

## **Our 2013 Trip - Blog Posts**

### **Day 1, 9/6/13, Warrensburg to Abilene**

Our first significant stop was the Flint Hills Discovery Center in Manhattan, KS. This is an excellent museum with interpretation of the geology, ecology and human history of the Flint Hills/tall grass prairie. Bill was impressed with the display of how deep the roots may go - since he's planted and/or nurtured various types of tall grass on the farm.

Lunch at a chain BBQ place in Junction City called Cox Family. Pretty good & reasonable.

Then it was on to Abilene and the Dwight D. Eisenhower Library & Museum. The exhibit included a WWII exhibit, the best I've seen. It will be on into 2014. We highly recommend it, and allow a LOT of time. This is a statue of Ike on the grounds.

Dinner at M&R Grill in Abilene. Excellent chicken fried steak & onion rings. We're spending the night at the Holiday Inn Express in Abilene, avoiding a bunch of folks on a tour bus. Tomorrow we're off to La Junta via Great Bend, Ness City, Lamar & Bent's Old Fort.

### **Day 2, 9/7/13, Abilene to La Junta**

A long & very hot day today - 400 miles and 99 degrees. We took I-70, KS-156, US-56, KS-96, CO-96, US-283, US-50, and CO-194, mostly a lot of nothing but fields and pastures. Couldn't even find anyplace interesting to eat, so ended up having lunch at Scott City DQ.

Finally, we arrived at Bent's Old Fort NHS and took a tour. It seems small for all the people who worked & traded there - a veritable who's who of the Santa Fe Trail trade. Took quite a few pictures, and talked with the staff interpreters, all dressed to period. I highly recommend (when it's cooler).

Next stop was Koshare Kiva & Indian Museum at Otero Community College in La Junta. A Boy Scout troop has been presenting authentic dances for 75 years (obviously not the same kids). The art collection is excellent and somewhat eclectic - lots of kachina/katsina figures, paintings from the Taos school, native art, old and modern pottery, etc. We were really pleasantly surprised - it's worth a stop.

Checked in at the HIE in La Junta, ate at Pizza Hut (I told y'all there was no place interesting to eat; as a matter of fact, there weren't many places to eat at all). Tomorrow we're off to Chama via Great Sand Dunes.

### **Day 3, 9/8/13 - La Junta to Chama**

A fun day with photo ops at Great Sand Dunes Nat'l Monument and on La Manga pass. Total drive was 272 miles, via CO-10, US-160, CO-150, US-285, CO-17/NM-17.

We had our first taste of "green" at Juanito's Mexican Kitchen in Alamosa, with a supplement at the High Country Cafe in Chama, for supper. Met some interesting people, mainly train buffs here and one fellow riding his BMW (bike).

Sandra always looks for the first Park Ranger she can find - in this case he was waiting to give a nature talk. We were his only audience. We didn't walk all the way to the dunes - it's 7800 ft altitude. Very scenic.

Tomorrow is our trip on the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad. It goes thru 2 passes at over 10,000 feet, some tunnels - and the trip includes a turkey dinner. I'll tell y'all about it tomorrow.

#### **Day 4, 9/9/13 - Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad**

That's what we did - take a day-long ride on a narrow gauge railroad. First, we took a bus from Chama to Antonito, where we boarded our "Tourist Class" car, with our own tiny table for two, our complimentary sippy cup and a bag of pretzels - each. When we get rolling, it's off to the gondola car, where we can experience the view unobstructed, the soot and cinders, and the fun of standing up & trying to take pictures on a rocking platform. And we took a LOT of pictures!

One glitch with the train caused us a significant delay, when they had to clear a clogged brakeline on our way up to Toltec Gorge. That got us into Osier and lunch about an hour late, but the turkey dinner was marvelous to our starved and not-particularly-discriminating taste. Then the train was off, for a late arrival in Chama, where tired and still-stuffed we headed back to The Hotel.

Supper at Sonny's Cafe - split a cheese enchilada plate (green) and planning on crashing soon. A few high points - meeting some train buffs (20th ride on the C&T), several other Missourians, a geologist taking pictures of the rocks as well as the scenery, some people learning how to be engineers and the gondola car docent from Texas.

Tomorrow it's the scenic route to Taos, via Echo Amphitheater, the Monastery of Christ in the Desert (to buy a bottle of wine), a stop at Ghost Ranch, bumming\* around Abiquiu, a mountain route that comes out near Ojo Caliente (a famous spa), a trip thru the Rio Grande gorge, and arrival late & tired in Taos. Of course, this all depends on whether it rains - heavy rain and all bets are off.

- means hunting for Forrest Fenn's Treasure Trove.

#### **Day 5, 9/10/13 - Chama to Taos**

Adventure time! We pulled out of Chama about 8 AM with a full tank of gas after a good breakfast at Fina's Cafe. We had high hopes for photography and treasure hunting, but you know what they say about best-laid plans. The day's journey started uneventfully enough, driving on US-84 thru some very scenic country with some very scenic clouds to stop for a few pictures at Echo Amphitheater - yes, there's definitely an echo at Echo Amphitheater, a natural formation in the cliffs.

Sandra just had to go see a monastery, so we turned off on the unpaved road for the 13 mile trek to the Monastery of Christ in the Desert, a Benedictine monastery. The goal was to see what it looked like and to buy some wine. Well, let's just say those goals weren't met. The road follows the Chama River, and we stopped a couple of times for photography and to take a closer look at the river. By the 10 mile point a drizzle started. As we reached the monastery parking lot, at least 300 yards from the visitor center/gift shop, the rain increased. Bill decided that discretion and all that, it was better to head back to the main road rather than get caught in a wash. Strike one.

We headed south toward Abiquiu, planning to stop at the paleontology museum. Rain got harder. We skipped it and headed for the dam, where we planned to take a ride on a little road that ran parallel to the river and to look for drainages into the Chama there. The rain let up. We headed down the face of the dam past the power plant (warm water halts, water high, heavy loads), then left the pavement to a gravel road. The road turned to dirt with occasional rocks. The rain started up, heavier now. The road dead-ended. Bill got some pre-winter practice with controlled skids as the dirt turned to slick clay mud. We, at last, got back to the good part of the road, climbed the dam, and headed for Abiquiu for a break. Strike 2.

Well, we still had the Rio Grande Gorge at Orrillo Verde - we hoped - via NM-554 & 111. First, a stop for lunch in Ojo Caliente, at the Mesa Vista cafe - their green sauce was hot. The rain got harder. After lunch, with the wipers going full blast, we drove thru the Ojo Caliente Resort & Spa, then headed north on US-285 to NM-567. We were told not to go down into the gorge, but the rain stopped - it didn't look like it had rained there at all, so down we went. Saw all kinds of "blazes" but none looked appropriate, so we crossed the river on a steel bridge and headed toward Taos via NM 570 & 68. A drizzle started.

Got to Taos, found our motel (Sun God Lodge). The room is nicely decorated with RC Gorman prints, ceramic light fixtures, and even a katsina doll. Furniture is mission style (duh) and tile work is very nice. I expect we'll have some pictures of it to share. Since we were early, thanks to the rain, we headed for the Plaza & took a walk around poking our noses into the shops. It rained harder. Sandra bought an on-sale T-shirt at her favorite T-shirt shop, we ate at El Taoseno (a local favorite where we had to split a giant burrito - green), bought some RC (cola, not Gorman) coffee & milk at an Albertsons, then called it a night. And so will I, as we dream of our trip to the John Dunn Bridge and the Enchanted Circle (weather permitting).

### **Day 6, Wednesday 9/11/13 - The Enchanted Circle**

That's what they call a trip from Taos to Questa, Red River, Eagles Nest, Angel Fire and back to Taos. We did it today, with a little side trip - but let me start from the beginning.

As we pulled out of the motel Bill's cell phone rang - it was another hunter of Forrest Fenn's treasure who was planning to meet us for breakfast tomorrow. He was pulling out of Taos today, so we met him and his buddy at their motel about a mile from ours. After a 40 minute chat with them, it was off to breakfast. Yes, I confess; we ate at McDonald's. Then we headed off for our first destination, the John Dunn Bridge, the sun shining brightly. It was reputedly hard to find, but the route is well-marked, as the only put-in/take out point for 17 miles.

This bridge was the only way across the gorge for Taosenos who wanted to catch the first train in northern NM. It was privately owned, so of course it was a toll bridge. There are a couple of "clothing optional" hot springs near the bridge, but the only vehicle parked nearby was a sheriff's deputy, and he was in the vehicle. We walked upstream a bit on the west side, where we heard one of the springs was. Walking was hard, so we went back and walked upstream on the east side - and saw the remains of the hotel, etc., John Dunn had built there to further extract money from travelers. But, enough was enough and we left for the Circle.

We headed north on NM-522 for Questa, with a side trip to the Red River Fish Hatchery to see how trout are raised (& if we could find any halting warm waters or a home of Brown). Went on from there to Questa, where not much was doing, then on to Red River. En route we passed Chevron's "moly" mine (that's molybdenum - say it 3 times quickly). Red River is a tourist town depending on skiing in the winter and outdoor sports in the summer - it being neither, a lot of stores were closed.

We continued to Eagles Nest where we thought we'd found a place to eat - the Cowboy Cafe. We knew it was "real" by the pickups pulling horse trailers full of saddled horses parked outside. One problem - there were too many of them and the weather was not conducive to eating outside. As we headed to Angel Fire, we passed the Vietnam Veterans Memorial State Park. The memorial was built by a doctor in memory of his Marine platoon leader son, killed in an ambush in Nam. It has previously been managed by the DAV and a foundation, but the state accepted ownership a few years ago. It's a very contemplative memorial.

On to Angel Fire, where we saw one cafe lot full of cars. It didn't look like it had "green" so we asked at the visitor center. He confirmed that the only "red, green or Christmas" restaurants were closed for the off season at this ski resort town, it being in that window when it's too hot to ski, to cold to swim and too illegal to hunt. Bill hates to double back, so we decided to head for Mora in hopes of finding something to eat; besides, we'd never been there. So, off we went down NM-434, which got lonelier and lonelier. There, on a narrow 2-lane section, we saw a row of abandoned log cabins with their doors open and in high grass - someone's dream returning to the forest.

At Mora we found a Hatcha's, an order-at-the-counter cafe and ate way too much. Then we picked up NM-518 back to Taos. After dinner at Antonio's, a high-end restaurant just off the Plaza. We split a plate of chiles relleno, and boy, were they good! Walked over to the Plaza, and enjoyed a spectacular sunset.

Tomorrow we're hitting the art trail in Taos. It is supposed to rain a lot, so I guess we may postpone our visit to the Taos Pueblo until our next trip.

### **Day 7, Thursday 9/12/13 - Around Taos**

This trip is a week old already. Today the weather put a damper on some of our plans, so we spent the day hitting Taos museums. By my count, 4 art museums, 1 historic hacienda, 5 galleries and assorted shops. There's an R.C. Gorman museum & gallery where we picked up some cards, calendars & posters. The major museums you can Google - Museum Association of Taos. Ate some more good NM cuisine.

Tomorrow is on to Santa Fe via the High Road, weather permitting - there's flooding around various places in NM. We'll check the weather and head on out.

No pictures for the blog today. We took some, but generally of the artsy side.

### **Day 8, Friday 9/13/13 - Taos to Santa Fe**

The High Road between Taos & Santa Fe is scenic ... I guess: we were in rain or actually in the clouds for most of it. The day started with an ominous omen - the motel lacked water pressure and (gasp!) the internet was out. But, the omens changed as both came back before we left, a good description on how the day was to go.

Breakfast was another misadventure. Sandra had her first experience with a breakfast burrito, and she was not amused. Bill thought it was OK, although even half of it was too much to eat; after all, it was just sausage, eggs, hash browns and "green" wrapped in a tortilla.

We passed thru a series of small towns in valleys along the road. First stop was Las Trampas, where a break in the rain allowed us to shoot some pictures of the Iglesia San Jose de Gracia, dated 1760. It's adobe, so it's in need of constant maintenance - especially in this very rainy monsoon season.

Further down the road, we stopped in Chimayo & visited the Santuario, where a miraculous cross appeared in the early 1800s to a community of penitentes. When it was moved to the local church, it disappeared to be found again at the original site. A church was built at the site, and is now surrounded by numerous shrines and a few gift shops. The spot where the cross was found is now a hole in the floor, where pilgrims can take some of the "holy dirt" and pray for healing. (I'm sure I've greatly oversimplified the story - read it yourself).

We got to Santa Fe about 10:30, checked into the Holiday Inn Express, and headed for the Plaza area. First stop: The Shed, our traditional lunch spot - and it was crowded. Sandra had a blue corn taco & Bill a blue corn enchilada plate (with posole). Then, it was on to the History Museum, always worth a visit, followed by a stop at the state's art museum. We buy the \$25 Culture Pass good at all the state-run museums and State Monuments. We'll easily get our money's worth out of it.

Now, it was shopping time. Sandra hit the Dime Store for postcards, another of our Santa Fe traditions. We walked around, visited some shops & galleries and a book store. Dinner was at the Blue Corn Brewery - some good beer and chiles relleno (green). Tomorrow we'll meet some folks near the Plaza for lunch, then visit the Museum Hill museums and prepare for our trip to Albuquerque Sunday.

### **Day 9, Saturday 9/14/13 - Santa Fe**

A rainy morning and dry afternoon, which was just fine. The big event of the day was meeting... But let me keep things in chronological order:

We went back to the Plaza area and found a parking space right across from the cathedral, a good omen. At 10, we visited the Museum of the Institute of American Indian Arts, which focuses on

current artists. We got in free because of my status as a military veteran (but donated on the way out). Much of the art displayed gives a rather different viewpoint of cultural relations, including one creatively displaying various stereotypes to be broken.

Then, we stood on the corner waiting for another hunter of the Forrest Fenn Treasure. He showed up shortly with wife & adult son (with a good camera), and when another hunter & his wife showed, we went to The Shed for lunch and discussion of "the Chase." Then an older gentleman arrived and seemed to be looking for someone - yes, the legendary Forrest Fenn himself. Sandra was thrilled, and I think the other hunters were excited as well. He gave away no clues, but it was a pleasant talk, anyway.

After lunch, we headed for Museum Hill, home of 4 museums. Our first was the International Folk Art Museum, where we toured exhibits on Japanese kites and chocolate, before visiting the large gallery full of all kinds of folk arts, including a collection of miniatures. Miniature cities, miniature temples, miniature events - from multiple cultures. Could take a whole day just to do this gallery.

We then visited the Museum of Indian Arts & Culture which is always excellent (yep, we'd been there before). Finally we went to Wheelwright Museum of the American Indian, which we'd never visited before. It's laid out in the shape of a Navajo hogan, and had an excellent display of native weaving. You know, the "Navajo rug," with a lot of history on the evolution of styles, etc., - and the gift shop on the lower level was laid out as a trading post, complete with squeaking floors.

The sky was filled with excellent clouds, so Bill just had to take a picture of the sky with an Apache dancer in the foreground. Tomorrow, we're off to Albuquerque via Tent Rocks (weather permitting as usual).

### **Day 10, Sunday, 9/15/13 - Santa Fe to Albuquerque**

We got off to an early start despite being awakened by a thunderstorm in the middle of the night. Our first stop was Kasha-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument located on the Cochiti Pueblo land. This displays erosion of multi-colored volcanic deposits into interesting shapes. It includes a slot canyon, very different from those eroded into the sandstone rocks in other areas. The "hoodoos" are generally conical so they look like tents. At a distance the cap rocks on some of them look like aliens a la Roswell. We ended up making a 2 mile hike - felt like it was all uphill.

Next stop: Albuquerque. After lunch at the Frontier Restaurant, a local tradition near UNM, we headed for the Albuquerque Museum of Art and History. It has been completely reorganized since our last visit, with all exhibits on one floor. We were a bit disappointed since two galleries were closed to change exhibits and it seemed like the total material exhibited in the history section was much reduced.

We went on to Old Town where we visited several shops looking for the perfect T-shirt. Having found it, we headed 5 miles east to the other end of town and the home of our host, Larry Harrah, whom we got to know thru his late wife, Madge, author of many children's books including one on Blind Boone.

Tomorrow it's the State Fair and another museum or two. Hope the clouds are as good for photography as today - and that they're not dumping rain on us.

### **Day 11, Monday, 9/16/13 - Around Albuquerque**

State Fair! We went to the New Mexico State Fair today. Toured all the art venues - Hispanic, Native American and Fine Art - tremendous number of excellent pieces in every category in each venue. Their award system is different from Missouri's, but then, they have so many more quality pieces.

It was crowded today, as well, as it's Senior Appreciation Today. A lot of medical booths from health pros and those marketing to seniors. We stopped to ask the Republicans if they were losing votes to the Libertarians in NM, which of course they denied, but it turns out that the lady we talked to (& her daughter) graduated from CMSC in Warrensburg. We also watched a couple of different Indian dance groups/demos and had an Indian Taco for lunch.

Afterwards we went to old town to buy a dvd of the Hillerman novel, "Coyote Waits." While there, we bought a couple of books by an author Bill met at the Hillerman Writers Workshop a number of years ago. Then it was on to the Museum of Natural History, where we looked at the dinosaurs and smooched in the volcano, cave and the Chixulub exhibit (we once saw a couple of museum staff members smooching in there).

Back to Larry's house, in time to go to supper at a very good New Mexican restaurant, Los Cuates, with our Chaser friend, Tim, and his family. Afterward we played with his personal pin-ball machine collection. Then it was back to Larry's and to bed. Tomorrow is up in the air depending on weather.

### **Day 12, Tuesday, 9/17/13 - Albuquerque to Gallup**

That's right, Gallup wasn't in our plans at all, but here we are in a brand new Holiday Inn Express. We did the laundry this AM, then bid farewell to our host, Larry Harrah about noon. We took one last look at old US-66 thru Albuquerque, following Central Ave from Juan Tabo to the far west end of town. Still a lot of the old classic motels active, but the iconic Zuni Motel is gone.

Then it was I-40 west to Grants for lunch at a great little place, El Cafecito, where we'll probably have lunch tomorrow. Grants started as a railroad town, then became known for uranium mining. We didn't tour the uranium mine they use as a tourism attraction. From here on, the scenery got more exciting, with red cliffs on the north as we left the malpais.

Arrived at Gallup and immediately toured the museum in the old AT&SF depot. It's a tribute to the area tribes (Navajo, Zuni, Hopi) with emphasis on the Navajo. Lots of art on display, a bronze Code Talker statue outside, and a caboos with an area map. The museum and its activities are sponsored by the Southwest Indian Foundation (you may have received its catalog) - the folks that rate charities fault them for excessive fund raising costs, but they obviously aren't a scam; perhaps they're fundraising costs are driven by merchandise costs.

Then we drove out to Red Rocks Park, where so many movies were made. Now it has a convention center, rodeo arena, and still some good scenery. Finally it was supper at local landmark Earls (Bill calls it overrated) and back to the motel.

Tomorrow it's El Morro (inscriptions in the rock) and El Malpais (lava fields), and to Belen for the night.

### **Day 13, Wednesday 9/18/13 - Gallup to Belen**

It's probably not over 150 miles by the most direct route - we took 254. Ah, but what we saw - the sky was full of small rain showers, starting at sunrise, making for all kinds of scenic clouds. First stop was El Morro Nat'l Monument, which is full of inscriptions ranging from petroglyphs to the early 20th Century. Notable among them is the first inscription by a Spaniard, Juan de Onate, who led their first settlement in the SW, and by an officer of the California Column in 1866. Even without the inscriptions, it's a very scenic location, with a 1/2 mile walking trail and a 2 mile loop. Definitely worth a visit.

A bit up the road one finds El Malpais Nat'l Monument. Malpais means "badlands" which is a good description for these huge lava fields from many eruptions, including one just 2000 years ago. It has two distinct sections, one a walk around an old crater and lava tubes - we started the walk, but a crash of thunder sent us back to the car. The other side takes one to overlooks and an arch - but first it was time for lunch at El Cafecito, Grants. This place is GOOD!

We took the long ride down the road to the overlook - sandstone cliffs that stopped the lava flows. First, we had to drive thru some of the residue of a rainstorm that had hit the area shortly before our drive - yellow, muddy water running over the road. After this side trip, we headed for Belen, a 100 mile drive. We stayed ahead of a big storm, checked into the Holiday Inn Express, and ate at Pete's, another great local eatery with New Mexican cuisine.

Tomorrow we take US-60 to Mountainair, NM-55 south to visit Salinas Missions at Gran Quivira, US-54 to Carrizozo and Three Rivers Petroglyphs, and on to Alamogordo.

### **Day 14, Thursday, 9/19/13 - Belen to Alamogordo**

Well, here we are in Avocado - Avogadro - Alamogordo, after a good day looking at old pueblos, painted burros, and petroglyphs. First stop was Abo, a unit of Salinas Missions Nat'l Monument. We arrived well before the official opening time, so we took photos from a distance. We had previously visited it in any case.

The second unit of this Nat'l Monument is Grand Quivira, where we arrived shortly after it opened at 9 AM. After a nice chat w/ the ranger, we took a walk around this large pueblo. It was built of a different colored rock than the other units and was considerably further south. We learned that these Piro/Tompiro speaking pueblos were abandoned before the pueblo revolt, and the language apparently didn't survive.

Off to Carrizozo, watching rains developing in the mountains. Had lunch at about the only place in town after touring it looking at the painted burros (waitress at the restaurant called them



"jackasses"). They're everywhere, even on the roofs! We stopped at an old-fashioned soda fountain and got a couple of ice cream cones, then hit the road again.

Next stop, the Three Rivers Petroglyphs. This is a BLM site with a \$5 fee, and we took a nice walk around it, taking pictures of the glyphs (and the storm over the nearby mountains).

Ended up in Alamogordo, which means large cottonwood, and started getting ready for tomorrow's early pictures at White Sands and a trip to Las Cruces to see Sandra's Uncle Murray, and lunch in Hatch.

### **Day 15, Friday, 9/20/13 - Alamogordo to Las Cruces & Back**

We got up early early to get to White Sands for early morning (magic time) pictures. Guess what - it's completely closed until 8:00 AM. With almost an hour to kill, we checked out the C-store at nearby Holloman AFB. Got back to White Sands NP to be first in line when the gates opened, but the magic light was gone. Nevertheless, we took a bunch of pictures, some of which are contest-worthy.

Then it was on to Las Cruces to visit Sandra's Uncle Murray and his down-the-hall friend Peggy. We picked them up and headed for Hatch, home of the famous Hatch Chiles. We bought some seeds, and had an excellent lunch at the Pepper Pot, a down-home New Mexican cafe in Hatch. All agreed it was a great place to eat.

We took the scenic route back to Las Cruces on NM-185, crossing the Rio Grande a couple of times - a thin stream of water is running in the riverbed, the first they've seen for months. All the rain was captured by upstream dams. Said goodbye about 3 and returned to Alamogordo, the trip slowed by an immigration checkpoint.

Tomorrow we head for Roswell via San Patricio (Hurd-Wyeth gallery/museum), and possibly Lincoln. All travel now points toward home.

### **Day 16, Saturday 9/21/13 - Alamogordo to Roswell**

Well, look where we are! Where even the hotel elevators celebrate the reported 1947 UFO crash. Besides the UFO museum and the July 4th festival/parade, there are plenty of shops selling UFO-related gear and info, some serious & some humorous.

Outside Roswell, the UFO connection tends to overshadow the great art & culture scene. We visited the Roswell Museum and Arts Center, which contains a wide variety of art, a Robert Goddard rocketry museum, and an eclectic historical exhibit. Definitely worth a visit. We also visited the Anderson Museum of Contemporary Art, featuring exhibits by over 40 years of visiting artists in residence. Definitely a mixed bag of media, styles & subjects, but also worth a visit.

Back to the beginning - we left Alamogordo early, took a leisurely drive thru Ruidoso to San Patricio, where we visited the Hurd La Rinconada Gallery. This museum/gallery has many

originals by Peter Hurd, his wife Henriette (Wyeth), son Michael and in-laws N.C. and Andrew Wyeth.

Next stop was Lincoln, famous for Billy the Kid, Pat Garrett, and the Lincoln County War. The visitor center & museum has been much upgraded since our last visit, and new exhibits are in place in other buildings of this NM State Monument. The town was full of bikers (no, not the outlaw types, just middle-aged folks who enjoy riding Harleys) exploring during a major rally at nearby Ruidoso. We also got a picture of one of Carrizozo's painted burros at a Lincoln gallery.

Finally, we headed for Roswell, had lunch, visited the aforementioned attractions, and settled in to our hotel. Tomorrow we continue the Billy the Kid theme with a stop at Ft. Sumner, where he was killed and, more importantly, site of Bosque Redondo, where Navajo & Mescalero Apaches were interned in the mid 1860s. We'll continue to Canyon, TX via Clovis NM.

### **Day 17, Sunday, 9/22/13 - Roswell to Canyon TX**

We did a lot more than planned today. After a long drive across pretty-much-empty prairie, we arrived at Ft. Sumner, where we toured the Bosque Redondo Memorial. This New Mexico State Historic Site (formerly called a State Monument) commemorates the forced imprisonment of the Mescalero Apaches and Navajos at a featureless flood plain with bad water, little wood, and inadequate support. Navajo call this the Long Walk, similar to the Trail of Tears when the eastern tribes were expelled to what's now Oklahoma. Col. Kit Carson, previously a friend of the Navajo, under threat of court-martial, was ordered to round them up from their homes and march them about 500 miles - in winter, naturally. The Mescaleros, only about 350 anyway, managed to escape, but over 8000 Navajo were held until the government determined there was no gold or silver in their homeland and they promised not to raid any more. Then they walked home, around late 1868. The folks at the memorial were very helpful, but new exhibits aren't in place in their new addition.

Then it was on to Clovis, where we visited Blackwater Draw National Archaeological Site. This is where the famous Clovis Point was discovered in conjunction with the bones of extinct animals, and pushed the timeline for human habitation of North America back a couple of thousand years, to 12-14,000 years ago. The site is unusual in that it holds the record of many millenia of different cultures occupying and hunting the springs there. There's even a partially-excavated bone bed with a building placed over it allowing viewing in situ. Staff again was very friendly & helpful.

We boogied off to Canyon, where we'll spend the night. We have changed our plans and will not stop at Enid or Bartlesville, but will go to El Dorado KS tomorrow and home fairly early Tuesday afternoon.

### **Day 18, 9/23/13, Canyon TX to El Dorado KS**

Big oops today. That 333 mile trip turned out to be almost 420. Either Rand McNally lied or I misread woefully - or maybe a bit of both. I feel assured, however, that my 244 mile estimate for tomorrow is reasonably accurate. We'll be home in early afternoon, then the work begins - getting all those credit card charges input, the bills paid, the mail looked at & sorted, the suitcases unpacked & stuff washed, the residue of muddy roads removed from the car...

Made no scenic stops today, but the sunrise as Bill loaded the car was worth a shot, so he took it. After that it was prairie (or originally so), some flat, some hilly, and all very windy. We ate lunch in Seiling OK, and supper here in El Dorado, where we're staying at our 9th & last Holiday Inn Express of the trip. Wrap-up tomorrow.

### **Day 19, 9/24/13 - El Dorado, KS to home**

Since we were in Kansas, we just quoted Dorothy and said "There's no place like home! There's no place like home!" Sure enough, 4 hours later we were home. Well, sorta - We're moving into the Cottage for a bit. The cats, despite all the treatments, Front Line, etc., left us a present before we took them to the cat boarder - we came home to a houseful of hungry fleas. A quick spot treatment knocked them down enough to be able to get some things done, until the exterminator comes tomorrow. Then we're going to rip out the carpets and put in a floor covering less welcoming to those little critters.

Pictures will be posted eventually, when Sandra has time to write up her journal. Bye for now.