

A Driving Trip from Salt Lake City to the West Coast

Salt Lake City

*The Grand
Tetons*

Sun Valley

Mt Hood

The Coastal Redwoods

Sacramento

Craters of The Moon

San Francisco

*Yellowstone
National Park*

Columbia River Gorge

Crater Lake



September 2014

Bob and Molly Hillery

This trip was arranged to provide Molly's brother Robert a chance to see some of the Western States of America. He had visited the US on a number of occasions when his parents were alive but had never ventured further west than their home in Pennsylvania and a visit to see us in Ohio. So, we put together an itinerary that would let him visit five or six western states and a number of National Parks—as well as all the magnificent scenery and interesting places that the West provides.

We met him in Salt lake City and stayed there for two days before starting the drive. We went north to the Grand Tetons and Yellowstone National Park before heading west through Idaho and into Oregon. There we turned south and entered California In the Red-woods area before completing the journey in San Francisco. We then had a quick side trip to Sacramento so he could meet our California family and, in fact, both he and Molly and I flew home from there.

He said many times that he enjoyed the visit and was impressed with the vastness of the West and its impressive scenery. He was particularly taken with Salt Lake City with its broad streets and overall clean appearance and, as are most people, was amazed at the wide variety of scenery and experiences in Yellowstone National Park. In fact, he seemed to be interested in every aspect of our journey, wanted to try all different foods and was an excellent traveling companion throughout. We enjoyed our time with him in this country.

Salt Lake to the West Coast, September 2014

Monday September 1 (Labor Day)

We had left home last evening, had dinner at a Bonefish restaurant near the airport and spent the night at the airport Marriott. We were up before 6:30 and checked in for our flight to Salt Lake City well before the departure time of 8:20.

The flight was bumpy for the first hour, so breakfast was delayed some. However, the ride became much smoother and remained pleasant for the final 2 ½ hours to Salt Lake. We arrived there about 10am local time and picked up our rental minivan, which we had decided on to give more luggage space and better viewing for three people since we were making this journey with Molly's brother Robert.

Robert's flight schedules had changed significantly since he first made his reservations and now he wasn't expected to arrive in Salt Lake City until late this evening after his flight from London (which included a four hour layover in Dallas). Consequently, Molly and I had the whole day to fill before his arrival.

After driving into town from the airport, we did a little essential shopping and then checked in at the downtown Marriott. We had a snack at the Starbucks in the hotel and then I went for a three mile walk up to the Capitol and back. We both then spent the rest of the afternoon in the room.



We received a call from Robert on his arrival in Dallas and assured him that we would be there to meet him when he got to Salt Lake and at a little before 6:30 we left for an early dinner. We ate at the Brio Tuscan Grille very close to the hotel and had a very pleasant chat with two middle aged sisters who were in town for a short sibling reunion. We exchanged e-mail addresses and they both seemed very interested in our travels and the web site we have created.

We returned to the hotel about 9pm and left again shortly before 10 to drive to the airport to pick up Robert. His flight was on time and he arrived in the baggage claim area looking wide awake and ready to go. We picked up his bag and then drove back to the hotel where we all turned in just before midnight.



Tuesday September 2

We met for breakfast in the Concierge Lounge at 8am and, once again, Robert looked wide awake and ready for a day of sightseeing.

In the morning we drove to the "This is the Place" monument, about 20 minutes out of town, before taking a tour of the Capitol, inside and out, as well as taking a short drive past the very expensive homes on the hillside on the north side of town.

The park is where, on July 24, 1847, Brigham Young first saw the Salt Lake Valley that would soon become the Mormon pioneers' new home. Members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believe that Young had a vision shortly after they were exiled from Nauvoo, Illinois. In the vision, he saw the place where the Latter-day Saints would settle and "make the desert blossom like a rose" and where they would build their State of Deseret. As the account goes, Brigham Young was very sick with Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever and was riding in the back of a wagon. After exiting Emigration Canyon and cresting a small hill, he asked to look out of the wagon. Those with him opened the canvas cover and propped him up so he could see the empty desert valley below. He then proclaimed, "It is enough. This is the right place. Drive on." The words, "this is the place," were soon heard throughout the wagon train as the Mormon pioneers descended into the valley, their long journey having come to an end.



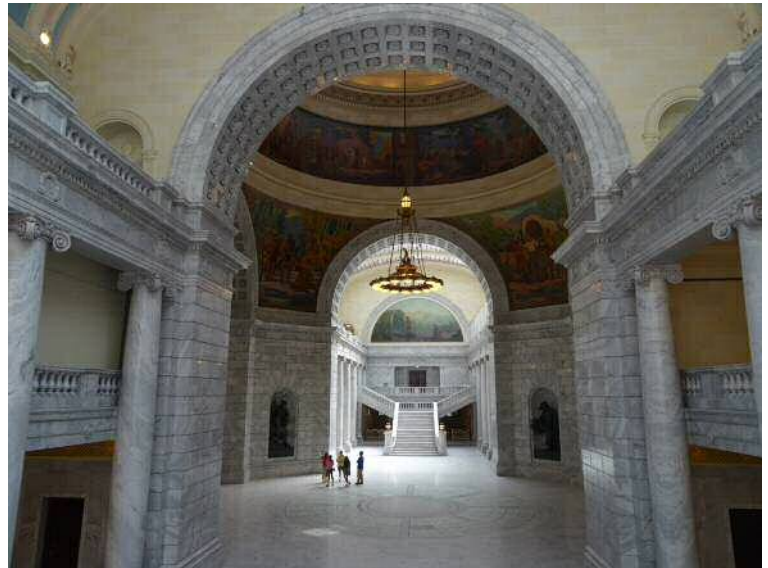
"This is the place"

*The **Utah State Capitol** is the house of government for the U.S. state of Utah. The building houses the chambers and offices of the Utah State Legislature, the offices of the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Attorney General, the State Auditor and their staffs. The capitol is the main building of the Utah State Capitol Complex, which is located on Capitol Hill, overlooking downtown Salt Lake City.*

The Neoclassical revival, Corinthian style building was built between 1912 and 1916. The building was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1978. Beginning in 2004, the capitol underwent a major restoration and renovation project. The project added two new buildings to the complex, while restoring many of the capitol's public spaces to their original appearance.

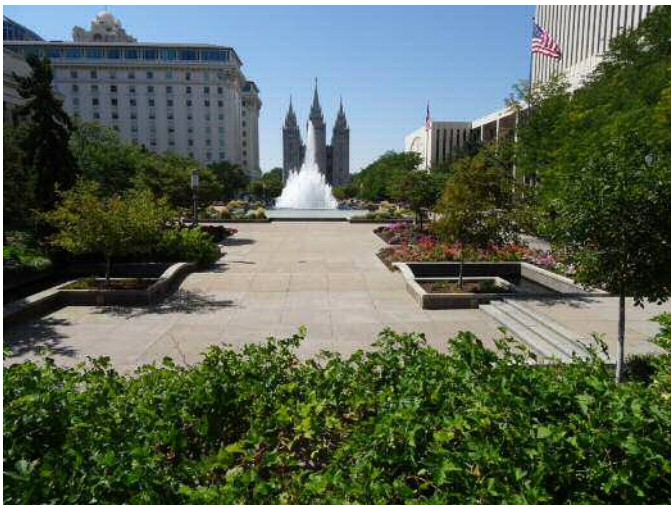


The first Euro-American settlers arrived in what would become Utah on July 24, 1847, which is now commemorated as Pioneer Day in the state. These settlers, Mormon pioneers led by Brigham Young, appealed to the United States Congress for statehood in 1849, asking to become the State of Deseret. Their proposal was denied, but they received some recognition in September 1850 when the U.S. Government created the Territory of Utah as part of the compromise of 1850.^[2] A territorial assembly, known as the Utah Territorial Legislature, was created to be the governing body for the territory. The assembly met in various buildings including the Council House, which had originally been constructed to serve as capitol of the provisional State of Deseret, until the first capitol building was constructed.



The Utah State Capitol

We then returned the car to the hotel, had a Subway lunch in the shopping mall nearby before walking across into Temple Square. There we went up the LDS Church office building for a panoramic view of the city and especially of the Temple Square complex and immediate surrounding area.



Temple Square



"Who's the tour guide here?"



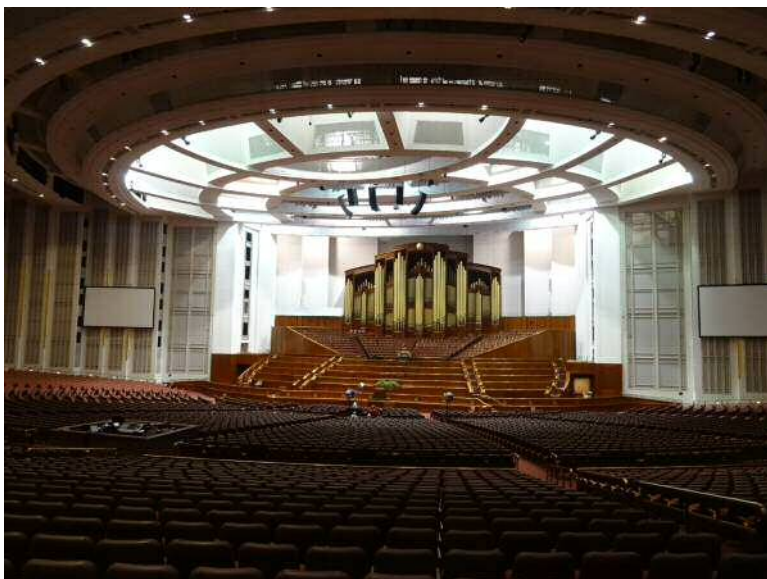
*The Tabernacle
(above) and
The Temple*



We then visited one of the two visitor centers on the site as well as spending about 15 minutes in the Tabernacle. As usual we were greeted everywhere by members of the Church, many of whom were on their 18 month mission to Salt Lake from all over the world. Each was happy to talk and appeared interested in our reasons for being in Salt Lake but none tried to convert us to the Mormon faith!

By this time (almost 4pm) we were all beginning to drag a little after a day under a warm but not oppressively hot sun, so we returned to the hotel, had a coffee and then went to our rooms to relax and clean up before dinner. Tonight we introduced Robert to Ruth's Chris, one of our favorite steakhouses, this one being just two blocks from the Marriott. He seemed to enjoy the experience – and we certainly did!

Wednesday September 3

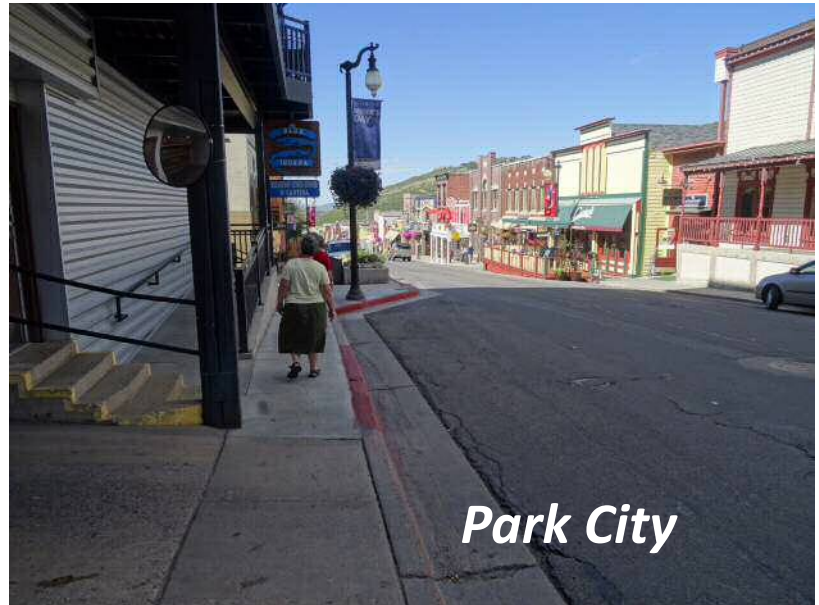


This morning we continued our visit to Temple Square, covering the North Visitor Center and attending the noon organ recital in the Tabernacle. We also spent a very interesting hour in the relatively new (now, actually 14 years old) **LDS Conference Center**. We have taken the tour several times

over the years but the guide today was particularly informative and we learned additional aspects of the Mormon faith and its practices. Once again we were impressed with the extent to which these missionaries would welcome visitors but with absolutely no “pushiness” or proselytizing.

We had planned to visit Bingham Copper Mine on this trip but – as had happened last year – we learned that the huge facility is still closed to visitors followed a major landslide that occurred in early 2013. Instead we took a 45 minute drive to Park City and spent a very pleasant 90 minutes strolling the (steep) main street of the Historic District. Park City had been founded on silver and lead mining in the 1860s but its history as a mining town was short lived as a result of a disastrous city fire and a major mine explosion and it became almost a ghost town by the 1950s. The development of the ski slopes and the selling of the “Greatest Snow on Earth” turned things around and Park City is now a major resort town all year round.

We returned to Salt Lake, had a quick snack and drink in the lounge and then relaxed until dinner time. Tonight we ate at Caffe Molise, just around the corner from the hotel, and enjoyed a very good Italian meal in the tree lined courtyard. Molly and I had eaten here three years ago and it was an equally pleasant experience tonight.



Thursday September 4

Today was a travel day as we left Salt Lake City and drove the almost 300 miles to Jackson Hole, Wyoming. It was a considerably cooler morning and the temperature was barely 60F as we checked out and headed north soon after 9am. It was nevertheless still bright and sunny so it was a very pleasant day for driving.

We drove on I-15 as far as Brigham City and then headed in a generally northeasterly direction, mostly along US Route 89. We climbed passes over



7000 feet as we made our way to **Bear Lake**, where we stopped for lunch at a Mexican restaurant. We recalled having eaten here three years ago with Keith and Zena as we followed the same route to the Tetons, but the town was much quieter today and we had the restaurant to ourselves.

From Bear Lake we traveled north and then east before the final stretch northward to Jackson, where we arrived a little before

4pm. It had been a very easy drive with light traffic and, of course, we passed through some spectacular scenery.

Along the drive we had crossed a short section of southeastern Idaho, but we were now in Wyoming for the next several days.



We checked in at the Super 8 Motel (no elevator and we were on the third floor!) and then set about identifying places for dinner. We settled on the Million Dollar Cowboy Steakhouse (the Cadillac Grille, where we had eaten on every previous visit to Jackson had closed) and had a very good meal, Robert and I choosing the mixed grill of various local meats.

Friday September 5



We spent the whole day in and around the town of **Jackson Hole**. We had breakfast in a nice café in the middle of town and then strolled around the streets near the town square. It had started out as a very cool morning (34F) but soon warmed up in the clear blue skies.

We then drove to Teton Village where we took the cable car to the top of Rendezvous Mountain which rises to 10,500 feet elevation – 4500 feet above the valley floor. Here we had some tremendous views of the valley, the Snake River and the surrounding peaks, including Grand Teton, the highest in the chain at almost 14,000 feet.





We tried to stop him, but.....

On returning to Teton Village we sat outside for a late lunch before making our way back to the hotel, taking one more short detour to visit the top of Teton Pass (8300 feet) to take in more views across the wide valley.

Robert in a more familiar pose

Tonight we ate at Calico, an Italian restaurant on the road to Teton Village. We decided not to go into town as we had been told of a large art fair that was to take place tonight and large crowds were expected. The place was still quite busy but we had a good meal in pleasant, if a little rustic, surroundings.



Saturday September 6

We checked out of the hotel at 8:30 and went to another local café for breakfast before leaving Jackson and heading north through Teton National Park to our next destination in West Yellowstone.



While still in the Teton Park we stopped first at the Visitor Center where we joined a talk by a Park Ranger on the various animals we could see and their habitats. We then drove to Jenny Lake for some beautiful shots of Grand Teton across the lake and where we had a mile-long stroll along the lake's edge.



We then drove to Summit Lodge for a very light lunch overlooking Jackson Lake – sitting outside on the deck in warm sunshine – before climbing Summit Mountain to its peak at 7700 feet. Here we had almost 360 degree views of the Jackson Hole valley, including the broad area of sage brush prairie, the Snake River and, of course, the Teton Range.

However, we got to see the beautiful Yellowstone Lake and were also rewarded with close up views of several bison and a male elk, as well as a female elk with her calf. We also saw many thermal areas along the route, so in all we got a good preview of the features which we will be visiting in much more detail over the next four days. We also crossed the Conti-



nental Divide—from West to East! Molly and I have made this trip several times and it is always a shock to realize that this first crossing of the Divide takes us in this direction. On reflection, it is obvious, since our origin in Salt Lake City is west of the Rockies and our route to Yellowstone took us mostly north but across the circuitous route that the Divide follows. Hence, virtually all of Yellowstone National Park is in the “East” insofar as its rivers feed the Gulf or Atlantic Oceans.

The Divide crosses into the United States in northwestern Montana, at the boundary between Waterton Lakes National Park and Glacier National Park. In Canada, it forms the western boundary of Waterton Lakes National Park, and in the US bisects Glacier National Park. Further south, the Divide forms the backbone of the Rocky Mountain Front, heads south towards Helena and Butte, then west past the namesake community of Divide, Montana through the Anaconda-Pintler Wilderness to the Bitterroot Range, where it forms the eastern third of the state boundary between Idaho and Montana. The Divide crosses into Wyoming within Yellowstone National Park and continues south-east into Colorado where it reaches its highest point in North America at the summit of 4352 m (14,278 ft) Grays Peak. The Divide then proceeds south into western New Mexico.

We checked in the hotel in West Yellowstone (in Montana, but right outside the Park) about 5:45 and left for dinner at 7. The restaurant we chose was Spanish Tapas, right across the street. We had about a 30 minute wait but it was worth the wait for some good food and wine and relatively reasonable prices. We turned in about 10pm.

Sunday September 7

Today was a day spent visiting a number of the thermal sites on the southern end of Yellowstone Park. We saw all four thermal forms: geysers, fumaroles, hot springs and mud holes. It was a beautiful day with a few white clouds to contrast with the blue sky and, although it was a little cool to start and at times when a wind sprung up, it was generally perfect for sightseeing.

Unless one has actually visited Yellowstone (or one of three other similar places in the world) it is difficult to comprehend the landscapes that are present and the wide variety of features that are prevalent when boiling water emerges from the ground. The colors alone (pink, white, black, brown, orange and – of course – blue) are magnificent but when these are combined with every kind of eruption and ground terrain, the whole is almost unreal. Steam rises from dozens of sources across the landscape, boiling water forms clear pools of water with multi-colored runoff to the surrounding land, and the land itself seems to boil as molten areas of crust bubble with the heat and pressure from under the surface.

Add to this surreal landscape the natural beauty of trees, rivers, waterfalls and desert and you begin to reveal Yellowstone – or, at least, the Yellowstone that we were visiting today.



A beautiful waterfall on a side road headed towards Old Faithful

We did see Old Faithful perform twice during our visit but, although the sight is impressive and a “must”, it is by no means the most interesting or unusual of the thermal features. Those thousands who capture this icon on camera and then get on the bus or in their cars to leave the area have certainly witnessed an awesome natural wonder but have only scratched the surface of this part of the Park.



*Fumaroles,
Boiling Water
and Mud Pools,
Colorful Runoff,
And a Bison
keeping warm!*





Old Faithful: with the crowds and without

Old Faithful was named by the first official expedition to Yellowstone, the Washburn Expedition of 1870. They were impressed by its size and frequency. Old Faithful erupts every 35 to 120 minutes for 1 1/2 to 5 minutes. Its maximum height ranges from 90 to 184 feet.

It is not the biggest or the most regular geyser in Yellowstone but it is the biggest regular geyser. Furthermore, it has been erupting in nearly the same fashion throughout the recorded history of the park. Through the years, it has become one of the most studied geysers. Hence, Park Rangers are able to predict its eruptions fairly accurately. This makes Old Faithful geyser one of the easiest geysers in Yellowstone to see and draws by far the biggest crowds.



Old Faithful is spectacular (every 30-120 minutes), but.....



..... Don't miss the sights along the boardwalks (especially of the wandering tourists)



We were gone for a little over seven hours, saw dozens of geysers and fumaroles, hot springs and bubbling mud – all different and all interesting – but even though Molly and I have been here perhaps six times, we also felt we have seen only a tiny fraction of what Yellowstone thermal areas have to offer.

In addition to the thermal areas, we saw elk and bison again and are hopeful for more large animal sightings in the days to come.

As an alternative to dining in West Yellowstone (not exactly the gourmet capital of the West) we drove about 6 miles out of town to a restaurant associated with the Bar N Ranch resort. The restaurant was much like many of the National Park lodges (huge wooden beams and a floor to ceiling stone fireplace) and the meal and service were very good. Although we were only six miles from our hotel we were surrounded by mountains and it felt like we were hundreds of miles from civilization. Wonderful!



Monday September 8

We had breakfast in town once again and then drove into the Park and straight across to the eastern half to spend the afternoon along the Yellowstone River and the Yellowstone Canyon. This area is much more mountainous than that around Old Faithful and, although it has a few thermal features, the main reason for the visit was to see the canyon, its waterfalls and the rugged scenery.

We climbed part way up Mt Washburn (over 10,000 feet) on a gravel road, which gave us a great panoramic view as well as a really close up look at a huge bison as it ambled quietly across the parking area. Shortly afterwards, we saw an elk grazing in the meadow below us.



We saw the Lower Falls from a high overlook and from second overlook we could see the Upper falls way in the distance. Although it is no match in size for the Grand Canyon in Arizona, Yellowstone Canyon is very impressive and beautiful in its own right. There is a significant amount of greenery on the North Rim and some fine examples of volcanic deposits and columns along the South Rim.

Yellowstone Falls consist of two major waterfalls on the Yellowstone River, within Yellowstone National Park. As the Yellowstone river flows north from Yellowstone Lake, it leaves the Hayden Valley and plunges first over Upper Yellowstone Falls and then a quarter mile downstream over Lower Yellowstone Falls, at which point it then enters the Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone, which is up to 1,000 feet deep.

The lower falls are 308 feet high, or almost twice as high as Niagara. The volume of water is in no way comparable to Niagara as the width of the Yellowstone River before it goes over the lower falls is 70 feet whereas Niagara is a half mile.

The lower falls descend from the 590,000 year old Canyon Rhyolite lava flow. The lower falls of the Yellowstone is still the largest volume major waterfall in the Rocky Mountains of the United States. The lower falls descend from the 590,000 year old Canyon Rhyolite lava flow. The lower falls of the Yellowstone is still the largest volume major waterfall in the Rocky Mountains of the United States.





In search of that perfect shot

We chose to leave the South Rim drive itself for another day but on the return journey we were held up by a bison taking a late afternoon stroll—and using the middle of the road as his path! He eventually moved to one side and allowed us to



pass, giving us a close-up picture of this magnificent beast.

Mammoth Hot Springs from above the terraces





We returned to West Yellowstone around 4:30pm and relaxed for a few

The terraces from above



Mammoth Hot Springs is a large complex of hot springs on a hill of travertine in Yellowstone National Park adjacent to Fort Yellowstone and the Mammoth Hot Springs Historic District. It was created over thousands of years as hot water from the spring cooled and deposited calcium carbonate (over two tons flow into Mammoth each day in a solution). Because of the huge amount of geothermal vents, travertine flourishes. Although these springs lie outside the caldera boundary, their energy has been attributed to the same magmatic system that fuels other Yellowstone geothermal areas.

The hot water that feeds Mammoth comes from Norris Geyser Basin after traveling underground via a fault line that runs through limestone and roughly parallel to the Norris-to-Mammoth road. The limestone from rock formations along the fault is the source of the calcium carbonate. Shallow circulation along this corridor allows Norris' superheated water to slightly cool before surfacing at Mammoth, generally at about 170 °F. Algae (pigmented bacteria) living in the warm pools have tinted the travertine shades of brown, orange, red, and green.^[7]

Thermal activity here is extensive both over time and distance. The thermal flows show much variability with some variations taking place over periods ranging from decades to days. Terrace Mountain at Mammoth Hot Springs is the largest known carbonate-depositing spring in the world. The most famous feature at the springs is the Minerva Terrace, a series of travertine terraces. The terraces have been deposited by the spring over many years but, due to recent minor earthquake activity, the spring vent has shifted, rendering the terraces dry.

The Mammoth Terraces extend all the way from the hillside, across the Parade Ground, and down to Boiling River. The Mammoth Hotel, as well as all of Fort Yellowstone, is built upon an old terrace formation known as Hotel Terrace. There was some concern when construction began in 1891 on the fort site that the hollow ground would not support the weight of the buildings. Several large sink holes (fenced off) can be seen out on the Parade Ground. This area has been thermally active for several thousand years.

hours before dinner at one of the “cowboy” restaurants in town. It turned out that we had about a 10 minute wait but the meal and service were once again very good.



*Travertine Terrace
Pure White and “Carved”
Or
Still Boiling*

Tuesday September 9

An approaching storm (Left)

Today
we

drove to the north end of the park to the Mammoth Hot Springs area. This is a series of hot springs that have formed terraces of perhaps 200 feet in height and in virtually every pastel shade as well as browns, whites and black. We started by driving to the top of the area and walking down a series of boardwalks to view several springs in various stages of activity. Later we started at the bottom of the hill and climbed boardwalks and wooden staircases almost to the top and saw even more spectacular formations.



Fort Yellowstone was a U.S. Army fort established in 1891 at Mammoth Hot Springs in Yellowstone National Park. Yellowstone was designated in 1872 but the Interior Department was unable to effectively manage the park. Administration was transferred to the War Department in August 1886 and General Philip Sheridan sent a company of cavalry to Mammoth Hot Springs to build a cavalry post. The army originally called the post Camp Sheridan in honor of General Sheridan but the name was changed to Fort Yellowstone in 1891 when construction of the permanent fort commenced. The army administered the park until 1918 when it was transferred to the newly created National Park Service. The facilities of Fort Yellowstone now comprise the Yellowstone National Park headquarters, the Horace Albright Visitor Center and staff accommodations.

Between the years 1891 and 1913, 60 structures were erected at Fort Yellowstone, of which 35 were still in existence one hundred years later. The fort was built in two major construction waves. During the first construction period from 1891 to 1897 mainly wood-framed buildings in what has been referred to as "cottage style" were built, a few of them with Colonial Revival architectural elements. A second construction wave began in 1908 and concluded in 1913, and these structures were primarily built from locally quarried sandstone. Many of the structures from the later construction period are now used as administrative offices, residences for National Park Service employees, museums and visitor center. Beyond the immediate confines of the fort, cabins were constructed for use by small detachments of army personnel while on patrol throughout the park.

Besides the buildings of Fort Yellowstone, the army left a legacy of policies and practices that served as precedents for the future National Park Service management of national parks. The army military commanders implemented back-country patrols, wildlife protection and management, and protection of natural features. Army educational programs were later adopted by the National Park Service as part of their resource management. The army effectively implemented law enforcement priorities and developed a ranger force that provided for prosecution and punishment of those engaged in illegal activity in the national parks. The National Park Service carried over a version of the campaign hat worn by members of the army during the last years of their management of Yellowstone National Park for use by Park Rangers.

We returned to the hotel via the eastern road and experienced some very heavy showers before we got back to West Yellowstone. The temperature dropped to about 45F and some of the precipitation appeared as sleet or hail but we experienced a nice sunset. Along the way we happened on a herd of bison and another spectacular waterfall.



*Always surprising
Yellowstone*



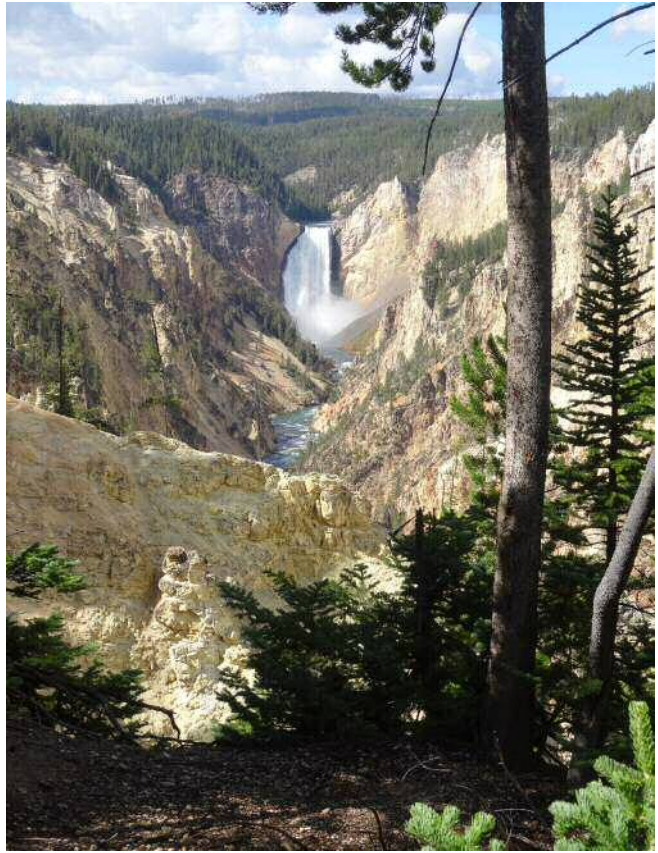
After three failed attempts to get a place in West Yellowstone for dinner, we drove out to the Bar N Ranch again (we had been there Sunday) and had another good meal.

Wednesday September 10

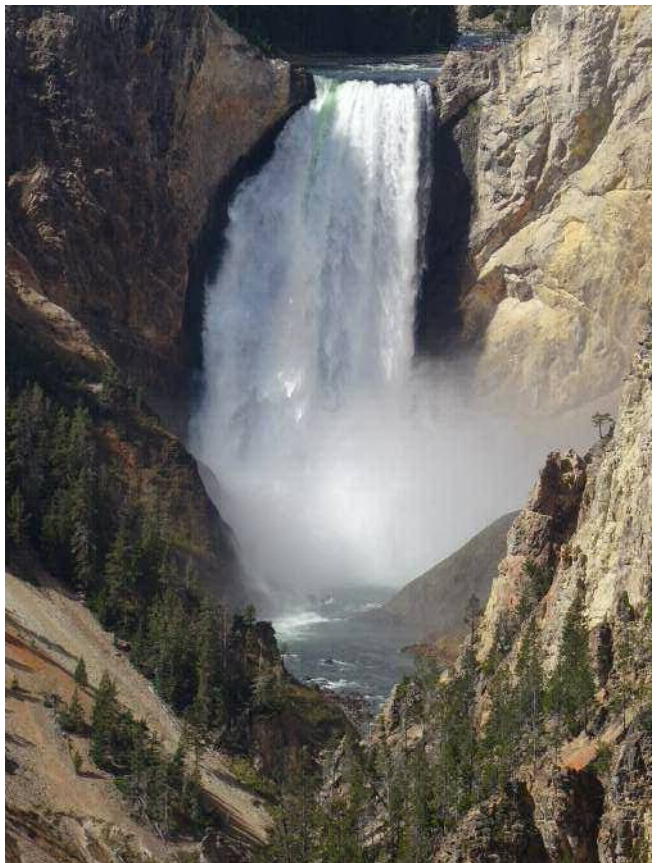
Today was our final day in this park and we started it by driving the south rim of the Grand Canyon of Yellowstone. We had been on the north rim two days ago and got some great views of the canyon walls, the river and the two major waterfalls, but today's views were, if anything, even better. We also had some superb views of the canyon below the falls.



The Grand Canyon of the Yellowstone is the first large canyon on the Yellowstone River downstream from Yellowstone Falls. The canyon is approximately 24 miles long, between 800 and 1,200 ft deep and from .25 to .75 mi wide.



The Yellowstone Canyon from the South Rim



We also drove alongside the Yellowstone River as far as the northern end of Yellowstone Lake before returning home. Along the way, however, we saw a huge herd of bison: they were off in the distance across the river but this was the first time we

had seen such a large grouping together. There were probably 50 or so. We also spotted a bald eagle (very briefly) and several elk so we felt we had done quite well during our four day stay in this wonderful park.



Yellowstone Lake



Presumably the sign is a traffic warning?

As we drove back to West Yellowstone this evening (as we had on the two previous days) we passed through the wall of the caldera with its mountain of black lava. Much (though by no means all) we had seen over the past days lay inside the caldera but the Park extends beyond that formed by the most recent eruption in the area. However, the majority of the features of the Park result from this series of vast eruptions and continuing volcanic activity.

The Yellowstone Caldera is the volcanic caldera and supervolcano located in Yellowstone National Park, sometimes referred to as the Yellowstone Supervolcano. The caldera and most of the park are located in the northwest corner of Wyoming. The major features of the caldera measure about 34 by 45 miles. The caldera formed during the last of three super eruptions over the past 2.1 million years. The most recent, the Lava Creek eruption 640,000 years ago, created the Yellowstone Caldera and the Lava Creek Tuff.

Tonight we ate at Serenity in town – just as we had on Monday evening. So, our four full days in Yellowstone were over and we were ready to move further west—with memories and pictures of some incredible facets of nature.

Thursday September 11

We left West Yellowstone after breakfast on a very cold morning – although there was no snow on the ground as had been predicted. We drove over a pass on the Montana-Idaho border (less than 8000 feet) and then headed south on US Route 20 towards Idaho Falls. Although West Yellowstone is in the State of Montana (and hence we had been in Montana for the past five nights, if not the days) we now were driving in the stat, so we acknowledge that with the flag and the “Welcome” sign.



The Mesa Falls Scenic Byway visits two of Idaho's most precious and untouched waterfalls on the Snake River, just outside of Yellowstone National

Park. The Lower and Upper Mesa Falls are the only waterfalls in Idaho not used for irrigation or hydroelectric projects.



We weren't in Montana very long, however and soon crossed into Idaho and made one slight detour to visit the Mesa Falls which we had seen a couple of times in the past and which are very impressive. It's perhaps interesting that this spectacular stretch of the North Snake River is just a "stop on the road" but in many parts of the country it would be a major tourist attraction. The falls are spectacular and the boardwalk that has been constructed to allow visitors to get close must have been a major project. In addition, the whole area is heavily forested so it is a beautiful spot to spend some time. Today, however, it was very cold and the half hour we spent there was plenty to be out of the car!

We then drove via Idaho Falls (actually bypassing the city center and therefore any chance for a light lunch) and continued past the vast Idaho National Laboratory (390 square miles where all the early nuclear reactor research was done) to visit the Experimental Breeder Reactor (EBR-1). This was the first nuclear reactor ever built to generate electricity and is one of four on the site. Two of these were prototypes for powering aircraft which never got off the ground!!!

Unfortunately we were about 10 days too late as the facility is open only through Labor Day so we were only able to circle the parking area and view the outside reactors.

Experimental Breeder Reactor I (EBR-I) is a decommissioned research reactor and U.S. National Historic Landmark located in the desert about 18 miles southeast of Arco, Idaho. At 1:50 pm on December 20, 1951, it became the world's first electricity-generating nuclear power plant when it produced sufficient electricity to illuminate four 200-watt light bulbs. It subsequently generated sufficient electricity to power its building, and continued to be used for experimental purposes until it was decommissioned in 1964.

The design purpose of EBR-I was not to produce electricity but instead to validate nuclear physics theory which suggested that a breeder reactor should be possible. In 1953, experiments revealed the reactor was producing additional fuel during fission, thus confirming the hypothesis. However, on November 29, 1955, the reactor at EBR-I suffered a partial meltdown during a coolant flow test. The flow test was trying to determine the cause of unexpected reactor responses to changes in coolant flow. It was subsequently repaired for further experiments, which determined that thermal expansion of the fuel rods and the thick plates supporting the fuel rods was the cause of the unexpected reactor response.

Although EBR-I produced the first electricity available in-house, a nearby reactor plant called BORAX-III was connected to external loads, powering the nearby city of Arco, Idaho in 1955, the first time a city had been powered solely by nuclear power.

Besides generating the world's first electricity from atomic energy, EBR-I was also the world's first breeder reactor and the first to use plutonium fuel to generate electricity. EBR-1's initial purpose was to prove Enrico Fermi's fuel breeding principle, a principle that showed a nuclear reactor producing more fuel atoms than consumed. Along with generating electricity, EBR-1 would also prove this principle.



So we drove on to the next town (Arco) where we managed to find a small, almost deserted café where we got a sandwich lunch.

Then it was on to the Craters of the Moon National Monument where we spent about a 1 ½ hours, primarily on the main driving route. This area is a vast lava field on which one can see not only the many forms that volcanic eruption material can take but also witness just how long it takes for forms of life to take hold again after a major eruption. The park has completely bare lava, lichen covered areas, small plants and even some trees – each representing the stages of re-growth from the barren landscape resulting from the lava flow and ash.

Robert and I took a walk to the top of a “mountain” (a few hundred feet high) of loose black lava which is completely devoid of life except for a few stubborn trees and shrubs near the top. It is almost a half mile to the top and is quite a strenuous walk. I recall my cousin Roy and I taking the same walk in 2004.

The generally rough terrain of the park made it an ideal place for training and vehicular testing prior to the initial moon landings.



“I see no ships”. (Not surprising since we are about 600 miles from the nearest ocean)

The final 60 miles of our 300 mile drive today took us to Ketchum in Sun Valley where we had just an overnight stop. We dined at an Italian restaurant that Molly and I have enjoyed on previous visits and tonight did not disappoint.

Friday September 12

It was very cold (near freezing) as we walked the streets of Ketchum looking for a suitable breakfast place. We finally settled on Starbucks (rapidly becoming a favorite spot of Robert’s as well as us), did a little shopping and then set off north to go around the Sawtooth Chain of mountains. Although cool, it was a beautiful clear day with nothing but blue sky as a backdrop, first for the jagged peaks of the Sawtooth and then the heavily forested areas on the west side of the range.





We made a quick stop at Smiley Creek Lodge (home of the Teepee Motel – although they seem to be slowly replacing them with more conventional log cabins) and then drove until we reached Boise. Here we introduced Robert to Cracker Barrel for a late lunch before completing the journey to Baker City, Oregon on Interstate 84. We crossed into the Pacific Time Zone and hence arrived at the hotel about 5pm new time.



From our visit here three years ago we learned that Baker City has little to offer in the way of fine dining but we decided to try the 100 year old Grand Hotel. Various reviews suggested that it was past its best but we had a very nice meal in elegant surroundings so we felt we had made a good decision.

The Geiser Grand Hotel is a historic hotel in Baker City, Oregon, that opened in 1889. It received a restoration and reopened in 1993 after closing in 1968. Decorations include mahogany columns



up to a high ceiling, Victorian-style chandeliers, and a stained glass ceiling. It was known as "the Queen of the Mines" during Gold Rush times and described as being the finest hotel between Portland, Oregon and Salt Lake City with the third elevator built west of the Mississippi River.

Saturday September 13

I was up early enough to take a 2 ½ mile walk to the Grand Hotel and back before we all met for breakfast in the hotel at 8:30. The place was packed with Masons, Elks and Shriners who seem to have converged on Baker City from all over the state, but we were able to enjoy a leisurely meal before checking out.

The National Historic Oregon Trail Interpretive Center is a 23,000-square-foot interpretive center about the Oregon Trail located 6 miles northeast of Baker City, Oregon atop Flagstaff Hill. It is operated by the Bureau of Land Management in partnership with Trail Tenders and the Oregon Trail Preservation Trust, and offers living history demonstrations, interpretive programs, exhibits, multi-media presentations, special events, and more than four miles of interpretive trails.

Exhibit themes include area natural history, pre-emigrant travelers and explorers, Native Americans, pioneer life, and the mining and settlement of Northeast Oregon.



Our only sightseeing stop for the day was in the Oregon Trail Interpretive Center just outside Baker City where we spent about an hour in the excellent *exhibit* area which depicted the trek made by mid-1800s pioneers as they made their way to Oregon and, later, to California as the Gold Rush started. The exhibits and film clips as well as excerpts from the diaries of those who made



the trip revealed the hardships suffered on the six month, 2000 mile journey and one got a sense of just how hopeful – and at times – desperate the families were as they walked, led their oxen and wagons (Prairie Schooners) and, in many case, lost loved ones. It was said that after 30 years of crossings, the Trail had a grave every 80 yards. In addition, goods and personal belongings were let go to lighten the load so many arrived almost destitute and extremely weary.



*Prairie
schooners
and ruts
left by
wagon
wheels*



We were able to walk in the ruts left by the wagons in an area very close to the Center and this, too, gave a sense of “connection” with those who had passed this way about 150 years ago – and not in an air-conditioned car!

We then drove northwest to the Columbia River and our destination at Hood River where Molly and I had stayed several times on previous trips. The scenery along the way was magnificent, especially as we paralleled the Columbia River for the final leg of the journey.

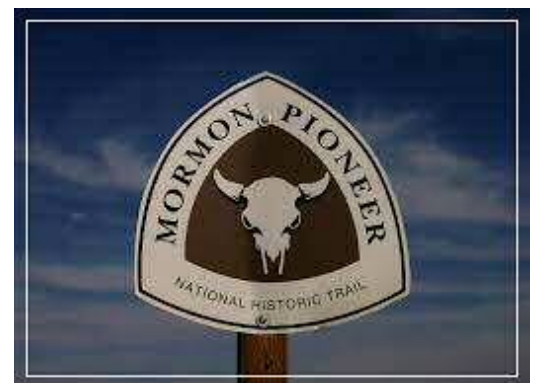
The Columbia River is the largest river in the Pacific Northwest region of North America.^[9] The river rises in the Rocky Mountains of British Columbia, Canada. It flows northwest and then south into the US state of Washington, then turns west to form most of the border between Washington and the state of Oregon before emptying into the Pacific Ocean. The river is 1,243 miles long, and its largest tributary is the Snake River. Its drainage basin is roughly the size of France and extends into seven U.S. states and a Canadian province.

By volume, the Columbia is the fourth-largest river in the United States; it has the greatest flow of any North American river draining into the Pacific. The river's heavy flow and its relatively steep gradient gives it tremendous potential for the generation of electricity. The 14 hydroelectric dams on the Columbia's main stem and many more on its tributaries produce more hydroelectric power than those of any other North American river.

The Columbia and its tributaries have been central to the region's culture and economy for thousands of years. They have been used for transportation since ancient times, linking the many cultural groups of the region. The river system hosts many species of fish, which migrate between freshwater habitats and the saline Pacific Ocean. These fish—especially the salmon species—provided the core subsistence for natives; in past centuries, traders from across western North America traveled to the Columbia to trade for fish.

Since the late 19th century, public and private sectors have heavily developed the river. The development, commonly referred to as taming or harnessing of the river, has been massive and multi-faceted. To aid ship and barge navigation, locks have been built along the lower Columbia and its tributaries, and dredging has opened, maintained, and enlarged shipping channels. Since the early 20th century, dams have been built across the river for the purposes of power generation, navigation, irrigation, and flood control.

It really is an impressive river and the views of the barges, pleasure craft and the trains along both the Oregon and Washington shores made for a very pleasant ride. We were now also driving along the Oregon Trail as well as that of Lewis and Clark. This provided Robert not only with a view of American history but also many attempts to get a photograph of the ubiquitous signs that line the highway. Unfortunately, either his camera technique (!) or the speed of the vehicle resulted in many “near misses” and subsequent pictures of wide open spaces, so we have taken the liberty of including examples from our previous trips. For completeness, we have also included one of the Mormon Trail since we obviously followed that for its final few miles while we were in Salt Lake City.



We checked in about 5pm and made arrangements for dinner in the hotel on a very warm (still over 80F) evening, which allowed us to dine on the open deck.

Sunday September 14

We had breakfast in the hotel restaurant (on the deck again, overlooking the Columbia River) and then set out for our day of sightseeing in the beautiful Columbia Gorge.

Bonneville Lock and Dam consist of several run-of-the-river dam structures that together complete a span of the Columbia River between the U.S. states of Oregon and Washington at River Mile 146.1. The dam is located 40 miles east of Portland, Oregon, in the Columbia River Gorge. The primary functions of Bonneville Lock and Dam are electrical power generation and river navigation. The dam was built and is managed by the United States Army Corps of Engineers. Bonneville Lock and Dam is named for Army Capt. Benjamin Bonneville, an early explorer credited with charting much of the Oregon Trail. The Bonneville Dam Historic District was designated a National Historic Landmark District in 1987.



The dam and one of its original turbines

We stopped first at Bonneville Dam and saw the facility and read a little about its construction, use and size but our main focus here was the fish ladder. This was built when the dam was constructed, to facilitate the upstream climb of the salmon as they returned to their spawning ground further inland. It is fascinating to see the huge fish pass through the ladder (seen in the open and also through glass windows) and equally interesting to learn that someone is counting the number of each species that makes the upstream swim. September is the peak month of the year with over 500,000 fish passing through this one ladder.





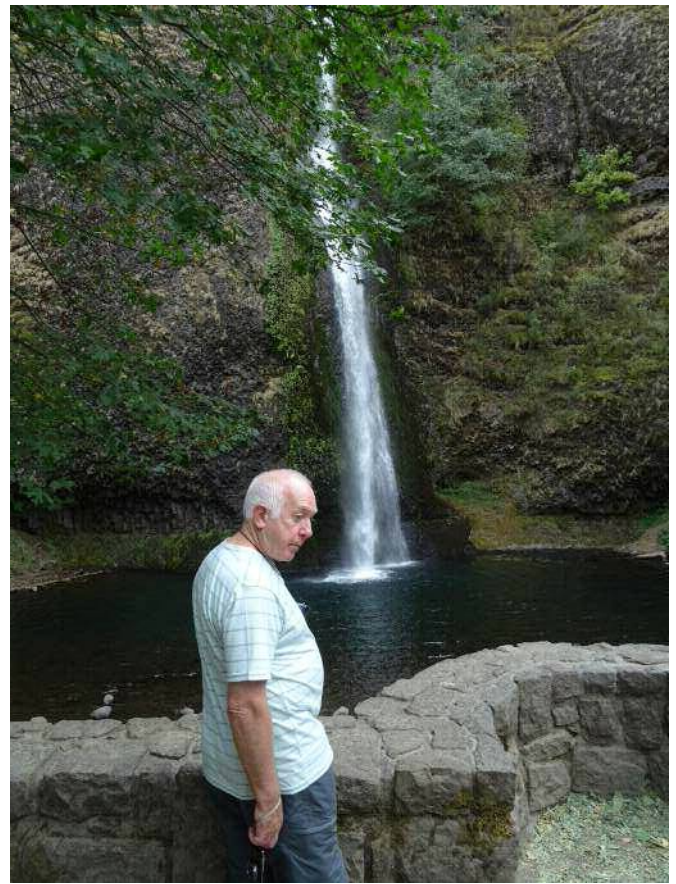
We then went to the adjoining fish hatchery where salmon that spawned here return after three to five years in the ocean and where a quite sophisticated process of egg and milt (sperm) combination is done by humans, replacing the natural process. In this way the salmon population is not



only retained (despite the man-made dam) but the hatchery returns even more "fingerlings" to the river. In addition, a certain amount of tagging is done to allow tracking of salmon throughout their lifespan and to assess how the population is doing.

Also in the hatchery is a sturgeon pool in which a dozen or so sturgeon (native to the Columbia) are kept, the largest of which ("Herman") is over ten feet long and over 80 years old.

From the hatchery we started our drive along Historic US Route 30 which parallels the expressway but passes nearby several giant waterfalls as it slowly (at first) climbs away from the Columbia. These waterfalls were created when a huge ice dam in Montana burst many millennia ago releasing a vast volume of water which, together with rocks carried by it, carved the Columbia Gorge. The River's tributaries then became giant waterfalls which line this part of the gorge and bring thousands of tourists a year. In fact, today was the busiest we have ever seen this stretch of road and parking near the major waterfalls was a very hit-and-miss process.





Above and bottom left: views from the footbridge



Multnomah Falls is a waterfall on the Oregon side of the Columbia River Gorge along the Historic Columbia River Highway. The falls drops in two major steps, split into an upper falls of 542 feet and a lower falls of 69 feet, with a gradual 9 foot drop in elevation between the two, so the total height of the waterfall is conventionally given as 620 feet. Multnomah Falls is the tallest waterfall in the state of Oregon. It is also credited by a sign at the site of the falls, and by the United States Forest Service, as the second tallest *year-round* waterfall in the United States.

Finally, we climbed the twisting road away from the river to reach Vista Point from where there are magnificent views up and down the Columbia. Looking upstream one could probably see as much as 30 miles of the large and beautiful river basin.

Samuel Lancaster, Assistant Highway Engineer for Multnomah County in 1913, supervised the Columbia River Highway project. Lancaster's proposal to construct a building on the summit of Crown Point was another reflection of his desire to inspire the traveler along the highway and to make the wonders of the gorge accessible. As Lancaster described it, the Crown Point promontory was the ideal site for "an observatory from which the view both up and down the Columbia could be viewed in silent communion with the infinite." Such an observatory would also be a fitting memorial to "the trials and hardships of those who had come into the Oregon country." And it could "serve as a comfort station for the tourist and the travelers of America's greatest highway." He suggested it be known as the Vista House .

Few places combine nature's wonders and human architectural brilliance so majestically. Once called "Thor's Heights," Crown Point (733 feet above the Columbia River) is a basalt promontory shaped by the same volcanic lava flows, floods and winds that created the Columbia River Gorge. Cited for its "exceptional value in illustrating the natural history of the U.S.," it was designated as a National Natural Landmark in 1971. It is protected as a state park property known as the Crown Point State Scenic Corridor.

The Vista House was built as a rest stop observatory for travelers on the old Columbia River Gorge Highway and as a fitting memorial honoring Oregon's pioneers—particularly those who made their way down the Columbia River. Described by its architect, Edgar M. Lazarus, as "a temple to the natural beauty of the Gorge," Vista House, built in German art nouveau style, has long been recognized for its historic significance and was listed in the National Register of Historic Places in 1974.



Vista Point



On our return we crossed over into Washington State for about 20 miles to get a different perspective on the river and also some distant views of Mount Hood. It was a little hazy but we hope to get much clearer pictures of it as we head south tomorrow.



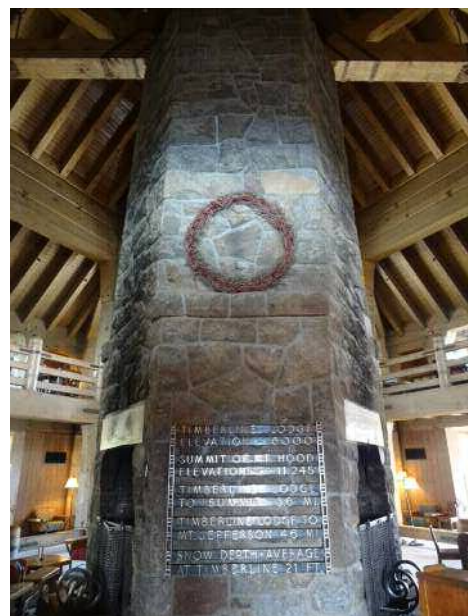
Tonight were able to view a beautiful sunset from the hotel and then we ate at Nora's Table in town and once again had a very enjoyable meal.



Monday September 15

We had breakfast on the hotel deck restaurant again on another sunny and mild morning. After checking out we drove directly south to Mt Hood and to the Timberline Lodge at an elevation of 6000 feet. There wasn't as much snow as we have seen in previous visits and we saw no-one skiing but Robert and I took a short walk up from the lodge to the point where the Pacific Rim Trail crosses the mountain.





Nice photograph of Robert at Mt Hood



We considered taking the shorter walk to Canada but felt a need to continue with our drive south.

Timberline Lodge is a mountain lodge on the south side of Mount Hood in Oregon, about 60 miles east of Portland.

Built in the late 1930s, this National Historic Landmark sits at an elevation of 5,960 feet within the Mount Hood National Forest and is accessible through the Mount Hood Scenic By-way. It is a popular tourist attraction, drawing more than a million visitors annually.

The lodge was constructed between 1936 and 1938 as a Works Progress Administration (WPA) project during the Great Depression. Workers used large timbers and local stone, and placed intricately carved decorative elements throughout the building.



We then had a drink before driving south to Redmond. Just before we got there we stopped at a rest area (at the Peter Skene Ogden state park named for an early explorer and Hudson's Bay Company buyer), that overlooked a 300 feet canyon and across which spanned a 100 year old railroad bridge – and we were fortunate to be there as a southbound train crossed. The overlook had been recommended as a stop by my friend Dave who spends half the year in Oregon and was well worth a stop.



The canyon over the Crooked River

We were staying tonight in Redmond but since we were there quite early we decided to show Robert the lava fields at McKenzie Pass, about 30 miles out of town, in the Three Sisters mountain area. Molly and I have always been impressed with this area ever since we happened on it several years ago and Robert seemed equally taken as we walked the ½ mile loop through the black lava area.

The youngest volcanic mountain of the Three Sisters area is 6,876 ft tall Belknap Crater, 8 mi NNW of North Sister. It is thought to be the result of three principal eruptive episodes between 3,000 and 1,500 ago. The main bulk of ash from Belknap, which has been traced over an area exceeding 100 square miles, was then ejected from a now disappeared large south crater. Some time less than 2000 years ago, basaltic lava flowed eastwards up to 7 mi from their vents.

Approximately 1,500 years ago, basaltic andesite flows issued from vents at the north and south bases of the cone. Lava poured 12 miles to the west and ash was ejected from the northernmost of two summit craters. A number of other eruptions also occurred in the general area during roughly the same time period. The result is the lava field right at the side of the highway at McKenzie Pass.





We were back in Redmond about 6pm and settled on a local Peruvian/Mexican restaurant in town for dinner. It turned out to be a small place in a strip mall but the food was quite good and reasonably priced.

Tuesday September 16

We had breakfast at Shari's right next to the hotel and then drove directly to Crater Lake. We entered on the north side and caught a few glimpses of the lake before arriving at the main village area where we had a light lunch before doing our full circuit of the park. We drove the entire 30+ mile drive with terrific views of the lake and learned a lot about its formation and current status.



Crater Lake is a caldera lake located in south-central Oregon. It is the main feature of Crater Lake National Park and is famous for its deep blue color and water clarity. The lake partly fills a nearly 2,148-foot deep caldera that was formed around 7,700 years ago by the collapse of the volcano Mount Mazama. There are no rivers flowing into or out of the lake; the evaporation is compensated for by rain and snowfall at a rate such that the total amount of water is replaced every 250 years. At 1,943 feet, the lake is the deepest in the United States, and the seventh or ninth deepest in the world, depending on whether average or maximum depth is measured.

Two islands are in Crater Lake; Wizard Island formed from a cinder cone that erupted after Crater Lake began to fill with water, and the smaller Phantom Ship has seven different trees living on it.

The lake is 5 by 6 miles across, with a caldera rim ranging in elevation from 7,000 to 8,000 feet and an average lake depth of 1,148 feet. The lake's maximum depth has been measured at 1,949 feet which fluctuates slightly as the weather changes. On the basis of maximum depth, Crater Lake is the deepest lake in the United States, the second deepest in North America (after Great Slave Lake in Canada).

The highest point on the drive was at 8000 feet – 2000 feet above the water level, which in turn is 2000 feet above the crater floor at the water's deepest point. On a day like today – almost clear blue skies, deep blue water and green pine trees, there really isn't a bad photograph that can be taken from any point along the route – and we took many.





We had smelled smoke for several days and seen road signs indicating that there were fires and firefighters in the area but this was the first direct evidence we had seen.

We also visited the Pinnacles, an area about 7 miles off the Rim Drive where great columns of extinct fumaroles reach from the ground to heights of perhaps a hundred feet. It is difficult to understand how these hollow columns of frozen lava have withstood the elements here for over a thousand years.

In the lower elevation southeast corner of Crater Lake National Park, the Pinnacles are a group of volcanic pumice spires, colored various shades of grey and brown, formed by erosion along the south edge of the steep-sided canyon of Wheeler Creek, a tributary of the larger Sand Creek that begins beneath the southern slopes of Mount Scott, the park's highest summit. Some cones are especially tall and graceful, dozens of feet tall and tapering very gradually to a sharp point - perhaps the narrowest erosional features in the West. These "hoodoos" were formed when the molten lava around fumaroles solidified around a hollow core and the surrounding material subsequently eroded to leave these tall structures. It is difficult to imagine how these slender, hollow towers have remained intact and standing for so long.



The Pinnacles

In all we spent about four hours in the park before descending rapidly to Medford, about 75 miles away, where we were to spend the evening. There were areas of smoke from forest fires in Northern California and we anticipate getting closer to those as we drive from here to Eureka tomorrow and more so the following day as we go inland some.

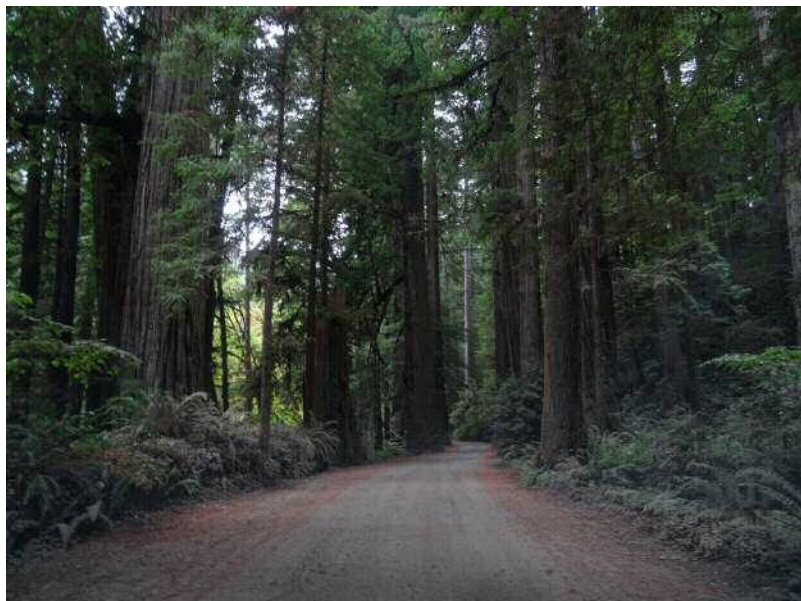
Tonight we went to an old railroad depot restaurant for dinner; it was only about 10 minutes from the hotel and had a good selection of dishes. We enjoyed the meal.

Wednesday September 17

We had breakfast at the Black Bear Diner in the hotel area and then set off towards California. Actually, the first 30 miles or so were in a northerly direction which took us to Grants Pass where we turned south travel to the Oregon Border and then to Crescent City, our first stop in California.



Here we had a Starbucks lunch and met a barista from Huddersfield (small world) who convinced us that we should have taken the Jedediah Smith route through the Redwoods north of the city. We remembered having been given the same advice on our last trip so we retraced our route for about 10 miles and then followed a dirt road through the Jedediah Smith State Park.



It was a slow but very pleasant drive though (almost literally) huge Redwood trees which lined the road and, in places, made some very narrow gaps. As it had started a light rain on the drive we made only one stop to get up close to these enormous trees.



Once back on the main road, we went quite a way south (catching our first glimpses of the Pacific Ocean on a very misty and somewhat rainy afternoon).



The Pacific Ocean

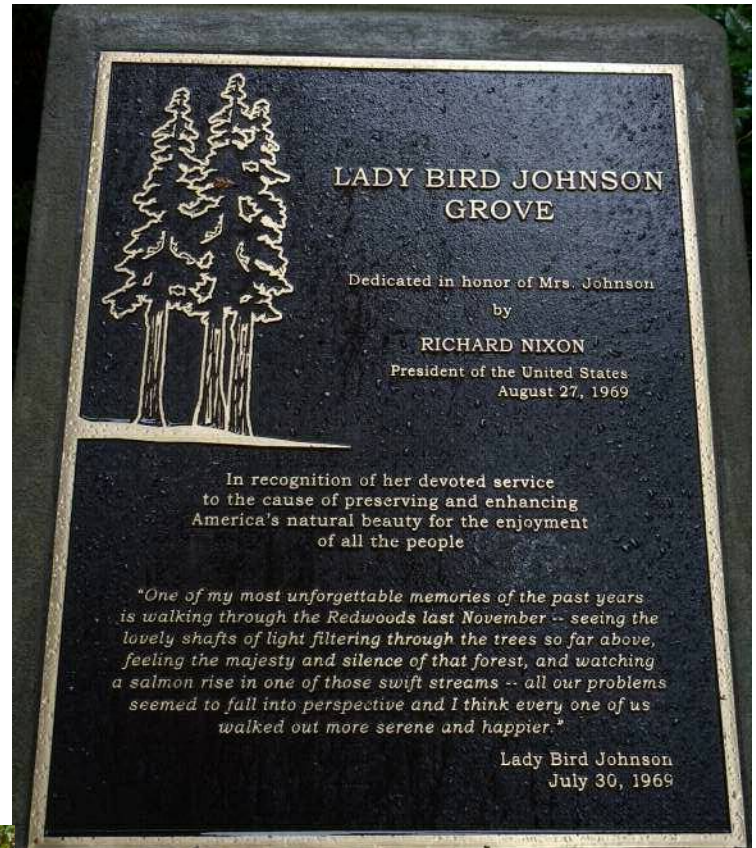


Made it to the Pacific!!!

We were headed to the stretch of National Park that includes most of the coastal red woods. In the Park we made a stop at the Lady Bird Johnson Trail (named for the former First Lady in honor of her landscape beautification work). This 1 ½ mile loop winds through the trees and includes markers which depict various aspects of the life of these forests: lightning strikes, fires, logging (a major industry here until well into the 20th Century), re-growth and other interesting facts.



***“Just like
Auntie Laura’s
Woods!”***



We were very fortunate that it stayed dry for our walk but the rain started in earnest as we left the Park and as we approached Eureka we went through some torrential downpours. Again we were lucky that it had just about stopped as we pulled into our motel around 5pm.

Tonight we ate at the Carter Inn Restaurant 301 where Molly and I have enjoyed meals before. Tonight's dinner was no exception and we were seated for about 2 ½ hours in very elegant surroundings.

Sequoia sempervirens is the sole living species of the genus *Sequoia* in the cypress family Cupressaceae. Common names include coastal redwood and California redwood. It is an evergreen, long-lived, monoecious tree living 1,200–1,800 years or more. This species includes the tallest living trees on Earth, reaching up to 379 feet in height (without the roots) and up to 26 feet in diameter at breast height. These trees are also among the oldest living things on Earth. Before commercial logging and clearing began by the 1850s, this massive tree occurred naturally in an estimated 2,100,000 acres along much of coastal California (excluding southern California where rainfall is not sufficient) and the southwestern corner of coastal Oregon within the United States. An estimated 95% or more of the original old-growth redwood trees have been cut down due to their excellent properties for use as lumber in construction.

Thursday September 18

We checked out of the motel, had a Starbucks breakfast and did a little sightseeing in town (mainly the large homes of the former lumber barons) and then set off down US 101 to San Francisco. The weather was better than predicted and we passed through only the occasional shower on an otherwise misty but mild day.



Eureka's Lumber Baron Homes and Businesses

We made one stop for lunch (McDonald's, much to Robert's chagrin) and another at a tourist trap where one could drive through a large Redwood tree (I chickened out, telling myself that it wasn't worth the risk in a rental van). Then it was on to



San Francisco where we crossed the Golden Gate Bridge (no cash or credit cards now accepted, merely an invoice sent to the vehicle owner via its plate!) and found the hotel thanks to the phone GPS.

After checking in and turning in the car, we went for a short stroll as far as Pier 39 so that Robert could get an initial feed for the city – and so that we could make a dinner reservation at Ai d'orsolater in the evening. The restaurant was packed and noisy but we still enjoyed a good seafood meal at one of San Francisco's icons.

Friday September 19

We had breakfast in the hotel restaurant and then walked just a couple of blocks to the Bay St end of the cable car line. We were fortunate to get a seat and had a very pleasant and interesting ride "over the top" to Union Square. Here we bought our Hop on/Hop off tickets and fitted a 25 minute wait, got the bus for our sightseeing trip of the city.



***Looking quite at home on
the San Francisco Trolley and
looking at Tony Bennett's
heart left here!***

We did a parallel circuit on the city route (seeing some of the city's landmarks along the way) and actually got off again at Union Square for our walk through Chinatown, after first having a short coffee break.



Clockwise from Top Left: Ferry Terminal; the Coit Tower; the Transamerica Pyramid; a small but beautiful Roman Catholic Church



Chinatown, San Francisco

Often claimed as the largest in North America (although Vancouver BC might challenge that)

We strolled for about ten blocks (visiting a number of shops) through Chinatown and then caught the bus again to complete the tour of the city, passing several other city landmarks along the way.



***Quintessential San Francisco homes And
the infamous Haight Ashbury District***

Finally we reached the Golden Gate Bridge. Although the skies had cleared significantly since early morning and it had become quite sunny before we got on the bus, the Marine Layer had come in again before we got to the bridge. Consequently, we could see about 2/3 of the piers from the bus and at the north end before we turned round for the return trip. We did, however, get some great views of the city, Alcatraz and the Bay, albeit from a rather cool upper deck of an open top bus.

Once back in town, we returned to Fisherman's Wharf and walked slowly back to the hotel – just in time for the 5pm wine “hour” that is a feature here every evening.



Tonight we walked just a couple of blocks to give Robert a chance to experience the good food and different ambiance of Joe's Crab Shack. He seemed to enjoy it!

Saturday September 20

Today we continued our sightseeing using the Hop on/Hop off bus. We started by walking to Pier 39 and taking in the views of Alcatraz and the Golden Gate Bridge – as well as the resident sea lions here.



We then took the bus (on a rather circuitous route that took us past City Hall) to the north end of the Golden Gate Bridge from where Robert and I walked across to the south side while Molly waited for us to return (on the Sausalito bus).

The walk is a little over 1.5 miles (one direction) and took us the best part of an hour, so Molly had a longer wait for us than we had anticipated. Still, we both enjoyed the exhilarating walk and tried our hand at a couple of not so good “selfies.”

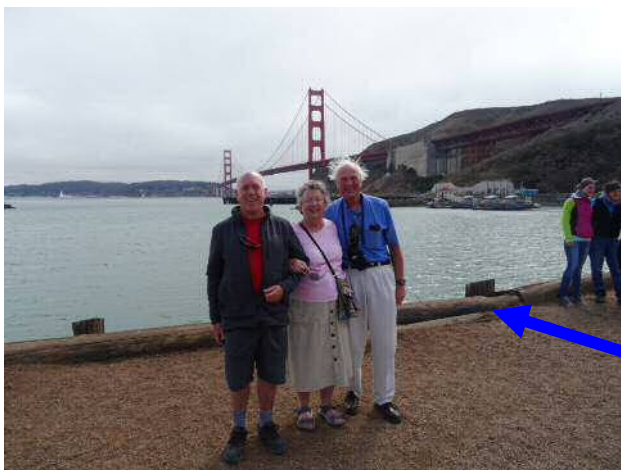




The Golden Gate Bridge is a suspension bridge spanning the Golden Gate strait, the mile-wide, three-mile-long channel between San Francisco Bay and the Pacific Ocean. The structure links the city of San Francisco, on the northern tip of the San Francisco Peninsula, to Marin County, bridging both U.S. Route 101 and California State Route 1 across the strait. The bridge is one of the most internationally recognized symbols of San Francisco, California, and the United States. It has been declared one of the Wonders of the Modern World by the American Society of Civil Engineers.

The Frommers travel guide considers the Golden Gate Bridge "possibly the most beautiful, certainly the most photographed bridge in the world". It opened in 1937 and had, until 1964, the longest suspension bridge main span in the world, at 4,200 feet.

The Golden Gate Bridge's clearance above high water averages 220 feet while its towers, at 746 feet above the water, were the world's tallest on a suspension bridge until 1998 when bridges in Denmark



Yes, it was windy! (but only two of us had hair to blow about!)

We all then continued on that bus to Sausalito where we spent an hour or so before taking the ferry back to Pier 39. The weather was kind to us again and we got some clear views of the bridge and Alcatraz and enjoyed some very warm sun in Sausalito.



Alcatraz Island is located in the San Francisco Bay, 1.5 miles offshore from San Francisco. Often referred to as "The Rock", the small island was developed with facilities for a lighthouse, a military fortification, a military prison (1868), and

a federal prison from 1933 until 1963. Alcatraz became a national recreation area and received designation as a National Historic Landmark in 1986.

Today, the island's facilities are managed by the National Park Service as part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area and is open to tours. It is home to the abandoned prison, the site of the oldest operating lighthouse on the West Coast of the United States, early military fortifications, and natural features such as rock pools and a seabird colony. Landmarks on the island include the Main Cell House, Dining Hall, Library, Lighthouse, the ruins of the Warden's House and Officers, Parade Grounds and the Recreation Yard.

The United States Disciplinary Barracks on Alcatraz was acquired by the United States Department of Justice on October 12, 1933, and the island became a Federal Bureau of Prisons federal prison in August 1934. Alcatraz was designed to hold prisoners who continuously caused trouble at other federal prisons. In August 1934, the first batch of 137 prisoners arrived at Alcatraz, arriving by railroad from the United States Penitentiary in Leavenworth, Kansas.

During the 29 years it was in use, the jail held some of the most notorious criminals in American history, such as Al Capone, Robert Franklin Stroud (the Birdman of Alcatraz) and Alvin "Creepy" Karpis (who served more time at Alcatraz than any other inmate). It also provided housing for the Bureau of Prisons staff and their families.

During its 29 years of operation, the penitentiary claimed that no prisoner successfully escaped. A total of 36 prisoners made 14 escape attempts, two men trying twice; 23 were caught, six were shot and killed during their escape, two drowned, and five are listed as "missing and presumed drowned"

The entire Alcatraz Island was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1976 and was further declared a National Historic Landmark in 1986.



*Sailing
on San
Francisco
Bay*



We ate tonight at the Franciscan with views over the Bay. The food and service were good but – as seems usual these days – it was extremely noisy.

Sunday September 21



We had breakfast at iHop again, walked along the wharf for a while and then checked out of the hotel. I walked to pick up the car and then we all set off for Sacramento.

It was an uneven ride with just one coffee stop before we checked into the Springhill Suites in Natomas.

After an hour or so we drove to Roseville where Cyndi and Sammy were enjoying an "Ice Themed Event" which featured periods of skating with "Princesses" and various other fun things.



We all met for dinner at 6:30 at Malabar. It has been some time since we have been to that restaurant and it turned out to be a good meal and allowed Robert to meet our California family. We finished the evening with a glass of wine in Robert's room.



Monday September 22

It was another iHop breakfast and then we had a couple of hours to show Robert old Sacramento and the State Capitol before having a final Starbucks visit on the way to the airport.



*Old Town
Sacramento
with the statue
commemorating
The Pony Express*





The California State Capitol

Robert checked in for his flight at noon and then we said our farewells before Molly and I returned to the hotel. I went for a 5.5 mile walk on a very hot afternoon and at 7:15 we met Christopher, Cyndi and Sammy for dinner at On the Border. We had a very pleasant 1 ½ hours and then said farewell for this trip.

Tuesday September 23

We walked to Starbucks for a light breakfast and then I went on an additional walk. On returning to the hotel we finished our packing, checked out and drove to the airport to turn in the rental car. We had over two hours before our first flight to Salt Lake City but passed the time reading and computing — and another cup of coffee!

Both flights home were on time and we arrived back in Las Vegas around 11:30pm after a super trip. We thoroughly enjoyed ourselves and particularly enjoyed Robert's company throughout.



One last hug