

July 2019 Trip to Michigan's U.P. And Minnesota's North Shore

Day 1, Warrensburg to Waterloo

Not so routine a day after all: we left a bit before 7 AM, picked up a Mountain Dew and cinnamon roll in Warrensburg, and headed north on MO-13. Wasn't too long before we crossed the Missouri Ocean via Lexington's Ike Skelton Bridge.

As we reached Richmond, we hit rain, light, then torrential. We weren't to be deterred from our mission of taking pictures of courthouses (well, we were deterred and skipped Ray County at Richmond); our first was Caldwell County at Kingston between raindrops. It was followed at Gallatin, Davies County seat. At Gallatin, we turned east on MO-6, which turned out to be a pretty well-traveled road, even after Jamesport - the Amish weren't out braving the weather. We picked up Grundy County at Trenton, then turned north on US-65 to Princeton (Mercer County) and east on US-136 to Unionville (Putnam County). Did you know all three of these counties have GAR monuments prominently placed at or near the courthouse?

We headed north on MO-5, and crossed the Iowa line to IA-5 - did you know that can take Hiway 5 from Des Moines to near Little Rock? Yep, use IA-5, MO-5, and AR-5 & you'll not change numbers. We picked up Appanoose County at Centerville and Monroe County at Albia. We had an excellent lunch at Highway Café in Albia - plentiful meat, potatoes, a salad & real ice cream for only \$7.45 each (plus tax & tip). Topped off the gas and made our first mistake of the trip. Bill turned east on US-34 toward Ottumwa instead of continuing to the north side of Albia to pick up IA-137 to US-63, a 14 mile trip instead of the 42 miles we actually took. Oh, well - at least we found the Mahaska County courthouse at Oskaloosa and the Poweshiek County one at Montezuma.

We finally arrived at Waterloo, wandered around the area where we thought the HIE was located, and finally found it at 4 PM. Here's a few *tidbits* we noticed:

- Iowa uses cable barriers on roadsides where Missouri uses guardrails, but the speed limit on well-maintained highways with good shoulders is only 55.
- Southern Iowa has lots of hills - I should say valleys.
- Malcolm IA has a Pour House Bar & Grill
- US-63 near Tama is the Iowa River Scenic Byway.
- Tama is home of the Cut Loose Salon (not quite a cute as Warrensburg's Curl Up & Dye)
- Iowa towns, like northern Missouri ones, have GAR monuments on the courthouse lawn. In our part of Missouri the monuments are generally in cemeteries.

Today's miles: 371. Tomorrow we'll continue on US-63 to near Rochester, MN, then MN-42 to Wabasha, then WI-25 to Menomonie. We'll visit some old friends nearby at Knapp.

Day 2, Waterloo to Knapp (WI)

Wednesday, JULY 10, 2019

We got to Knapp WI about 1145 hours, to visit old friends Margaret & Willie Miller. How old? They stood up for us at our wedding in '77 and hosted the reception. The reception was a hoot because some of Sandra's country Baptist connections had no idea the punch had punch. Willie worked with me on training the crews for Olympic Arena missile competition. Margaret was an Intelligence Officer at Whiteman and met Sandra at Dr. Jones' evening creative writing class. She's now a published author with quite a few books to her credit.

They have a neat 40 acre farmstead, perfect for their two remaining horses. Here are a few pictures (I hope):

Tidbits:

- The Mississippi is out at Wabasha, MN
We noted a change in farm architecture as well as types of trees. Started seeing enclosed porches east of Rochester.
At Spring Valley MN, we passed the Popcorn Wagon Recreation Area.
Wabasha County MN has a rail-to-trail along MN-42.
In Wisconsin we started seeing an unusual farm field pattern - alternating strips of corn & alfalfa.
Sign seen on WI-25: "EAT MY FISH"

217 miles on the day, via US-63, I-90, MN-42, US-61, MN-60, WI-25 and US-12. 583.8 on the trip

THURSDAY, JULY 11, 2019

Day 3, Knapp to Calumet

After breakfast with Willie & Margaret at the Denny's in Menominee, we started for Michigan's Copper Country, but not without drama - Waggin Tails called that Topsy was acting sick. I OK'd taking her to the vet. Soon the vet called & said her temperature was high, so I OK'd blood work. As we were checking in at the motel, they called back; they'll put her on antibiotics and hold her to watch for a while.

We hit the road at 9:21 AM, via I-94 and WI-29 toward Wausau, where we picked up US-51 northbound to US-8. We followed US-8 to Rhinelander, which we remembered as a small tourist town - now it's a big one. The same applied to Eagle River, where we stopped for a quick McDs while moving from WI-17 to US-45. US-45 took us to MI-26. At Houghton, it was US-41 through Calumet to the Trailside Motel. Dinner was our first pasty at The Hut Inn. We'll be comparing it when we eat at couple of other places over the next few days (no, we're not eating those stick on things; try Googling Cornish pasty).

Tomorrow we have breakfast at Lindell's Chocolate Shoppe in Lake Linden, then visit the Houghton County Historical Society for some research. After that, we'll like take our drive around Bootjack, visit Jacobsville and Rabbit Bay, and have a bite at the Dreamland Hotel. Then it's back to Laurium for another pasty. I promise we'll have pictures tomorrow!

Tidbits:

At the Abbotsford exit, we saw a caboose riding a flatbed trailer.
What would a restaurant along the Rib River serve? BBQ.
US-51 is the Korean War Veterans Highway.
We saw lots of logging trucks, fortunately none holding us up.
The Misery River is north of Twin Lakes, MI. It runs into Misery Bay - gotta be a story there.
Near Quincy Mines, a sign advertises "Deer Skull Boiling."

328.4 miles on the day, 912.2 for the trip

FRIDAY, JULY 12, 2019

Day 4 - Around Copper Country

This part of the U.P. is on Eastern Daylight Time, so it's hard to get to sleep by 9 PM when it's still just about broad daylight outside. Our plans for the day included some research on Bill's connections, and a tour of Bootjack. We started with breakfast at Lindell's Chocolate Shoppe in Lake Linden. This is definitely an institution, with very private booths, and oak everywhere. To top things off, our breakfast was excellent, one of the best I've had on the road.

After Lindell's we decided to make a run out to Bootjack to see where Bill's grandfather's cottage once stood. The state had taken the land for a boat launching area on Portage Lake, and the only possible sign is a bunch of large rocks that probably were part of his breakwater - not worth a picture, especially with a thunderstorm moving in. We did take a few shots of the house where Bill's grand parents lived and his mother grew up. This was originally a company house provided by the Calumet & Hecla mining company.'

Back to Lake Linden for a visit to the Houghton County Historical Society's research facilities, temporarily located in the basement of an old church due to some flash flooding. Bill did learn that most of the ancestors around in 1902 worked for C&H.

Next stop, Hancock, home of Finlandia University and the Finnish Heritage Center. It's also the home of the Kaleva Café, known for Finnish style pasties, which we naturally had for lunch. We got some good information on the role of Finnish immigrants and their descendants, as well as some pronunciation hints - the Finnish language is unrelated to any of Europe's big three families (Romance, Germanic, Slavic).

Back to Lake Linden, where we saw that the Historical Society museum was open. Interesting exhibits, and it has a short train ride available:

The sun was shining, the clouds well to the south, so we headed out to Bootjack once again. It's all so built up along both Portage & Torch lakes, one can't get close to the water for photography. We continued to Jacobsville so Bill could reminisce about childhood visits to the Jacobsville store for an Osogrape and pictures of the Jacobsville sandstone cliffs. The old lighthouse there has big No Trespassing signs, and even wants \$5 to take pictures from the road. We finally found a spot without a house or sign to get this shot of the cliffs overlooking Keweenaw Bay.

On the way back, we stopped at another institution, the Dreamland Hotel (ca 1913), where we shared a local beer. The moose & muskie -they've been there as long as Bill can remember and likely much longer. We returned to Calumet to visit the Keweenaw National Historical Park visitor center. Bill found some information that a distant cousin in Finland would like. Then it was another excellent pastie, this time at Tony's in Laurium, a stop at a supermarket for some of that local beer, and back to the motel.

113 miles for the day, 1025.2 for the trip. Tomorrow it's Copper Harbor and return via scenic routes.

SATURDAY, JULY 13, 2019

Day 5, Copper Harbor and back

Up and at 'em by 7:30, breakfast at Miners Café in Laurium, then off on MI-26 north. At Kearsarge, we had to take picture of the stone USS Kearsarge (a WWI destroyer, not the Alabama's bane) - didn't climb on it like Bill did as a kid during Copper Harbor trips.

We took the cutoff on Cliff Road, past the site of the Cliff Mine, first of many economically successful mines in Copper Country. Our first view of Lake Superior and our first waterfall came at Eagle River. We also picked up our first rocks here.

The day started out cloudy and cool, giving the lake a dark cast instead of that scenic blue, so we concentrated on the next waterfall, Jacob's Falls (on Jacob's Creek - Bill remembered associating it with the hymn about Jacob's ladder).

Did you know this stretch of Lake Superior coast has sand dunes? Bill didn't remember this section, but it provides good views and access to the beach. Eagle Harbor is the Keewenaw County Seat and is notable for its lighthouse. Tours are available - for a price. We opted for photos from a view tower.

Now it's time for Brockway Mountain Drive, known for the long views it provides. On the way up the mountain's wooded side, Bill saw a black bear cross the road and disappear into the woods. Up on top, we were disappointed that no lakera were in sight, but Bill used his longest lens to capture a yacht/fishing boat running parallel to the shore.

The cloud cover remained, along with a slight haze from far-away fires, so we couldn't test whether Isle Royale could be seen from here. The clouds did add some interest to this shot of Copper Harbor.

One of the main attractions of Copper Harbor is Fort Wilkins State Historic Site. The fort, placed to protect/keep the peace during the copper boom, was active from 1842 to 1870 and was manned by a small infantry detachment. The buildings in the pictures are original, with restoration of buildings and stockades by the WPA. Two first-person interpreters did a nice job staying in character, but I tried to ask questions that would allow them to answer w/o causing them difficulty.

Copper Harbor itself hasn't changed all that much - a few more motels, only a few restaurants, and minimum access to the waterfront. We noticed that most waterfront property on these natural lakes is privately owned, limiting our chances for good scenic views. Our lunch was a mediocre pasty at Tamarack Inn, so we started back toward Calumet via Lakeshore Drive and Lac la Belle

It's 22 miles from Lac la Belle to Gay, an old mill town. The route features sand beaches, and a great place for rock picking - so we picked a bunch. Then it was on to Gay for a beer. Want proof?

Back to Calumet for supper at Connie's, the last of the pasty houses we wanted to try. Guess what! It's closed Saturday & Sunday, so no Connie's for us. We ended up in Lake Linden, where Lindell's was also closed for the afternoon, so we had an excellent hamburger & superb onion rings at Beakers at Dairyland.

118.7 miles for the day, 1144 for the trip. Tomorrow we do the laundry and do a little additional gallivanting.

SUNDAY, JULY 14, 2019

Day 6 - Laundry Day (plus)

It's time - we brought enough clothes for 6 days, including what we had on when we left. Lake Linden has a nice little laundromat in the ground floor of an old wooden building, so that's where we headed. But first, breakfast at Lindell's. After breakfast we headed out to Bootjack again to see exactly where some important (to Bill) places were. The old store is long gone & you can't tell it was ever there. The cottage location - well, not much left.

The area you see was a hidden lot, perfect for play. To the left is the location of the cottage - Bill couldn't crawl thru the brush to look for foundation remnants.

On the way out, we'd passed a lady walking with two walking sticks in her left hand, while her right one held a phone to her ear. Half an hour later we saw her again - same configuration. Back at Lake Linden we got gas at the lowest price we'd seen (\$2.79), bought ice and a Yooper candy bar, and ate lunch at Beakers. Then it was back to the motel to fold clothes and watch the Royals debacle on the Tigers' feed. The Trailside Lodge was a very satisfactory place, which caters to people running ATV trails - it even rents ATVs.

We went back to Calumet to look for the old depot where Bill & his mother arrived & departed via the Copper Country Limited. In the early years it was a steam train, clearly visible across Portage Lake when it passed by morning & evening. We tried a "southwestern cuisine" restaurant for supper. Food was OK, nothing special, but they were proud of it. Back to the motel & start loading for an early departure tomorrow.

62.1 miles for the day, 1201 for the trip. Tomorrow we head east on MI-26, MI-28, US-2 & MN-61 to Gooseberry Falls, MN

MONDAY, JULY 15, 2019

Day 7 - Calumet to Gooseberry Falls

Woke up quite early this morning, so we were on the road by 6:15 EDT. Naturally, the only place open for breakfast was McD's, so we went hungry for a while. At Ontonagon, we finally found a café open, with 10 men drinking coffee and us eating. This was a side trip via MI-38. After breakfast we took MI-60 back to MI-28, which ran into US-2 and relatively heavy traffic. Despite that, we got thru Duluth before lunch. Two older US Steel lakers were in port in Superior, and Sandra wanted me to stop (on the interstate) to take their picture. No!

We stopped for lunch at Judy's Pies in Two Harbors, then drove down toward the port to see what was happening. En route, we captured the Lake County Courthouse. At first look, the port didn't seem to have anything exciting going on. A large laker was taking on ore on the other side of the dock. When, to our surprise, we had a visitor - one A of the new-fangled 1000 foot lakers coming in to port. All we could say was "Wow!" It's amazing how they maneuver such a massive boat.

We headed northwest on MN-61, through a series of tunnels, toward our night's destination, Gooseberry Park Cottages and Motel - and drove right past it to Gooseberry Falls State Park. We

(luckily) found a parking place, and headed up the trail marked "To Falls." The park is features a series of falls, and a bit of recent rain had them running at a reasonable rate. The upper falls are almost underneath the highway bridge.

Our next stop was the oft-photographed Split Rock Light, which was built in response to a wreck nearby. There's a lot of iron ore in the rocks along the North Shore, so magnetic compasses are often in error. The light was made obsolete by radar. Back to the motel to register and move into the room - just in time before a thunderstorm delivered a roaring deluge. After the rain stopped we crossed the highway for supper. The folks up here are awfully proud of their food!

295.4 miles on the day, 101 for the trip. Tomorrow it's up to Grand Portage & back, looking at scenery, especially waterfalls.

Tidbits of the day:

- The UP has a Sleepy Creek
- Lake Gogebic sports a Hoop & Holler Bar
- Wakefield features a very large wood Indian statue
- Sign west of Hurley: "Watch for Blowing Snow and Drifting Sand"
- There's a Bad River Casino - is it a bad casino on a river or a casino on the Bad River?.
- East of Brule we saw a rocking chair with a fishing pole, an arrow, and a stump with an axe - all at least 10 feet long/high
- Brule also sports the Kro Bar

WEDNESDAY, JULY 17, 2019

Day 9, Gooseberry to Fargo

Well, here we are in Fargo, in our last of the contiguous 48 states to visit. We got off to an early start, heading toward Duluth. Breakfast this time was at McDonald's in Two Harbors, but gas was a dime higher than reported on Gas Buddy. We needed an oil change, but were in the wrong lane in heavy traffic going thru Duluth. After we cleared the metro, travel was clean until we hit a real downpour; never heard the thunder but it had to be there.

As we neared Leech Lake (still in the rain), we ran into a real traffic jam - hundreds of campers, mostly trailers of all sizes, filled parking spots and the road coming in. It turns out there's a big rock festival called the Moondance Jam. We were lucky to get thru w/o much delay. Lunch was a Perkins at Detroit Lakes. It took 1-1/4 hour to be served and eat. No return there! Then in Moorhead we hit a detour that wasn't well-marked. Finally got in a bit after 2 PM. After off-loading, we headed for a Valvoline oil change place; so did everyone else. After a good wait in the heat, it was back to the motel.

Just a block away, we saw the Space Alien Bar & Grille. How could we resist, especially w/ Sandra's cow-abduction socks and Bill's Roswell T-shirt.

Tidbits:

- What's with the pink trash cans on MN-194 west of Duluth?
- The Fond-du-Lac Indian Reservation sign, as well as all the lake and river signs are in English and Chippewa. Tidbits:

- The Upper Mississippi River in northern Minnesota is already a stream to be reckoned with.
- Akeley, MN, has a Paul Bunyan statue and a Blue Ox café (complete with mural).
- Want to visit the Bullwinkle bar? Try Nevis, MN, also home of the Firefly Event Barn.
- And then there's the pink bicycle about 20 miles east of Detroit Lakes.
- Detroit Rapids has a Spaceman Storage unit.

287.5 miles for the day, 2021.5 miles for the trip. Tomorrow we take I-29 south into South Dakota, then cut over to Pipestone, MN for a visit to the National Monument there. Then it's US-75 south into Iowa, with RON at Cherokee.

FRIDAY, JULY 19, 2019

Day 10 - Fargo to Warrensburg

That is NOT what was planned. We left Fargo at 7:30, heading south on I-29 (speed limit 75). A bit less than an hour later, we crossed the South Dakota line (speed limit 80). After 3:15 hours and 204 miles, we turned off on 2-lane SD-34 (speed limit 65) headed for Pipestone.

After a great lunch at Lange's Cafe in Pipestone, Sandra had a sudden attack of heat and wanted to head home immediately. So we pulled out without visiting the park, cancelled our reservation at Cherokee, and headed out on US-59 (speed limit 55, like even the best 2-lanes in Iowa).

We passed through Cherokee about 3 PM, figuring we had about over 312 miles to go. Turns out that a bit of a calculation mistake on the spreadsheet dropped about 80 miles. We finally got in at 10:30, after 721 miles and 15 hours. Bill's glad he can still do that kind of driving when needed, but doesn't want to practice it.

We saw lots of possible tidbits, such as Ida Grove, the town that has a castle theme in its architecture, but didn't have time to write much down.

Route for the day was I-29, SD-34, MN-30, US-75, IA-3, US-59, IA-2, ES-71, I-29, US-36 and MO-13. Whew. Total miles on the trip was 2741.6