

Subject: Deadwood, South Dakota
Date: Wed, 13 Oct 1999 21:35:33

Gambling addicts look out, Deadwood is slot machine heaven. EVERY saloon, hotel, and coffee shop has at least a few slot machines if not hundreds of them.

The area around Deadwood is called the Black Hills. The area was originally granted to the Lakota and the army was supposed to keep white men away from the area. When Custer (remember him?) came back with tales of GOLD! White men invaded with a fever, gold fever. This was one of the instances that lead up to the Little Big Horn. Deadwood was one of the gold rush towns that quickly sprang up in the area. The merchants, soiled doves, and gamblers quickly followed. The Lakota eventually had to give up the Black Hills.



The number one name in Deadwood's history is Wild Bill Hickok. Lots of "Wild Bill" this and "Hickok" that in town. Wild Bill was shot in the back by Jack McCall while playing poker at the Number 10 Saloon. Wild Bills hand? Legend has it that it was Black Aces and Black eights, what became known as the "Deadmans Hand" But what was the fifth card? Queen of Hearts. The local museum have what is supposed to be the actual hand of cards picked from the table after he was shot. What is interesting is that they weren't black aces or black eights. It was the Ace of Diamonds, Ace of Spades, 8 of Spades, 8 of hearts, and the Queen of Hearts.

The thing that we enjoyed the most was actually the Celebrity Hotel's Movie memorabilia and Auto Museum. They had lots of clothes worn by different actors in different movies. Sean Connery is always a hit with Bonnie. They also had one of the Jeeps from Mash. One of the stunt car HERBIEs (This one had the volkswagon body on backwards, and was used for the scenes where Herbie would drive backward at 60 miles an hour.) They had the Austin Martin from James Bonds "The Living Daylights" starring Timothy Dalton. Clint Eastwood's Trans-Am. One of Evel Knievel's jump motorcycles and a couple of X-rays showing broken bones and pins. Their premier attraction was the Batmobile. It was the one from the Danny Devito movie. Keys still in the ignition too!

The graveyard up on the hill contains Wild Bill and one of the town's other celebrities, Calamity Jane. Her dying wish was to be buried next to Bill. Well, behind will have to do.

They are warning of snow for the weekend, we have mixed reports about the weather. We asked one of the ladies in the coffee shop when they normally got snowed that stayed. "middle of October" TIME TO GO SOUTH! Well tomorrow is supposed to be good so we are going to head down to Mount Rushmore and Crazy Horse. Where after that we aren't sure. We wanted to go to the Badlands but we will have to see what the weather does.

Subject: Mount Rushmore, Crazy Horse, and Wall Drug.

Date: Sat, 16 Oct 1999 21:05:23

Mount Rushmore on a bright sunny day is a brilliant display, not only in the intensity of the light but the pride in the people's faces. Mount Rushmore has to rank near the top of anyone's list of America's patriotic places. There is a big interpretation center that covers construction of the monument, the artist, care to keep the monument, and why the individuals were chosen.

The little timeline history of the US got Bonnie a little miffed. The war of 1812 to "rid North America of British influence" said the outcome was "undecided". Hey guys ever notice that little blob on the map called Canada. Not exactly "undecided". Lost that one boys.

Mt. Rushmore is a sight to see and there is a nice walk you can take along the base of the mountain. Only part of it was open the day we were there but we enjoyed the walk. It starts out on the left hand side with George Washington, then Thomas Jefferson, Theodore Roosevelt and Abraham Lincoln. It wasn't supposed to be that way. First was to be Jefferson and they started a significant amount carving with Jefferson in that position but, depending on which documentation you read, poor material for the sculpture, a blast that tilted his forehead the wrong way, or insufficient material to complete the sculpture, they couldn't complete him there. So after he was already started he was blasted away and positioned on the other side of Washington. More problems cropped up when a fissure would have ended up coming down Jefferson's Nose, and rather than make a statue that would have been noseless in a hundred years, Gutzon Borglum (the artist) tilted him back a bit so the crack came down his cheek. All this time poor Roosevelt was getting shoved back further and further. In fact he ended up within ten feet of the canyon behind Mt Rushmore.



Other things caused problems and if you take a look at Lincoln, he does look a little worried, but it's probably not about money, his worry lines are actually veins of silver that ran through the granite.

Twenty two years before construction began in 1927 a lawyer was in the area surveying the tin mines of a client and asked what the mountain was called. "Slaughterhouse Rock, but we can change it. How does Mount Rushmore sound?" was the answer. The name stuck and he was so pestered by reporters that Charles Rushmore gave a \$5000 donation to the monument.

It took almost a million dollars and 14 years to complete the project (6.5 years of carving). And the original residents of the mountains are still there, the Mountain Goats still maintain a presence in the area and can on occasion be seen scaling the rocks around the mountain.

To give you an estimate of the size of the sculpture George Washington's head from forehead to chin is 60 feet, his eye is 11 feet wide, his nose is 20 feet long and his mouth is 18.

Borglum's other work that I thought was neat, a remodeled torch for the Statue of Liberty.

He selected Washington for belief in the sacred fire of liberty and the destiny of the Republican model of government (and for refusing to be crowned as king although it was offered to him more than once). Jefferson for the Declaration of Independence and advocate of westward expansion (the Louisiana Purchase) Abraham Lincoln whose leadership ended slavery on US soil. (It was interesting to note that the southern states declared separation before he was elected and the shooting war started a month after his inauguration.) Roosevelt who promoted the Panama Canal and antitrust legislation.



Crazy Horse is another mountain sculpture just 17 miles from Mt. Rushmore. It was a project picked up by an artist named Korczak Ziolkowski. He was asked by Chief Standing Bear to carve Crazy Horse "My fellow chiefs and I would like the white man to know that the red man has great heroes too"

This statue is shall we say LARGE. They have the face completed after starting in 1949, this is not a federal or state project, it is entirely funded through donations and admission fees. They have twice turned down \$10,000,000 of potential federal funding of the project. The face is 87.5 feet high, Mt Rushmore could fit in the face of Crazy Horse. If it is ever completed as intended it will be 563 feet high and 641 feet long. LARGE.

Crazy Horse's war strategies are still taught at West Point, wonder if Custer's are, doubt it. After leaving Crazy Horse we headed toward a little place called Wall. On the way we started seeing signs about Wall Drug. Apparently Wall Drug is a local legend and the distance to Wall Drug has been stuck on road signs from Saudi Arabia, to Korea, and appeared in space and submarines. Wall Drug is now in it's third generation of family operation, the drugstore is a small piece of one section. They came to be famous by putting up billboards offering free ice water to passing travelers. Story has it by the time the people got back from putting up the ice water signs customers were queued to buy ice cream. The place now occupies most of a city block and contains a small drug section, two jewelry sections, a fudge shop, harness shop, book store, shoe store, and a café that seats 530 people.

Subject: Badlands National Park, Rolling pumpkins, and a Hydrogen bomb
Date: Sun, 17 Oct 1999 22:41:09

The Badlands National Park is just across the highway from Wall. They have a different view of the world than the Badlands National Park in Canada. They have two quite distinct sections a northern part where there are pretty good roads, trails and interpretation centers. The southern part has a slight problem, they used it for a weapons range in the second world war and they have a bunch of unexploded bombs they would like to take care of before they let people on it. But then they have the slight inconvenience of cell phones, which can set off the bombs, making tourists REAL unpopular in the area while the guys are trying to clean the area. This area is closed.

Where the Canadian version has hoodoos with ironstone protecting the top, here the protection seems to be grass. The hoodoos seem to be more colorful than in the Canadian version, the soil here shows three distinct shades a beige, a red, and a green.

They have a couple of fossil walks that you can do and are up and protected from any wild life (read rattlers). The fossils here seem to be more smaller animals than the dinosaurs of Alberta. Probably due to the age of the sediments but I'm not sure we didn't stop at the visitor center and missed out on a lot of the interpretation information.



Colors melting together in the Badlands

They did have examples of fossils of pig like creatures with heads up to four feet long, a Oligocene counterpart of the modern hyena, rhinoceros from the same era, as well as a few more versions of the rhino that didn't make it through the Darwin process. I always find the fossils neat stuff.

We left the park and headed our way toward the Missouri River and made it to a place called Burke. Not much, we can say about Burke beside we enjoyed our stay at the Municipal Park and the radio was making a great to do about pheasant season! It starts the next day at noon. Considering the number we drove through (and missed them all) they could use a little thinning of the population (est. 4 million). It was definitely an eagerly awaited moment. The next day we heard a great rattle of gunfire in the distance (about 15 minutes early by my watch).

We made it to Ponca State Park in time for the Great Pumpkin Rolling Event. Bonnie and I were walking through some of the trails on the way to the Missouri River and made it out in time to catch the Pumpkin Rolling Event. This was a obviously a hit with the locals and great masses of kids with competitive parents showed up. The 5 and unders were the most fun to watch. And in fact some of them beat a lot of the distances of older kids (owing more to a bowling motion on a steep hill compared to a shot putt throw with a smashing finish). At least one local paper and two TV stations made an appearance to record the events. We enjoyed the short day and a nice state park.

Nebraska has some of the nicest state parks. Most sites have power with no water or sewer which allows them to stay open longer (No water to freeze). The 30 amp services also allow us to wake up in the morning to a cool RV then snap on the electric heater and sneak back under the covers until things have warmed up. We have played with the propane furnace the last couple of days. The forced air furnace has pipes running in the floor to distribute the heat. If we run the furnace for just a few minutes, the floor gets warm and then the ceiling electric heater (much less heating power) can circulate the heat from the propane furnace quickly.

We considered staying in Ponca for a Sunday but decided to make a run to Omaha to see the Mormon Trail Museum. It is a neat place and we enjoyed it a lot. The Museum is run by the Mormons and the presentation was a little more religious that we wanted but wasn't so much that we didn't enjoy the history. What surprised us was how well they had integrated technology into their presentation. The motion sensors and audio visual presentations worked very well together and all and all a show that

was interesting and enjoyable presentation of history even to us non-religious people.

We wanted to stop at the Black History Museum in Omaha but it was closed on Sundays so we continued on to the SAC Museum. The Strategic Air Command Museum is an interesting place with LOTS and LOTS of planes including a U-2 spy plane and it's successor the SR-71 (Blackbird). The SR-71 was interesting in the fact that when on land they often leaked fuel and other fluids, it wasn't until they were airborne at high altitude and speed that they "grew" into their shape sealing off the leaks. They also gave impressive stats on exactly how much they could survey while on a mission. They have many bombers and fighters used during WWII, the Vietnam war, and throughout the cold war.



They have the Apollo 009 capsule on display. The double 0 missions were unmanned Apollo test flights and the 009 flight was used to test a wide variety of systems from heat shields to communications and electronics.

They have a lot of space dedicated to the cold war, not only aircraft but some of the civil defense films of the time on making bomb shelters and how to identify aircraft. Nebraska also housed a number of the missile silos that contained the Atlas-D missiles (one on display in the front yard). They also have an area dedicated to the airman lost in the Cold War. A telling reminder of times not long ago.

Among the many bombers and fighters scattered around the hanger is a green can that Bonnie walked by mistaking it as a fuel tank. This green cylindrical tank a little over 12 feet long, a little over four and a half feet in diameter was a Mark-36 Thermonuclear (Hydrogen) Bomb. The empty casing is on display, weighing 12,000 pounds empty and surprisingly only 17,500 loaded. That 5,500 pounds carried a megaton range wallop. It was set up to be deployed as an air or ground burst option, either way it was always dropped parachute retarded regardless of the option.



Thanks to those who chose the "No, thank you" option.

Subject: Western Trails Center and the Danish Immigrant Museum.
Date: Mon, 18 Oct 1999 20:49:41

We started looking at our route again and shifted it to do a quicker east trip so we can turn south faster. We turned east and headed through the metropolis of Omaha Nebraska. We waited for the bulk of the traffic to subside according to the radio and headed through 20 miles of 8 to 12 lanes of traffic. Thankfully things were not crowded and we moved through without a hitch. Although the four stabbing and/or shooting reports for last night did give us extra reason to press harder on the accelerator. We

made it safely to Iowa , just on the other side of the Missouri and turned into the Western Trails Visitor Center (exit 1B).

The California, Oregon, Mormon, and the Lewis and Clark trail all started from here. They did a good job of comparing today's travel to yesterday. We have been tripping over Lewis and Clark campsites, historical markers, and state parks since Mt. Saint Helens. We should run out of them within the next couple of days.

We left and headed toward the Danish Immigrant Museum in Elk Horn, Iowa. The Museum was neat and they had lots of stuff that was interesting to read about. They had a wall of immigrants (1 Canadian entry from BC). One reference book had an entry about New Denmark (the guy left to come to the states). The immigration to New Denmark NB was not large (27 families) so it is probably reasonable they didn't have much information on it. They did have one picture of evidence of Danish immigration to Canada, a picture of a church in Alberta.



North America in profile

Bonnie wasn't the least bit interested in getting her family placed up on the wall of immigrants. She's funny that way.

A couple of neat tidbits. Victor Borge came to the states in 1940 and donated a piano to the museum. Another person to which I can thank for one of my favorite tools, William Petersen inventor of the ViceGrip wrench. They have a couple of examples on display, a 1921 edition that had a screw mechanism for adjusting the teeth and a 1924 edition with the locking lever that we all know and love.

Subject: Pella Iowa, shopping expedition and random thoughts.

Date: Wed, 20 Oct 1999 09:22:31

Pella is a quaint little place southeast of Des Moines. Home of Pella Windows. We arrived in search of a Walmart. We needed a bunch of odd and sod stuff and Walmart usually fits the bill for most of the things on our shopping list. Some of the stuff (Tide, paper towels, and Kleenex) was actually better priced than in Canada but given the exchange would have been just slightly more expensive. There were other things (CDs, Toaster, rubber gloves for dumping septic tanks) that were priced about the same dollar figure in both Canada and the US.

We picked up a toaster (birthday money from my mother), something we have been looking for off and on since we left. We wanted a low wattage toaster. Something that is



surprisingly hard to find. We finally gave up and settled on an 800 watt version.

The little things seem to make a big difference between "camping" and "living" one for me is hot water in the morning. So I often pop out while the coffee water is heating and start the propane hot water heater, after breakfast I have nice hot water to wash up with and Bonnie has hot water for dishes. Another "living" item for me is toast. I like toast and the campfire toaster we started with is just that a camp fire toaster. We wanted to get one that we could take on the boat with us, which means we have to be able to run the thing. AC invertors up to 1000 watts are not too bad in the cost department. Once you hit the 1500 watt variety they get pricier as well you have to heft up the battery bank to run them. I figure the lower wattage toaster should work better with the lower wattage inverter.

We stopped into a grocery store to get a couple of things we were out of and picked up a new ice cream for trial. "Blue Bunny" is supposed to be a premium ice cream. They also had a supply of Ben and Jerry's but they had a limited selection so we only bought one. (The Ice Cream is about the same price after exchange). Reports on the taste test later.

We decided to bite on the Good Sam Samboree for the Rose Parade. Good thing we did when we did, there were only 3 slots left. If you are watching the Rose Parade watch the bleachers for a couple of Tilley hats. Now we have a deadline Dec 28 1999, Pasadena High School parking lot. This is a once in a lifetime event so we are looking forward to the week.

We are parked in Robert's Creek Public Campground. The crowds are definitely thinning out. Last night there were four RVs in the campground, tonight two. We are planning on stopping to visit Pella tomorrow morning and then heading toward the Amana Colonies. Pella was settled by the Dutch, Amana by Germans. Last night was the Danes. There are a lot of European cultures within a small distance. We are planning on spending a couple of days in Amana. We have been traveling hard and we are both tired, we need a Sunday. We haven't really stopped and not moved the RV for a day since leaving Vancouver. We are definitely at a record breaking pace in terms of fuel consumption. Nearly 1400 liters so far this month. Up until this point we have been doing kind of a backward C heading east to pick up as many states that we missed as we could before turning south and heading back west. Amana will be the end of the top part of that C, from there we will head south east to Springfield Illinois (the curve of the C) and then head west from there. We really don't have any plans made for the western trip yet. We have 70 days before we are due in Pasadena. Considering it took 19 days to get here that seems comfortable.

We have definitely made it out of the "west" the radio stations are a little more varied. For the last 12-14 days we have had a choice of BOTH types of music, country or western.

DRUM ROLL taste test. Blue Bunny is a pretty good ice cream and considering it costs about 2/3 as much as B+J it is impressive. But I still would buy B+J, but serve the relatives Blue Bunny ;-)

Subject: Pella, Iowa

Date: Wed, 20 Oct 1999 18:03:37

We stopped in Pella this morning for a visit to the main square. Our utility shopping really didn't give us a feel for town. But today's visit was great way to spend a few hours. We started by feeding Millie at the local gas pump. Gas prices are the best we have seen since Mass. \$1.17 for the medium grade, it's interesting that gas stations in Nebraska and Iowa have been selling the medium grade gas for the same

price or less than regular. The octane level is also back up to 87 for regular rather than the 85.5 in Montana and Wyoming. While fueling up I started talking to an elderly gentleman, people in the midwest are really friendly and helpful. They have diagonal parking here and we would block traffic if we did so we were in search of a parking spot. He wasn't sure where we could park but he ran, well hobbled on his cane, into the station and asked while I was tending Millie. The attendant didn't know either. So we parked on the street just up from the gas station in the residential area.

Bonnie asked the other day if I had found a place I would rather live than home. I'm not sure we have but if we HAD to move to the states, Pella would be high on the candidate list. It is a quaint little village with lots of neat shops (read bakeries, butcher shops, craft stores, hardware stores, etc.) and a local university Central College. The write-up in the local tourist rag sounded a lot like St. FX. 1300 students, small classes, and profs that know students on a first name basis. The place is spotlessly clean, the little shops are ornate and they even have a working Klokkenspel. The Klokkenspel has a number of local figures that step up and perform several times a day. One of them is Wyatt Earp who grew up in the area.

They have a great sundial in the park that shows pretty accurate time as well as a war memorial, Tulip Toren, and a tourist bureau in a windmill. They are considering building a huge windmill that would be visible from the highway and a canal. We asked one of the local gentleman who stopped to talk where they were going to put the canal. Apparently that is an interesting question, and a furious debate among the locals.

There seems to be lots of industry in town, Pella Windows the window manufacturer as well as Vermeer, a farm implement manufacturer. We are definitely in corn country and have been watching the corn harvest since Nebraska. The corn harvesters are huge machines and deadly looking with seven spikes that jut out from the front and provide a path for harvesting six rows of corn at a time, out the back comes kernels of corn. Fields along the roads regularly have one, two, and three large corn cribs awaiting ears of corn.

We headed out and made our way less than 100 miles to the Amana colonies. The Amana Colonies were founded by German immigrants who rather than build houses on the land, built villages and left each day to tend the farms, just as they had done in the old country. We stopped at the visitor center, the Amana outlet stores and the Seven Villages Restaurant (Cinnamon Buns!) Since they were advertising their cinnamon buns we had to add to our North American Bakery Challenge. We figured they are a good third after Braeburn in Alaska and Merchant's Deli and



A homestead at the Amana Colonies

Bakery in Washington.

We drove around the west part of the Amana Trail, a twenty mile loop that visits the Amana villages. We stopped at High Amana to visit the Old Fashion High Amana Store a store tended by a woman in her 90s, the store hasn't changed in 135 years. It is now more like a museum than a store but you can purchase Amana goods there. The old tin ceilings, display cases, dishes and memorabilia were interesting to see.

We are planning on a Sunday and are currently parked in the RV park in Amana. As soon as we landed we were swarmed by flocks of little brown birds. We were barely settled even still sitting in the driving seats when we saw waves of the little birds arrive. They are eating the bugs off the RV. We are used to the hornets visiting us in the parks but this is the first time we have had flocks of birds!

Subject: The Amana Colonies.

Date: Thu, 21 Oct 1999 21:01:44

The Amana Colonies, according to one of the articles I've read, are Iowa's number one tourist attraction. Main Amana is full of touristy shops selling kitchen gadgets, Christmas ornaments, cheeses, wines, smoked meat and many, Many, MANY antique and craft shops. Needlepoint seems to be on the rise again and Bonnie enjoyed her trip through the shops. She seems to be itching to get something to do while she is traveling and then remembers that her time is pretty full and really hasn't had time to do much of anything beyond our travels. Lighthouses seem to be a popular needlepoint theme and we even found one that had a group of 15 or so including Swallowtail light on Grand Manan, the Yarmouth light, Louisburg CB light, Head Harbour light, and Cape Fourche NS.

We visited the Amana Woolen Mill where we saw the modern equivalent of the water powered mill at Upper Canada Village. Seeing the two is an interesting contrast. The technology is definitely recognizable as a direct descendent but plant burrs have been replaced by steel needles, water wheels are replaced by electric motors, and people by computers and rolls of paper tape. Blankets roll off of the machine fast enough that you can watch the pattern appear and before you know it a full blanket is clear of the machine. The divider between the blanket is four or six inches of non woven treads. We didn't realize we had watched a full blanket materialize until we saw the napper running to make the blankets soft and fuzzy. The gaps in the woven material are more noticeable when the napper is folding them.

The Woolen Mill has been in operation since 1857. It was badly damaged in 1998 when a severe wind blew the roof and much of the third floor off. Meteorologists think that straight line winds in excess of 150 mph were to blame, although exact wind speeds were unavailable, the University of Iowa weather station at the visitor center blew away.

The reconstruction process restored the original pitched roof and unveiled some of the craftsmanship in the original construction, the support posts were still had accurate centers within 1/4 of an inch after over 100 years, under the boards on the first floor was six inches of sand supporting the floor to absorb the vibration of the milling machines, when the restoration of the support beams required the removal of years of paint and grime it was revealed they were not oak as expected but pine trees. Pine from Ebenezer, NY was used to build the mill, 15 pine posts 36 inches in diameter all set into oak supports and topped with identical turnings. It is unknown if they were carved by hand or on a huge lathe. Nine thousand bricks from a demolished barn in one of the other Amana communities were used to repair the

damage to the brick part of the woolen mill. It certainly is worth a stop for a visit.

Many of the houses have a wooden trellis used to support grape vines. Wine production was an important part of the Amana culture but often the grapes didn't supply sufficient wine to last the year so rather than grow more grapes (and look like a lush) they started a fruit wine from rhubarb. A hundred pounds of stocks yielded nine gallons of juice, add 100 pounds of sugar and some water and they produced 50 gallons of wine. Not bad either.

We have picked up a number of small bottles of fruit wine including rhubarb, blackberry, and raspberry. Many of these are dessert wines. One of our accidental discoveries from a winery in Ontario was the combination of a sweet raspberry wine and bitter chocolate.

One of the things Bonnie was reading today said they expected their harvest to be done by thanksgiving, which means they can't be expecting any serious amounts of snow before the end of harvest. We are heading south from here.

Subject: Springfield Illinois
Date: Sun, 24 Oct 1999 20:38:05

We had an interesting day visiting the Lincoln sites around Springfield.

Our first stop was at the Lincoln home. They have a block of homes around the Lincoln home that are used to create a view of what the community would have looked like at the time when Lincoln lived there. They have done a really nice job of preserving the place and they have a lot of artifacts from the home. Lincoln was a tall man, 6 foot 4 inches and much of the furniture of the time just didn't fit him. He would often lay on the floor and turn the chairs over and lean against the back of the chair. His bed was a special construction and is 6 feet 9 inches long. It doesn't look any different than a normal bed until you realize the bedroom has 11 foot ceilings and the four corner posts of the bed are 7 feet tall, it is also significantly taller than your normal bed.

They figure they have the formal reception rooms about 97% accurate to the time. Another building up the street talks about the original building as well as the additions and renovations done by Lincoln and his wife.



Lincoln had four sons, Robert Todd, Edward Baker "Eddie", William Wallace, and Thomas "Tad" (nick named by his father because he looked like a tadpole). Eddie died when he was four years old of "pulmonary consumption" (TB). Willie died in the White House at the age of 12 of pneumonia, Thomas died six years after his father at the age of 17 of a lung disease. Only Robert, the first born, lived to be an old man of 83. Robert had a son named Abraham Lincoln who died childless in 1985 and ended the family line.

Lincoln is the only president with a patent in his name. He patented a device for refloating grounded vessels. They looked like bellows that could be hung from the side of the vessel and let down to increase the buoyancy and lower the draft of the vessel.

Lincoln was a member of the Whig party all his life and when the Whigs were disbanded he joined the recently formed Republican Party. He took four days to decide if he should accept the Republican Party nomination for president. It would have been a tough decision. The civil war started shortly after his inauguration and he was assassinated six days after General Robert E. Lee surrendered to General Ulysses S. Grant.

His memorial at Oak Ridge Cemetery is really something to see. The 117 foot monument is constructed of granite from Quincy Massachusetts, it is graced with many sculptures mostly depicting different times in his life. A bust right at the entrance is by Gutson Borglum, of Mt. Rushmore fame.



Lincoln Memorial

Inside the memorial is a great hallway leading to a red marble stone marking the grave. He is buried 30 inches behind and ten feet below in a steel and concrete vault. He was originally buried in a white marble crypt but after someone tried to steal the body he was made a little more inaccessible.

There are many other areas in Springfield that are relevant to people interested in Lincoln's history.

Subject: Cahokia and Mark Twain's boyhood home

Date: Tue, 26 Oct 1999 22:33:46

We always figure that anything labeled a UNESCO world heritage site is worth a visit. Cahokia Mounds is certainly no exception. Cahokia Mounds is the remains of a city that existed from 700 A.D. to 1400 A.D. The largest earthen pyramid in North America prehistoric indian tribes congregated in the area and created a city of 20,000 people or more based on a agricultural crop that is still very dominant in the area: corn. There were over 120 mounds originally, about 109 mounds have been recorded, many have been destroyed by agriculture or construction (used for fill). 68 are now protected within the UNESCO site.

The mounds are very visible in the area, the land tends to be pretty flat around Saint Louis. Climbing Monks Mound (named for the french priests that built a small chapel in the 1730s) is a little bit of a hike by itself, it is composed of over 22,000,000 cubic feet of earth, has a base of 14 acres, has four terrace levels that rise to 100 feet, a building on top of the top terrace was significant (105 feet long, 48 feet wide and 50 high). Considering this earth was dug by hand from "borrow pits" and carried to the site on a person's back, Monk's Mound is an amazing structure. They estimated it took 300 years to build.

The view from Monk's Mound was pretty impressive too. Saint Louis including the Gateway Arch, was visible through the smog on the west side and the corn harvesters were busy on the north, Mounds and

the Interpretation Center are visible on the south.

They had developed a solar clock that marked the seasons and consisted of large log stuck in the ground in a circular pattern, it was called Woodhenge by the archeologists. It is quite visible from the top of the Monks Mound.

Mounds were used for three basic purposes, platform mounds with a flat top, were used for ceremonial purposes and for residences of the elite, conical and ridgetop for burial of mucky mucks or marking important locations. Monks Mound was the residence of the chief and the seat of government.



The center of the city was surrounded by a wall of posts 2 miles long consisting of nearly 20,000 logs. Every 70 feet there was a projecting bastion for defensive purposes. The stockade was used for defense as well as segregating the elite from the masses.

The Interpretive Center is a large museum and pretty impressive by itself. There are really neat bronze relief sculptures on the entrance doors (each door weighs about 800 pounds). Inside there are many different exhibit areas that present different aspects of the Cahokia history. One of the most interesting things is a "Mirrored Box" an exhibit area consisting of a large enclosed area with a life sized village scene with several houses and activities. The whole area is constructed of two way mirrors from inside the box you get the impression of being in a larger village but is really only the few that are inside the box. Well done and well worth a visit.

From the Cahokia Mounds in Collinsville we crossed through Saint Louis near the base of the Gateway Arch and took off up I70 trying to keep up with traffic and fit in the best we could. At one point I noticed Millie seemed to be acting funny, kind of "this is all I'm going to do and don't push me any harder" checked out the temp, ok, checked the oil pressure, ok, charging system, ok, Speedometer, 115 kph. Shortly after that traffic started getting heavier and slower, thank you. We turned northbound to Hannibal and within minutes saw a police barricade on the southbound lane. Then more and more state police. Complete with specialty vans and lots and lots of marked and unmarked cars. Looked like smoky and the bandit country for quite a while. The paper this morning talked about an escaped bank robber from the jail in Bowling Green, where we stopped to fuel up. They have him back in custody according to the radio.



Artist rendition of Cahokia Mounds

We stopped in Hannibal for a couple of nights which really means one full day of visiting.

Hannibal is Samuel Clements' (Mark Twain) boyhood home and many of the Huck Finn and Tom Sawyer books are based on people and places in the Hannibal area. One of the features that show up are the caves just outside of town. We toured the caverns this morning and had a great time looking over the caverns. Missouri has 5600 registered caves and 22 show caves. The Mark Twain caves are probably one of the most famous. Seventeen of the 22 claim to have some connection the outlaw Jesse James. This cave claims a connection as well, they have evidence in the form of a dated signature that has been confirmed by handwriting analysis. The date was eight days after a \$12,000 bank robbery in the area.

One of the neat things was that there were almost no stalactites or stalagmites. The interconnecting 6.5 miles of tunnels wind in and around. There were bats flying around which didn't make Bonnie overly comfortable. As we were going through the cave the guide would talk about different passages in the Mark Twain books and their reference to particular rooms in the caves. Neat stuff. The tour is about 5/8ths of a mile long with no loops. We enjoyed the trip, but I think I would read Tom Sawyer before I went again.

In Hannibal itself we finally found Mark Twain's "Following the Equator" in Becky Thatcher's House. The boyhood home of Mark Twain has been restored and has been combined with six buildings to form a disjointed museum that cover a lot of his life and how his books related to his childhood and the people and buildings in Hannibal.



One of the funny and interesting bits of information was that the "Unsinkable" Molly Brown who survived the sinking of the Titanic was on her way home to Hannibal.

Norman Rockwell gave The Mark Twain Museum 12 original paintings that he used to illustrate a special edition of Tom Sawyer and Huckleberry Finn. The paintings are really something to see and I really enjoyed the Tom Sawyer and Becky Thatcher in the cave painting. Rockwell came to visit Hannibal to make sure his illustrations were as accurate as possible. Prior illustrations of the Tom Sawyer and Becky Thatcher in the cave always showed stalactites and stalagmites. Rockwell saw that in the area where their candle was blown out the cave had none, so he made sure his illustrations showed the horizontal layers to accurately depict the scene as would have been envisioned by Clements. Houses in his drafts had shutters, but the houses in Hannibal didn't so they were removed in the final version.

Samuel Clements' Pilot Certificate is on display and he spent two years on a number of Mississippi River steamers. "Mark Twain" was an indication of 12 feet of water and sign of safe passage for a steamer.

Mark Twain was another historical figure who lost children early, a son died in infancy, and two daughters who died before him. His only remaining daughter had a daughter who married a orchestra conductor. The granddaughter died not that long ago. There are no more descendants of Samuel Clements.

One of the interesting things in the Museum is a section on the recovery of the treasure of the steamboat Arabia. The steamboat was fully loaded heading toward Council Bluffs on the Missouri River. The Arabia was steaming upriver in a river that was full of deadheads and silt. The water was described as "Too thick to drink and not thick enough to plow". One of deadheads rammed through the hull and sank her so quick that they barely had time to save the passengers. Over 200 tons of brand new merchandise sunk to the bottom of the Missouri. In 1988, 132 years after she sank, she was found a half mile from the existing river and 45 feet down in a farmer's field. What was found was a very well preserved "Walmart of 1865". The main museum for the Arabia is in Kansas City MO.



At tug with 16 barge's going up the Mississippi