

# *Birmingham, AL*

*July 2024*



## *Birmingham, Alabama, June 2024*

### **Thursday June 11**

We left home shortly after 2pm for the two-hour drive to Lexington. Traffic was relatively light, and we arrived as scheduled at the Fairfield Inn on the east side of town before 4:30. I was able to take a two-mile walk in the neighborhood around the hotel before getting ready for dinner at Coles, which we have enjoyed several times in the past. Tonight was no exception, and we had a lovely meal in very pleasant surroundings.

### **Friday June 12**

We were up about 8:30 and soon had packed and checked out and driven across the street for breakfast at Cracker Barrel. We then started our drive to Nashville, traveling on the Bluegrass Parkway from Lexington to Elizabethtown and then south on I-65. The Parkway was very quiet, and a pleasant drive and I-65 moved smoothly until we were on the outskirts of Nashville. For the final 30 miles it was stop-and-go in many places and getting into the right lanes for several changes in expressway was a nightmare. However, we eventually found the SpringHill Suites in Brentwood and checked in about 2:30 (now on Central Time).

I went for a 2 ½ mile walk in 90F heat and then we both relaxed until dinner time. We had a reservation at Del Frisco's, just a few minutes from the hotel, and recalled having dined there a couple of times in the past. The restaurant was very quiet but we had a very good meal with leisurely but pleasant service.

### **Saturday June 13**

We were up, packed and checked out shortly after 8:30 and drove the very short distance to the Puffy Muffin for a very good breakfast in a very nice non-chain restaurant. We then started our drive down I-65 to complete the journey to Birmingham, about 3 hours south. We made one stop at a Starbucks and arrived at the hotel about 1:15. No rooms were available right away, so we sat in the lobby until one became free. It was now 100F outside, so I debated going for a walk.

I did eventually take a short walk (2 miles in blistering hot conditions but was able to relax for a while before we went to dinner. We drove (less than 10 minutes) to Gianmarco's restaurant where we were seated for a few minutes before Celia, Ashlyn and Rachael arrived. We had a very good Italian meal and some great conversation which lasted for about 2 ½ hours. It was great to spend time with them and we arranged to meet at least Celia and Ashlyn for brunch on Sunday morning.



The big national news that broke during dinner was that President Trump had been shot during a rally in Pennsylvania.

### Sunday July 14

It was almost 9:30 before we got up, so we filled the time before brunch packing and checking out at a leisurely pace. We drove 10 minutes to Ruby Sunshine in Homewood to meet Ashlyn and Celia. It was another very pleasant meal (too much food!) and conversation time and a great way to end our visit to Birmingham.

We drove directly to Nashville with just a brief rest stop and another for gas. It was still 100F when we checked in but I went for a short walk, which wasn't as bad as yesterday as the sun was partially hidden by some fluffy clouds.

Tonight, we drove to the Gaylord Resort for dinner at the Old Hickory Steakhouse within this vast complex. We had quite a walk from the parking lot but still arrived a little early at the restaurant. A pleasant drink in the bar filled the time before we were escorted to our table "outside" (everything in the resort is under roof). We had a very pleasant meal and nice chats with both our waiters.



### Monday July 15

We checked out and drove a few hundred yards to a local Bob Evans for breakfast. We decided to take a slightly longer route to our next stop in Louisville and we soon noticed that Madisonville, KY was close to our route. Having spent many days in Madisonville at the GE plant during my working days, it seemed a logical look down memory lane by making a short detour. We did find the plant (newly painted in deep blue and sporting the new



GE Aerospace logo), although I hadn't recognized any of the final few miles after leaving the expressway. On our return to the expressway, it became obvious that **this** was the route I would have followed so many times and we even saw the Days Inn where we used to stay! Memories!

We then continued via Evansville, IN (a stop for coffee) and along Interstate 64 to Louisville, where we arrived at the hotel around 4:30. I took a two-mile walk on another sweltering late afternoon, before cleaning up for our traditional Louisville dinner at Ruth's Chris. As usual, this was a very pleasant meal in unique surroundings at the top of an iconic Frank

Lloyd Wright building.

### Tuesday July 16

We checked out of the hotel and went to Bob Evans (almost next door) for breakfast. We then drove directly home but took US42 instead of I-71. On the route we passed the ritzy homes and estates just outside Louisville, the farmland (corn and tobacco) and rolling hills away from the river and, later, several small villages at the edge of the Ohio. As on previous trips along this road, perhaps the most surprising aspect comes closer to Cincinnati where there are several huge commercial facilities – plastics factories, steelworks and generating stations. It seems a little incongruous in the middle of Kentucky rural land – but clearly is providing many alternatives to the traditional farm worker.

We arrived home at 1pm after a lovely visit with our granddaughter and her wife as well as very pleasant five-day drive through the South.

