The observation platform along the edge of the canyon continues underneath the bridge. There's also a couple of Jehovah Witnesses standing here with their rack of literature.

A plaque outside says that Twin Falls is also the site of Evel Knievel's ill-fated attempt to jump over the Snake River canyon on his rocket-powered Skycycle. i don't think we're going to visit *that* monument.

Just behind the shopping center to the west of the visitors' center is the road that descends to the canyon floor. About a quarter mile in is a narrow turnout with a view of the Perinne Falls. We were told that this is a "fake" waterfall, from an irrigation runoff ditch, and it didn't exist until historic times. Still, it's pretty spectacular!



After looking at the water falling for a while (and kicking up a mist, which we breathe, of course, which makes me think of those greenish agricultural chemicals), we return back to the top and follow the directions to Shoshone Falls. The route ends in a private park (we pay admission) which is actually pretty nice, with observation platforms and paved trails and green lawns suitable for picnics (there are quite a few

young families here today, having picnics), and a gift shop/snack bar. But the real attraction is the historic Shoshone Falls on the Snake River.



There's also quite a few foreign visitors. When the Chinese family is (finally) finished taking their selfies on this extension to the main observation platform, Jerri takes her turn.

It really is beautiful. There is also a pavilion of historical markers in the park near the rim path. Shoshone Falls was known by the Indians for ages, and Lewis and Clark had to deal with them. As the area was being developed. Shoshone Falls was a major attraction, promoted as the "Niagara of the West". Clarence Bisbee (of course, his name arrests the attention of Southern



Arizonans) was an early photographer who recorded life and the Falls tourism business around Twin Falls.



As we are leaving, we stop at a pullout for a different perspective of the Falls. Note the orange pipe at the far left - that's the penstock for a hydroelectric plant. This is apparently fed from the dam, and probably the canals, that supply irrigation water. The sign back at the pavilion said that the volume over the falls changes with the season (we've come on a good day), and in low-flow

times, more water is diverted from agriculture to run the generating turbines.

Okay, we are back on the road. We get back up to I-84 and cruise for just a little while before the "City of Rocks" sign directs us off at the Burley exit. There's a little bit of a drive south to the town of Oakley, which bills itself as "Gateway to the City of Rocks".

It's lunchtime. The best option we see is Judy's Cafe. Judy cooks and her uncommunicative daughter serves. There's a family of Idaho farmers gathered at a table; big, good-looking men who work the land - and are quite likely Mormons. After we finish, we ask directions of the daughter, but she says she doesn't know, and so Judy has to come out from the kitchen and chat with us.



Back outside, I take a photo of some local color - a store in an old brick building. Not much else in this town. I notice that water runs continually in the gutter by the curb. Water everywhere.

We are told to continue down this street until we get to the fork and the marker stone and take the right-hand way. The road out of Oakley turns into a more-or-less maintained dirt road, and goes for a long ways. Big trucks loaded with flagstone material pass us, covering us with dust. Then we find a signpost directing us to turn left to the City of Rocks. Narrow, bumpy, rutted dirt road. Doesn't seem quite right for a National Monument. But after a while we start seeing the big rocks.

The "City of Rocks" is this collection of granite extrusions sticking out of the dirt matrix all over the place. Here's a particularly impressive example.



We stop at one of these big rocks and get out to walk around and explore. I can clamber up on one of them and look down at Jerri.

Amazing view in all directions. I can zoom in on a rock across the valley where a party of climbers is preparing to ascend.



There are occasional explanatory signs along the road. One of them has the story of settlers traveling through the area via wagon trains who found this region of unusual geological formations and gave it the "City of Rocks" name. It was a good place to camp. It would appear that camping - and rock climbing - are still the big attractions to the park.





"Camp Rock" is one of these big granite formations that was used by the early travelers as a graffiti board, very much like Inscription Rock in New Mexico. There is also a couple of trucks parked on the road in front of Camp Rock, and some men sitting in chairs in the shade. Some younger fellows are running around climbing on nearby rocks, and about three of them are climbing on this rock over

our heads.

We've encountered a few other signs along the road with maps that lead us to understand that we entered the park from the back way. After a bit more driving, we come up to the official signboard for the entrance to the park. A ways beyond that is the visitors' center. Jerri gets her stamp, and we look at the old photos, and the ranger behind the counter tells us that Almo is actually the "Gateway to the City of Rocks", but Oakley likes to encroach.



The ranger also tells us about Castle Rocks State Park, just a little while away from here. We've got time. After we leave the station, I'm looking at the gas gauge again that I've been eyeing since passing the "Mr. Gas" station outside of Burley. There's a pump outside Tracy's General Store. I go inside to pay. Yes, it is a general store, large and roomy with lots of stocked shelves. A woman behind the counter is running the place (Tracy, maybe?), and her two daughters are in here, a little one seated at the counter working on a coloring sheet, and the older one stirring batter in the kitchen area. There is a partially-done jigsaw puzzle on the counter. After paying, we continue on our way.



The park seems mostly deserted. We stop at the first building, not a visitors' center, not open. There is a bunkhouse next to the main building, and down a path in the back is this "modern yurt". As we return to the car, we are met by a lady who asks us if we have a reservation. It turns out she thought we might be people who rented one of these buildings (bunkhouse, yurt) for a stay, and she wasn't

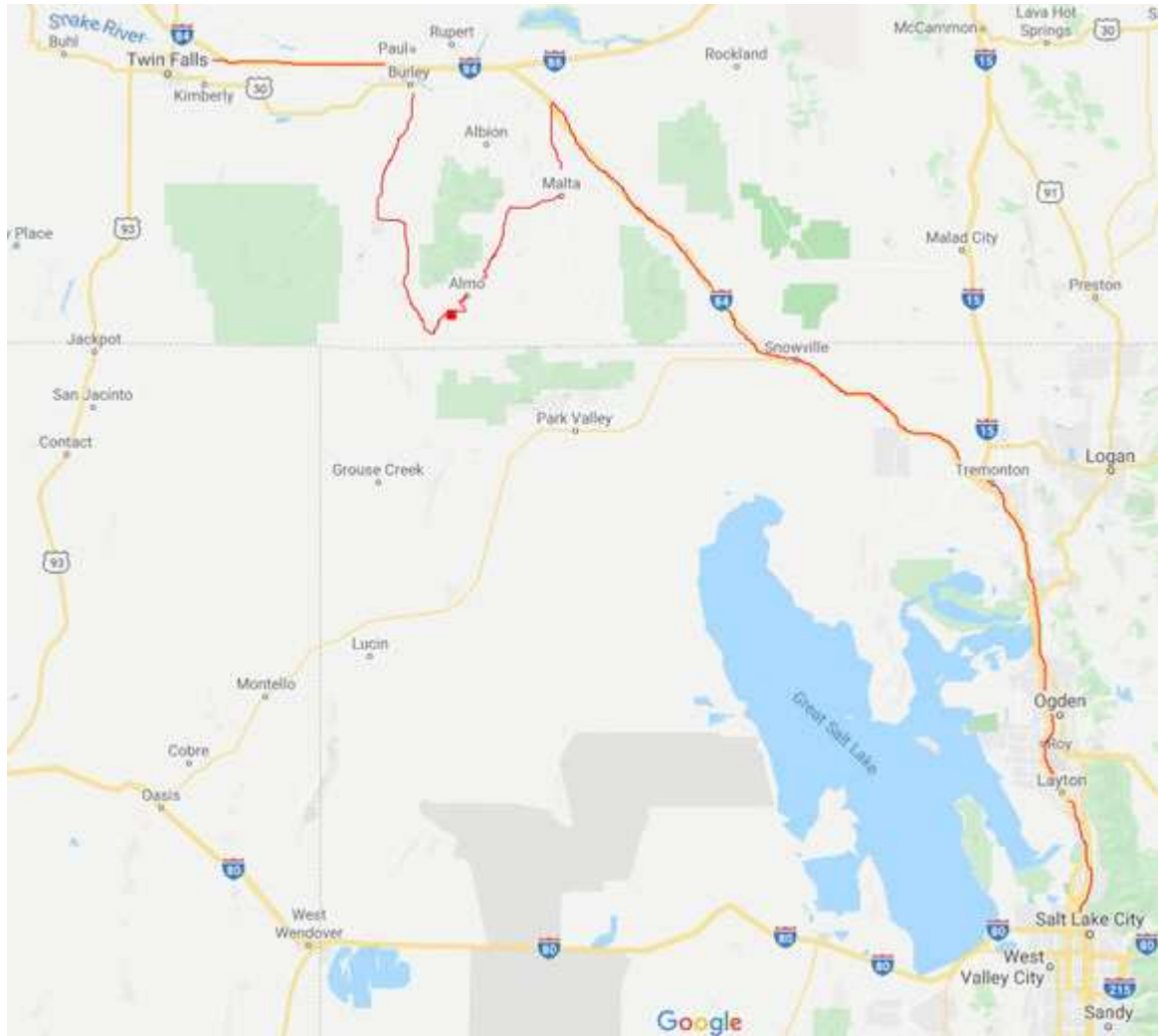
aware of any pending rentals. She is here to clean up the place - it's usually empty, and even empty buildings need care. She explains a bit more about the park, and it's not sounding too promising.

After leaving her to her work, we continue on toward the "castle rock". There are horseback trails, hiking trails, a pond stocked with game fish, and a number of campsites, but there are no auto roads into or around the big rockpile. So, other than looking at the natural marvel, there's no more we can do with it.



The road winds through more agricultural Idaho. In every little hamlet there is a sign to or a spire of a Latter Day Saints church. Eventually we get back to I-84 and can make up time cruising at 80MPH again. I notice three-trailer rigs rolling by; that's not something we see in Arizona (yet). Then we cross into Utah, headed toward Ogden and Salt Lake City. Our objective tomorrow is Promontory and the Golden Spike Monument. We pass the turnoff to Promontory and we're still a long ways from SLC. I'm thinking we should have gotten a hotel in Brigham City, which is a lot closer, but oh, well.

We get to the City and find our hotel. It's nice (and has luggage trolleys and elevators). It's also apparently a convention hotel. The adjoining restaurant is down a hall from the lobby, with the large meeting rooms, and on our way to dinner we have to ease past an Amway group being hosted, with many (mostly younger) people in formal clothing.



Thursday July 11 - Golden Spike

Breakfast the next morning is in the same restaurant that has been converted to a buffet format. But it's the same kind of breakfast food we've found in all the other hotels, just a nicer place to sit and eat it. Then we're back on the road northward to the exit we saw yesterday. The small community of Corinne is near the highway, and it's not too far beyond that before we pick up roadside signs pointing out remaining earthworks from the construction of the original railroad. Soon we are at Promontory, noticing that the parking lot is full and there are a few big tour buses. Inside, it is so crowded that we don't ever get challenged to pay the entry fee, or show our Parks Pass. Lots of older people and young families with noisy and active little kids.

Even before going outside, even as we are driving up to the visitors' center, we can see the *real* attraction - high-accuracy reproductions of the two locomotives involved in the original transcontinental railroad

Golden Spike event.



The visitors' center is running three films on rotation; a fakey Charlie Brown "building the railroad" cartoon, a documentary of the transcontinental railroad project, and a film about the fabrication of the locomotives from 19th Century industrial technology (this engineer enjoyed this part). There is also a little museum with railroad construction equipment and displays about the contributions of the Irish and the Chinese, and why the railroad no longer goes through Promontory - the Southern Pacific built a causeway across the Salt Lake that reduces the distance and occurrences of curves and grades. The exhibits make it clear that the massive project had lots of naysayers ("it's impossible!"), sustained a tremendous loss of life of the workers (which I'm thinking would never be acceptable in our days), and had long-lasting consequences (the End of the Frontier Age, the end of the Plains Indians lifestyle, and the large-scale entry of foreign immigrants into the interior of the continent).

Jerri and I can look down on the location where the Golden Spike was driven to connect the Union Pacific and the Central Pacific lines.





We observe this man taking a photo of a gnome on the tie. He tells us that he and his wife carry this gnome and take photos of him in the places they visit.

This reminds me of my older daughter and her silly friends and their "Brohan" project.



Jerri stands between the two locomotives at the place where the Golden Spike was driven.

The highlight of the morning is when the ranger announces on the PA that the locomotives are going to be fired up. Everyone is supposed to

stay well clear of the tracks for safety, and be quiet so we can hear the sounds of the steam locomotives. First the Jupiter backs up perhaps a quarter-mile and then steams back up.



Then the 119 backs up a ways and then runs forward on the spur track.





Very nice. As we leave, we look at the replica Golden Spike on display (the real one is at Stanford University - Leland Stanford was the president of Central Pacific).

And now, we retrace our route all the way back to Salt Lake City, but take the exit downtown. The Utah Capitol Building is on top of a hill, so it's not hard to find, and it's not too hard to get a parking spot on the east side of the building. We walk up to the side doors, past several Utah State Highway Patrol cars, and enter just in time to join the free tour led by an Indian or Pakistani woman with an accent so thick we had to listen very close to understand her.

At the start of the tour, we are at the bottom level standing around the Great Seal of the State of Utah. Note the "deseret" beehive, symbolizing industry. The "deseret" and the focus on industry are linked to the Mormons. Nobody said this, of course. The story that comes out is that while the Mormons were the most influential settlers in the territory, they weren't the first ones and they weren't the last, so the Mormons had to come to terms with sharing with "gentiles".





The guide leads us upstairs to the main level, where we can look up into the dome. It's painted like a sky-view, with clouds - and a flock of seagulls, which, according to Mormon legend, appeared miraculously to devour the locusts that were threatening their crops.

Our narrator points out some of the historical frescoes - this mountain main is Peter Skene Ogden, a Canadian fur trader who wandered around much of western North America, from Wyoming to Oregon, and from British Columbia to Utah. He was one of the first white explorers to enter the Wasatch valley.





Lots of Mormon influence. Here's Brigham Young leading the LDS settlers into the "promised land".

The state reception room is also on this level, roped off for us visitors. There are some people in here sitting around, so we are admonished to be quiet. This is also known as the "Gold Room", for all the gilding on the architectural surfaces. Much of the furnishings and appointments (like the chandeliers and the drapes) have been brought from Europe.





Ornate staircase to the next level where the House chamber is located. Note the full-width skylight - there's lots of natural light in the central area of the Capitol. Also note the big lunette pioneer-themed painting, and the two-story columns. Stunning. Our tour climbs the Senate stair to the next level up.

There is a chamber reserved for the Utah Supreme Court in the Capitol, but as is the case for Idaho, the Court has their own building, and they don't use this chamber much - although they *do* use it for ceremonial occasions.





Our tour group sits down in the rectangular House Gallery. There are paintings of historical moments up by the broad skylight. The brass railings round the gallery include representations of beehives. Utah was the first state to televise proceedings in the legislature, and therefore there are facilities for cameras and A/V equipment in the gallery.

At this level, we can look out into the main area with the chandelier at eye level. Note all the paintings. The building is beautiful with all the natural light and the colorful artwork.





The guide points out this statue on the topmost gallery. This is Philo Farnsworth, a contender for the title "Inventor of Television". The guide explains that every state can have two statues in Statuary Hall in the United States Capitol. One is (of course) Brigham Young. The other was Farnsworth until Idaho asserted a more weighty claim to Farnsworth, so Utah replaced him with Martha Cannon - for no other reason than being the first female senator elected in the U.S.

At this point, the tour is over, and the guide leaves us to ourselves. After peeking into the Senate and House chambers again, Jerri and I return to the information desk where we picked up the tour. There's nobody there. Somewhat frustrated, Jerri asks the state trooper who is standing against the wall when the info person will be back so she can get her Passport stamp. "Oh, I can help you with that", he says, and steps behind the desk and pulls out the stamp and stamps her book.

The chamber near the info desk is the visitors' center - except it really isn't, it's more of a gallery dedicated largely to the renovation of the Capitol, mostly to improve its earthquake resistance. There are a few other interesting things in this little museum, like this "magic picture" of the future governor of Utah. Scary looking character, I wouldn't vote for him.





The helpful trooper tells us there is no gift shop inside the capitol, but there is one down the hill. Instead of going out the side door, we go out through the main front door, and down the steps. On the way down is... yes... a beehive. With some bronze bees. I can't resist suggesting to Jerri that it looks like a pile of pooh with some flies on it.

At the circulating road below the capitol is the gift shop, which is really more of a Utah gift shop than a Capitol gift shop, but it will have to do. From outside, looking up the hill, is the imposing Capitol - and the last one we will visit on this trip.



We get back to our car and make our way down the hill, into the heart of the city. We happen to be driving near the *actual heart* of Salt Lake City, and park the car (semi-illegally) for a few minutes to get a photo of the Temple from the side.



There's Moroni on the pinnacle, tooting his little horn. I think of the newly-built Mormon Temple in Tucson, on Skyline. Moroni has his back to the road. I wonder if there is a rule that Moroni on subordinate temples has to face toward *the* Temple here in SLC.

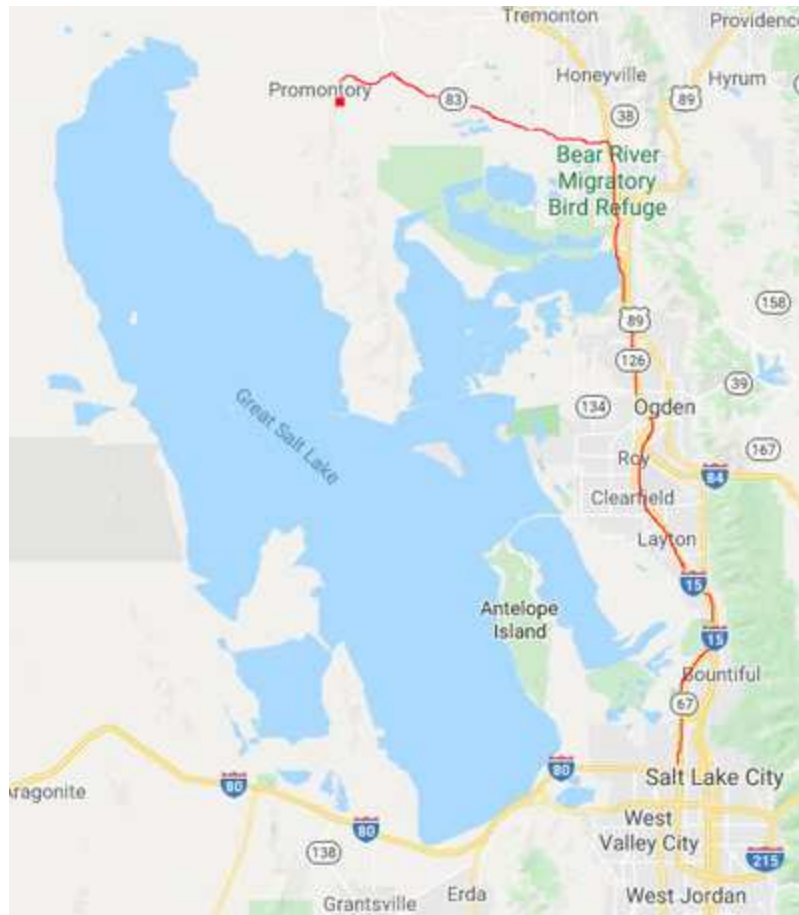
We are now officially done with the Utah Capitol and Salt Lake City. Last night, perusing the in-room tourist guidebook, I came across a mention of the Union Central train depot in Ogden, and the historical downtown district around it. Pretty pictures of colorful fountains, that sort of thing. So I talk Jerri into looking for dinner in Ogden, which is just up the road. It would have been a fast hop up the freeway, like it was earlier today when we went that way enroute to Promontory. Instead, there are miles of backed-up creep-along traffic. Dreadful if it is this way for rush hour *every* day. What should have been a 30-minute hop turns into more than an hour. Eventually we can exit off I-15 into

Ogden and find the station. Closed. And there are what might have been some interesting museums inside. Bummer.

But at least we can walk up the road outside and find a dinner place; 25th Street. We walk up one side to the intersection. Nothing really promising on this side, mostly coffee shops and yoga studios. I'm wanting to go on up, but Jerri's feet are hurting after all that Capitol walking around, so we just cross to the north side and walk back. Rovali's Ristorante Italiano - that sounds like a winner. After a nice leisurely dinner, we go back to the south side of the street to a Coldstone Creamery shop for desert.



It's starting to get dark when we go back to the station where our car is parked. No lighted fountains. False advertising. At least we can get a photo that says we were here. On the return trip to SLC, there is no traffic problem.



Friday July 12 - Bryce Canyon

After getting our breakfast in the buffet/restaurant and checking out, we are on our way south on I-15. There's a lot of roadwork in the SLC I-15 corridor, so it's stop-and-go. One time we are stopped, I can look westward and see the



tailings of the Kennecott Mine, supposedly the largest mining excavation in the world and has produced more copper than any other mine ever. I'm thinking it would be nice to peek inside and compare it with the Morenci mine which I have seen, but of course, that's not why we're here.

South on I-15 for quite a ways, through Lehi and Provo and Nephi, towns with classic Mormon names. Near Sulphurdale, we fork over to

I-70 for a short twisty-turny trip through the Fishlake Mountains. Coming out of the hills, there's a long grade down to the valley, where we pick up US 89 going south. Beautiful country. Eventually we get to the small town of Panguitch, where we stop for lunch at a barbeque cafe. My brisket sandwich is pretty good, but the service isn't so great - the staff seems to prefer standing around the register in the gift shop chatting among themselves. After lunch we pop across the street to a gas station to refuel and so Jerri can get some bottled water. While in the office, she learns that the attendant was born in Safford, Arizona!

Continuing through town, it appears there's more to Panguitch than it appeared. There's an active downtown and nice brick houses. A little ways out of Panguitch, there's a sign that directs us onto the "Scenic Highway" (local route 12) for Red Canyon park and Bryce National Park. Emerging from Red Canyon park, the ground levels off and there are more and more inns, campgrounds, and recreational equipment rental places as we approach the entrance. Just before the park entrance is a small town or community geared to serving tourists. The Ruby Inn is here, looks like it's been serving tourists since 1919. There's a parking lot and a shuttle station to pick up people and enter the park, but I think we're going to need our car.

Our National Park Pass gets us through the fee station. There's quite a community inside as well, with roads going hither and thither and lots of hikers and cyclists. We stop at the visitors' center. It's crowded, of course, and we have to park way at the back. It appears to serve also as a shuttle park & ride lot. I think briefly about switching to the shuttle, but a look at the map indicates it really only operates in this vicinity of campgrounds and nearby vista points, and we are wanting to go all the way to the end of the road. After Jerri gets her stamp and her postcards, we are ready to proceed.

The strategy is to ignore all the stops on the way out and pick them up as time permits on the way back. It's quite a ways driving to the end, especially with the pokey 35MPH limit and rubbernecking sightseers in front of us. Eventually we get to the end of the road: Rainbow Point, and this panorama:



This is what Bryce is, a lengthy complex of sandstone spires formed by water and wind erosion. Not millions of years, but that's another story. it's not a canyon (like so many other southern Utah parks on the Grand Staircase formation north of the Mogollon Rim); there's no river, there's no other side.

We have since turned back and are proceeding from Rainbow Point back to the village. We see two or three arch formations like this one; this is the biggest and best-presented to the road.

Looking down below the railing around the platform, we can see hats that have blown off out of reach. This reminds me of Faith as a small child losing her hat when it was blown off and into the Grand Canyon.



Often, the sandstone has its supporting members stripped away and only a lonely spire remains - a "hoodoo".

At another stop, a huge crow is hanging around close to us, to see if we're going to offer any food. This is why it's a bad idea to feed wildlife. In the background is more of the fantastically eroded sandstone landscape.



We stop at a number (almost all) of the many scenic overlooks on the way back. The village is set on the side of a particularly dense structure of the sandstone formations called Bryce Amphitheatre. There is a path all the way from one end (Bryce Point) to the other (Fairyland Point), and hiking trails of varying difficulty down into the depression and threading around the sandstone formations. There are several overlook stations, and we stop and park at the one closest to the road, Sunset Point. The objective is to see a hoodoo that Jerri has found on the map that we should be able to see - Thor's Hammer.



We think this is it here, in the center of this bowl otherwise relatively free of large freestanding formations.

Here's a zoom. There is a large bulge not quite at the end of the hoodoo, and then another differently-colored bulge at the end. You can imagine the large bulge is Thor's hand, holding the handle to the hammer, and the bulge or knob at the top is the head of the hammer.



I can stand here near the rail of Sunset Point and look down on the heads of the hikers walking happily on the switchback trail into the complex. It looks like an easy trail, but (as always) we don't really have the time, and we didn't come prepared (with shoes) to do any serious hiking. There are signboards with information the Park Service thought was useful, about plants and animals and millions of years... and who Bryce was. Ebenezer Bryce was a Mormon who essentially abused the Homestead Act to claim as much land as possible for the church. He would file a claim for a homestead, live on it for a while as required by law, then file a claim for a homestead on adjacent land, and so on. In this way, he ended up "owning" a good bit of the area along the sandstone cliffs.



The day is wearing on and we have places to get to. As we leave the park, we take a peek into one of the campgrounds. It appears guests can rent a tipi for a special memorable camping experience.

Back out to the main road, back past the inns and the campgrounds and the recreational equipment rental places, and back up to Red Canyon park. We had driven through these arches cut through for the road, and now we stop to take a photo of one.





It isn't entirely clear to us that Red Canyon is part of the National Park system, but we stop at the visitors' center in the off-chance it's still open and maybe they have a stamp for Jerri's book. It isn't open, so we don't know. The sign at the visitors' center has the shape of a national park sign, or it could be because it's in Dixie National Forest". But Smoky is here, and he's a Forest Service

mascot. Nice view of the red rocks and Smoky's backside.

Face to face with Smoky, but the sun is at his back, so he's harder to make out. Bears that wear hats and blue jeans and use shovels - *that's silly.*





More of the majestic red rocks looming over the outdoors restroom at the visitors' center.

Further down the road, we stop again and have a quiet look at some of the giant red rocks, so we can say we "did" Red Canyon. The sandstone formations have a different character here than the ones at Bryce.



We quickly get to the end of "Scenic Route" 12 and head south on US 89 again, following the path of a lovely quiet creek. At one point we can see a buffalo farm off the the left in the valley. The road continues southward over ground that is mostly flat but always seems to be trending downhill. The road enters hilly country, and we start winding back and forth, following a mountain stream. Somewhere around Mount Carmel I notice a "Maynard Dixon Gallery" sign. Maynard Dixon was a famous western artist closely associated with Tucson (I think there is a Maynard Dixon museum or gallery in Tucson), and he did some murals or shaped paintings in the historic Depot. I didn't realize there was a Utah connection.



On and on until we get to Kanab, the town on the border between Utah and Arizona. I am amazed at all the hotels and the tourists wandering around. I think we may have to look at some Kanab action in the future. It is time for dinner, but we still have a long ways to go to Flagstaff, and this means grab-n-go. I don't see anything suitable except for a McDonald's.

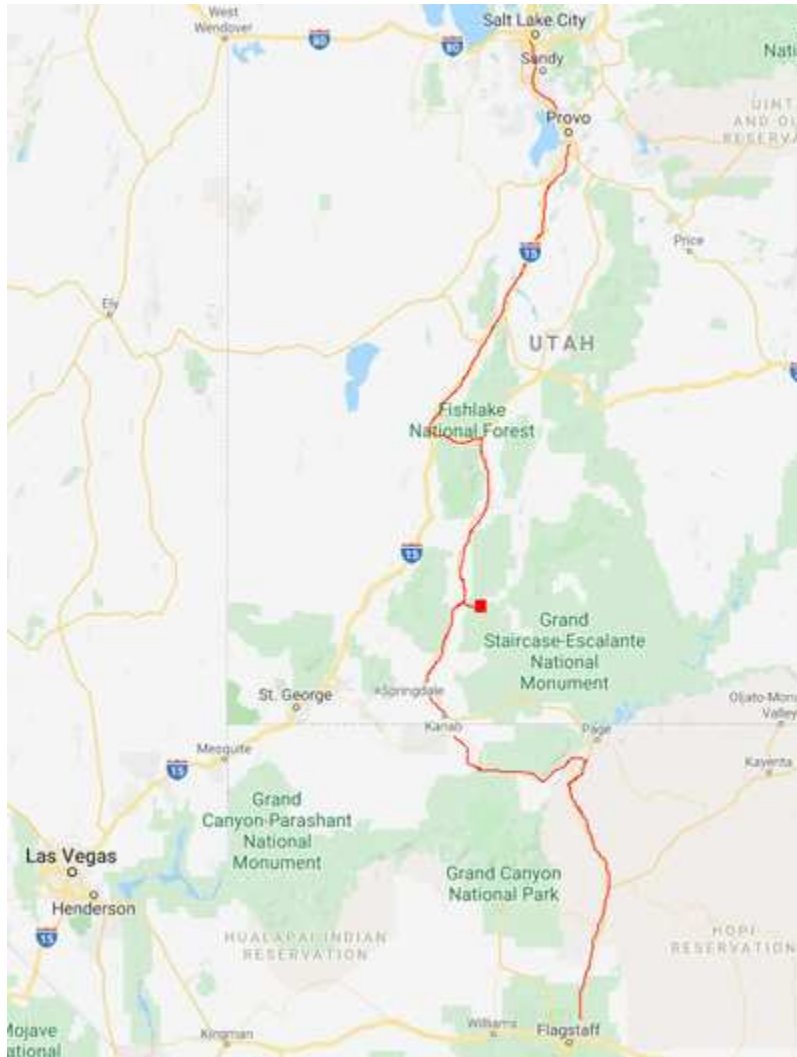
Highway 89 continues eastward, but Highway 89A is a bypass that can save us some time. The border is just a mile or two south of Kanab. As we cross in, I'm keenly on the lookout for an Arizona Centennial sign to add to my collection. However, other than a Grand Canyon Centennial sign, I see nothing else. How odd. There's a long, straight drive across the northern edge of Arizona, and in the gathering dusk, the road bends left/eastward and enters the hills. As darkness falls, I am following the looping curves with all prudent speed. The daylight fails, the headlights come on, and I'm still pushing it. At one point, there is a "Caution: Campground" sign, and a near miss of a deer while turning a bend. So I cool it. A little.

We are on a narrow road, two lanes, no passing due to the curves, and at my current speed we fetch up behind a pick-up pulling a trailer and

fighting to stay on the road. We put up with this for a long time, Then, the road descends from the hills to a long, long straight section, near a sign for the Vermillion Cliffs National Monument, and we take our chance to pass. Around Marble Canyon, we cross a little river on a big bridge. I notice some old-style lodges in this vicinity, with a lot of guest cars out front.

Shortly after this, at Bitter Springs, our 89A rejoins US 89, a familiar road to Flagstaff. No more mountain curves; I can relax and drive easier. It's still a long drive southward. Grassy plains give way to rolling hills with pine trees, and then into a full-on pine forest. The outside air is noticeably cooler. At long last, the lights of Flagstaff appear before us.

It's been a long ways since refueling in Panguitch, so I take the first reasonable station I get to. Well, it *looked* reasonable, anyways; the pump I've already put the card into is dispensing a few teaspoons per minute. Ridiculous. I would have just given up and tried the next pump up, but we are already in Flagstaff, so I just wait it out. Finally a full tank, and we are back on Historic Route 66. Just a few miles, and we are checking into our old favorite Pony Soldier Inn. This is new; we are given a "suite", which is two rooms on the west side of upstairs joined together. A couch and two easy chairs in one room (with a bathroom), and the bed in the other room (with another bathroom). Spacious.



Saturday July 13 - Final Leg Home

Breakfast at the Pony Soldier is in the adjacent building which also houses the indoor swimming pool (very nice during the winter; one of the reasons this Best Western has become a favorite). We check out, get back on the road, and then I miss the turnoff to I-40. Instead, we go down Butler, bypassing the (interesting, congested) historic downtown, and soon we are on I-17 headed south on a *very* familiar road. Two hours later, driving through Phoenix, we reach the point where Grand Avenue crosses I-17; we are now back where we were almost five weeks ago! The huge diamond-shaped Spencer sign greets us, and the Shamrock Dairy sign says it is 105 degrees outside! Yes, home!

An hour and a half later, we are back in Tucson, meeting Grandpa Norton and Aunt Maribeth at El Molinito for lunch. Afterwards, back on I-10 and headed to the Congress exit, a terrific monsoon shower falls.

Driving through downtown, I'm seeing tied down pavilions and tarps pulled over A/V speakers; oh, yes, this is Second Saturday Downtown, but it has gotten rained out.

We're done! This is the round-trip route we have taken. We can now add Oregon and Washington to the "states visited" list, and cross California, Oregon, Washington, Idaho, and Utah off the "capitol stamps needed for the passport" list, as well as a *lot* of lighthouses!

