

## Tuesday September 20

It was a beautiful clear morning so it seemed like a perfect day for our planned outing to Mt Hood. This 11,300 feet mountain (snow covered and skied all year) is about 40 miles south of Hood River where we were staying and the route there passes many orchards and berry farms, as well as a few vineyards, before becoming a dense pine forest at the higher elevations.



The road climbs all the way from Hood River at a steady pace but the last six miles to Timberline Lodge is a very steep and winding road. All the way we had occasional views of the mountain and it was bathed in sunlight throughout the drive. Twists and turns of the road took it out of sight for a while but then it would jump out above the horizon again – perhaps now viewed from a slightly different angle, but always huge and beautiful.

Timberline lodge was constructed between 1936 and 1938 as a Works Progress Administration project during the Great Depression.





From the Lodge at 6000 feet, Keith, Zena and I took a one mile walking trail to the ski lift station on the mountainside just at the bottom end of the snow line. The path was paved initially but soon became a soft dirt trail which rose rather steeply in places. We passed several gullies that had retained snow (and been supplemented we suspect with snow from higher elevations) and were being used by snowboarders, skiers and even one young man who kept doing aerial acrobatics from a man-made ramp. We suspected that he was practicing his technique as he appeared to carry a camera on his runs. Each time he completed a jump he would walk back slowly about 300 yards up the hill and do it all again.







The Winner



Time to relax →

## Our "Ascent" of Mt Hood



We all successfully made it to the one mile point, Zena taking the Gold Medal by quite some distance and we each were glad to simply stand and admire the view while we got our breath back and prepared for the descent. This turned out to be relatively easy on the dusty track and we soon re-joined Molly after our two mile round trip in which we had climbed 900 feet vertically from the lodge.

We had lunch in the lodge before returning to our hotel, arriving around 4 pm. Keith and Zena went for a walk along the river while Molly and I had a Starbucks coffee and I managed an additional two mile walk before returning to prepare for the evening. Tonight we ate at a small restaurant (Nora's) in Hood River and the food and service were excellent.



**Wednesday September 21**

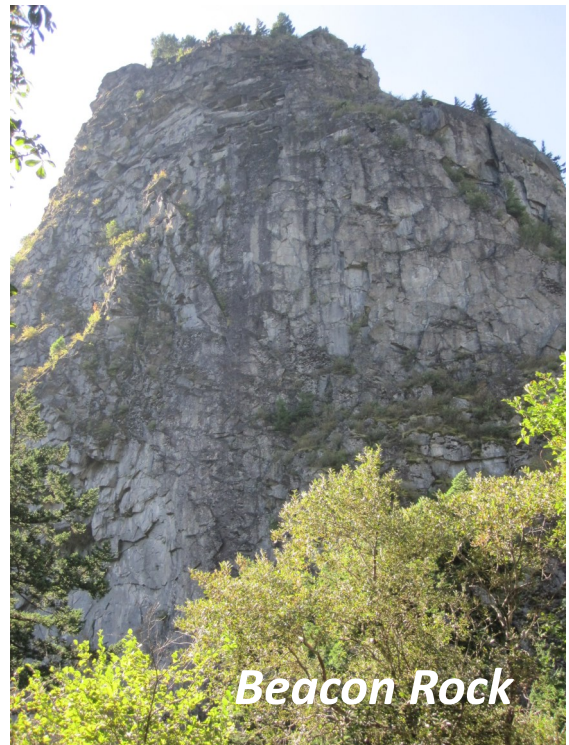
We had breakfast sitting outside in the warm sunshine before leaving Hood River and immediately crossing the bridge over the Columbia River into Washington State. We drove west along the north side of the river towards Vancouver, WA and stopped briefly at Beacon Rock. This is actually the core of an extinct volcano that stands 800 feet tall right next to the river and has been used as a navigation aid and landmark for centuries.

Our next stop was at the Mt St Helens Visitor Center just off Interstate 5. Here we watched a 15 minute video of the 1980 eruption and the devastation it caused as well as walking through the excellent exhibit area. We didn't take the time to drive the almost 50 miles to the furthest observation point near the site of the volcano but we did get some good views of the snow-capped mountain from our vantage point.

**Mount St. Helens** is an active stratovolcano located in Skamania County, Washington, in the Pacific Northwest region of the United States. It is 96 miles south of Seattle, Washington and 50 miles northeast of Portland, Oregon. Mount St. Helens takes its English name from the British diplomat Lord St Helens, a friend of explorer George Vancouver who made a survey of the area in the late 18th century. The volcano is located in the Cascade Range and is part of the Cascade Volcanic Arc, a segment of the Pacific Ring of Fire that includes over 160 active volcanoes. This volcano is well known for its ash explosions and pyroclastic flows.

Mount St. Helens is most notorious for its catastrophic eruption on May 18, 1980, at 8:32 am PDT which was the deadliest and most economically destructive volcanic event in the history of the United States. Fifty-seven people were killed; 250 homes, 47 bridges, 15 miles of railways, and 185 miles of highway were destroyed. A massive debris avalanche triggered by an earthquake measuring 5.1 on the Richter scale, caused an eruption, reducing the elevation of the mountain's summit from 9,677 ft to 8,365 ft and replacing it with a 1 mile wide horseshoe-shaped crater. The earthquake was caused by a sudden surge of magma from the Earth's mantle. The debris avalanche was up to 0.7 cubic miles in volume. The Mount St. Helens National Volcanic Monument was created to preserve the volcano and allow for its aftermath to be scientifically studied.

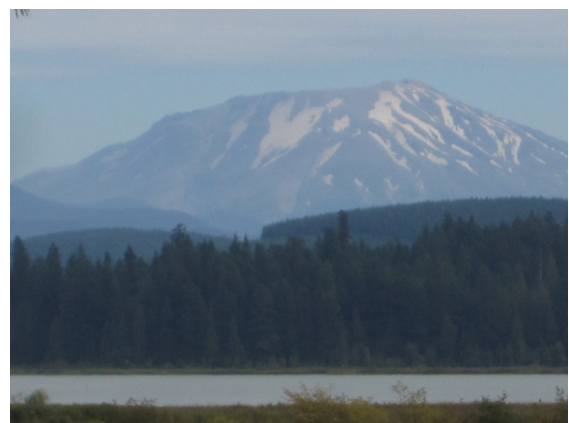
As with most other volcanoes in the Cascade Range, Mount St. Helens is a large eruptive cone consisting of lava rock interlayered with ash, pumice, and other deposits. The mountain includes layers of basalt and andesite through which several domes of dacite lava have erupted. The largest of the dacite domes formed the previous summit, and off its northern flank sat the smaller Goat Rocks dome. Both were destroyed in the 1980 eruption.



*Beacon Rock*



*Mt St Helens*





We continued north on I-5 to our hotel near the SeaTac airport, stopping at Olympia for a coffee. We arrived at the hotel around 4:30 and relaxed until dinner time. Tonight we chose Duke's Chowder House (with a little trepidation) but it was close to the hotel and turned out to be a reasonable meal, although a little expensive.

#### Thursday September 22

Today we had breakfast at the Starbucks next to the hotel and then drove into Seattle for the day. We started at Pike Place Market.



***Downtown Seattle***



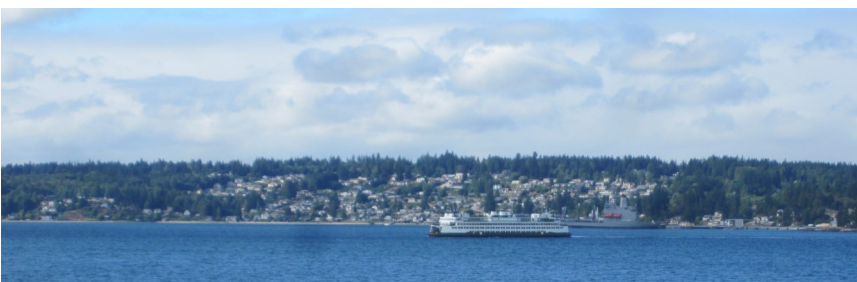
We then went down to the waterfront and walked along as far as Pioneer Square. We walked back via First Avenue and had a light soup lunch at a local deli before returning to the car and then back to the hotel. The weather today was overcast with the occasional sunny spell and it was pleasantly warm. The clear blue skies of the past three weeks were gone, however.

Tonight we went to dinner at Salty's overlooking the city of Seattle. Molly and I have enjoyed Salty's in Portland on a number of occasions and tonight did not disappoint here in Seattle. We had a wonderful view of the Seattle skyline at night.



### Friday September 23

We had breakfast at Starbucks again and then drove downtown to Pier 52 to take the ferry to Bremerton. This was a sixty minute crossing in ideal conditions: sunny skies, warm and with fantastic views of Mt Rainier and the mountains of the Olympic Peninsula.



Puget Sound

We stopped in Bremerton for about an hour and, although it is primarily a Naval Base town, we found it very pleasant to walk around and even nicer when we found a Starbucks for lunch.

We then drove north to Poulsbo which also turned out to be a very nice little town with very strong Norwegian roots. Many streets were named after early Norwegian kings and queens and the store fronts had a definite northern European flavor. It was very pleasant strolling the waterfront and the main shopping street and we even found an ice cream shop to provide a little sustenance in the middle of the afternoon.



*Bremerton (above) and Poulsbo (below)*



*A rather hazy  
long shot of Mt  
Rainier*



We chose to return to Seattle via the Kingston-Edmonds ferry which left at 4 pm. It was about 10 minutes late leaving but the crossing took only 20 minutes and then we were headed south through the city to our hotel. This was a very slow journey as road works and Friday afternoon rush hour traffic combined to make it almost 1 ½ hours of driving.

Nevertheless, we made it in time to get cleaned up and drive the three miles to Spencer’s near the airport for our farewell dinner. Once again, the food and service were very good and it was a very enjoyable way to complete our trip.

**Saturday September 24**

We left the hotel before nine and had returned the car, checked in and got through Security soon after 10. Hence we had over two hours to have a Starbucks breakfast and final time with our friends before they left for Chicago and we headed to Salt Lake City and on to Cincinnati.

Unfortunately, our plane had a hydraulics problem before we left Seattle which meant that we missed our connection in Salt Lake. So, we had another unexpected night in SLC, courtesy of Delta, and went to the Market Street Grill downtown for dinner.

**Sunday September 25**

We were up around 7:15 and got the hotel shuttle to the airport to continue our journey home. This time the flight was uneventful and we arrived in Cincinnati around 3pm after a super three week trip with good friends.

We learned later that Keith and Zena had had a good time in Chicago and had visited Frank Llyod Wright’s office and several of the homes he designed. The weather was not so cooperative but they enjoyed their brief stay in the Windy City and had an uneventful journey home to England.

XX



*21 days*

*3000 Miles Driving*

*63 Miles Walking*

*0 to 10,200 Feet Elevation*

*6 States*

*8 National Parks and Monuments*

*Countless Coffees*

*4 Friends*











