

TUESDAY, MAY 1, 2018

Day 1 - Warrensburg to Poplar Bluff

Hit the road bright and early at 0645. First stop was a visit to friend Sharon at her donut shop in Stover, MO. Heading east on MO-52, we saw some trail improvements at Versailles - could they be working on their own little stretch of the Rock Island? After wandering through various backroads, rife with construction delays, we arrived at Vienna, MO, home of Americana Antiques. Owner John Viessman is a reenactor (retired) and a purveyor of military books (among other things). Bill salivated over many of them, but John knows what they're worth.

Lunch at Country Bob's (highly recommended) just north of St. James on MO-68, then into the hills. Next stop was Dillard Mill State Historic Site, a scenic mill & pond, with much improved access since our Ozarks trip a decade+ ago.

We'd not been to Johnson's Shut-Ins for a very long time, certainly before the dam collapse. It's only 40 hilly, curvy miles from Dillard Mill. The walkways are much improved, parking areas good, and the shut-ins are still scenic. The only signs of the big flood were the large red boulders scattered throughout the area.

We hustled on to Pilot Knob so we could hit the visitor center before it closed at 4. The main point was for Sandra to visit her Yankee great-grandfather, John A. Adams, whose equestrian photo is blown up at the end of the main hallway (along with a description of his small mistake involving a couple of mules). We walked around and Bill took pictures while Sandra reminded him the temperature was in the 80s. We also noted that the Ironton area displayed more Rebel flags than we saw the rest of the day.

We got into the Poplar Bluff Holiday Inn almost 11 hours after we left home. Our travels took us through a lot of scenic country, with more than its share of Sandra's "Tid-bits" - you'll have to wait for our trip story to see them.

338 miles on the day. Tomorrow it's Greenville, MS, via Helena, AR (another CW battlefield involving MO Rebs - do you sense a theme developing?).

Roads taken: MO-Y, MO-23, MO-WW, MO-52, MO-17, MO-42, US-63, MO-68, MO-8, MO-19, MO-N, MO-21, MO-72, US-67

WEDNESDAY, MAY 2, 2018

Day 2 - Poplar Bluff to Greenville

Watching the Weather Channel's tornado coverage and hoping the system falls apart before it reaches Warrensburg. Left Poplar Bluff about 7:30 AM, heading south through eastern Arkansas on AR-1. Much of the route followed Crowley's Ridge all the way to Helena, AR. Passed through adjacent

places called "Stonewall" & "Hooker" and wondered if the juxtaposition was intentional. Also crossed several highways that we will see later in the trip (US-60, 64, & 70).

Helena was our primary (read 'only') sightseeing destination. The town itself has seen better days (actually, better decades), and is one of the few significant battle sites involving Missouri Confederate troops that I had not yet paid at least a cursory visit. A couple of Federal battery sites are marked and a fort reconstructed. The Helena museum sports one intact battle flag for a local unit and a well-done diorama. One thing I noticed in the diorama was the wide variety of battle flags for Confederate units. Wonder if all those were really present.

Local streets lead to the Confederate cemetery high on a loess bluff, containing a monument as a number of grave. The monument was surrounded by Battle Flags – one seemed to be mourning. We also took a picture of Gen. Cleburne's grave marker.

Late lunch at a Lebanese cafe in Clarksdale, supper at an upscale restaurant in Greenville (we're staying at a Holiday Inn Express). 296 miles for the day, 634 for the trip. Tomorrow we cross the river 3 more times, with prime stops at Poverty Point, Vicksburg, Champion Hill and the Natchez Trace Parkway, ending up at Alexandria.

Highways for the day: US-67, US-62, AR-135. US-49, AR-1. US-61, US-82

THURSDAY, MAY 3, 2018

Day 3 - Greenville to Alexandria

Alexandria, LA: A very long day, only 325 miles, but much of it on the back roads around Vicksburg. I'll update this when I have time. Tomorrow to Lake Charles via Gueydan.

OK, here's the story: We left Greenville about 0715, with our first crossing of the Mississippi back into Arkansas, then south into Louisiana to Poverty Point World Heritage Site, ancient earthworks about 3500 years old. We visited about 7 years ago, and the site is much improved. This large bird-shaped mound is unusual in Archaic sites. We took pictures:

Then it was on to Vicksburg, where Sandra took a shot of this old bridge after our second crossing of a certain river. After lunch at Cracker Barrel, it was on to Vicksburg NMP. We took a partial tour - the road had been washed out by hurricane rains last year, but the part we wanted to see was accessible. Can you identify each of these places?

Right - the first is a view of Stockade Redan up Cemetery Road, the second is a detail of the Confederate side of the Missouri monument (the only one honoring soldiers of both sides) and the third is the recently-refurbished Missouri monument.

Now came the fun part - wandering through back road Mississippi looking for the Big Black and Champion Hill battlefields. I really wanted to find Ratliff Road, where Wade's Battery was posted near the Ratliff House. This was complicated by the fact that the Park has no

interpretation or instruction for those who'd like to visit other important sites. We found the Coker House, which had a display telling us, sort of, how to find the Crossroads, focal point of the battle of Champion Hill. So after several miles on 3rd rate roads, we found it

More miles on narrow, curving roads, and we found the Natchez Trace Parkway, followed it to US-61 south of Port Gibson, and boogied on to Natchez, where we found slow going thanks to a single-laned bridge. Another 75 miles and we were at the Best Western in Alexandria. The neighboring sea-food place next door was too proud of its cuisine, so we walked on to the Pitt Grill next door.

Roads taken: US-82, US-65, AR-159, LA-577, LA-580, I-20, Natchez Trace Pkwy, US-61, US-84, LA-28.

FRIDAY, MAY 4, 2018

Day 4, Alexandria to Lake Charles

This was a relatively easy day as far as mileage, but fairly busy in any case. We only missed a couple of turns, thanks to the lack of a decent Louisiana map. First stop was Mamou - Mamou is to Cajun music what Nashville is to Country. Fred's was not open, but we found a thrift shop that had a Cajun CD still in shrink wrap, only \$1. So we listened to it and to a zydeco CD we brought with us, appropriate for the "Zydeco Cajun Prairie Scenic Byway."

Our real goal for the day was Gueydan, where Bill's great-grandfather moved around 1900 and lived until his death in '33. He's in good company in the cemetery - two other Rebs rest nearby.

Lunch at Johnny's (po-boys, of course) and on to Lake Charles via LA-14, the Jean Lafitte Scenic Byway. Arrived about 1300, started a tour of the places Bill lived and the schools he attended from 3rd Grade through high school, along with other interesting places in town. There's a large vine covered gator outside the visitor center:

Bill's high school closed in 1983, but is not forgotten. This memorial commemorates the school and many of those who taught or/and attended there. We'll meet some of them for lunch tomorrow.

Town motto is effectively "laissez les bon temps rouler" - it's noted for its Mardi Gras celebration (which Bill doesn't remember at all) and its week-long Louisiana Pirate Festival, which just happened to kick off on the lakefront this weekend. As we drove along the lakeshore heading back to our Candlewood Suites we saw a carnival and a parrot-promoting pirate ship (on wheels). Then, the unmistakable sound of a black powder cannon drew us to the lakefront. Yep, a little battery of 3-4 small guns were exchanging shots with pistol-armed pirates traipsing around the lake on yachts. The bridge in the background once boasted a crossed pistols design in its rails. There were seven yachts - we saw no casualties

Supper was the classic burger in memory of Bill's favorite hamburger place - now long gone. Not the same, but a LOT better than fast food. We ended with 194.8 miles on the day (over 33 after reaching LC), 1154 for the trip. Tomorrow is more local jaunts and, of course, lunch get-together.

Roads taken: I-49, US-71, LA-13, LA-91, LA-14

SATURDAY, MAY 5, 2018

Day 5 - Around Lake Charles

A rather full day - We ate a great Southern breakfast at the Pitt Grill - meat, eggs, grits, biscuits or pancakes, more. Then it was a quick trip out to Moss Bluff area, to again be shocked at the development out there. It used to be a quiet, rural area, now it's wall-to-wall houses, many of them high-\$.

The one pre-planned event was a lunch with some of Bill's HS classmates at noon. A bit over a dozen, including spouses, were there and we talked - and talked - and ate Cajun food - and talked some more. We left about 3 PM, just in time for...

More Pirate Festival - we started at the Lake Charles lakefront (which didn't exist when Bill lived here) Soon, the pirate yachts started passing by. They were safe because yesterday's cannons were unmanned. Not all the pirates were unarmed. They threw beads. And here's to a successful raid on the pirate treasure (or good scavenging). Tomorrow we're off to San Antonio! Stay tuned! 50 miles for the day.

SUNDAY, MAY 6, 2018

Day 6, Lake Charles to San Antonio

Pulled out of LC at 0650 after a last Southern breakfast at Pitt Grill. I-10 all the way, mostly at 75 mph (had to - they would have run over otherwise). Stopped for a quick lunch at Taco Cabana outside of Seguin. Got into downtown San Antonio at 1245, found our hotel, hopped on their shuttle and headed for the Riverwalk (& the Briscoe Museum of Western Art). The museum featured excellent works by a variety of artists, most of whom I was not familiar with. Sandra worked on pictures of some horse head sculptures outside:

Then, it was time to go for a boat ride - in the river along which one walks on the Riverwalk. Here's the type of boat used. Bridges abound - just high enough for the boats and riders. Our primary activity while riding in the boat - shooting pictures.

Then it was time for that other Riverwalk event - eating! We picked the Casa Rio because it's a classic place, had colorful shades over the tables, and a reasonable menu. It was also the closest to where we got off the boat. Among its main attractions are the "food observers"

(pigeons & ducks) We experienced them on our first trip in 1979, when they helped us by testing the salsa. They're still here. Watching...

Back to the motel, check in, and get caught up after a 90-degree day (whew!). Tomorrow we meet a friend at the gun club, visit the Witte Museum, and look for some BBQ. Total miles for the day was 332, 1537 for the trip.

Roads taken: I-10, Commerce Street

ONDAY, MAY 7, 2018

Day 7 - Around San Antonio

Here we are in San Antonio, with plenty to do. Our first stop, as planned, was to visit with an old AF skeet shooting friend, who happens to be curator of the NSSA Museum. I looked through the displays to see a lot of people I know/knew and shot with/against over much of the last 50 years. En route we stopped at big grocery store to get some Lone Star, as well as something to clean the remains of a bunch of doublebugs (clean name) from the front of the car.

Next adventure was trying to find the Witte Museum. It was an adventure because I didn't know the correct turn off the freeway - that happens when you leave all your maps at the hotel. I ended up asking my cell phone to show me the way, which it did! The Witte Museum is kind of the 'museum of everything Texan' in San Antonio. It has history, wildlife, geology, and more Take a look at some examples:

A dinosaur greets you outside the museum - take a close look. An early freight wagon, reproduced. A Comanche warrior, eyed by a big long horn.

After lunch at Smoke Shack, a popular BBQ restaurant across the street from the Witte (really delicious brisket, sauce was a bit different from what we're used to) we found our way back to the hotel for a short break. Then it was back to downtown for a visit to The Alamo! But first, Sandra had to have a word with a couple of critters outside a bar (buffalo or longhorn picture)

Once at the Alamo, we found a Missouri flag representing Missourians who fell defending the fort (sorry, no pictures inside the old mission building, last place to fall). Then we wandered around the grounds taking pictures, hoping to score a prize winner to make up for our paucity of awards at the Mid-Missouri Artists' show.

Now for supper - back to the Riverwalk and Casa Rio. The critters must have remembered us from yesterday, as we had a lot of help with dinner: Yeah, those pigeons have beady eyes!

For the day - 45 miles. Tomorrow we check out, take the Historic Mission drive, and head for Del Rio for the night.

TUESDAY, MAY 8, 2018

Day 8 - San Antonio to Del Rio

Off from the hotel bright and early today, heading for the Mission Trail. Picked up the trail start quickly enough, but sometimes the directions and markers weren't what one might expect. In any case, we reached the first mission, Nuestra Senora de la Purisima Concepcion (aka Concepcion), with a rather imposing church; most of the rest of the original grounds have not been preserved. We arrived well before the site opened, so we couldn't go inside.

Next stop was the best preserved site, as well as the park headquarters. This one is known as San Jose, and is also an active church (as are all the missions except the Alamo). The outer wall is lined with quarters for the mission's Indians, and the corner bastions are still there. The church itself is also impressive. The cloisters (quarters for monks and other religious staff) have not been restored, but are nevertheless impressive, as well. As I said, this is an active church. Parishioners, busy cleaning the Sacristy floor, said it was OK to take pictures in the sanctuary:

Next stop was one of the two southernmost missions, San Juan Capistrano. This mission's plaster had been restored and whitewashed; its bell tower reminds one of a similarly-named mission in another part of the country

Last stop was Mission Espada, the most exposed site. Here, the gift shop is run by the parish, and Sandra picked up a pineapple ice-on-a-stick.

We had a BBQ lunch at Bill Miller's BBQ - food was OK, bought they didn't supply any extra sauce at the table. Won't go back there again. Then we finally got to experience an urban traffic jam - construction reduced multiple lanes to a single lane, and we couldn't find anything telling how to get to US 90 once we got out of the jam. A guess and a map sent us the right way, and we were soon running 75mph along a 6/4/finally 2 lane hiway.

As we got away from the big city, we quickly found ourselves in the sort of country you see on hunting TV shows. Every ranch, it seemed, advertised quail & deer, with some pushing hogs as well. Got to our HIE about 3:20, washed clothes, had supper at a BBQ place within walking distance.

For the day 176 miles, 1767 for the trip. Tomorrow's US-90 west past Langtry, Alpine, Marfa (hope that cafe is open) and on to Van Horn.

Roads taken: Interstate loop, US-90.

Day 9, Del Rio to Van Horn

Hottest day yet - mid to upper 90s by the time we hit Van Horn. Bought gas at Wal-Mart for \$2.47 before leaving Del Rio, and headed out across the hills & canyons of western Texas.

Pulled off the road at a high point near the Pecos canyon, where the story of the Southern Pacific's final connection to complete the second transcontinental train route talks about a silver spike.

We were now west of the Pecos, and you know what the law here once was? Hint - its home was in Langtry, now home of a nice Welcome Stop. A building there looks like a saloon

Yep, that's what it was, and it doesn't look like many boards had to be replaced - stuff doesn't rot as quickly out here where it's dry. Judge Roy also built an "Opera House," where the "house" was more authentic than the "opera." No musical performances, but he did live here - swallows are building houses inside.

A lot more driving through places like Sanderson, Marathon and Alpine, and we arrived in Marfa, with its ornate courthouse - not to mention Mando's for lunch. We stopped at the local museum (after stopping at the museum's thrift store - 3 books, a Telemann CD, and some sheet music). It's rather eclectic, covering everything that's happened in the area. Plus, it has an age test on the front porch:

Marfa has two other attractions, not counting the Paisano Hotel (HQ for the cast of Giant). One is an artist's foundation featuring what Bill calls giant box culverts - you'll have to look at our 2016 trip for a picture. The other is what's likely the country's most unusual lodging facilities, El Cosmico. Take your choice from among old trailers, tepees, wall tents, yurts or even hammocks.

Back on the road to Van Horn, check in at a very new HIE, dinner at Chuy's (lots of sports memorabilia), and price shock at the pump - \$3/gal. We'll get 2 gal tomorrow to make sure we don't run low before reaching Carlsbad.

310 miles on the day, 2077 on the trip - tomorrow is the scenic route to Las Cruces. US-90 all the way, with a brief overlap w/ US-67.

THURSDAY, MAY 10, 2018

Day 10 - Van Horn to Las Cruces

Van Horn is on the western edge of the Central time zone, so sunrise was the latest we experienced. So, when we left at a usual time, the magic morning light was with us. The first 50 miles was between mountain ranges, and offered some good shots.

The most imposing mountains are in Guadalupe Mountains National Park, home of the highest point in Texas, as well as the landmark El Capitan, used by settlers, travelers and even the Butterfield Stage. And by us.

We pressed on to Carlsbad to visit the local museum. It has an excellent art collection, a nice batch of artifacts, and a Carlsbad diorama (complete with railroad, guano & potash mines, and even an swinging outhouse door). Then it was lunch at Kaleidoscoops (great green chile cheeseburger, plus ice cream). A long climb into Cloudcroft (temp 82) and back down to

Alamogordo and White Sands (temp 99).

White Sands in the wind - kind of difficult to take pictures and protect the camera, but we tried - watch out for the UFOs (see the sky).

Going down into Las Cruces on US-70, we almost had a disaster. Cars swerved in front of us to reveal a ladder in the middle lane, no space to swerve. We braked enough to lessen the impact on our tires, didn't feel anything weird in handling, so went on the last 4-5 miles to our hotel. Looked under the car and can't find any damage; tires still fully inflated several hours later. Met Sandra's Uncle Murray and his friend Peggy for supper at Nopalito, back to out HIE & bed. 340 miles on the day. Tomorrow: Around Las Cruces.

Roads taken: TX-54, US-62, US-285, US-82, US-70

FRIDAY, MAY 11, 2018

Day 11 - Around Las Cruces

Big disaster this morning - the motel coffee maker died, so Sandra had no coffee. We picked up Sandra's Uncle about 9 AM, went to COAS book store. No books by the author Bill wanted, Steven Havill, so he settled for a book on the Kennesaw battle in 1864. Then we drove around sightseeing a bit, with a stop at the Mesilla plaza. We took pictures of a cathedral in Mesilla and Sandra & Uncle Murray outside a Mesilla shop

Lunch at a local Village Inn - decent food, decent price, followed by a visit to Uncle Murray's apartment - what a view of the Organ Mountains! Back to the motel, did laundry, Sandra took a nap. We'll be picked up 5-ish for supper at Si Senor. Tomorrow we plan to visit Deming, Lordsburg, Silver City, assorted ghost towns, ending up at Socorro. Only 30 miles (around town) today, 2455.4 for the trip.

SATURDAY, MAY 12, 2018

Day 12 - Las Cruces to Socorro

Well, that doesn't sound like an adventurous day - except we took the very 'scenic route', via Lordsburg & Silver City. Left the hotel before the 7 AM breakfast & ate at McD's, on the road by 7:20. Too early, since nothing in Deming opens until 9, it's only 60 miles, and driving under 70 on I-10 will get you run over. So we found a side road that ran roughly parallel to the big hiway, and got there not quite as early. First stop was a visit to a couple of characters we met 2 years ago (dinosaur replicas) - one had been there a while - he's a tail-dragger. The small one looks hungry.

Next stop was Deming's Luna-Mimbres Museum, with three levels of artifacts from various eras located in an old National Guard armory, with extensions. Bill examined the

interpretation and pottery of the Mimbres culture, while Sandra had a nice talk with the lady in charge. Replica pots hold signs all over town

We left about 1030 for Lordsburg, where we planned to eat at Ramona's. Wait, no cars parked in front? What's this? A fellow on the roof looked down at us and shook his head. Well, that was a wasted stop. So off to Silver City, once a mining town where Billy the Kid first got into trouble with the law. It's now a thriving art center, home of a state university with an outstanding Mimbres pottery collection - we couldn't find it. It's also the home of La Cocina cafe, which is worth a stop!

We also missed the turnoffs to Ft. Bayard and a Mimbres archaeological site. We didn't miss the huge copper strip mine in the area. It's actually quite colorful in its own way. This road is known as the Geronimo Trail Scenic Byway, since the Black Mountains were part of the domain of his White Mountain Apache band. The road started off rather mildly, then quickly became curvy with lots of ups and downs. Rocks beside the road could be interesting, as long as they stayed off the road. Eventually we reached a high point overlook, I think about 8600' above sea level. Some bikers were taking a break, then 4 women showed up heading for the 'facilities.'

We finally came out at the old mining town of Hillsboro. It's shown as a ghost town, but like so many others in New Mexico, many of the ghosts still seem to be animate. It was full of shops, with even a garage sale going on. We did find a ghost of a building:. Finally back on the Interstate, we headed for Socorro and the HIE there. Tomorrow we take another 'scenic' route to Albuquerque, via Carrizozo and the Salinas Missions. 332.6 miles for today, 2795.9 for the trip.

Roads taken: US-70, I-10, NM-549, NM-90, US-180, NM-152, I-25

SUNDAY, MAY 13, 2018

Day 13 - Socorro to Albuquerque

Off early after a hotel breakfast, heading east on US-380. When we reached the Tularosa Basin, we could see Carrizozo - and a lava field. So naturally, we pulled over to take some shots of the lava. Then it was on to Carrizozo - you'll remember all the shots of the painted burros around town and on the rooftops. Well, you also know we can't resist those critters.

Next was a side trip to the old mining town of White Oaks. It's supposed to be sort of an art town, but not much open today.

We turned off on NM-55, went through the almost-ghost town of Claunch, on to the southernmost of the Salinas Missions Nat'l Monument, Gran Quivira. This was a Tompiro-speaking pueblo; the remaining residents headed south with the Spanish after the revolt of

1680 and their descendants live near El Paso. It also is built of darker stone than the other two. We took pictures of the church as seen over the remains of a housing block and housing block ruins

Headed on to Mountainair, home of the monument headquarters and of a really good green chile cheeseburger at Jerry's Ancient Cities Cafe. It's also home of an interesting mural. We continued north to another of the pueblo ruins, Quarai. This one was built with red stone; the people were Tiwa-speakers so any descendants likely live in current Tiwa pueblos. The church is the most intact of the three. All of these pueblos include a little 'stay-on-the-trails' memo – let the rattlesnakes have their privacy

We continued on scenic roads to Tijeras, then on Old US-66 to Old Town Albuquerque. Visited the Albuquerque Museum (art & history), said "hello" to our favorite pictures and to some new ones, and a special exhibit of high-schooler photographs - some of those kids are immensely talented photographers, others know digital editing.

Checked in at the HIE Old Town, drove cross town to the Frontier for supper, and now thinking about tomorrow - mostly Old Town. We're now over 3000 miles on the trip.

Roads taken: I-25, US-380, US-54, NM-349, NM-55, NM-337, old US-66

MONDAY, MAY 14, 2018

Day 14 - Around Albuquerque

After a motel breakfast, we headed for Old Town and found a free place to park central to what we wanted to see. The walk to the New Mexico Museum of Natural History was leisurely, as we had about 1/2 hour to go about 1/4 mile. We bought our NM Culture Pass, one visit to each museum & historic site, visited with the dinosaurs (picture: "Steggy") while Bill perused a giant map of current earthquakes.

Part of the visit was a 3D movie about National Parks - OK, once all the school kids got quiet. Then we went to the Plaza area. First stop was lunch at the Church Street Cafe, second was a T-shirt shop. Sandra got a new T-shirt (Bill got a different one).

Bill paid a visit to a couple of relics of Sibley's misadventures in the area, replicas of a couple of the mountain howitzers buried nearby during his retreat after his supply train was destroyed. Kind of interesting how certain parts of the gun are some much shinier than the rest of it. Now it was time for a visit to Bill's favorite store on the Plaza - a book shop. He ended up with 6 Steven Havills and the new Anne Hillerman - lots of reading when we get home.

After a trip back to the motel to recuperate, we hiked across the street to the Pueblo Cultural Center. The lobby features one of New Mexico's 'painted ponies.' The museum is much improved over our first visit many years ago, but certain aspects of the center's Plaza remain very similar to the old appearance. Interpretation is a lot more confident and even 'in your face' than many years ago- confident in their Pueblo identity. The featured exhibit was a series of cartoon paintings by Ricardo Cate', whose strip makes pointed pokes at White-Indian relations. Dinner was a Tewa Taco at the center's restaurant.

Only 6 miles today, but 3066 for the trip. Tomorrow we're off to Santa Fe for a couple of days.

Day 15 - Albuquerque to Santa Fe

Left the hotel today about 8 AM and headed north on I-25. We pulled off at Santo Domingo for some of their less expensive gas ('only' \$2.769/gal), then continued on NM-22 toward Cochiti and Kashe-Katuwe Tent Rocks National Monument. This is a place where erosion of ancient volcanic ash and pyroclastic flows created tepee-shaped hoodoos. It also has a slot canyon. We were here several years ago (when it was much less crowded) so didn't walk the full trail or up the slot canyon. We took pictures, including one we called the "space alien." Ponderosa pines grow in the slot canyon

The thousand foot La Bajada climb awaited us on our return to the interstate - we'd heard of it but never really put it together with this location. There's a rest area at the top, so no more excuses.

On to Santa Fe, located our motel but drove on by for lunch at Weck's, where we'd eaten breakfast on previous trips. It was OK, but breakfast is better. Then we took a route we know to Museum Hill. First museum was the Museum of Indian Arts and Culture, guarded by a massive statue of Apache dancer

Bill took his time going through the Here, Now and Always exhibit, featuring history & culture of New Mexico's resident nations. Downstairs was a special exhibit about Apachean groups. Then we went over to the Museum of International Folk Art, with its regular exhibits plus a special exhibit on beading - seems virtually every culture has used it at one time or another.

On to the Best Western after making it through a traffic jam; seems they're paving every road in southern Santa Fe. We were upgraded to what is the nicest suite we've seen in a long time. Light supper at Tortilla Flats, then an early night to get ready for tomorrow - downtown to the Plaza, the Shed for lunch, several museums and sightseeing. Only 102 miles today.

Roads taken: I-25, NM-22, NM-16.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 16, 2018

Day 16 - Around Santa Fe

The Best Western this AM had an unusually good motel breakfast - the sausage & eggs tasted real. Thus fortified, we set off for the Plaza. We parked in the cathedral parking lot, \$10 for all day, and headed for the

Plaza, passing the La Fonda Hotel parking garage (Yes, EVERYTHING in Santa Fe is the Pueblo style, even garages)

We walked past the Indians setting up their wares in front of the Palace of the Governors, stopped at the Dime Store for post cards, then walked up the street toward the Institute for American Indian Arts (IAIA). Stopped in a camera store, just to look, and Bill coveted the Nikon P900 superzoom camera - \$600 is not in the market today.

The IAIA is a long standing fixture just off the Plaza, with displays of recent (read: modern) art by its students and graduates. We took pictures of its Houser Sculpture Gallery. BY 11 AM, we were first in a long line for our favorite Santa Fe eatery, just across the street. We always try to get the same table, a sorta-private one where we dined during our first visit here in '04. There's a mirror right behind it, so we could get Sandra & Bill in the same picture. And the food - the food - do you like blue corn enchiladas, green?

After lunch we headed for the New Mexico History Museum, where we were reminded of the characters & issues in the prehistory, settlement and U.S. acquisition of the area, as well as 'modern' transportation options.

A quick visit to the Museum of Art (no pictures from the courtyard this year), some ice cream, and a walk around to a book store, back through the Plaza looking for pigeon pics (did you know SFPD cars can have bike racks for the pedal patrol?).

Then it was back to IAIA to buy a Lakota Noon (their story of Custer's demise), and back to the motel - tired!

Tomorrow we're off to Taos and Red River. Only about 12 miles for the day and 5 days left on the trip!

THURSDAY, MAY 17, 2018

Day 17 - Santa Fe to Red River

And mostly Taos. We were rolling by 7 for Taos, mainly to have a second breakfast at Michael's. After the breakfast, we drove to the Plaza area to shop and take pictures - and to shop some more (Bill ended up with two books at op. cit. bookstore). Here's what the Taos roofline looks like a bit after 9 AM. We then drove over the Gorge Bridge and stopped for pictures;

We followed the West Rim Road, and then down into the gorge - Sandra wanted to stop for rock picking; Bill said not until we find someplace somewhat level. We crossed the low level bridge, and stopped to watch some fisherman out in the Rio Grande:

We then headed back to Taos for lunch at El Taoseno - Bill recommends the green chile stew, best so far this trip. Then we headed north to Red River, where we're staying at the River's

Edge Best Western, did the laundry, ate at a fancy place w/in walking distance, and enjoyed the view from the motel. There's a lift tower for the ski area, just across the creek

A change of plans for the rest of the trip. Tomorrow we'll visit the Vietnam Memorial State Park and Raton as planned, but we'll also see Bent's Old Fort and spend the night in Lamar. Saturday it'll be Great Bend rather than Scott City, and we'll be home on Sunday afternoon! 3349 so far for the trip.

Roads taken: NM-599, US-285, NM-68, US-64, NM-567, NM-570, NM-522, NM-38

FRIDAY, MAY 18, 2018

Day 18, Red River to Lamar

We were really tired Friday evening, but after a good night's sleep at the HIE, Lamar, ready to go. We left the BW Red River about 0745, headed through the mountains (a 9000' pass north of Mt. Wheeler) toward the Vietnam Memorial State Park. This is a special place, originally funded by a private citizen in memory of his son, KIA. The state eventually took it over since the endowment/volunteers couldn't keep up. The indoor portions have lots of tissue boxes around - they are needed.

We took the Cimarron canyon down to the plains, just in time for a stop at Raton. Amtrak arrived from KC we drove past the depot - memories of Bill's trip to Albuquerque a number of years ago. We visited the museum, had lunch at El Matador, and headed for Raton Pass. The road from Trinidad to La Junta is 70+ miles of essentially nothing, just a few ranches and some abandoned settlements without even a change in speed limit. This road follows the Santa Fe Trail for many miles.

We arrived at Bent's Old Ford NHS about 2:30 and explored it thoroughly, leaving not long before it closed at 4. We took pictures of the restored fort seen from the walk, a hat, woodpile & fire pit, the gate seen from outside, two interpreters in period dress, a wagon in yard of fort, a room interior, the yard of the fort and an outside adobe wall seen from a bastion.

We got to Lamar about 4:30, checked in, watched a thunderstorm roll in and crashed early. 259 miles on the day, 3606 for the trip. Saturday it's on to Great Bend - sightseeing optional.

Roads taken: NM-38, US-62, I-25, US-350, NM-194, US-50.

SATURDAY, MAY 19, 2018

Day 19 - Lamar to Great Bend

A nice, easy driving day. Not much traffic on the roads we picked (CO-196, US-385, CO/KS-96), so drove 5 mph below the speed limit and got close to 40 mpg on the day. Left at 0820 MDT, arrived 1445 CDT, 235 miles. Had a break at Tribune, KS (why are towns called 'Horace' and 'Tribune' so close together? hmm) and talked about the weather. They've been very droughty and welcomed the rain. Lunch at a little cafe in Scott City, supper at Perkins in Great Bend. Oh, no pictures today - sorry!

Tomorrow we're off for home - a bit under 300 miles. If we start by 0730, we should be home a bit after 1500.

2018 Trip Blog Text

SUNDAY, MAY 20, 2018

Day 20 - Great Bend to Warrensburg

We left Great Bend before 7 AM, but we didn't have to worry about sun in our eyes. It started off cloudy, then became foggy. The fog became a mist, the rain, then a hard rain. It finally cleared up between Emporia & Ottawa, and was positively steamy by the time we got home, about 1:15 PM. Chore time - empty car, do laundry, check on cottage, make a grocery run, work out finances of the trip (& reconcile accounts). We'll start working on the trip report from Sandra's notes after we get the cats back home and everything put away and organized.

297.9 miles on the day, 4142.8 for the trip, overall average (per the car's computer) 32.4 MPG.

Roads taken: US-56, KS-150, US-50, I-35, KS-68, MO-2, MO-131, MO-58, CR-SW200, MO-BB, MO-13, MO-Y