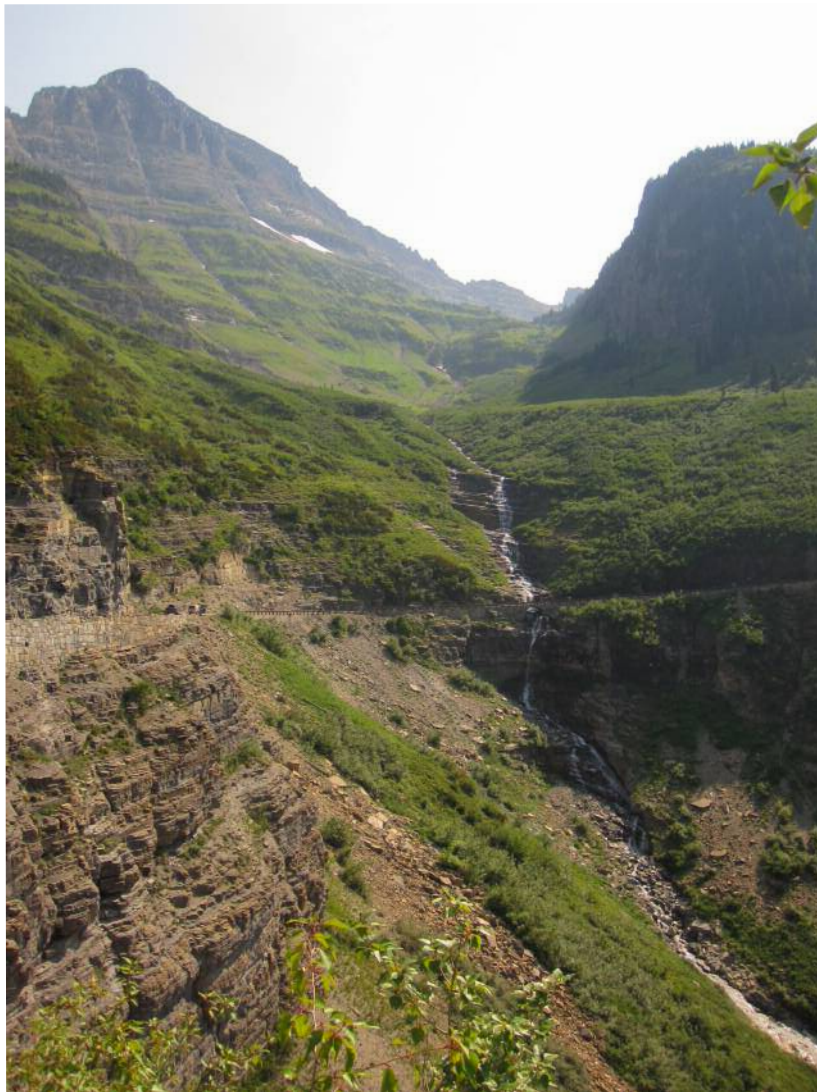


Sacramento and US Route 93



August 2010

Molly and Bob Hillery

We have taken several east-west trips across the United States and have driven down most of the East and West Coasts. However, we had not to this point taken a route that would take us from North to South in the middle of the country. A review of our "Road Trips" book suggested that US Route 93, which starts at the Canadian border and ends almost at the Mexican border, would fill that need and provide some spectacular scenery as it passed just west of the Rocky Mountains.

We decided to combine this road trip with another visit to California and spent a very enjoyable weekend with Christopher, Cyndi and Samantha. This time Samantha seemed to remember us from previous visits and we spent a good deal of time playing with her and having fun in the pool.

On Monday morning we flew to Kalispell in Northern Montana to begin our driving trip south. We started with a day in Glacier National Park - last visited almost twenty years ago - and then drove the entire length of Route 93. As anticipated, the scenery was spectacular: mountains, rivers, lava fields, great gorges, lakes and desert. We re-lived part of our Lewis and Clark route as well as crossing US Route 50 which we have followed in its entirety right across the country.

We finished this trip in Phoenix, Arizona, which is still a day's drive from the Mexican border - but we wanted to leave some for a return visit!

Sacramento and Route 93, August 2010

Thursday August 12

We left home soon after 1pm and stopped at our local Starbucks before driving through Cincinnati to the airport. We were in plenty of time for our 4:30 flight to Atlanta and then had an easy transfer to the 7:50 flight to Sacramento.

Both flights were on time and we arrived in Sacramento just after 9:30 (PDST) and were checked in the hotel and in bed by about 11pm.

Friday August 13

We had babysitting “duty” this morning so we were up soon after 7 and had a Starbucks breakfast before going to Christopher and Cyndi’s home for 8:30. We arrived a little earlier than scheduled to give Samantha more time to get used to us before Cyndi left for work – but it wasn’t necessary. She immediately brought out several of her favorite toys for us to play with and hardly noticed when Cyndi left a few minutes later. We spent the next 3 ½ hours happily playing and Samantha occasionally joined in as she continued to snack on her breakfast throughout the morning.

About noon, Christopher appeared and we all went to Sizzler for a salad lunch before Samantha was taken to her other grandparents for the afternoon and we returned to the hotel to rest!

In the evening, we met Christopher and Cyndi again for a 3 hour meal at the Melting Pot in downtown Sacramento and immediately retired when we got back to the hotel around 10:30.

Saturday August 14

We had a rather late (9:30) light breakfast at Starbucks and returned to the hotel to catch up on e-mails before going to Christopher and Cyndi’s home for a barbecue lunch. Samantha took a three hour nap in the afternoon during which time we viewed the slide show of our England trip of May-July. Samantha and family went in the pool as soon as she got up from her nap and Molly and I returned to the hotel to rest up before dinner.

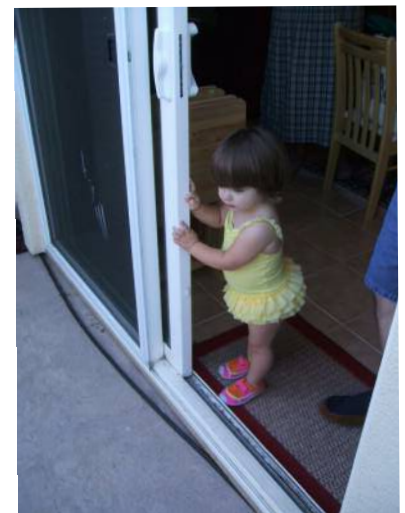
We met everyone again at 7pm at Chili’s for another pleasant family meal and a relatively early night.



Sunday August 15

We had breakfast again at Starbucks and then I went for a four mile walk while Molly stayed at the hotel and knitted in the courtyard. At 11:30 we met Christopher, Cyndi and Samantha for brunch at iHop and then went swimming in their pool. We were in the water for well over an hour and Samantha had a wonderful time, particularly riding the “Daddy Boat”. She can’t swim but seems to have no fear of the water.

Molly and I returned to the hotel (via Starbucks) about 4pm and relaxed until meeting the rest of the family again. Tonight we ate at Chevy’s, which is less than ½ mile from our hotel and right on the river. It was another pleasant meal and a good time chatting and being entertained by Samantha. We sat outside overlooking the river and it got quite cool towards the end of the meal so Samantha and I warmed ourselves by walking up and down the stairs three times!





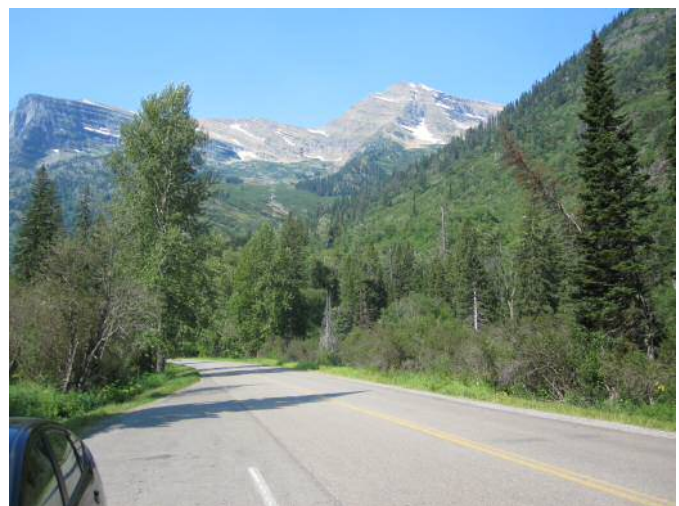
Monday August 16

We were up rather late again and had a light breakfast at the local Starbucks and then returned to the hotel to pack. This was completed by 10am so we had 45 minutes relaxing before leaving for the airport for our 1pm flight to Salt Lake City. As it had been the entire weekend, it was a beautiful day with clear blue skies so we hope for this to continue as we start our journey across the US from North to South.

Tonight we ate outside at MamboItaliano, a rather good restaurant in Whitefish, just a mile or so from the hotel. It was very pleasant to sit in the cool of the evening with a bottle of wine, some good food and glorious views of the sunset.

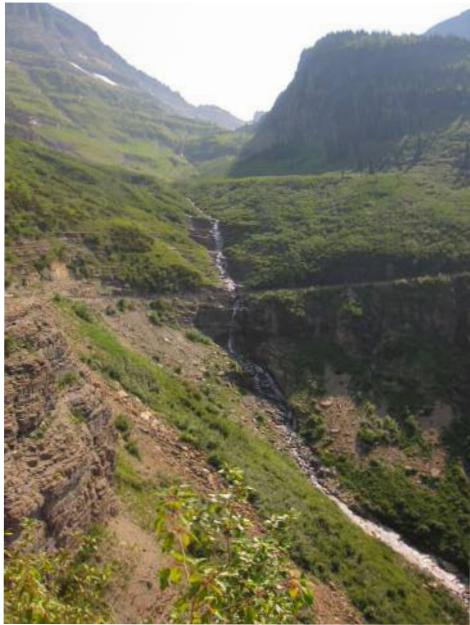
Tuesday August 17

After breakfast at a local coffee shop/bike shop (!) we spent the day in Glacier National Park, which has some spectacular scenery - and still a few glaciers. There are dire predictions that these will have disappeared in another twenty years but for now they continue to provide a touch of white in an otherwise surprisingly green topography. We just reached a (rather dirty) patch of snow as we crossed the Continental Divide at 7000 feet and there were some much larger patches on the 10,000 feet high peaks around us. Glacier National Park is right on the Canadian border and in fact is contiguous with the Waterton Lakes National Park in Alberta. We didn't cross the border but followed the famous "Going to the Sun" road in the Park which climbs to 7000 feet and passes two huge lakes and countless mountain peaks. There were some spectacular waterfalls also, even at this late stage in the season, and we could only imagine how impressive they would be during the snow melting time in spring. The road (about 50 miles) closes for Winter on September 15, so it is a very short season. It seemed that everyone was on it today (glorious sunshine) trying to beat the deadline!

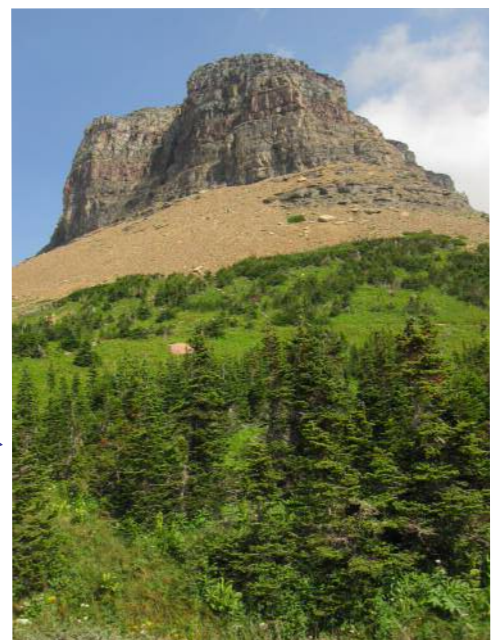


We crossed the Park from West to East and then returned to our hotel in Whitefish via the road that tracks the southern boundary of the Park. This route has very similar scenery to that within the Park itself and

some equally hair-raising stretches of road. In all, it was a beautiful drive (just short of 200 miles) and a great start to our trip south which begins tomorrow.



Glacier National Park



Tonight we had dinner at Whitefish Lake restaurant, which is a rather upscale establishment on the town's golf course. The meal and service were very good and quite an unexpected treat for such a "Back woods" town.

Wednesday August 18

We had breakfast at a recommended restaurant in town (like a “Western-style” Bob Evans) and then set off NORTH, despite our journey being one generally in a southerly direction. We wanted to start traveling US Route 93 as close to the Canadian border as possible without actually crossing into Canada so we drove about 55 miles to the town of Eureka. This is 8 miles from the border but we actually overshot just a little and turned around just 4 miles south of the Port of Entry.



Eureka (left). Roosville is on the Canadian Border

Eureka is a tiny town but has a rather pleasant (small) museum of about a half dozen buildings from its early days. They are set out in a green area just at the southern edge of the current day town and provided a pleasant stop to stretch for a few minutes before heading back south.



Route 93 from Eureka to Kalispell skirts the western edge of Glacier National Park and is very heavily forested along its entire length. It is a very scenic drive with glimpses of the Rocky Mountains on the left and a smaller range a few miles to the west.

We stopped in Kalispell (about 15 miles south of Whitefish where we had been the past two nights) for a coffee and then continued south towards Missoula. From Kalispell the road hugs the western shore of Flathead Lake which is the largest lake west of the Mississippi and we were following it for the best part of an hour. The northern end has many marinas and lakeside cottages and lodges, whereas the southern half runs through the Flathead Indian Reservation.

About 35 miles north of Missoula we turned off Route 93 to visit the National Bison Range. We had visited here about 3 years ago but had seen only a handful of bison and these were too far from the car to really get a good picture. After the first 13 miles of the 19 mile loop road we thought that we were in for a repeat of our last visit; in fact at that time the only wildlife we had seen were two chipmunks, a rabbit and about six birds! We had seen no deer or mountain goat, which were prevalent a few years ago but apparently (at least in the case of the mountain goat) have now left the range completely.

However, shortly after mile 13 we saw a few bison in the distance and were able to get some long shots of them as they wallowed in the dust. But then, round the next bend, we saw dozens of the beasts; bulls, cows and young on both sides of the gravel road. We were extremely close to a family that walked across the road in front of us and equally intimate with a large bull that walked behind the car. We got some very good photographs this time and even saw a few Pronghorn Deer.



The National Bison Range



The drive is well worth the ride even without seeing any bison because it climbs a couple of thousand feet about a huge plain which was once Lake Missoula. The lake was formed when an ice dam captured water in the valley and at one point the water level was thought to have reached 4500 feet above sea level. This huge plain stretches from the Rockies to the northern end of the Bitter-root Range to the west.

After our wildlife viewing we carried on to Missoula and arrived at the Courtyard just a few minutes before a thunderstorm passed through the area (later followed by a glorious sunset). We relaxed for a couple of hours before heading into town for dinner. Tonight we had a good meal at The Depot, a restaurant near the station (!) which we had enjoyed the last time we were here.



Thursday August 19

We had breakfast at Starbucks and then spent about two hours at Old Fort Missoula. This had been built in the 1870s as part of the “chain” of forts designed to keep the new White settlers safe from Indian attack. It was at first ignored by the Nez Perce who simply bypassed the “open” fort until it was strengthened and fortified in the early 1900s. It would appear that it was never used in anger. In the late 1880s it was the home to a 25 man Bicycle Regiment as part of an experiment to see how bicycles would fare in the military. It did not replace the horse!



In the First World War it was turned over to the Army as a training center and after a period of between war years in which it was almost abandoned, found a new life as an internment camp for Italians and Japanese in World War 2. The Italians were mostly civilians who had arrived for the New York World's Fair just as war broke out in Europe, so their visas were not extended and they were shipped to Montana until 1943. The Japanese were part of the massive round-up of California Japanese-Americans and they were interned after Pearl

Harbor until 1944.

At this point the Fort ceased to

have any real function and was decommissioned in 1947 but, despite many of the buildings having been dismantled or moved, non-military organizations managed to save many of the structures and even imported buildings of historical significance from other parts of the state to form the very informative and interesting museum that stands today.





We left the Fort and went into downtown for a stroll down to the river front (this is the Clark River, named after the co-leader of the Expedition of 1803) and to view some of the fine late 1800s, early 1900s buildings in the historic district.



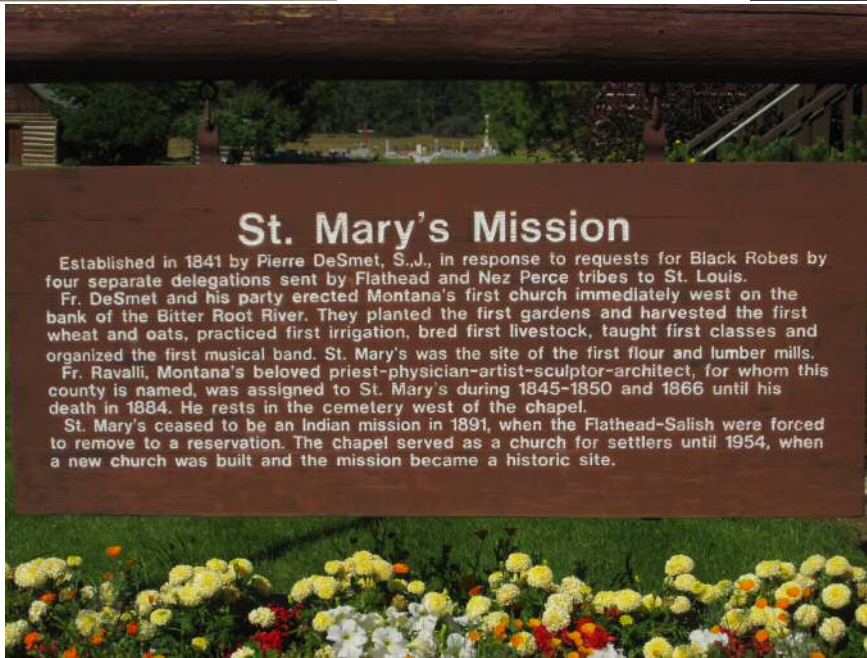
In the afternoon we took a short drive up the Clearwater Canyon, alongside both the Blackfoot and Clearwater Rivers as far as the hamlet of Clearwater. It was another beautiful sunny afternoon and the drive was very picturesque as we drove to the foothills of the Rocky Mountains on the road that eventually reaches Great Falls. This was not the route that Lewis and Clark followed, their path taking them quite a bit further south from Great Falls to the headwaters of the Missouri and then along the dangerous stretch of the Bitterroot Mountain Range, much of which we will be passing as we continue south tomorrow.

However, it was a very pleasant afternoon drive and we had an equally pleasant meal at The Pearl in Missoula. We both had bison, which was excellent.

Friday August 20

We had breakfast at Starbucks and then drove down US 93 about 130 miles to Salmon, Idaho. The initial part of the journey was in the broad valley flanked by the Bitterroots on the right and the Sapphire Mountains to the east. However, after passing through Hamilton the road climbed steeply to the highest point at just under 7000 feet, right on the Idaho border.

We had taken a slight detour from Route 93 north of Hamilton to visit the oldest town in Montana, Stevensville. This had been settled by Jesuit monks who had converted the local Indians to Christianity and the Mission had existed there until the Indians were forced to move to a Reservation as part of the ongoing “revisions” to the treaties signed with them. The site is now renovated, the original Father Rastelli’s grave still stands in the cemetery and the school houses and other buildings have been restored.



Stevensville, oldest town in Montana and St Mary's Mission

Once over the pass into Idaho, it was a very long (20 miles) drive downhill to the town of Salmon where we were staying for the night. We arrived about 3pm and had time for a short walk on the Salmon River (right outside our room) before dinner.

So, the entire drive today had been following the Lewis and Clark Trail and we had covered this same ground (in reverse) a few years ago. We had followed the Bitterroot River south, essentially to its source and then soon picked up the Salmon River heading in a southerly direction. Lewis and Clark had found the Salmon to be un-navigable (it is flowing very swiftly and turbulently even now) and so had been forced to travel over 100 miles north to cross the mountains along the Bitterroot Range. Had they been able to travel the Salmon, they would very quickly have reached the Snake River and been well on their way to the west coast.



Salmon had a limited choice of eating establishments but we had a good meal at the Shady Nook, just a few minutes' walk from the hotel.

Saturday August 21

We had breakfast at a local diner in Salmon and then set off south again on our drive to tonight's destination of Ketchum. We followed Route 93 paralleling the Salmon River for about an hour until Idaho Route 75 took off to the west. This had been the original route for US 93 so we decided to follow the "original", which the guide book said was a more scenic drive anyway.



However, at this same junction in Challis we read about yet another route that cut through the mountains roughly parallel to Route 75 but on an unpaved road of about 35 miles. This road would take us to a mining ghost town and, being unpaved with twists and climbs, provide a little adventure also.

At the State Park Ranger Station we were advised that our low-slung Prius might not be the best car for taking on such a route and a high chassis pickup or 4WD might be a better bet. However, after a little discussion with the ranger and an admonishment to "take it easy", we decided to at least start the journey and see how far we could get.

It turned out that the road was very well graded for the most part and only on the steepest grades were there loose rocks that might present a problem. We were able to negotiate these quite easily and in general the road was at least as good as the one we had traveled through the Bison Range three days ago.



*Our
Off-Road
Detour*



It was a beautiful drive alongside one stream to the highest point (almost 9000 feet) and then another down the western side to Custer. The road ran through deeply forested pines with occasional glimpses of some higher peaks and a number of sheer rock faces.

We stopped in Custer for about an hour. The town had grown in the late 1870s as a result of gold being found; in fact, the road we had just traveled was built specifically to bring supplies into the new town. As with many gold mining towns in the West, this one came, grew, prospered (for some) and went within a 30 year period and by 1904 was essentially abandoned. Today there are a lot of mining tools and equipment to view as well as about a dozen homes, bars, assay building, etc of the era. The museum and several historical markers add more life to the place with descriptions of the miners, families and support workers who came to make a living in this out-of-the-way spot.



*Custer - as it was
In the 1870s*



From Custer we drove directly on to Ketchum (about another 70 miles) and got our first views of the Sawtooth Range of Mountains to the west. We drove alongside this range for 40-50 miles and then ended up in the ski area that is Ketchum-Sun Valley. We checked in to the hotel about 5:30pm.

We had an excellent Italian meal at Il Naso in town. The food, service – and time to eat (2 hours) – were all authentic Italian.



Sunday August 22

We had breakfast at Starbucks in town and then set off south. Rather than drive directly to Twin Falls, we took a detour to visit the *Craters of the Moon National Monument*. After leaving Ketchum and the mountains of Sun Valley we were soon in the vast, predominantly flat plain which contains the lava fields. At the National Monument (which we have visited twice before but still found something new this time) we took the short loop drive to see the results of the eruptions of two major volcanoes. The last eruption is estimated to have taken place only 2000 years ago so the fields are in the very early stages of taking on life. A small hill nearby is now fully grass covered and has a few trees but it was formed in an eruption some 70,000 years ago. Obviously it takes a while.....



New Life on the Lava Field



Incredible lava mounds and snow in August!



I visited a *lava tunnel* (or cave) at the end of a half mile trail. The tunnel is about 50 feet wide and thirty feet high, with occasional holes in the roof where the lava covering has collapsed. The tunnel extends for 800 feet but requires “a scramble over rocks and crawling through a small hole” to get out at the far end, so I just went in about 200 feet and turned around. The “floor” was mostly ridged lava bed but there were several rock piles (presumably from previous collapses) which made the “walk” even more challenging. This was one of three caves in the area, the other two requiring flashlights to penetrate the darkness. Even so, the one I was in (Indian Cave) was quite dark in several spots.

On the way in to Twin Falls, the weather changed to a steady rain. There had been the odd shower throughout the day but none to interrupt our activities. There was a good deal of smoke in the area although we didn't pass any areas of active fires.

We had dinner at a restaurant overlooking the Snake River Canyon from the south rim and walked outside for a good view of the 500 feet deep canyon after dinner. We decided it was worth a closer look in daylight.

Monday August 23

After breakfast we packed and drove to the south side of the Snake River Canyon and found the steep winding road that led down to the river. Actually the road ended at a golf course which was one of two built on either side of the river. Although the river is perhaps only 100 or so feet wide at this point as it cuts through the city, the valley bottom is much wider and the local authorities have done a good job of filling it as a recreational area. This region of the Snake had been cut about 14000 years ago when a huge dam on Lake Bonneville broke releasing millions of gallons of water in a six week flood. This not only created the huge canyons of the Snake River but also, of course, left behind the Bonneville Salt Flats that we know today together with the shrinking Salt Lake.

There are several waterfalls (from underground springs) that cascade down the vertical canyon wall but one in particular was very impressive. However, about 7 miles further to the east was a much larger waterfall which reputedly has a greater vertical drop than Niagara Falls. Certainly the Shoshoni Falls are very impressive and, again because of the public access amenities, one is able to get a very close look at the several cascades as they drop into the very calm Snake River downstream.



*Snake River,
Twin Falls*



After a Starbucks lunch we left Twin falls and started out towards Nevada. The change in scenery was very dramatic – from the mountains of yesterday morning, to the lava fields north of Twin Falls to the very obvious desert of Northern Nevada. We were now in the Great Basin which has no outlets for rivers and streams, all water flowing into the region being used or dried up before it reaches a point where it could flow to the Pacific or Gulf Oceans.

The terrain that Route 93 follows is essentially flat in broad valleys of sage brush, very few trees and some irrigated farmland. There are very few towns and the one we were headed for, Ely, was the biggest at a population of just under 5000. The “monotony” (essentially the Guide Book word for the region) is in fact broken by mountain ranges to both east and west, each being perhaps 10 to 20 miles from the road. Occasionally we would climb a little way up one of these ridges but generally we maintained an elevation between 5000 and 6000 feet, whereas the mountain peaks were often in excess of 10,000 feet. This pattern was to be followed for 250 miles to Ely and a similar distance to Las Vegas which we will follow in the next two days – a total of 500 miles of “an exceptional degree of desolation” (again the Guide Book’s words.



*US Route 93
Northern
Nevada*



But, of course, it is neither monotonous nor desolate when one is able to drive along good straight roads on a beautiful sunny day and see the details that form this huge piece of real estate. Lots of sage brush, of course, but desert trees, wonderfully colorful rock formations which change as the different light strikes them, grey and rocky mountain peaks – some with small patches of snow even at this late date – and tree lines unique to the state. One ends at the usual higher elevations of around 10,000 feet but the other is at 4000 feet, below which no trees grow. Having said that, those familiar with the geography of this part of the world will recognize that there isn’t a great deal of Nevada that is actually below 4,000 feet! A rich – certainly not monotonous – landscape indeed.

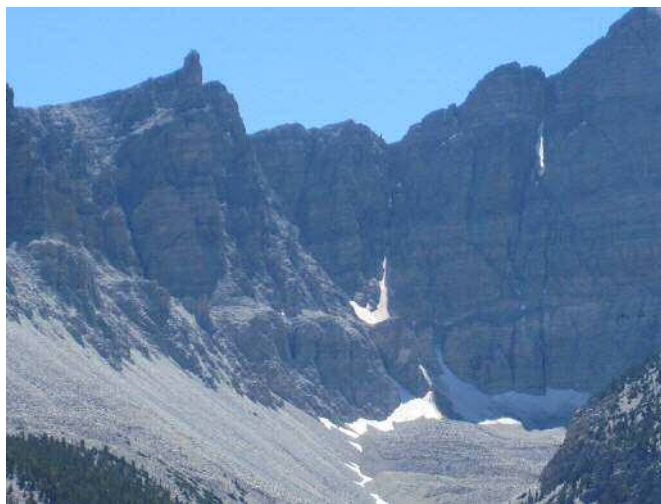
Once in Ely we checked in and made some “field changes” for the remainder of our trip and then enjoyed a good steak dinner at the Jailhouse Restaurant – where we actually sat in fake cells to eat the meal.

Tuesday August 24

We had breakfast at McDonald’s and then set off for our second visit to the Great Basin National Park about 60 miles from Ely. Unfortunately we had a flat tire after about 35 miles of driving and had to return to Ely – the nearest point with any civilization. This caused about a 2 ½ hour delay but we still went on to the Park in the afternoon.

A well paved road through the park climbs to 10,000 feet for some spectacular views of the nearby 13,000 foot peaks (snow topped) and the absolutely enormous flat plain that stretches well across the Utah border. Again, we were reminded of the amazing contrasts in landscape in this state.





The Great Basin National Park



Following our visit, we drove the approximately 150 miles to Caliente across more of the “desolate” landscape we had covered yesterday. Again, however, the roads allow a good speed to be maintained and the road has enough turns and a few climbs to provide a variety of vistas.

Caliente is very small (about 1000 inhabitants) but, after our delay with the flat tire we were glad that we didn’t have to continue on to Las Vegas, another 150 miles down the road. The small motel was certainly adequate and our evening meal at the Bandin’ Iron was fine.



Wednesday August 25

After breakfast (at the Brandin’ Iron again) we back-tracked from Caliente 14 few miles to visit the Cathedral Gorge State Park - an area of silt hills eroded to formed the most unusual formations of "organ pipes" and narrow tunnels. It's not unlike a much smaller version of

Bryce Canyon in Utah. I took a one mile walk to a lookout on the ridge above the eroded area but with the temperature already in the 90s it was enough.





We then set out on our planned route south but once again took a detour to travel the *Rainbow Canyon*.



This canyon has some very steep and colorful rock faces which makes for a very scenic 20 mile drive. The drive today was made even more exciting for us as it is undergoing reconstruction following a flood which washed most of it away almost five years ago. So, for 20 miles it was us and heavy construction equipment and trucks on dirt and mud roads, alternating with short stretches of pavement. It was a beautiful drive nevertheless and we returned to our Route 93 via 38 miles of unpaved road. It was good to get on a smooth road at the end of all that but we were now soon in the sprawling city that is Las Vegas. Ten days of gorgeous scenery from mountains to rivers to deserts to canyons and lava fields (sublime) to the high rise casinos and bright lights of Las Vegas (fill in your own word to describe!)

We checked in at the Marriott on Convention Center Blvd and immediately went out for a Starbucks lunch. The temperature was now 106F so we were quite happy to return to the room for a few hours until it cooled down a little at dinner time.

Tonight we dined at Ruth's Chris not far from the hotel – but it took us 45 minutes to find! Nevertheless we had an excellent meal at we always do at this upscale chain. We also had a very interesting chat with our waiter who was originally from the Dominican Republic and arrived in Las Vegas 14 years ago by way of New York City.

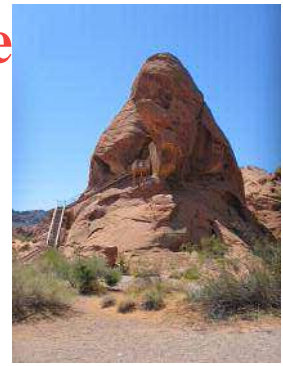
Thursday August 26

After a leisurely breakfast we set off to visit the Lake Mead Recreational Area, about 45 miles north of town. However, the route we chose to get there had us pass through the *Valley of Fire State Park* (\$10 entrance fee). This turned out to be a wonderful display of monoliths, fantastic eroded shapes and rock displays and we ended up spending about 4 hours there – and consequently missing a visit to the Lake.

The rock formations, eroded by wind and water in this old sea bed, were predominantly red in color but there was almost every other color from white, to yellow, to gold – mixed with the occasional green of the very sparse vegetation. It was similar in some respects to the Arches National Monument in Utah; somewhat smaller (but still over 30 miles of roadway) and perhaps a little less grand but with a similar array of formations. These included several arches, rocks with holes in them, clusters that looked like people or inanimate object shapes, and some we would just describe as “grand”.

There were also a number of trails leading to other places of interest, including one that I took to see a “water tank” (a hole in the rocks which remains filled with water throughout the summer) which had pro

Valley of Fire



vided a home for an Indian outlaw for several months in the 1890s. Many rocks also contained 4000 year old petroglyphs and this area had been home to Native Americans throughout the entire period from then until today.

The weather today is described in one word: “HOT”. It was generally about 109F but we saw the car thermometer touch 113F at one point. By the time we got back to town, with storm clouds on the horizon but no actual rain, the temperature had dropped to 100F. On the way back to town we caught occasional glimpses of Lake Mead from the North Shore Highway but there were no spots where swimming was available (I had taken my suit just in case) so we drove straight back to Las Vegas, had a Starbucks coffee and returned to the hotel about 5pm. It had been a totally unexpected but very interesting and rewarding day which we topped off with something equally good. We had dinner at “The Top of The World” restaurant, 107 floors up the Stratosphere. We had the five course tasting menu, which was very good, and had some wonderful views of the city at night. The restaurant revolved so we got to see Las Vegas from every angle. We also got several glimpses of people who were taking the “controlled freefall” jump from a point directly above the restaurant – an 855 feet drop to the ground. We took the elevator.....



Friday August 27

We left Las Vegas after breakfast and drove via Hoover Dam into Arizona. We stopped briefly for a photo shot of the dam and the new highway bridge spanning the gorge (almost ready to open it would appear). We wondered how similar were the amounts of concrete in the dam and the bridge because the bridge is an enormous structure.



Once in Arizona, we continued on US Route 93 to Kingman. The terrain was once again desert and mountainous – and the road was much busier than any other section of US 93 that we have traveled on this trip. In Kingman we stopped for coffee (after a short but disappointing side trip to the old mining town of Chlo-ride) and stopped for coffee at a shop on Route 66. Obviously we had traveled this section of road on our Route 66 several years ago and similarly we had traveled a section of Route 50 (to the Great Basin Park three days ago) on our cross country US 50 vacation.



South of Kingman the vegetation became classical Arizona – with huge cacti and prickly pines at the side of the road. As we went further south, we traveled a section of road called the Joshua Tree Scenic Route and, at first, all we saw were these huge cacti and the usual brush of the desert. So what was the Joshua Tree? Was it a name for these particularly tall cacti? The question was answered a little later when we actually passed through a “forest” of prickly trees that actually looked like trees. Apparently they are found

in the Mojave Desert of parts of Arizona, Utah and Nevada and can grow as tall as 50 feet and live as long as 1000 years.

From the Joshua Tree Parkway it was an additional few miles to *Wickenburg* which is the official end of Route 93. The Route now becomes part of the Interstate System as far as the Mexico border (for another trip) so we had – give or take a few miles – traveled the entire length of this Route in the US. It actually bears the same route number in Canada – but, again, that's for another day.

50 mile further and we were in the sprawling city of Phoenix, fighting our way through the rush hour traffic on a maze of Interstate Highways to reach our hotel for the night near the airport. We checked in around 4:30 and relaxed until dinner time.

Tonight we had dinner at an Italian restaurant, Avanti, about 3 miles from the hotel. It was staffed primarily by Italians and the food and service were very good. A good meal (mine was excellent Dover Sole) topped off with espresso and grappa and limoncello.



Saturday August 28

We had breakfast in the hotel, packed and drove to the airport. This was only about two miles from the hotel – but the rental car return office was about another three miles!

The flight to Cincinnati left a little early and it seemed no time at all before we were back home after a wonderfully scenic – and hot – two weeks away.

