

2016 Trip Southwest, May-June. Text of our Blog Posts

If you want to see the pictures, start at http://modaytrips.blogspot.com/2016_05_01_archive.html and continue into June.

Day 0, Saturday, May 21, 2016 - Warrensburg to Miami OK

This is Day 0, because we originally planned to leave tomorrow. But - we were ready & packed, and this would give us more time at tomorrow's stops - Woolaroc & the Gilcrease, both noted for western art.

We took the cats in to Wag'n Tails about 9:30. Miss Topsy objected to getting into her travel case, and even more to exiting it. I had to turn it on end and sort of slide her out. That done, we visited the Master Gardener group's plant sale at Blind Boone Park, where I made connections to get some milkweed pods into their hands. Then it was lunch at Country Kitchen, a visit to the library, and finally the art show reception at UCM's gallery (we each have 6 photos in it).

Finally, hit the road at 2:40, via MO-13, MO-82, I-49 and I-44. No pictures, but we saw a few Battle Flags along MO-82 between Osceola & Eldorado Springs. Got to Miami (pronounced mi am uh) a bit after 6, 196 miles. Staying at the HIE here, which is nice but the wifi in our room is spotty. Town has a lot of businesses, so it must be bigger than I thought, as well as being on a major interstate.

Tomorrow, we're off on OK-10/US-60 to Bartlesville, then on to Woolaroc. After a few hours there, we'll try to find some BBQ, spend some time at the Gilcrease, and RON at Sand Springs HIE.

Day 1, Sunday, 5/22/16 - Miami to Sand Springs

Very definitely a day for ART. Out at 8 AM via OK-10, US-169, US-60, & OK-123, to [Woolaroc](#) at 10 AM, just when it opened. It's a scenic place in the Osage Hills of Oklahoma, where Frank Phillips (Phillips 66) had his country estate. He collected eclectically - exotic animals, western art, native relics, guns, etc. The art collection is what I'd call "important" - everyone you've heard of and some that you probably haven't. We spent two hours there, mostly in the museum, and that comes nowhere near doing it justice.

We planned on getting lunch en route to Tulsa on OK-11, but we were detoured onto US-75, an express highway, and never saw a restaurant. Our next destination is the [Gilcrease Museum](#), created by another wealthy oilman (this statue is in front of the entrance). This is another outstanding museum of, predominantly, western art. More of everyone you've heard of, even a couple of Bingham portraits, Indian relics, and more art. Walked my feet off, and stumbled out after 2 hours, still hungry, and not having spent enough time to look at everything in the detail I would have liked.

A quick trip to Sand Springs to our HIE. This a new and very modern one, well laid out. Had lunch/supper at Billy Sims BBQ (decor features the legendary OU running back). Good, not great.

Tomorrow it's on to Oklahoma City and the [National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum](#) (formerly known as the Cowboy Hall of Fame), and the State Historical Museum. Then it'll be on to Lawton for the night.

For the day, only 155 miles; 347 for the trip. Glad we didn't try to do it all in one day!

Day 2, Monday, May 23, 2016 - Sand Springs to Lawton

Rain in the morning and more museums the rest of the day. We left the Tulsa area just ahead of a line of thunderstorms - and we drove through them most of the way to Oklahoma City. Got to the [National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum](#) at 9 when we thought it opened - wrong, it opens at 10. We drove downtown, then wandered thru the streets until we found the memorial for the Oklahoma City bombing. Did a slow drive-around, then to the [Oklahoma History Center](#), where we looked through the galleries for the 30-something tribes in Oklahoma, a Kiowa painted teepee, and the CW exhibit. Outside the entry, Apache sculptor Allan Houser is featured.

Back to the Cowboy Museum. We'd decided to have lunch there, Navajo Taco or Frito Pie - closed on Mondays. Guess I need to research better next time. It's a good museum, lots of great art, a firearms collection, western history, rodeo, western movies. Worn out again!

On to Lawton w/o a real lunch. just a quick stop at a McDs. Got to the [Museum of the Great Plains](#), an interactive museum which is great for kids but a bit overpriced for adults familiar with the history & geography. A high point is the tornado experience simulation - you're in a cellar for a major tornado hearing all the sounds.

Right next door is the [Comanche National Museum and Heritage Center](#). The gentleman manning the desk was a relative of the last Comanche code talker of the 14 who landed at Utah Beach and were involved in the rest of WWII in Europe. This museum covers the history & culture of the Comanche people in brief, and it's free. It even has a "selfies site."

Found our Candlewood Suites & checked in, went to Golden Corral for supper, and had another surprise when we got back - a fraud detected email on my credit card. Ouch!

211 miles on the day, 559 on the trip. Tomorrow we drive to Pecos TX on I-44, US-277 & I-20.

Day 3, Tuesday, May 24, 2016 - Lawton to Pecos (TX)

It was farther than I thought I made a small mistake in the formula for distance, and drove an extra 40 miles. Still got here before 4 - went to the laundromat, had a good dinner, and bought some Lone Star. We survived a thunderstorm at 3 AM, and hit the road by 7:30. Our first stop was a Texas welcome center at Wichita Falls for maps & ideas. It rained there, too

Most of the day was spent driving past oil wells as the temperature got higher and higher, breaking 100. Had lunch at Buck's near Big Spring, and supper at an excellent Mexican restaurant here in Pecos. Finally paying a bit over \$2/gallon for gas.

444.9 miles on the day, 1003 for the trip. Tomorrow to Marfa via Ft. Davis; spending the night at Alpine.

Day 4 – Wednesday, May 25, 2016 - Pecos to Alpine via Marfa

Finally some mountains. It was pretty flat from Pecos to Balmorhea, but just past that we hit the volcanic Davis Mountains. Not a hard drive, but it wasn't flatland. Here's a view.

Got to [Ft. Davis](#) about 9 AM. This was a frontier fort astride the San Antonio-El Paso Road and close by the Comanche War Trail used to raid Mexico. It was built in the 1840s, abandoned during the War, and rebuilt around 1867. It was occupied by a Buffalo Soldier cavalry regiment for most of the time until it was closed in the 1890s. It's a National Park site.

Next was Marfa, home of modern art and the ghost lights. We had a good lunch and started looking for 'outré' art. The [Chinati Foundation](#) features 'minimalist art by Donald Judd.' We looked at one of his outdoor installations, which left Bill puzzled & Sandra checking it for solidity.

We also visited the Hotel Paisano, famous for its use during the filming of Giant.

And, of course, the Ghost Light Viewing Area, where we may visit tonight about 9 PM, since the lights don't show up until twilight & later. Or, we may go to a ball game, or maybe... both - if we can stay awake.

Well, we didn't go to any. There's a chance of thunderstorms here. Today was 141.6 miles, 1145 for the trip.. Tomorrow it's on to Roswell via TX-118, TX-17 & US-285.

Day 5, Thursday, May 26, 2016 - Alpine to Roswell

Got out of Alpine about 7:30 AM after a nice night at the Alpine HIE. The ballpark we didn't visit last night looked pretty nice, and it did rain about the time we would have been at the ghost light viewing area. After we got through the Davis Mountains, we stopped at a roadside site we'd noticed the day before. It's a memorial for "all the horses, mules & burros that passed by on their way to be slaughtered."

After a gas stop at Pecos, then up a long & busy road to Carlsbad, with lots of oil field truck traffic. At Carlsbad, we stopped at the Info Center for advice on lunch, then paid a visit to the [Carlsbad Museum & Art Center](#). This museum has a small but solid art collection, and an in-process model of the town in an earlier day, complete with railroads and moving parts. This is where we found a lady who is from Stover, MO. We also recommend the green chile cheeseburgers and the ice cream at [Kaleidoscoops](#).

After a short stop at the Artesia Library to see the [Peter Hurd mural](#) we pressed on to Roswell. A quick stop at the [UFO Museum](#) gift shop for a set of antennae, we headed for the [Roswell Museum & Art Center](#), with its excellent art galleries as well as local & regional history and Robert Goddard's rocketry.

Final stop was the Anderson Museum of Contemporary Art, which has an Artist in Residence program and is full of the work of current & past program participants. The large galleries have plenty of space for a wide variety of works. Whatever your taste in art, you'll likely find works that you like (& don't care for - the collection is eclectic).

Supper was at Los Ceritos, a very good restaurant, and we're hanging out in our room at the Candlewood Suites. Tomorrow it's on to TorC, via Lincoln, Ft. Stanton, Carrizozo, & Socorro.

264.8 miles on the trip, 1410 for the trip.

Day 6, Friday, May 27, 2016 - Roswell to T or C

Left Roswell bright & early after an uncomfortable night at Candlewood Suites and breakfast at Denny's. Took about an hour to get to [Lincoln](#), site of the Lincoln County War & Billy the Kid's exploits, shortly before everything opened. We didn't wait - we've been there several times before.

Back in the car to [Fort Stanton](#) (the reason for the commercial rivalry that caused the Lincoln County War), again well before anything opened. In addition to its role in the Apache wars, Ft. Stanton served as a WPA camp, a POW camp during WWII, a TB sanitarium and a school for developmentally disabled. It was recently opened for tourists. Here's the sign:

On to Carrizozo, a major junction on old trails and 2-lane highways (US-54 & US-380). It's also a bit of a folk-art center, and is known for [painted burros](#) (you know, like painted ponies, cows, dogs, etc.) all over town - and I do mean 'over.' They're on the roof tops, as well as the streets.

Headed west along US-380, which passes through the '[Valley of Fires](#),' a volcanic lava flow about 5000 years old. It's pretty extensive, but we just stopped along the roadside where it cut through.

At Socorro, we stopped by the welcome center for maps & suggestions. Weren't impressed by the food at the recommended restaurant, but the plaza is nicely done. [San Miguel](#) was supposedly the first one in New Mexico (under the name of Our Lady of Succor), but it fell to ruins. The current one was built on the same site in the early 1800s and the name was later changed when a vision of St. Michael (San Miguel) warned the people of an impending Apache attack.

We stopped at the [Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge](#). This is the winter home of greater sandhill cranes. No pictures, so we pressed on to the [El Camino Real International Heritage Center](#), which covers the history (and prehistory) of this important trail from Mexico to the province of Nuevo Mexico. Oxcarts were often used.

On to Truth or Consequences, formerly known as Hot Springs, where we had dinner and relaxed at the HIE. Tomorrow we go on to Las Cruces to visit Sandra's Uncle Murray, with an en route stop at Ft. Selden. Then it's on to Deming for the night. 262 miles for the day, 1671 for the trip.

Day 7, Saturday, May 28, 2016 - T or C to Deming

Not a lot of miles, but a lot of visiting. Left about 8:30 AM for Ft. Selden & Las Cruces. [Fort Selden](#) was a post-CW fort designed to protect the settlement at Mesilla from the Apaches. As an adobe fort, it is badly deteriorated. It had on display an 1865 3" ordnance rifle that had been modified for breach loading. It had once been painted yellow. Meanwhile, please take care to avoid the snakes.

We met Sandra's Uncle Murray and his friend Peggy at the COAS bookstore downtown - they have some nice new & used books, for a nice price. We had lunch at [La Posta in Mesilla](#), then did some shopping. Talked some more at Uncle Murray's apartment.

Arrived at a nice HIE in Deming, ate at El Camino Real, and looked at next day's plan. Tomorrow we'll go to Willcox via Columbus on NM-1, Hachita on NM-9, and Lordsburg on NM-113 & I-10. For the day, about 160 miles, 1826 for the trip.

Day 8, Sunday, May 29, 2016 - Deming to Willcox

Deserted (de' sert ed) - Saw a lot of desert today, some Border Patrol vehicles, and even a blimp. On our way out of Deming, we ran across these critters out for their morning stroll.

We headed south past the Tres Hermanas Mountains. Our first stop was to be Columbus, site of [Pancho Villa's 1916 raid](#). It has a [state park](#) - reputedly the only one named for an invader of the U.S. The museum at the park is in an old RR station and supposedly opens at 9 AM. It didn't. We did see the outdoor exhibits, such as this armored car. Despite a nice little hill for a lookout post, armored cars and airplanes, Pershing didn't catch Villa.

On to [Hachita](#), shown on the NM map as a ghost town. Let's just say some of the ghosts are not incorporal - while many of the buildings are deserted, the place is populated. The 'ghosts' thoughtfully provided a rest area at the edge of town.

Among the deserted buildings are this Catholic church and the saloon - if they're empty, it is indeed a ghost town.

On to Lordsburg for lunch (trivia - the destination for a certain conveyance in a well-known 1939 John Ford western). As has happened to so many towns bypassed by the interstate hiway, the downtown area on Main Street (next to the tracks) was full of empty buildings as the thriving ones moved out near the big highway. We passed though here in 2012 when returning from the Las Vegas Libertarian convention. We don't ask the welcome center what they recommend, we ask them where they like to eat. We made a point to return to [Ramona's](#), a small place on Main Street, with a strong local clientele. We got there before the rush (luckily), and invited two ladies to share our table. Turns out they were travelers, as well. Folks were lined up outside when we left. Best meal of the trip.

Got to Willcox about 12:45, unaware that we'd gained another hour. We said we'd gallivant around the town, but they came up with a room early. So we gallivanted anyway, ending up at [Buffalo Sisters Trading Post](#), owned by a Comanche lady. Told her of our visit to the cultural center in Lawton. Dinner at a truck stop (the town shuts down on Sunday), a quick laundry, and process some photos.

Tomorrow it's about 300 miles through mountains to Holbrook, via US-191, US-60 and AZ-77, through towns like Safford, Clifton, Eager, and Show Low. 210 miles for today, 2036 for the trip.

Day 9, Monday, May 30, 2016 - Willcox to Holbrook

Well, I had this whole thing written and it disappeared! Damn laptop. The blog has some pictures with a short comment about each:

Railroad station/visitor center in Clifton, AZ - see the mountains? We're headed that way. Clifton has a flock of bighorn sheep wandering around town.

The Morenci mine - it eats mountains looking for copper.

One of dozens of scenic mountain views taken along US-191, the Coronado Scenic Byway - 90 miles of this.

Holbrook Arizona has rock shops and dinosaurs and petrified wood.

It's on Route 66. The Wigwam motel has rooms in concrete teepees, with classic cars in front of each. We're staying across the street in the Globetrotter Lodge - it has better reviews.

Tomorrow we're off to Farmington via AZ-77, N-15 and US-191 to Chinle, N-64 and N-7 to Lukachukai, N-13 thru Chuska Pass, US-491 to Ship Rock and US-64 to Farmington and Aztec. For the day, 309 miles, 2348 for the trip

Day 10, Tuesday, May 31, 2016 - Holbrook to Farmington

Didn't sleep too well last night because we don't adapt well to really firm mattresses. Had a quick breakfast at a very overpriced McD's, and quickly headed off into the painted desert on BIA roads. After a couple of hours through scenery varying from 'scenic' to spectacular, we arrived at Chinle, gateway to [Canyon de Chelley](#) (pronounced de shay, a Europeanization of the Dine' name tsegi). This is a sacred place to the Dine' (Navajo) and important in their history.

We decided to tour the South Rim before lunch, intending to view (photograph) Spider Rock, home of Spider Woman, who taught the Dine' weaving. We stopped first at the White House Ruin overlook, a view of an Anasazi site.

Then it was on to Spider Rock, a pinnacle in the middle of a divide in the canyon. We toured the canyon to here on our 30th Anniversary, and visited the overlook on our 35th. We again took photos from the overlook this trip.

After lunch at the Thunderbird Lodge, our next stop was Lukachukai and the Totsoh Trading Post. We had visited there before, in 2005, 2007 & 2012 (and had met a daughter of the family in the Phoenix area in 2006). In 2012 I'd bought Sandra a small rug for our 35th Anniversary; today we bought another one.

After Lukachukai, we headed into a pass in the Chuska (pronounced chews' ka) Mountains. At the top, we got a view of [Ship Rock, the Rock With Wings](#), another place sacred to the Dine'.

Finally, we arrived in Farmington and the HIE. A good Mexican dinner, download pictures, and to bed! 259 miles on the day, 2604 for the trip. Tomorrow we tour the Aztec ruins and head for Albuquerque.

Day 11, Wednesday, June 1, 2016 - Farmington to Bernalillo

Left the HIE about 7:45 for Aztec. With traffic and stops for gas & a Coke, reached [Aztec Ruins National Monument](#). This was a Chacoan settlement along the Animas River, settled around 1000 AD & abandoned by 1300, and has nothing to do with the Aztecs. The ruins are partially excavated and conserved (restored/reinforced as needed). The museum is well-interpreted and the self-guided tour is excellent. We took lots of photos, trying to show what it looks like (and incidentally maybe getting an art shot or two).

When we left the National Monument, we drove by the [Aztec Museum and Pioneer Village](#). Wonderful, it was open! We thought it didn't open until 10 AM. This museum had a feline tour guide on our first visit in 2004, and she was queen of the museum the next time we stopped; alas, she is no

longer remembered. In addition to the pioneer town and oil drilling displays, it possesses a unique item - a hand carved, rotating cyclorama of the West. Worth a stop!

Split a Green Chile Cheesburger at the Cuban Cafe (in Cuba) and arrived at Bernalillo about 2 PM. A quick laundry and off to Albuquerque to take our friend Larry Harrah to supper at the [Frontier Restaurant](#), an Albuquerque/UNM institution that he had never visited. It's good! Then back to Bernalillo thru a thunderstorm (why do we seem to drive through more hail in NM than back in MO?).

235 miles on the day, 2838 on the trip. Tomorrow it's sightseeing in Albuquerque.

Day 12, Thursday, June 2, 2016 - Around Albuquerque

Well, mostly Old Town. We arrived around 9 AM, and took a leisurely walk around the Plaza before shopping or visiting museums. Sandra always wants her picture taken there.

Unusually, the Plaza was devoid of cars. That's because of a festival to be held over the weekend to celebrate San Filipe, the patron of the local church.

Back to the [Albuquerque Museum of Art and History](#), where we saw a new exhibit about Route 66 along with items from the permanent collection. Here's our favorite painting - this critter follows you where-ever you go - I swear I saw his nose move!

Next stop - the [Church Street Cafe](#) for lunch. We've had the same waiter for the last three years. The food is good.

Last stop was the [New Mexico Museum of Natural History](#), home of a cast of Stan (yep, a named T-Rex). We stop here every time we visit and have a little tradition. On a visit a number of years ago, we found a couple of staffers smooching in the dark Chixulub meteor exhibit, so we try to emulate them at that exhibit (as well as at the volcano & the cave).

Back to the HIE, dinner at [Abuelita's](#) (the green sauce is HOT!). Tomorrow we boogie off to Santa Fe, where we'll tour the museums, have lunch at the The Shed Cafe, and go off to a Fennboree bonfire. 42.5 miles on the day, 2881 for the trip.

Days 13 and 14, Friday & Saturday, June 3 & 4, 2016: Fennboree 2016

We'd planned our annual trip Southwest around our April 30th anniversary, but when we heard when Fennboree was scheduled, we move the whole schedule by about a month so we could attend. For those who are wondering what kind of festival a Fennboree is, it's a gathering of folks who are hunting for the treasure chest a retired fighter pilot and art dealer named Forrest Fenn placed somewhere in the Rocky Mountains north of Santa Fe. The clues are contained in a cryptic poem published in 2010 in a book called "The Thrill of the Chase"; it's a lot harder than the first look would indicate, since tens of thousands of people have been looking for it for 6 years now. Want to know more? Google "Forrest Fenn treasure."

We've been involved in this rather Herculean quest since 2013, when friend Theresa called to tell us that a \$ million hunt was covered on a station we don't watch; she was home to watch TV only because

Leeton had a snow day. It looked easy; we took a ride on the [Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railway](#), then headed for the Abiquiu area where we thought it might be from reading assorted blogs. After a couple of nerve-wracking jaunts on slick wet-clay roads, we realized it wouldn't be that easy.

In 2014 the first Fennboree was held at a semi-primitive camp at the [Gallina Canyon Ranch](#), hosted by "Desertphile" (blog name). You can read of our experience there at our [2014 Trip story](#). After that experience, we'd had enough of tent camping, so we skipped the 2015 event (which turned out a mite muddy, we understand).

The 2016 event was held the weekend after Memorial Day, in Hyde Memorial State Park, at 8500 or so feet in the Sangre de Cristo Range north of Santa Fe. After our museum visits in Santa Fe & lunch at The Shed, we checked out the location for the Friday evening campfire get-together. Then it was back to Santa Fe & the Silver Saddle Motel to check in, offload what wasn't needed, pick up some beer & ice, and head back up the mountain to party. What transpired then - look at the pictures.

Left the party about 9, dodged a big muley on the way down, and hit the hay. Up early in the morning, breakfast at Weck's, a visit to Museum Hill, and back for the cookout and fun and games. A few observations: parking was tight, glad we got there fairly early. There was plenty of food, and those who stayed late took some home. Game prizes ranged from a \$100 map down to a Fennboree coffee cup. Forrest Fenn himself was present for both Friday's & Saturday's event. Sacha & Cynthia did a bang-up job organizing it. A film project about the Chase included filming of events and interviews with principal figures in it.

One of the special things about the event was seeing other searchers we'd met at previous events; a lunch in 2013, Fennboree in 2014 and a party last year. We also were able to put faces to many we'd met on the [Chasechat blog](#) and sometimes saw on [Dal Neitzel's blog](#). In any case, here's an album of pictures - 186 strong (I'm going to go back & identify some of the people, help is appreciated). They'll expand if you click on them. Enjoy.

Day 15, Sunday, June 5, 2016 - Santa Fe to Dodge City

First a quick recap of Friday & Saturday: Friday we hustled up to Santa Fe from Bernalillo, parked downtown & toured the art museum. Also ate at The Shed, as expected. Then we headed for Hyde Park to check things out, back to check in at the Silver Saddle, a quick snack at a Wendy's, and out for Fennboree Part I. It was a blast. Left at 9.

Saturday we had a good breakfast at Weck's, went to Fennboree Part II all day. That was also a great time. Left about 3, had supper & were in bed by 8.

Left early Sunday AM for home. 421 miles of I-25 & US-56, we got here. That's 3430 for the trip. Tomorrow we pick up US-50 to Emporia, I-35 to Ottawa, KS-68, MO-2, etc. home. It looks like another 394 miles or so.

Tuesday, June 7, 2016 - Home!

We got in about 2:30 yesterday afternoon, picked up the mail, got gas and a few groceries, and started washing clothes, getting the accounts updated, and getting organized. The last two days coming home we covered almost 800 miles; the trip in total was 3811 miles. Today we pick up the cats from the boarding place, start shopping for the weekend guests, and enjoy our own home.