

2014

Our Travel Log – East Coast



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[Company name]

1/1/2014

INTRODUCTION

I would like to invite you to journey with Carla and I, as we recount our travels in 2014. Let me make the introductions before we launch into this story. We're the old folks and in the middle is Abby. She's our surrogate granddaughter, who was nice enough to adopt us as grandparents almost ten years ago. She's an excellent photographer and always looks at life on the light side.



As we are today is not how we lived back in 2013. Carla and I are just like most everyone else. We are living the best we can, on Social Security and savings. Scoots, our cat, is the junior member of the family.

Now back to the story.

Our change in lifestyles began as a result of our Grand Canyon vacation. I'm certain you've experienced that type of vacation; basically it encompassed seeing as much as possible as fast as possible. And in less than fourteen days, thanks to Southwest Airlines and a Lexis rent-a-car, we got to enjoy Vegas, Boulder Dam, the Grand Canyon, a short visit with Cindy, our former Director, who worked with us at our first Child Care Center in Greenacres, FL and a trip to the Crater in Flagstaff, AZ, then quickly pack up and fly back home. It was very exhausting and equally expensive, but we were happy that we took the trip. But the experience got us to try to find a better way to vacation, for the future. One possible option was looking us in the face as we experienced the Grand Canyon; *RVing*. From the time we got back home our focus would be directed on the possibility of acquiring an RV of our own. There's a quite a bit more to the story of our finding the perfect RV, but that could take a chapter or two and it's not my purpose to weigh you down with details, We'll casually mention some of our challenges either during the stories that follow or possibly at the end of this book.

My primary purpose for writing this book was to bring all those who read this book into our recollected travels. This is a non-fiction book; and everything I talk about exists. Through pictures and some text I hope to bring you and your family along with us and spare many of you from saying "*I can't imagine just how awesome the cliffs of the Flume must have looked.*" I would like so much to have been a gifted writer like a Steven Spielberg but that was not meant to be. My hopes are to take you by the hand, in the many pages to follow, as we wander into the bowels of the USS Wisconsin with its mighty guns and massive decks and only hope that the six hundred plus pictures I've taken will compensate for my marginal literary talent. Together we will also walk the hallowed grounds of Gettysburg, Yorktown and Valley Forge. On the lighter side, especially for any kids, we will visit Ben & Jerry's and even take a trip to a working farm with animals of all sizes. There's also a trip to an awesome candle shop. Or, for a different twist, we'll manage to get lost on a mountain, wander aimlessly through a corn maze and then we have those quiet times when we just sit and enjoy the light and warmth of a campfire at many of the campgrounds we'd stayed at.

Once again we hope you will enjoy wandering in a beautiful Canadian town and visiting a building that sits in two countries. All these, and much more, are waiting for you and your family to experience in the three-hundred pages ahead, not only to try an *"imagine"* but actually see as if you had taken the trip yourself.

Another good reason and best of all reasons for sitting down and writing this manuscript was to expose you to this awesome lifestyle we are enjoying. It is my hope that by presenting our travels in text and digital form, a seed might get sewn, a seed that will hopefully grow over the years to the point that you too might opt for an RV vacation some day and personally visit many of the places we've been to for yourself. Maybe, even if not as a full-time RVer as we are, but possibly rent a Motorhome or Travel Trailer and enjoy one or more of our places as a family.

Even with over thirty thousand words of text, this is still a very quick read, but reading this text is only half the experience. Taking time to enjoy the hundreds of pictures, I hope, will complete the experience. They will visually take you to all our destinations and the pictures should accentuate the experience greatly, especially for the younger readers. I encourage you to take all the time you need to enjoy the pictures fully. The Table of Contents page has all the major venues listed. There are, as you read through the chapters, about a dozen venues that have not been listed in the Table of Contents in order to facilitate keeping the table of contents to one page. Our new lifestyle story begins on the July chapter. I ask you to please be patient with us. This will be an entirely new way of living for us, not to mention, actually living on the road with no brick and mortar home to fall back on. To make matters even more challenging we will be traveling in a Dodge Ram 2500 truck and towing a six-ton home behind us. In full disclosure, it was never our intention to document our travels in hopes of sharing our travels with the outside world. Next year with our second book, we will focus on our travels through the mid-west. Big difference is that I am now documenting more in anticipation of another book.

Our first thirty days will be spent with family, since it will be the last time we see our folks for at least twelve months. It will be during this month that we experience many of the venues in the Greenfield MA and Derby, VT areas. In August we will be truly on our own, untethered from family. We begin to venture out with much less fear of not knowing what we're really trying to do. As you can see in the Table of Contents, we begin feeling our oats in September through October chapters.

Once again, be patient with us as we experiment with this novel lifestyle.

JULY 2014

Our first night:



Fast forwarding a few months we find ourselves in March of 2014 preparing for our transition to this full-time life style. It would mean weeding through all our household belongings and selling off everything we owned. Well to make a long story short we finally closed on our home on July 3rd waiting three months longer than we were told it would take. The very next day, July 4th 2014 was our Independence Day. Our first day as full-time RVers, and we've never looked back since. Our new home would now be a thirty-five foot Open Range Fifth Wheel with our ever trustworthy red Dodge Ram 2500.

Yup, we were on our way, first stop would be in South Carolina for an overnight boondoggle at a Walmart, I know, breath-taking! Needless to say, boondocking in a Walmart parking lot was not precisely what we had envisioned for the first night of the rest of our traveling life. Since those primitive early days we now do our overnights at more civilized locations like those ever present Cracker Barrel's. For the most part, RVers do take advantage of Walmart's every chance they get, and Walmart doesn't mind their business either. Living on the road with everything you have in the storage compartments below or tucked away under your bed is definitely not a hardship. This is really the American dream. False as it might seem, that acquiring more and more stuff brings happiness, not so. As I've said for the last two years,

HAPPINESS:

is to HAVING EVERYTHING You need!

NOT the need

to HAVE EVERYTHING!



At a Walmart in So Carolina, just outside of Savannah, GA

Our life is such that if it's not in the fifth, we don't need it. What's great about all the Walmart stores is that they have just about every basic need you might be looking for, just in case you got rid of just a little too much stuff.

At this point every square inch of space inside the fifth, not needed for living was occupied by boxes of personal stuff. We are hoping that other members of our families would treasure this stuff as much as we have. *Sure!* Nobody refused any of our boxes, at least not while we visited. It's not like everyone else doesn't have enough stuff of their own.

Good news is, everyone is still talking to us. Our goal for the next day would be finding a campground called Traveler's Woods. This will be our first actual camping experience in the fifth; to be honest it will be our first camping experience, period! Camping, however in this style, is as comfortable as living at home. The campground is located a short distance from family members that we'll be visiting over the next three weeks. I unfortunately would have some serious concerns in the months to come concerning backing the fifth and being in control of the fifth, however, hitching up and unhitching the fifth comes easily. We went the entire year and never came close to anyone else's rig. This, unfortunately, is a concern that would never leave me. Throughout the year we faced some difficult sites and, sometimes we needed a little help, we always managed to back it in safely, however, one way or another. Camp managers and owners, especially at private camp grounds are always ready to assist, especially a newbie. We would eventually resolve this apprehension, but that's a story for the 2015 book. It would be great visiting family and friends but we are patiently waiting for our time alone in a few weeks.

Poet's Seat Tower=(Located in Greenfield, MA)-July 25th, 2014



The Poet's Seat Tower 2014. Greenfield, MA. It's been quiet the last few days working; yes working, as in trying to make some money. I haven't totally given in to the idea that I may be actually retired. Poet's Seat overlooks Greenfield. It has very little importance other than it's a beautiful view. We climbed our way to this high point in Greenfield; just being a little facetious. You'll find this tower at Mountain Rd / Maple St, Greenfield, MA 01301.

Town of Greenfield, MA- Farren Memorial Hospital Montague City, MA



This hospital is significant for at least 2 reasons. First, Carla was born there. Second, according to legend, Joyce Kilmer, at one time, looked out upon the trees to the right side of the hospital property and wrote the poem "TREES."

Now that we have Greenfield out of the way we begin travelling North through Northfield on our way to experience Cathedral in the Pines. We're not sure what to expect. On our way Carla realized we were on the road to a log home she once owned in her previous life. Could we find it? Driving slowly she spotted her street, now it was up to her to remember where it was located. On the first try she spotted it. Below- there it was about fifty feet from the road. It was a little sad, evidently the folks that currently own it have given up on it, is what it looks like. We poked around barely able to see through the windows. Dog food still on the floor, from how long ago, we don't know. The yard was fully overgrown. I can see it must have been very nice in its day. We might try to determine the full story behind this forgotten homestead, someday. There will be only a couple of personal diversions like this one.



Kimball's Restaurant

Now it's back on the road, after finding a piece of Carla's past history, heading for The Cathedral of the Pines. But every trip has its interruptions. Once again we are sidetracked as we drove by Kimball's Restaurant; "*best seafood for miles around*" is what their road sign says. Actually, from what I could see, it was the only decent restaurant we'd seen on these desolate roads. We were not hungry for food, but Ice Cream was definitely an option. So we pulled in. After receiving our cones we sat down at a picnic table where we met and spoke to a staff person having lunch, a seafood platter, what else? Very enjoyable to speak to. His son is a pilot and is now flying in Alaska. I have a picture of the ice cream cones we purchased, that is, in our cell phones.

Once I figure out how to move it from cell to computer this next sentence will make more sense. We're still new at this new lifestyle, but one activity never ceases to satisfy, and that's the option of having ice cream. I've given it some thought and it would be much cheaper for us to just read about these places of interest and then treat ourselves to another cone. Do not give up on the travel journal. We're only thirty days into our new lifestyle and the same goes for this journal. The pictures and locations, I promise, are about to get much more interesting. At this stage in our new life we're very much like the senior college students just about ready to graduate. Only weeks to go before we'll have a good jobs and be free and on our own, but not forgotten, by family. Our travels are currently hovering around family. We both realize, especially Carla, once we really set off on our own, it won't be till October before we're within traveling distance of family again.

Cathedral of the Pines, Rindge, NH



The story of the Cathedral is actually a memorial dedicated to Sandy Sloan. FYI. Dr. and Mrs. Sloane's farmhouse (below) and barn can be seen across the street from the Cathedral. And 400 acres of land that go with it, including an awesome lake. His plan was to deed over parcels to each of his kids. He only had 4 kids, so there was more than enough land to go around. Sandy chose a heavily wooded parcel up on a hill across from the farmhouse but died in WWII before realizing his dream home. He was shot down over Germany. Parents decided to erect a small alter on his property in his memory.

Cathedral of the Pines Meditation Gardens behind the Chapel. This is the Main Alter with Mt. Monadnock in background. Below on this bell tower are plaques representing four different branches of the service, women in the service being the theme represented here.

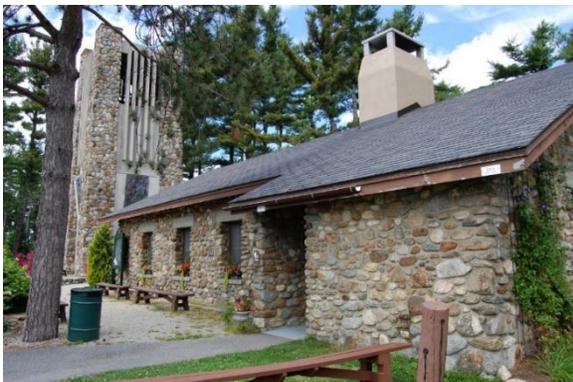




This alter is composed of rocks from every state in the country and almost every country in the world. This is a non-denominational venue. Services have been held here for most religions from Catholic to Jewish and so many more. Mount Monadnock can be seen just a few miles from here. We've done our mountain climbing for this year. Just for the record we did climb this mountain a few years ago. Before we leave this venue, enjoy a look at the inside of the chapel.



Stones that make up this alter above, come from every country in the world. Presidents and outstanding leaders around the world had also sent stones from the size of a small stone to some as big as one foot square. A monument can be found in the Medication Gardens, just to the back of the Chapel. It is the Prayer to St. Francis of Assisi.



In 1936 a hurricane came through the area and devastated many of the trees on Sandy's lot. As a result Mount Monadnock is now visible from the property. The view is magnificent. Long story short, the land was cleared nicely, a chapel built as an Ecumenical Meditation Chapel, a chapel for all faiths. Stones and artifacts have been donated by current and past presidents, leaders from all over the world have contributed rocks for the construction of this alter, and meditation gardens. Behind the chapel and the bell tower there's a

beautiful meditation walkway. To come to south New Hampshire and not spend the extra thirty minutes just to meditate on family and friends now but a memory, would be a great shame.

Bridge of Flowers: Shelburne, MA - (20 north of Northampton, MA)



This is the Deerfield River as it flows through Shelburne Falls, MA. We made it safely to Traveler's Woods and were very satisfied with all that it has to offer. What an experience this bridge is, a walk back in time to a simpler and more gratifying era. This is the Bridge of Flowers located in the center of Shelburne Falls. On the far side of the Bridge of Flowers is a beautiful garden area. Carla was able to rattle off the names of many of the flowers, indigenous to the northeast, I nodded my head in full acknowledgement, of course. Just down the road a piece we arrive at Greenfield, MA, which will be our next stop. *Please don't despair, our venues will be much more exciting very shortly.*

GLACIAL POT HOLES



If you look closely at the pictures above and below you will see round holes in the rocks; these are the Glacial Pot Holes. This is one of the largest known concentrations of potholes and the location of the largest pothole on record. The potholes were not caused by meteors, as I first suspected, rather from the "whirlpool action" of the water. Just to emphasize the terrific action of the water, the stone here is solid granite. These potholes vary from just inches in diameter to as much as forty feet in diameter. There is no charge for access to the Potholes, and no "supervision" is provided, so be cautious when climbing on the rocks. Water levels may vary, based on weather conditions, but you should be able to dunk your feet to very refreshing waters. Also remember to bring your camera! The shadings in the ancient granite is caused by the swirling of water. The stones, are part of the glacial age thousands of years ago, when they began to "melt down" are a beautiful picturesque geological sight.

Kringle Candle Shop, Bernardston, MA-(Just off of I-91 below the New Hampshire border.)



What a great little shop, although actually it's not very little, but not a Yankee Candle either. This business occupies many acres on both sides of the street. Just a couple of more pictures. This building contains Christmas everything. Michael Kittredge III is the owner of Kringle Candle Shop. His father was Michael Kittredge II who was the founder of Yankee Candle. Strangely, this candle store is just a short distance from Yankee Candle. I believe that when the new store opened the only color available was white. That has definitely changed. Lots of pastel colors were to be seen, but white did seem to still dominate.



Now, getting back to the father.

The father, the founder of the Yankee Candle Shop years ago sold his Yankee Candle empire for around four-hundred million dollars, I've been told. Just take a look at how pretty this looks. It looks like this all year round. Wish I had a better picture of how perfectly green the grass is. Now, getting back to the father. The father, the founder of the Yankee Candle Shop years ago sold his Yankee Candle empire for around four-hundred million dollars, I've been told. Just take a look at how pretty this looks. It looks like this all year round. Wish I had a better picture of how perfectly green the grass is.

Antique car show:



Several times a year Michael Kittredge sponsors an antique car show on the Kringle Candle grounds. This is a must see occasion. If anyone in your family enjoys older impeccably restored cars this is the place. The red Jag was my favorite, it's also Mr. K's favorite as well. I went to college for five years in hopes of being able to afford this baby, never happened! Such is life. Just a little trivial information. Should you attend this car attraction you be given an opportunity to vote on your favorite car. The cars directly in front of the Candle Shop, by the road, are not permitted to be judged. All those cars, there are quite a few, are part of Mr. K's personal collection, and since he already knows they are the best on the lot, they may not be part of the judging, FYI.

I believe this might be a Pontiac. The car below might have been the oldest model on the lot. As I mentioned above, the candle shop is awesome but if you can combine it with one of his antique car displays...Priceless!

7.14.2014



As you can guess from the dates on some of these entries there are some gaps in time. We are full-time RVers and as such we do take time to just relax. I was also there, but someone had to take the picture. That's another reason we often miss Abby on our trips, she was an excellent photographer. Life is just too short and must be enjoyed. I've always said:

"You will never have enough money to retire, but if you wait too long, you may not have enough time. It's a paradox we all have to come face to face with some day."

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Cheryl & Paul – Dinner at Friendly's Restaurant

July 15th.

On this day we had a chance to visit with my daughter Cheryl and hubby Paul. As a bonus we got to see them again on the 26th just a couple of weeks later. Today, the 26th, just a little out of sequence, but it ties in with Kringle Candle. We began our day with a visit from Cheryl and Paul as they visited with us in the fifth. In most instances the kids end up doing the traveling but in Cheryl's case, on some days, it is a chore for her to physically make a two-hour trip. We both appreciated their efforts immensely. The food at Kringle's was excellent and they were able to get on their way by 1pm. I would have liked to have kept them at the campground and just sit and talk, but we did quite a bit of that last week when we visited them in their beautiful home in Norwich, CT. A fifth-wheel might be interesting to talk about for a while, but the conversation wears thin quickly. Nevertheless it was a great visit. Just another one of those family snippets I felt like sharing.

July 17th- Old Deerfield, MA:



The historic Town of Deerfield is someplace everyone should visit at least once in their lives. The house above actually began as a 4-room home. The back portion was added on. But before the add-on the owner, a wealthy industrialist, actually raised the original building 18 inches, for a more impressive look from the road. When the owner was finished he had a 14-room home. In the end he and others with larger homes and additional rooms would rent out a room or two. This beckons an explanation on the saying "*Room and Board*". *Many home-owners, at the time, would rent a "bare" room usually to a student attending Deerfield Academy. And that is all the home-owner would give the individual, a room and a "board" to use any way he wanted.*

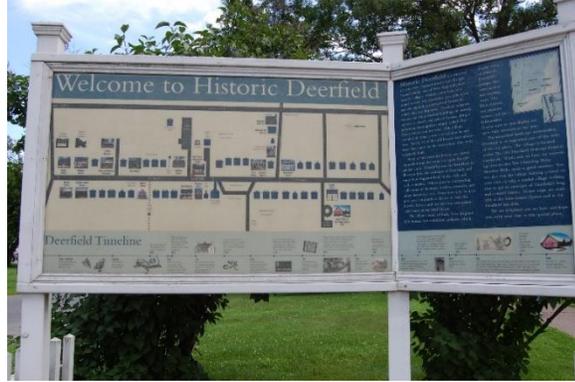
The brown house below, as you can see, has an overhang on the front portion of the home. We see this architecture in present day, but this house was built in 1734. The real reason, as was told to Carla when she was in the 4th grade, was to permit openings on the second floor overhang to facilitate shooting and warding off intruders



This home, above, was also owned by a wealthy person. Items used in the home like wallpaper (shipped from France) and floor coverings (usually from the Orient) were very expensive. Another indication were the paintings on the walls. Most paintings, since digital was not around yet, were head shots only. Only a wealthy person could afford to have not only his head painted but arms and legs as well, which at the time, many artists had difficulty painting in the proper proportions. *So comes the saying "cost you an arm and a leg"*. Only those wealthy enough could have an upper body or full body portrait. Below is the first home built with brick in place of wood.



This is the First Church of Deerfield and first to have a steeple. It was built in 1824 and, is known as the "Brick Church." It was built by contractor Winthrop Clapp and was modeled on the 1819 Second Congregational Church in Greenfield, MA. In 1807, a controversy began when the church ordained a Unitarian minister, Rev. Samuel Willard. He was succeeded by other Unitarians. Orthodox Congregationalists eventually broke away and built their own church in 1838. The Brick Church remains a Unitarian Universalist Church today. Below, does not require an explanation. Carla and I were hungry and the town has an exceptional lunch wagon on the grounds of the Deerfield Fire Station offering sandwiches and snacks. We had hot dogs.



Just a couple of words to the reader, especially if you have children. Be prepared to spend the entire day in order to see all that is available for viewing. No picture taking is permitted inside the homes, outside is okay. It's essential to choose a comfortable day and equally comfortable shoes. As you can see, by the self-guided tour map above, there's a great deal to see and learn should you visit. At the end of the street is an awesome Ice Cream store, for when the kids have a hankering for a cone. Not much else to add. Should you decide to visit, pay the \$14 fee and enjoy live presentations at several on the homes on display, all are very interesting. We arrived to late for this option. Once again, photography is not permitted, which is why this blog is a little blah and short. A wealth of information is to be had concerning the life and times of the people from 1725 to the mid-18th century.

Above is the Deerfield Inn built in 1884 with 24 guest rooms and excellent dining.

For more information on the Deerfield Homes of the past go to:
<http://www.historic-deerfield.org/discover-deerfield/historic-houses/stebbins-house/>

Traveler's Woods RV Park:
 Bernardston, MA
 (Just off of I-91 below the New Hampshire border.)



What a great little campground. In the pictures to follow you'll see just how serene this area really is and what a great place to enjoy RVing. We're located at the bottom of the campground. During heavy downpours this area could get very soggy. The highway, I-91, is within walking distance in back of the camper, but after your first day you will barely notice the sound from the highway. This park, a long time ago, was originally a KOA campground. Many years ago forty-four campers decided to make an offer on the property and were successful in acquiring it. They turned it into a Mason Retreat. Eventually they opened it up to the public. At present, I'm told, there are twenty-eight original members left. Some of the RVs on the grounds are annual residents and are empty. The empty RVs are for seasonal and part-time visitors. Dave, shown to the left, on the other hand, lives here six months, then leaves his RV and returns in the spring. He is retired law-enforcement officer and loves it here.

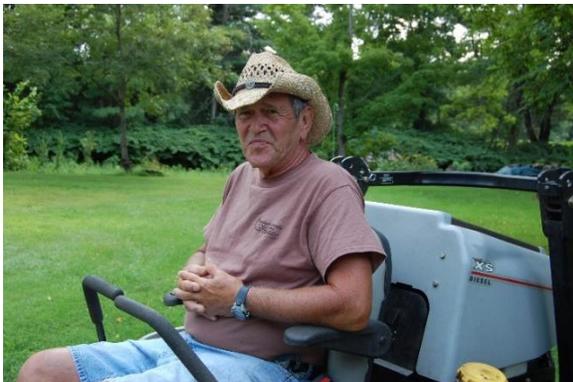


3The Visitors Center is staffed almost all day long, including longer hours on weekends at times. Books, DVDs, magazines and TV is available. Downstairs you'll find a ping pong table, bathrooms and washer dryers. We're located in the lower section of the campground, which is still great, but sewer hook-ups are not available here. To compensate for the lack of sewer hook-up the campground will come around every week and drain your holding tanks on their own. As far as water, it's great. In fact we're not using any of our filtered water at this campground. I am correcting this last statement, so as not to mislead RV novices. In our early days we had a great deal of faith in park utilities, not so any longer. For our drinking water we are now stocking two three-gallon containers of water purchased from, where else but Walmart.

For a little more than a dollar a unit we play it safe as advised from FMCA (Family Motor Coach Association). Don't trust the campgrounds on electricity either. Always protect all your expensive appliances by utilizing a surge protector.



We used to subscribe to Dish and here we find ourselves with no reception with Dish using our Tailgater receiver. I would not recommend this type of unit to anyone. So few channels to choose from and the reception is very frustrating. We've terminated service temporarily. Television was such a large segment of our lives when living conventionally. I'd never thought that in the months to come TV would be so inconsequential, we would never have spent all that money, not to mention the two year contract, for Dish satellite service. Television has very little to do with the camping lifestyle. Tailgater owners will have no reception either, it's a Dish problem. FYI for those readers that might be thinking of pursuing this lifestyle, it would be my advice to opt for the dome on roof, a little more expensive but you'll have just about all the options you would have had at home, most of all the option to record one or more stations at a time. Below you'll find a large area for kids to play in. Granted some of it can be used for parking motorhomes, but the managers seem to keep this area open except for a large special group, if needed.

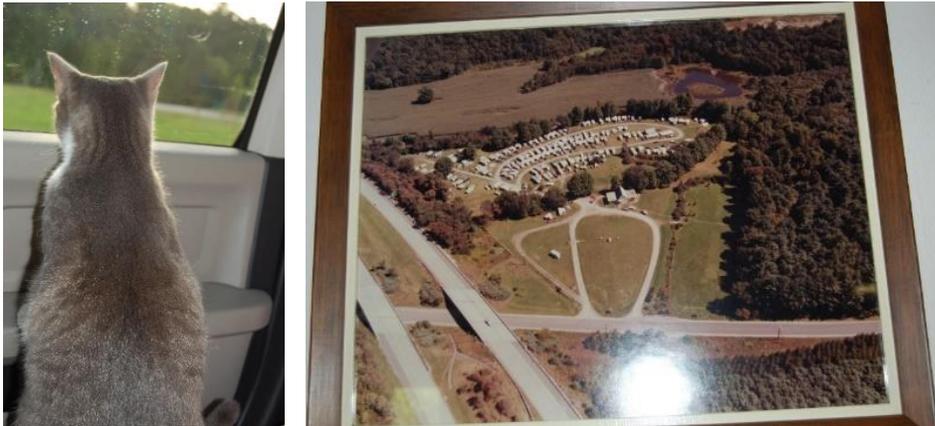


Call or write for specific driving directions from the camp managers prior to traveling to Travelers Woods. If you don't your GPS will bring you to a bridge in town just before you arrive at the campground. For those with a travel trailer or intend to tent-camp, this might not be relevant. Height of the bridge is not 11'2", more like 9 feet. The town continues to repave the road and rarely removes all the old pavement. Calling ahead for any specific driving directions is always a must. When we were boating it was called getting to know the local hazards to navigation.

Above is the upper section by the office and is a little more expensive, but comes with sewer hookups. Not as heavily treed, something I enjoy. I would like to interject that, back last year we were very naïve and did not realize how important it is for a campground to have open spaces, like what you see above, when you arrive to facilitate checking-in. In our travels In 2014 we did run into a small number of campgrounds that had limited parking for arrivals. One in Vermont (Car-bo) had a horrible arrival area. On the way out of the campground there is pump-out station if needed before you get back on the road. As everyone knows it only takes money to own a campground and running at campground isn't physics. However, if you're not a people person, good luck! If doing grounds keeping and pump station maintenance is not up your ally, good luck again. Once again! Travelers Woods is fortunate in having two husband and wife teams that have all the right attributes. Bev, part of the Bev and Leon team, is awesome. She'll bend over backwards to get everyone the accommodations best suited for their needs.

Then there's Leon.

Leon, the muscle behind the scenes. He's the gentle lion, in charge of everything physical. Just a few days ago we had a tremendous rain storm. Revere, MA had a tornado as part of that storm. During a short break in the rain, you could see Leon in his golf cart/chariot, assessing any damage from the storm. "Only this one large branch" he told me, had fallen by the river. Within minutes he was back in his tractor ridding the park of this hazard. The way he zips along in his cart lead me to think he had some professional training with fast vehicles. And sure enough; In his younger days he was involved in racing for a few years.



Scoots is fascinated watching Leon zig-zag up and down and occasionally doing a circle-eight which he has definitely mastered. But then, she's a cat, and has no life. The campground is always in pristine condition which, most likely, accounts for all the activity in camper traffic every day. Bev and Leon truly enjoy being campground managers. With the zest they show every day catering to our needs they should have the opportunity to not only manage a campground but be owners. Who knows, there's always the possibility of winning the lottery.

I found this picture on their Web Site. Our location during our stay is in the upper left corner. But what you see is about 90% of the campground. This park is for the everyday person and family. Honestly it's much nicer than many corporate campgrounds. however you can't beat the fees some of those campgrounds charge. This year, 2014, we'll end up spending almost four-thousand dollars just on campground fees. We will corrected that situation in 2015.

Hiking Northfield Mountain

(20 minute drive from Travelers Woods east of I-91)

July 20, 2014



Sunday, was supposed to be a quiet day, but that would be a waste of a beautiful day. Temps are in the low 70s and no humidity, awesome! It was our decision to take a short trip to Northfield, MA. The heading on this topic says "mountain" but you must take the term loosely, after all were in our late sixties, and can barely remember the last time we climbed a real mountain. We arrived and paid the small fees they were asking for, then we were faced with a decision, which trail would we select. Given all these choices we chose Rose Ledge trail. We were told it

would be around five miles, unless we miss a turn, which we will, and add at least half mile or more to this adventure. Things began quite nicely, still just a gentle slope, but we both knew that would not last. See the RED markers below on the tree, that's our trail. Look at the size of that marker, it's about as wide as a tree. But we'll be seeing "blue" soon.



Yup, you guessed it, still going uphill! Below, if you haven't noticed, yes, were still going uphill. We look at it this way, we're retired, and life is not a race. We're going to take our time and smell the roses, whatever! At least the red trail markers are where they should be, and us too.





This looks like a memorial marker. Someone did not make it! Water!!! Thank goodness, we made note of where we are and that there's water just in case we drink through the 12oz water bottle we took with us.



Right again, still going up! This is as high as we go. We started on red markers, then followed blue for a while, then about 1/4 mile ago we were back on the red trail. Met a young man at this point, from Granby CT. He was going the other way. He got side tracked on this trail as well. He assured us the red trail was well marked from this point moving forward.



Water again; we're good. Still have four ounces left. It's just reassuring to know, should we need more, where water can be found. Notice the ravine is going downhill, we're going up again; just a bit! This is still a perfect day for a hike.

Neither are we concerned about how long this is taking us nor the fact that we haven't seen many hikers the lasty twenty minutes nor do we have idea if we're even on the red trail, or any trail. Red markers. Where are you?



Going downhill! Finally, but we haven't seen a red marker or blue marker for the last twenty minutes. Below, guess what, a red marker. The path we've been following was pretty well worn, so we were not that worried, we knew we'd come out somewhere. Thank goodness a red marker was here to greet us.



End is in sight! Made it, 2.5 hours later. Nice climb, and people tell us we're old! This was a great walk in the park type climb, and we would recommend it as a five star adventure. A family with kids age eight and above should have very little problems here at Northfield Mountain.



Just a cautionary word to parents. This is not a hill, it's a small mountain, definitely not Canon Mountain but probably not much harder to climb than Mount Washington. Dress appropriately, comfortable "climbing" shoes, not what we wore, and bring more than one bottle of water. Drinking water from a spring is never advised.



July 25th,- The Inn at East Hill Farm.

Now, to top off the day, we are heading for Troy, NH. To be exact The Inn at East Hill Farm. This beautiful old Inn holds so many memories for me. There was a time, not that long ago, square dancing was an integral part of our lives. Our caller Jim Harris and wife Mary, both now pasted away, would book the entire property as a graduation celebration for his new dancers. He was always the only caller scheduled, however he had a great many followers, those he had taught, numbered over three-hundred on these weekends. His reputation was so wide spread he very rarely had less than ten or twelve high level callers show up as well. These were callers at the top of their field, and they came on their own dime. We would begin dancing around 10am, right after an awesome breakfast and sometimes dance till well after midnight...Priceless weekends!

The Inn at East Hill Farm – The Main House

The Barn at the Inn

This was always a family experience and it never disappointed. With Jim Harris as our caller plus the awesome East Hill Farm location would always be the square dance extravaganza the newbies would never forget. The level, for those square dancers would start a “club-level” and reach mainstream and A1 for those dances with a great deal of experience. From a social point of view you forgot work and problems back home, and concentrated on dancing, eating and just plain having fun. Sadly Jim and wife Mary are no longer with us and with his passing would go any possibility of future dancers learning this dance form from such an awesome teacher. Our three-day weekends at the Inn, if I recall rightly, were in March/April and it was usually cold, sometimes very cold. The ambiance of the Inn, friends and fireplaces never let the chilly weather dampen our weekends. So many adults and kids would come and



enjoy all of the activities the Inn provided for them. My kids would join us for dances and, of course, meals (awesome food). Often times they were off during the afternoon times with the other kids experiencing the animals in the barn, and possibly other activities. The days and nights went by so fast that, before we knew it, the Inn was serving its memorable Thanksgiving Turkey Dinner family style to everyone’s satisfaction, this however, would also mean it was about time to leave. If this could be your only camping experience over a vacation period, the memories of East Hill Farm would never leave you.

The welcome mat is always out at the INN

Old folks' first campfire
7/2014



Last Friday night we tried our hand at having a campfire. We did pretty well. Managed not to set the grounds on fire and were able to cook up a few hot dogs. Hey, if you look very closely you might be able to see the fire. Remember that song "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes", by either Nat King Cole or the Platters. Thought it was a song about a breaking-up, but now I think it was a country-western song about a smokey campfire. We would spend the next week reviewing our plans and double checking our travel routes. August would actually be the spring-board month for the rest of our lives, a camping lifestyle. We hadn't fully experienced this lifestyle yet, but in the months to follow, we will often be asked, "How do you like not having a real home?" Being full-time is a totally unique experience. It's so hard to fully explain. I assume it would be like trying to describe a roller-coaster experience, or even the exhilarating feeling of the Tower of Terror at Disney. To be totally free from all those things that tie you to the brick and mortar world, especially the lawn..Awesome!. From time to time I will try to expand on this thought but enough for now.

AUGUST 2014



Carla's Birthday -It's tradition with Carla to try to guess what her gifts might be, prior to opening. Today would be the same as she guessed; a loaf of pumpkin bread. We hope to go out to eat later this evening and then finish the birthday day with a movie; we selected Noah. We have already begun the packing-up process, not that it is that involved or takes that long, it's just the idea of doing it the right way to facilitate the setting-up process as we travel next to Vermont. Carla's 2014 Birthday Cake was actually a strawberry cheesecake. Promised her dinner this evening and dinner we did.

We re-visited the Four Leaf Clover Restaurant in Bernardston, VT. Later that evening we relaxed in the coach and around 6 we'll begin watching Noah. We don't expect the movie to disappoint. We're still celebrating Carla's birthday, later that evening. The birthday cake did not come out, this year, till the end of the day. We really needed nourishment after sitting through Noah for two-and one-half hours. Cake this year was a mini cheesecake for two, and no more! It was from Stop & Shop and was delicious.

Four Leaf Clover Restaurant-MA
Bernardston, MA.
Four Leaf Clover (FLC) Restaurant



Fancy restaurants with fancy names and stars after their names are so over-rated. I'll take a family-owned restaurant with casual dress code any day of the week. The Four Leaf Clover this evening served up two Lobster Rolls with fries. I had a beer and Carla had an ice tea and the meal was beyond our expectations. Since we forgot to go out to eat for my birthday, this was an ideal opportunity to celebrate both occasions. We were here once before, two weeks ago, celebrating our 24th Wedding Anniversary. Carla had Shrimp and pasta and I dined on a thick

medium well done steak and a generous piece of fish, haddock I think... At the restaurant, that evening, the folks next to us had ordered that same meal I had ordered and, although it was a fairly good size piece of fish, the jumbo shrimp looked so much better. I asked the waitress if I could swap out the plain fish for the shrimp, she said no problem. Was honestly expecting only a couple of jumbo shrimp; what a surprise! I was given four of jumbo shrimp, just like Carla had. I definitely got the best of both worlds on this meal. The Four Leaf Clover is about as casual as you can get. The menu is more than adequate, from beans and bacon to steak with seafood. This restaurant deserves all the promoting possible. It will not disappoint.

Aug 6, 2014 - **Travelers Woods RVP**-last night

The slides have been checked, tanks emptied, the king-pin unsecured and the bikes have been safely



secured to the rear ladder. Seems we work harder preparing the bikes to travel than anything else. Sounds worse than it is. I envy those folks with coaches, you know, those big motorhomes. Family decided to get together at Applebee's. This has been a very pleasant stay. Noticed Carla is just a little concerned that it might be a long time before we visit family in Greenfield, MA again, but that should not be the case. New York, Conn. and Mass. connect to everywhere in the country; and revisiting should not be a problem. Next day Pat. Carla's sister in law,

called and invited us to join them this evening for pizza; she saved me from having left-over ham at home; delicious!

We are preparing to leave Traveler's Woods by 10 AM tomorrow morning. by 10 PM the fifth wheel is ready for the next trip which will be a six hour trip. We will break up the traveling into two short trips, called boondocking; the frugal lifestyle of living with no outside utilities.

This year we were full-timing in a fifth-wheel RV, that's a big trailer being towed by a very strong diesel truck. We'll use the batteries in the fifth wheel for lights, our only comfort. The camper has a bathroom, thank goodness. For breakfast tomorrow we'll keep it simple with just coffee, cereal and donuts. After breakfast is over the slides come in and we disconnect electric and water from Traveler's Woods-RVP and hitch-up to the truck for our two-hundred-mile trek to Northern Vermont. What a life; taking your home with you no matter where you go.

August 8, Friday Generally I group our trips by the campground that we're staying at, but Char-bo has only been a disappointment so I will avoid mentioning this campground by name, oops! and refer this trip by our town of destination, Derby, VT. We will be visiting Carla's sister at her camp/home. This will be another family snippet, but it also qualifies for a very nice destination as well, that is, Derby, VT.

Mary Ann's Derby camp



We've visited before in 2012 when we enjoyed our first family get together here. First day involves traveling but we were pleasantly treated to an awesome pork dinner that evening and after that we viewed a DVD which did not disappoint, however nobody can remember the name of it. The weekend is here already and Carla and Mary Ann went to visit the library at the Derby Line. Being Saturday we went to church at 4 PM that evening. On the way home from church we picked up a pizza and brought it to the camp. Then, as customary, it was movie night. Mark, Carla's nephew, and Jody will arrive Sunday morning. Their kids, Morgan and Haley will be arriving this coming Friday with others. It was great seeing them again, although we'd all been together during our Greenfield, MA visit. The rest of the day was spent just talking. Mark and Jodi we're scheduled to cook this evening, they'd be serving up some stuffed peppers for dinner. Then again we ended the evening with a movie, "Escape". Monday already. We picked up Mark and Jodi and spent the day in Magog, in Québec, Canada. Only a 45 minute drive from Derby, this picturesque town was a pleasure to visit. In the evening, at the camp, it doesn't get much better than this. Every family should have a family member fortunate to have a camp get-away, like this. View from the camp...Thank you Mary Ann.

Magog, Quebec- Canada



Magog, August 11, 2014, in Quebec Canada, I'm sure, it's not on anyone's "must see" list, but in our travels we hope to visit and explore not only the big sights but also some lesser known towns and areas of interest. We hope you enjoy some of the venues we visit.



Saint Patric's Church in downtown Magog, Quebec. We have a really hard time passing up visiting a new church. This church was truly awesome. Just check out what the interior of the church looked like. Like so many of our friends who RV full-time, we can't help but realize how blessed we are to be fortunate enough to enjoy this type of lifestyle. None of the full-time RVers that I know of have any serious money, we all live on a very strict budgets, but all of us are acutely aware that it only takes one serious accident to limit our traveling abilities. Carla and I never pass up an opportunity to thank Him for making all this possible for us.



What do you think...?
Awesome right!

Just across the street we finally give in to our stomachs and discover a quaint restaurant, however, the menu all in French of course, so we decide on a ham and cheese sandwich and other stuff but all was in French, all of it as so delicious. Below for many Canadians, I'm told, this beachfront is their Rivera without their having to mortgage the farm. It was just so pleasant touring this town from this beautiful walkway. Especially having Mark and Jodi with us on this particular venue. Mary Ann had left her passport back home and so was unable to go on this trip.



Mark, Carla's nephew and wife Jodi, This looks like an old fashioned train depot below, but in actuality it's a building housing restrooms. At the end of the building, notice the windows, is an awesome Ice Cream station. Ice Cream is not necessary to make our day, but it doesn't hurt. Another look at this walkway as it hooks around the town marina. Only drawback to the walkway is that the only way back to where you parked your car is to backtrack the way you came.



The village of Magog. If it were not for the cars on the street this could easily be mistaken for a turn of the century New England town. For now though, all good things must come to an end and return to the USA. We arrived around 1 PM. Magog was only 31 miles from Derby. For dinner this evening, at Mary Ann's camp, we had cheeseburgers, that were awesome. The following day was spent at home (in the fifth) till later in the afternoon. In the meantime Kelly, Jodi's sister and Barbara, Jodi and Kelly's mom, arrived at the camp. Where did everyone sleep for the next five days? We joined them for a "build it your way" dinner. Chicken sandwich was the meal for this evening. We followed up dinner with the movie "Heaven is for Real." Needless to say everyone enjoyed the movie.



The evenings at the camp, as Mary Ann calls it, are so very peaceful. I think the lake has a great deal to do with it. We were expected at the camp on Wednesday by 7 AM. Not used to getting up and getting



out that early but we made it. Then off to McDonald's to enjoy a quick breakfast followed by a trip to the "turbines" in the town of Lowell, VT. Karen will be staying overnight with us. Hot dogs and cold cuts are on the menu. Saturday, and it's a very special day. My daughter, Cheryl's, birthday today. Yes! I remembered! Last night we had our first overnight guest stay with us in the coach, Karen. All the others were sleeping at the camp in Derby, somewhere somehow. The camp is a one-bedroom home. As usual Mass is on the docket for 4 PM. Mary Ann, Carla and I

attended and then met up with the gang at a pizza shop in Derby. This was followed up with a full evening of "Left-Right-Center," as very inexpensive but very enjoyable card game. Carla's family bids everyone farewell for 2014

8.13.2014- Wind Turbines of Vermont- Lowell, VT



The blades on these goliaths are around two-hundred feet long. The towers that house them are around three-hundred feet tall. The base of the turbines measure around twelve feet. The turbine motor unit, in the center of the blade, is twelve feet in diameter, but looks much smaller from the ground. Above is one-half of a full blade.



In this location there were twenty-one turbines. Little did we know that in our travels we would be seeing turbines in so many locations. One was actually in Boston by the new bridge. Iowa is inundated with them. They also dot the landscape of so many acres of farmlands in Wisconsin.



Strangely, when you stand close to these turbines the blades, they appear to move ever so slowly. Our guide told us that they were operating at full power. They actually are fitted with brakes should they go around much faster than this. Just a tidbit of junk information. Would you believe that the power company that paid for the land rights, bought the turbines and erected them only have a twenty year lease, after which if lucky, the holder of the lease will renew the lease. If not given a renewal, they face having to dismantle everything and go home. This is only the second week in August, not November. Do we look like the temps are in the seventies? This day we were lucky if the temp reached forty degrees. Not to mention the wind. It took me a good four hours to begin feeling my toes after we finally got back to the fifth. Gotta love Vermont.

8.19.2014- Haskell Free Library , Québec, CA

As they say;" this is the pride of Stanstead, Québec and Derby Line, VT." Why both?



This beautiful building, built in 1904 as a library, for the border communities of both these villages, but it also has an Opera House on the upper level. The Opera Theatre was an afterthought to hopefully insure the financial success of the Library. This Canadian officer above was a little concerned when he noticed us pulling over to the side of the road. He must have mistaken us for a couple of old terrorist. Once I pulled out my camera he was kind enough to strike a pose for our camera. A French and English translation on the origination of the opera house.

"This structure is doubly unusual: It not only straddles the Canada-United States boundary but also contains a theatre. Built between 1901 and 1904 as the gift of the Haskell family of Vermont, it testifies to the late Victorian belief in the intellectual and moral benefits of education and the arts. It is a Queen Anne Revival style, as designed by James Ball, is typical of public libraries of the period. The second story opera house follows accepted principles of 19th-century theatre design and its ornate interior seats 500 people."



So, once again, why are we here? It all has to do with the black line you see on the floor in the picture below. If you are seated on the back side of the line you would be sitting in the USA. Sit yourself in front of the line and you'd be in Canada. This is the only known building that straddles two countries. This delightful destination is well worth a serious ride for both adults and children.



On the back walls of this theatre you will find signatures of performers going back over one-hundred years. In the beginning the management tried to discourage this new fad but the performers felt a need to be remembered and the walls back stage were selected. This is not part of the regular tour. Carla had asked our tour person a question and she brought us back stage to reinforce the answer to her question.

8.20.2014- Jay Peak Mountain,



Right, we've just arrived at Jay Peak. This is a huge attraction in Jay, Vermont. How can anyone or any group of people envision how to erect such an awesome project?

This indoor water palace has everything in it. Just when you've looked around and thought you've seen everything, something new pops up.



For me, it was the surf pool. There's too much to talk about, I'm going to let the pictures do quite a bit of the talking. Below you'll see wall-to-wall kids. This venue appears to be extremely safe for everyone, young and old. All of us, non-paying gawkers, cannot get to the lower level. You must be a paying guest or renter to enjoy the lower level. Lifeguards are all over this place.

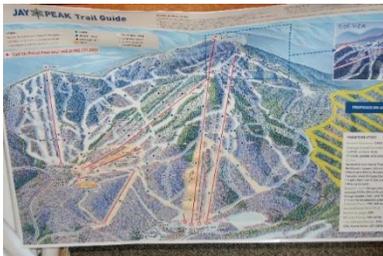


I doubt if I could afford to spend a week here, but would sure like to try. If you and/or your family enjoys skiing in Vermont and water sports this is the place to come to. It is definitely off the beaten path, but then there is very little in Vermont to do except outdoor sports, so to have this summer-like venue alongside this year-round resort is just short of priceless. Those wanting to hike or camp, it's all here! In the winter, those not totally sold on skiing have the option to just hang out here if they so desire.



Do not forget the hundreds of hotel rooms, condos for sale and condos for rent. For those more affluent parents and grand-parents who can afford to send a child or grandchild to camp, this resort has a summer camp program for only \$250/week (Great birthday or holiday gift idea). I guess it's all relative.

If we were in the area and Abby wanted to spend a week here, we would make it happen, just as long as we could enjoy it as well. Don't forget, five months of the year Jay Peak is all about skiing.



What could you do and learn if you did summer camp here? How about rope courses, surfing, skating, golfing, climbing, tie-dyeing, cooking, hiking, kayaking and more. Could I sign up? A question I've always wanted to ask and Jay Peak had the answer; *what is the top speed of a Zamboni? Answer 9.7 mph...That one was for you Abby.*

This place also has a separate ice skating building to boot. It's so easy to just talk about the buildings and this awesome attraction, but most folks come to Vermont and Jay Peak for the skiing. Dozens of ski trails, as you can see from the picture above. As far as the apartments and condos everyone knows, if you call and they give you a mini vacation here on their dime, there's, most likely, a spiel you'll have to listen to. The smallest condos in the far back of this picture sells for \$129,000 that's about a 630 SF just a short walk from the slopes. That's just a little bigger than our coach.

8.25.214- The Great Vermont Corn Maze, 1404 Wheelock Road - Danville, VT 05828



Many cars and trucks were already here by the time we arrived. If you haven't guessed it yet, we are now on our own. We left Derby, VT early this morning. On our way to our next campground in Littleton, NH we noticed an add for the "Maze." And had to check it out. That's the amazing thing about being a full-time camper.

If you see it or hear about it you have the option to go and see whatever you want. We had a very enjoyable time visiting with family and friends, but today is the first day, away totally untethered from family, beginning our new lifestyle. *Yea! We're here, and we can do this.* We paid a very modest fee to participate and then we were hit with having to make a choice on which entrance we wanted to start at. Choices were: Eeny, Meeny, Miney and Mo. We chose Mo. That would be, as we were soon to find out, only our first of many bad decisions.



This is going to be easy! Anyone can do this, after all we were told, just follow your nose. Now it was time to get started. We would soon be told, as we naively journeyed the maze, that it was comprised of four quadrants totaling ten acres, that's almost 500,000 square feet! Given all that, did you know the corn grows over seven feet tall! Below is the maze as LeBron James could view it. Our wanderings would bring us to visit the father, creator of the maze, at least five times.



Above is the father and creator of the maze. You could tell, after speaking to him so many times, he enjoyed talking to all of us. But the maze, in many areas, offered some relief. The bells of "frustration" below. There were many of them throughout the maze. We took delight in expressing our feelings every time we ran into one of these. The Maze offered the wanderers options, all the time. The doors to the scenic view were everywhere to help the weary, in other words, those who were giving up.

All you had to do was open the door and walk through. The sign on the door read...Enter to solve the scenic maze. Only a wimp would quit this challenge! These doors are for all the others looking for the easy way out; so we traipsed on!



The tunnel. In our travels we would run into this infrastructure many times. The tunnel was good for shade since it was now high noon. Below is the same tunnel, once again, now 12:30 Carla did eventually get over seeing the tunnel over and over again. Then we also happened across other man-made items.



A Vessel in a sea of corn. This boat from where I don't know? Only bumped into this three times. "Which way" we asked the creator for the second time? Then...Yes, we're finally asking for real help.



The son of the father who is responsible for this green jungle was also minimally helpful. Both he and the father were more than willing to aim us in the right direction. Directions were, “just keep to your left, sounds simple, until your left gives you three different lefts to choose from. We are now asking the son for directions on how to get out... Yes, we’re giving up. It’s been 2.5 hours. Fifteen minutes later we end up back at the father needing additional help on how we can surrender to the vastness of this maze. I’m beginning to think this is a family of clones, very helpful clones, nonetheless. A wanderer who just had a hip replacement and could go no further, has joined us now.

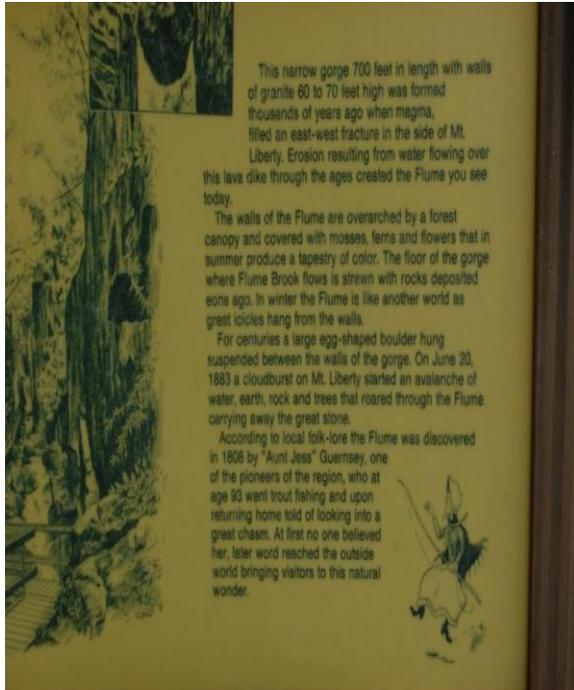


The Bell of Success. Even though we needed help, we were told few make it without help and even fewer make it on their own.. We did stick it out and the father said we deserved to ring the bell of success. Yes! We did it. Took almost three hours.

The Flume Franconia Notch, NH



Yesterday after arriving in New Hampshire we rested. Today we’re traveling to Franconia, NH to experience Franconia Notch. After that, if were not thoroughly exhausted, the Basin in Cannon Mountain. What a beautiful entrance to one of Mother Nature’s finest creations, thousands of years in the making.



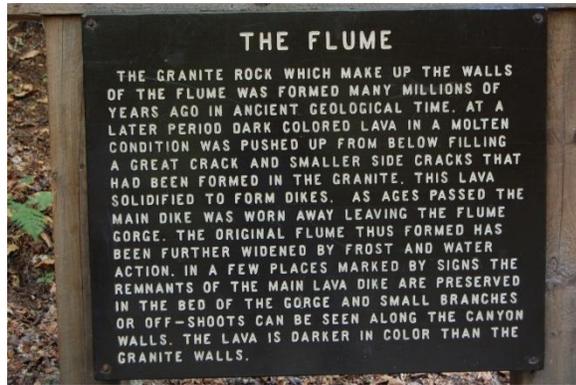
The story of Aunt Jess. Reading the picture to the left is a great way to begin this journey. Please take a minute to read the placard above, for the Aunt Jess saga. So far this has been a walk in the park. On entering we read this poster above. This would be a two mile trek in total and were planning to spend about three hours at this venue. This narrative will be mostly pictorial. How does that saying go "a picture is worth a thousand words"? Well we have lots of pictures so hopefully I will have less to type. How quaint, this covered bridge. And there's a message another board.



The message did not photograph that well. Basically said this was a covered bridge and a few reasons why our ancestors put a roof over bridges. The stream in the above picture runs under the bridge. Another picture of that stream further along. I included this picture of the stream below because every once in a while I accidentally take, what I think, is a one-in-a-million shot. Below is one of those very special shots with special effects courtesy of Mother Nature added, at no extra charge.



This is a picture taken in 1878 of the Flume back then. If you have the ability to enlarge you might see it better. Ahead is the bridge that should take us into the Flume Gorge. Very few of us would even attempt to negotiate the flume if it had not been upgraded and made more accessible. The Federal Parks Department work diligently to make all of their properties extremely manageable and most importantly, safe for the public. We found that each time we tackled a mountain. In 2015 we were challenged by some very awesome caves and caverns, once again, made safe and passable thanks to the park staff.



It's important to read the picture above. It explains, very nicely and right to the point, the formation and some history of the Flume.



This is one of those attractions where you cannot just tell your kids "just be careful." This venue mandates a great amount of walking and much of it is well above the gorge.

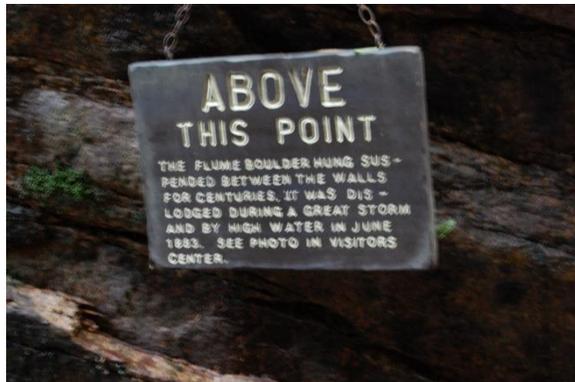
This is the beginning of the Flume Gorge and it gets better and a bit more challenging. The temperature has dropped seriously and moisture permeates the air around us.



The walkways are easy to navigate...but the rocks below are real and very unforgiving. Once again, best to keep the younger children by your side.



We are still climbing. Now we're dealing with many steps and steep extended walkways. We both came well prepared for this walk, as we had done this once before, over twenty years ago. Today we came with proper dress attire and proper shoes. Should have brought some water, however, always forgetting something!



Following the Flume, with this walkway, is easy. You do, however, work up a thirst. Did I mention that I forgot to pack the water! There are a few placards explaining some of the history and special items that we are witnessing today. Like the moss and in particular flowers indigenous to the flume.

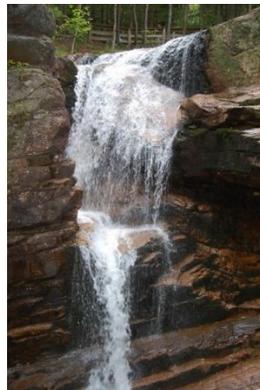


We continue walking through the Flume Gorge. A photo of the algae growth "on the rocks" in this gorge. Below, Carla leads the way....



Still climbing...Below, I look back, how did they do this one-hundred years ago? Not to mention old Aunt Jess! Our tax dollars were well invested in the construction and maintenance of this venue.

Looking back...



And the walkway continues. This was one of those views that must be taken the best way possible. I resist, as much as possible, taking vertical shots, but it was the only way to illustrate the details in the rock formations. The temperature is getting even a little cooler. A great destination to hit on a very warm day.



Just some fill-in pictures as we walk along the boardwalks. Moss and mildew continue to be seen brought about by moisture and minimal light. It doesn't take much for moss to grow. Even in caverns three-hundred feet below the surface, moss can grow. Reason is, (I know you're dying to find out), many years back, cave owners used incandescent lights that emitted both heat and light; sadly many times a lot more heat. Even a small trickle of water would inevitably yield the moisture needed to produce the green growth. It would take years for LED lights to be developed and even longer for Mother Nature to kill the algae naturally; more on this in next year's book.

A bear cave above, but no signs of a bear.



Just doing a little looking back again, yet we keep going up! As the picture below tells us, we're at 1600 feet above sea level. We continue to traverse over bridges and walkways that rise up like a slow elevator leaving the rocky ground below. Just another warning to parents concerning kids, be watchful! Unlike a mountain climb or hike in a forest, the temperature make this journey comfortable, but a little strenuous.



Looking down from across the gorge. Imagine trying to hike the trail over one-hundred years ago, that is, over the slippery wet rocks and clinging on to the ground cover wherever possible. Let's all say thank you to the next Park Ranger you might bump into.



Looking at the gorge walkways from the other side. From here we are now returning, going back to the Visitor's Center except from the other side of the gorge. Our wooden walkway has evolved into a very comfortable forest path, for a change.



Please notice how high up we are. To the right hand side lower corner of the picture you can see the walkway we were on barely a few minutes ago. This is a very woody walk. In place of a wooden walkway, we are now following a path in the forest. The Flume is still very much there except to our left side from this point on.



How nice, someone offered to take our picture...I say that only because it does not happen very often. Conscious of that I never stop offering to take pictures of others with their cameras. Once again, back about eight years ago we were so fortunate to have Abby along with us on many of our vacations, but kids grow up and are now more interested in their friends and, of course, texting. She was an excellent photographer. Below is a heavy rain shelter...



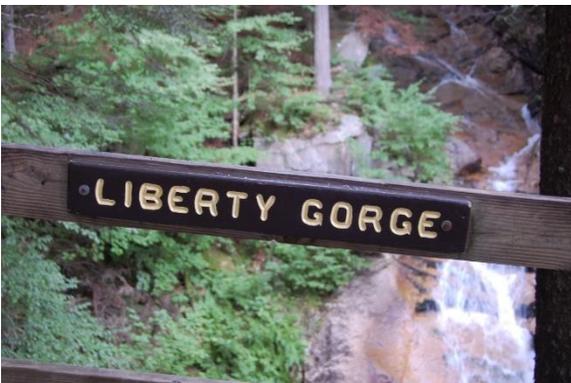
The story goes that there was a king, forgot which one, from England, who was told of the lush green forest and the virgin wood in this forest. As a result he contracted dozens of ships to return to this area. Entire areas were totally deforested and vast acreages were laid to waist. The trees were sent to England to build his ships. *Another good reason for the tea-party revolution.* This pathway is very wide and extremely well cared for. The tree in the picture is an example of the size of the trees around over 100 years ago.



We're still pretty high, looking down. Some additional pictures for appreciation. We're up quite a bit and would not put too much faith in the fencing provided, just a word to the wise.



The Pool is coming up. Going down for a change. This part is much steeper than the picture actually shows. It is safe, however, we make use of the railings provided. We rather err on the side of safety.

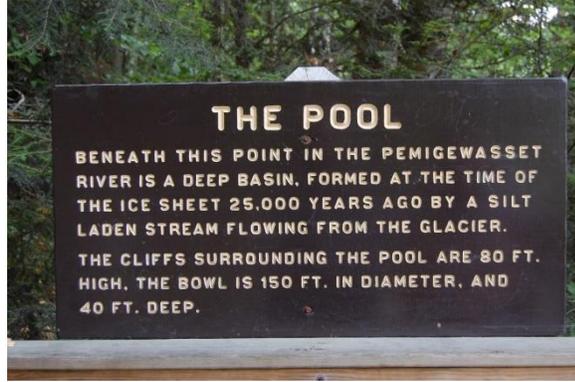


Time to move on. I could go for an ice cream right now, what else is new! This area right here, once again is up about one-hundred-fifty feet. It's a great view looking straight down, but kids beware. The path is very steep and not always free of obstructions and rocks.



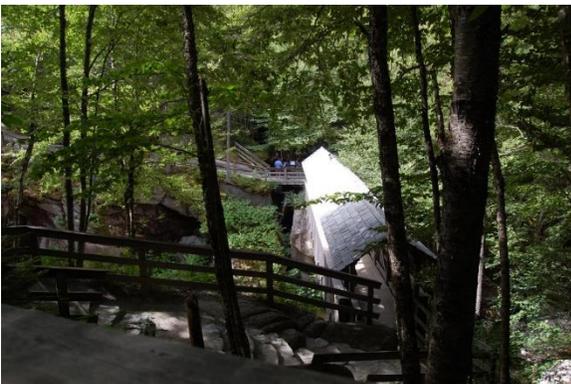
The Pool...

Explanation in the picture below....



In the picture above you can see the pathway we will be on within a few minutes. In this picture below you can see, if you look closely, the huge log on which this covered bridge was built upon.

It's difficult to see and in a few pictures the log will be more visible.



It should go with question that the path below is not to be taken lightly. Even as carefully as we are moving, it is very easy to catch your toe or heel on one of the many protrusions here.



The Sentinel Bridge is built on an ancient tree. It fell naturally and the bridge was built upon it. There's a 1938 picture coming up depicting the size of the tree holding up this bridge.

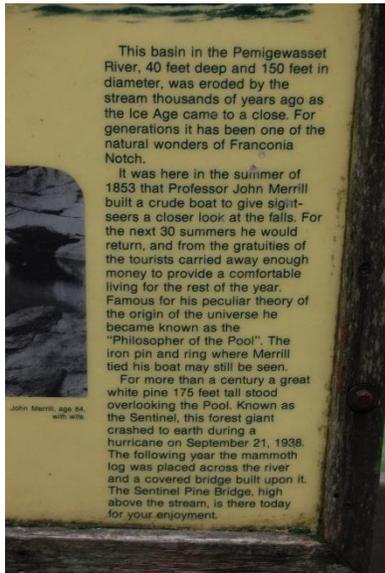


Carla and I opted to take their word on this Wolf's Den. Others took the challenge and discovered the den for themselves; more power to them!

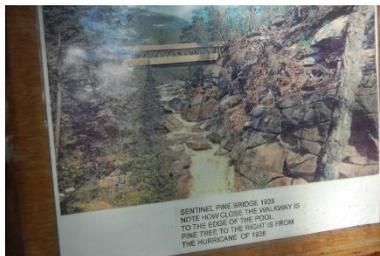


We are on our final leg, in many ways, of this venture. Mother Nature will grow anywhere or on anything. The pictures may not show it, but we're both getting a little tired.

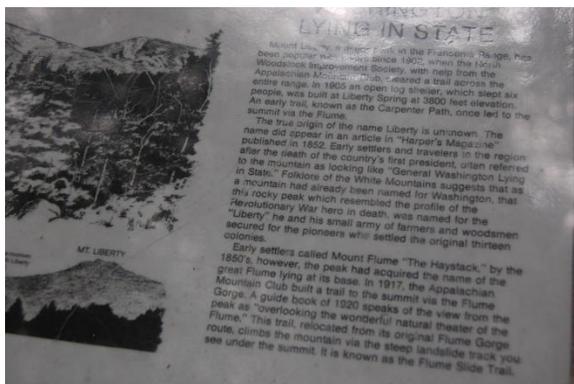
Everyone has to stand back and marvel at just how beautiful Mother Nature grows, and with the assistance of very few tax dollars.



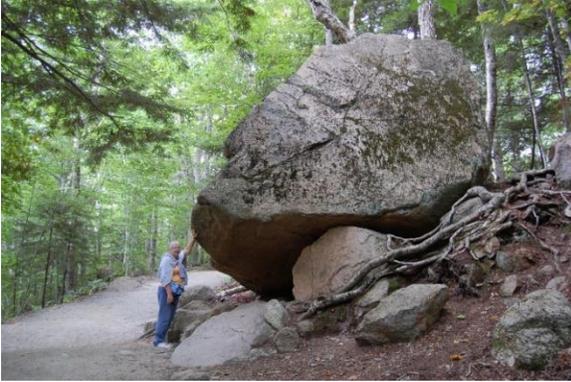
The Pool from another angle. And yes! We're almost to the end of this trek. But before I end please take a look at some additional pictures we found along our way back to the Visitor's Center.



We're both ready to call it a day, but we're not there yet. There! I knew I had a picture showing the log supporting the bridge. See below.



How many centuries would it take for this to occur?



Worried about it falling?



Even a wimp can do this...

Only feet to go and we will leave this awesome park.



We finally reach the visitors' center. Pictures of this beautiful center.



These pictures are of the Visitor's Center. This is the second time we've been here in the last twenty-five years and hopefully we'll do it again, sooner next time.



Thank you for taking this excursion with us, but now it's time to find the car and hopefully, if the weather holds, check out Cannon Mountain.

August 28, 2014- Cannon Mountain, Franconia, NH



We're just a little tuckered out from our venture through The Flume. Just up the road from the Flume is Cannon. We did Cannon Mountain about Twenty-five years ago, when we were much younger. Today we will aerial tram our way up the mountain.

As we recall there's not much to do when we arrive at the top. The road we're on is I-93N. Actually this is on the way to Littleton, NH, which is about a half hour north of here, more on that later.



Made it, still not totally rested up. There's always a gift shop and a visitor's center. Unlike many of the visitor's centers we'll be visiting in the future there's no history on the creation of Cannon Mountain or even the building of the tram, probably before my time. Great place to hang out as Carla is testing. We're still waiting for our tram to arrive.



Okay, here it comes. As one come down, I'm told, it gives most of the power to bring the other tram up. The tram in itself would make an excellent blog if there was any information on it at all. Just another couple of minutes and it will be our turn. Did I mention this car is full, I mean really full. No chance for a descent picture, except for that of this child's ear. In the picture below you can see that dip in the tram lines, it's sometimes similar to a Disney E ride. But as much as that will cause one to hold their stomach, coming up, is a tram tower; coming up fast.



Everyone holds their stomachs and gives out a small sound of relief once we've crossed through the tower, only to see another is on the horizon.

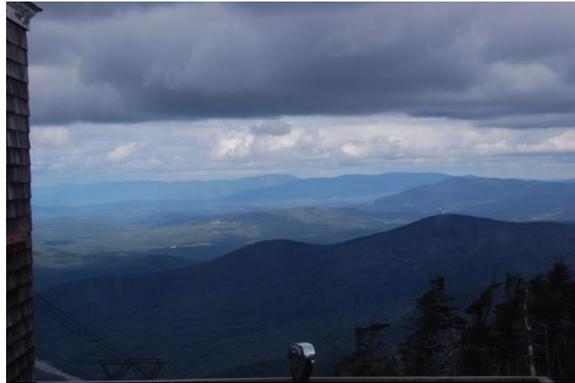
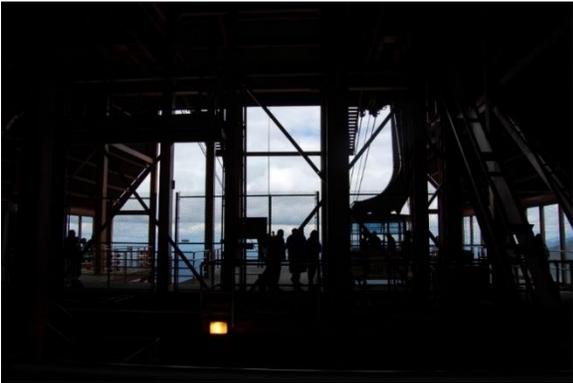


There's either two or three, but regardless, there's no way around these. Skiers go through these several times a day, whatever! We get through them all and we can see the top of the mountain. Coming in a little fast, as some look on apprehensively, but nonetheless we'll be there in a couple of minutes. Below you can see that we've made it up safely.

Summit elevation at 4100 feet. In a few days we'll be ascending Mount Washington, this time by railway which is a little over 6000 feet above sea level. Only hope we have as nice a day for that venture.



I never fail to marvel at how smart so many other people are to be able to build such powerful and heavy operating devices at four-thousand feet up, without the help of a tram to get all that is needed up here.



The dark silhouettes in the picture above is indicative of how bright it is outside. Everyone is disembarking and moving indoors. Below, for those who are skiers, is an enhanced picture of all the ski trails Cannon Mountain offers. Back in my youth, twenties that is, I had a very good friend, Tommy Lehan; a little younger than Carla and I. He used to be a member of the ski patrol in his free time. Actually, I really think he was doing it because it gave him a chance to ski for free, which was important since he was a young parent at the time and none of us had that much extra cash in those days. He's gone now, wish I'd been more diligent about keeping in touch with him through the years. He was a good father and husband and great friend to have known. It's nice to have had an opportunity to at least mention his name in this text. Susan, his wife, has kept in touch, from time to time. What a clear and beautiful day. It is September and down below it's quite comfortable. Up here, however, we're cold. The wind is blowing and the cold is going right through us. We hadn't packed a picnic lunch for going to the Flume, we try to keep everything as simple as possible, and now we're hungry. At the top of this mountain is a very good restaurant and it is very busy. We decide on grilled cheese sandwiches and chips.



If the day were a little warmer we might venture to reach the top of the mountain, but I'm satisfied with just looking at it from here. The sandwich warmed us up comfortably. We do decide to meander around the railed-in area and take a few pictures. Can we see Canada from here? I doubt it. Canada is still a pretty good ride, but the view is awesome. Only hope Washington is as good. As it turns out, Washington would turn out to be a little disappointing as you will discover in a few pages, so enjoy what you see here.



Looking over the edge a bit, which I'm not too excited about, is just short of breathtaking and to think that I used to fly once. Trams continue to inch their way up and down. We're beginning to give going back down some thought. But decided to take just a few more pictures.



If it were not for the extreme cold we would be walking around up and down that path. From here you could even begin hiking the mountain top or, for the more adventurous, descending down the mountain instead of riding down in the tram.



We've been up here about an hour and it's time to begin thinking about descending. This tram has been here for the better part of a hundred years, if not more. But, unlike Washington and Stone Mountain (venues for 2015), almost all of the Visitor's Centers we visited over the last two years always gave a very intense history on the formation of the mountain. Cannon should do likewise. Within minutes we were back on the tram going down. It was once again packed to the hilt. The trip down was, thankfully, uneventful.

SEPTEMBER 2014

9.08.2014-Crazy Horse Campground-788 Hilltop Rd, Littleton, NH 03561
603-444-2204...Littleton, NH

Today is Labor Day.....and we're at our campsite after a very busy day.



What a great way to start off September. As I've mentioned previously, Carla and I are in retirement and that we monitor financials, very closely. We usually splurge just a bit on holidays; today would be no exception. Steak would be on the menu for the evening. We needed provisions, especially in light of our traveling this coming Friday, and at Shaw's Supermarket we came across porterhouse steaks on sale. Today being a holiday would be a good occasion to have steak over the fire for dinner this evening. I know, all anyone has ever seen me cook over the fire were hot dogs and burgers, but that was then. It cooked up so well, it was awesome. Carla had seasoned it just right; priceless evening.



Just as I was preparing to cook over the fire, Monique Cook came to say hi. She and her husband Ian have the campsite just across the road from us here at Crazy Horse. She came over to drop off some fruits and vegetables for us. Canadian campers are not permitted to cross the border into Canada with edible items from the USA. We happily accepted. She then asked if we wanted to join them after dinner at their campsite, and we accepted. We had such a delightful evening talking about boating and traveling in the Canadian Provinces. Possibly, maybe in 2016, we hope to experience Canada a little more intensely after we do Alaska. They will be leaving the campground at first light journeying back to Canada by way of Magog, which we had just visited only a couple of weeks ago. This, I feel, is the most gratifying part of the RVing life; discussing places you've been to and hope to travel to, with old or new friends who are traveling as well. We too will be leaving this Friday. We wish them safe travels. Monique will be retiring in twenty months, maybe we'll head up North? We'll see!



One of the North Country's finest campgrounds;

It's so great to tell others about a campground that offers so much for everyone. Bathrooms here are excellent at least a 9+. We feel that bathrooms are a primary indicator on how seriously the owners are about their park. Directions and access to the park are equally as great. Our lot, as you can see in the picture below, is very large and private but we do have folks all around us. No cell phone access from ATT, but this in no way is a campground fault. Verizon is available and, most likely at the end of our contract with ATT, we plan to switch.



Getting back to the campground. This is the lake associated with the camp. It's part of the Moore Dam and the power company. Probably a little too far out to carry a canoe but just throw it in the back of the truck, there's plenty of parking at the lake once you arrive. Another great perk for this park are the campfire facilities. How many times do you find yourself having to accept a specified campfire area, in some cases no where close to where you and your family are camping? As I think back into my personal history when I was a Pharmacist at Parker Drug Stores in Littleton and living in Littleton, NH, the power company that owns the dam would give the citizens of Grafton County a Christmas gift of a free utility month, December. Here amidst all the trees virtually each campsite has its own fire pit; and I'm not talking about your own "truck-rim fire pit". Barb and Joe, owners, have a stone rimmed pit or fancy metal rimmed pit waiting for everyone.



In this picture is the pavilion. Big picnic gatherings, bingo or just a plain old birthday party, there's room here for anything. Thousand Trails (Equity Lifestyle Properties), an organization you'll hear more about in the 2015 book, makes a very big deal on their pavilions. Below is just a very good example of just how spacious the roadways are in this campground. It doesn't sound like something that even needs mentioning, but many of my readers, I hope, will be either part or full-time campers, and knowing a small detail like this could be very important to them.

Family play time together has not been forgotten here. The in-ground pool, to the best of my knowledge, is not heated, but even today about 77 degrees, water temp is decent. Just walked by and we have seniors splashing around. Below, play equipment for younger kids.



Above, Barbara is socializing with campers. Children get to enjoy castle structures for their imaginations. In the pictures below, for the older kids, there's pool, ping pong and air hockey. I was just telling Carla, when we were at Christmas RV Park in Titusville, FL, that air hockey would be a welcome addition. Below is the office. As you arrive at the campground checking in is quick and easy. Just park your rig parallel to the porch and, if you've called ahead and have a reservation, you'll be out in just a few minutes. After you get settled on your site, don't hesitate to come back and sit a spell and let the folks know who you are. Just off the porch is a covered glider...awesome! Excellent spot to enjoy an ice cream cone.



There's also a very complete library of books, if you're inclined to read. Also a very intense video library as well, which might be of more interest to the kids. Can't even tell you how often we used the pool table. The thing that was really great here, as opposed to many corporate campgrounds, the pool table does not require any money. There's no secret as to why so much of the indoor play items look so new, at many corporate parks as we discovered in 2015; they all require money to be played.

Really, how much money could a pool table generate, as opposed to the bad publicity the money tables create? Not only pool but air hockey, but that table does require coins, but I've been told they require a great deal of maintenance. Below you'll see the campground is anticipating what many will want to enjoy at the lake, but carrying a canoe may not be practical. Plenty of canoes here to rent. This afternoon I took a walk with my camera and just took some random shots showing how relaxing this campground looks in general and pictures of some of the sites available, big and small.



Enjoy the pictures I took along our walk. Can I go back to bathrooms, again? Is this necessary? Yes! You might have need to use it. Parents and elders can be forgiving if the bathroom isn't quite what you would hope for, but how about for your kids. This, you're right, is related to the child care centers we've owned in the past. I would have no problem having either of my kids using this facility. I assume the ladies room is comparable. The showers, however, do cost a quarter. I can't see showers being a big profit maker. Tried taking a shower, no hot water. Hot water is better from the showers on the left, I was told. Did get my quarter back. The hot water tank might just have been low at the time. We have a great shower in the fifth, so I took a long shower in the rig. It will be interesting to see, in the months to come, exactly how many campgrounds do charge for shower use (more than I'd like to admit.) Personally I would forgo this particular charge in exchange for the good-will that comes from a shower on the house. It's not my campground, but would be extremely happy if I had the opportunity to own it. Instead we owned a pharmacy at one time and later a couple of child care centers, boring!

Could we re-visit the lake again? How about some more views of the campground? Can you picture yourself and your family in this nicely treed lot above? Obviously the travel trailer below is not ours. But when I came upon it I wanted those readers who might find a fifth a little aggressive, to think small in the form of a travel trailer. More than 50% of all campers in campgrounds are easy-to-tow units like this one. This is just a simple tow behind your car camper. It does occupy an awesome site, however, could you just see yourself there every weekend...Wicked!



Just trying to entice you into this lifestyle. You guessed it; time to get back to our campsite and maybe even have a cookout tonight. So the question is; if you're heading for the White Mountains and possibly Littleton, NH, what are you waiting for. Give Crazy Horse Campgrounds a call or email and reserve a spot in one of the North Countries best RV resorts. NO! We're not on commission.

Mt. Washington, Cog Railway-Welcome to the Mount Washington, Cog Railway.



This is the base camp. We will board a "diesel" locomotive "pushing" the coach to the top of the mountain some 6288 feet above sea level. NO! This was not our locomotive, but it was one of the originals if not the original.



Above is the coach and locomotive we took. The coach we're in is so authentic looking if you didn't know, you'd swear you were back in the early 1900s. The steam locomotives must stop here to replenish water for the steam engine. For decades this water tower has been constantly fed from a mountain stream.



As you can tell this is a picture. Many years ago free-riding daredevils rode down the rails, a sport for the very brave. We were told the riders would reach speeds of up to 60 mph and would have to take the brake very seriously if they wanted to stop. A newspaper was published, I believe, on top of the mountain and this was one way to bring the paper and down the mountain. Passengers are permitted to get up and move around. I preferred to shoot from my seat; not much on heights.



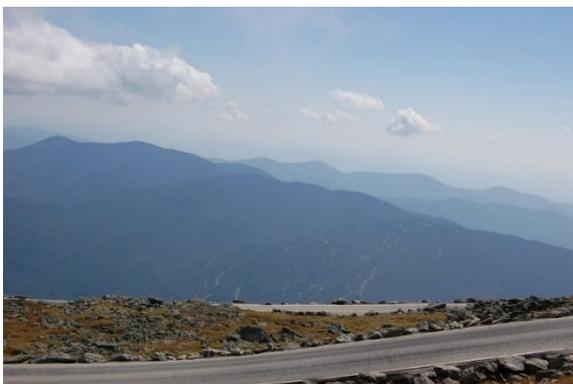
The locomotives weigh in at 70 tons and the coaches around 30 tons; just a hint at how powerful these engines are. So many beautiful views as we traveled to the top. Let me share a few with you at this time.



One more...This picture I really liked. Not sure how I took it. It's one of my, one-in-a-million shots.



As many of you hikers know, this is a trail marker, so now we all know. Yes, we made it uneventfully to the top of Mount Washington.



In this picture we are looking at the "auto-road". The conductor is advising all, if anyone wants to drive up the mountain, use a rental-car. I did it with family, about 35 years ago, the trip takes a toll on your brakes. Trains are stacking up here at the top of the world. We've been told we only have one hour to visit the Tip Top House and the Observation building before we must go back down.



Now for a look at the inside. Chilly up here, fifties but feels like thirty-five. It's very big and still under construction.



View from the top. *We're told, on a clear day, you can see the Atlantic Ocean. No!* We haven't had a sudden snow storm. This is from special screens showing what it's like up here in colder temps.



There, now it's official. A picture of us at 6288 feet above sea level. I cannot finish without mentioning this father – daughter team below. As always I have no names other than he was a surgeon from Delaware and she lived in Pennsylvania. Really nice folks. She was so happy having brought him up the mountain to experience Mt. Washington . He had the look of a father that has done everything right, Priceless! Some of us can only envy such a good life.



This is FYI only. The Mt. W. weather station is manned 24/7. She's a cumini!



Just another great view of the scenery as we traveled back to terra-firma. Below- Yup! Met up with a train going up. A few years ago they created a parallel track in order to move visitors up and down faster.



Half-way mark shed. We're at 4500 feet



A picture of the changing rail mechanism. For decades this was done manually then in 1967, the year I moved up to Littleton, after graduating Mass. College of Pharmacy, a hiker crossed the track and changed it enough to cause an extremely bad accident. Many lives were lost as the coach tumbled hundreds of feet down the mountain. The Cog management knew they had to be able to change the track automatically in the future to prevent this from happening again. Now we're back at the Visitor's Center safely. Some miscellaneous pictures. Great memories!



9.03.2014-Rock of Ages, Barre, VT



At first I was not sure what to expect, what a unique industry this is.... This industry is very solid for growth in the future, especially in this area. The image below shows how the cutters get to their areas and leave in the evening. All workers must leave the area using this cart on a hoist whenever a block of stone is to be blasted and freed from the cliff. Based on cuttings of the past Rock of Ages estimates that the Barre, VT location has enough rock to keep its cutters busy for the next 4000 years, yes 4000!



In the picture above you can easily make out the size of rock blocks that are cut at one time. Just one cubic foot of granite weighs in at almost 200 pounds. In the picture below you'll see an example of the diamond-laden cable used to saw through these blocks of granite.



Granite blocks that have been recently cut. First the cutters drill through the granite about every 4 inches. In every other drill hole an explosive powder, not dynamite since it is too strong, is used to separate the blocks of granite. The diamond cable will eventually cut the 50 foot long blocks into smaller blocks. The diamond-wire will slice the blocks into the desired thicknesses. If I recall correctly one of these fifty-foot blocks will weigh in at about two-million pounds. This business is basically a monument company. Yes! The blocks of stone you find in a cemetery. Dealers can have Rock of Ages cut and finish off the entire monument or, if they have the resources, they can order a block of granite in a preset thickness and do the finishing process themselves. Below is what most of their product is used for, a grave-stone for all of us when we die. Some monument stones are from soft, impure granite, like the ones you see in very old cemeteries. That is why you might have difficulty reading markers from one-hundred years ago. The product they produce here will last forever.



Above is an inside look at the plant that finishes off these monuments. On the tracks you can see a typical stone or monument just after polishing. The next step would be to adhere a heavy rubber material over the polished area and send it to the engraver. A computer will take over at this point. It has all the information that must be inscribed on the face of the stone. Lasers are not used in any of these processes, only because the beam is too hot. Below is an example of what the finished product might look like. This vault is designed for cremations...



Their expertise is not only grave stones, but also vaults, as seen above and even entire mausoleums. They carved the entire WWII Memorial in Washington, DC. We were lucky enough see it in person a couple of years ago. Below is a picture found in this building of the WWII memorial. Because these folks thought that granite was so great and since it could last forever, a good candidate for lots of granite would be bowling alleys. They were right, up to a point.

A granite alley would last forever, but the fact that it was so hard and non-porous it did not permit the bowling ball to grab the alley as it was thrown and gradually curve the way wood permits. This proved to be very embarrassing to the granite folks especially when they had invited major bowling alley companies to bear witness to the benefits of using granite instead of wood. One item the company really brags about is that only those individuals in specific locations are mandated to wear breathing masks. The filtration system in this plant, about two football fields in size, is so clean that very few must wear a mask.

9.10.2014-Ben & Jerry's -Waterbury, VT



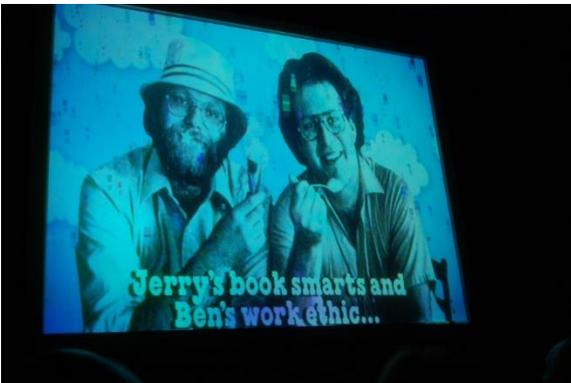
Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream Factory. The trip up here was totally delightful, as you can judge for yourself in the picture below. This is one of those venues where, for the most part, pictures are not permitted. The grounds and items on the grounds are uniquely tailored for kids of all ages.



The gift shop above was everything ice cream or everything cows. The grounds and the gift shop were really quite nice.



They even provided Carla with a hint of foliage. Just a quick look at the grounds. Can you believe; all this ice cream and no chocolate chip!



The cartoon they present on Ben & Jerry should inspire any child to try to think outside the box as an alternative to higher education. There's not much more to add. Not that anything we saw would be considered top secret. Just a lot of pipes. Cape Kennedy permits more picture taking than this place. We did get a very small taste of a new ice cream, forgot the flavor, it was uneventful. Not sure if it was worth the gas to come and visit. Personally I would not cross the street to see this venue, now that I know what's here. Below, when we first arrived we really thought it would be much more interactive, for the kids of course. But it's not. All you're going to see are a few rooms, lots of piping and some cute signs; it barely held my attention. Of course it had a great gift shop, plenty to buy.



Please notice the red "Tour" door. Once you pass through this door all cameras must be off. Personally I did not see that much to photograph, let alone anything that should be kept top secret. I find it hard to believe that B&J knows something the other ice cream makers don't know; *whatever! Watching grass grow would be more exciting than this place.*

9.11.2014-Hopewell Furnace, Elverson, Penn.



This is the story of the Hopewell Plantation and an industrialist named Mark Bird. In the mid 1770's the iron industry was about to mushroom into a mega industry bigger than anyone could imagine. England was losing its ironmasters to America especially in Pennsylvania. England wanted America to produce the pig iron and ship the product back to England. England would then take the pig iron and refine it and produce cooking implements, farm equipment and tools needed and then sell these products back to America. America saw things differently. Mark Bird took his experience in the iron industry and came to Everson, PA and began what would eventually be early America's biggest ironworks company. The Hopewell Furnace, which is what it was called, was crucial to Washington in fighting and eventually winning the Revolutionary War. The plantation has been preserved all these years and is now a National Historic Site. Hopewell, having been in business for over one-hundred years, was making stove plates and cookware for everyday use. The three basic components it needed to manufacture the cast iron products were limestone, iron ore and wood.



Let's take a walk around the plantation. With hundreds of charcoal hearths colliers would turned out up to 6000 cords of wood each year into charcoal. Charcoal was used in the furnaces, like the one below, to produce the pig iron (in the form of rough cast bars, as seen in the picture above).

Teamsters dumped the hot charcoal, from the charcoal hearths, in the cooling sheds, pictured above, before moving it to the charcoal house. Workers known as fillers, carted the ingredients needed to produce the pig iron; charcoal, limestone and iron ore by way of the connecting shed, as seen above, to the bridge house. The furnace to produce the ore is in this building.



At the base of the furnace, see above, the water wheel was used to run the blast machinery seen above the water wheel. The blast machinery replaced a huge bellows that was needed to provide the furnace with needed oxygen. The furnace, as a result, could reach temps as high as 3000 degrees. In the cast house above, the liquid pig iron was cast into stove plates and other products by “molders”.



The stoves, manufactured at Hopewell, were the industry leaders. As I'm told Bird in the 1750's moved on and family members took over the business, sound familiar? Not as driven as Bird, the plantation was eventually sold and ultimately in 1788 was sold off at a sheriff's sale. In the early 1800's Clement Brook bought Hopewell Furnace and was successful, but not nearly as successful as Bird. In 1883 Hopewell Furnace closed its doors. To deviate, just a bit, the next picture is the office store. Workers would have their pay posted at the store and they could buy food and other household items and have the expense debited from their pay.

They could also ask for cash, if they needed some. The Office Store was also situated on the property.



The blacksmith shop, in this picture was a vital area in keeping the 36 horses in the barn shoed, not to mention other implements needed. It was always a warm area and, as a result, was a great gathering place. The Ironmaster, as Bird was called, also provided a schoolhouse on the plantation. Only the foundation survived the years. Bird knew that every child needed a basic rudimentary education but most all the children would eventually pick up one of the many trades on the plantation. Below is a boarding house the workers and their families could rent.



The barn, as mentioned earlier, sheltered a fleet of horses on the bottom level, and stored a year's supply of hay as well.



Above in the smokehouse and springhouse, maids stored and cured foods. As you can see in the picture jugs and other containers are located in a stream of water. This water was diverted from a nearby stream and made to flow through this shed providing a form of passive refrigeration. We saw this system used by the military in a couple of the other blogs.



Lastly the Ironmaster's Mansion. He would house two or more families in his home, usually his supervisors and their families. All would eat together. Family members would be housed and slept on the 3rd floor. Business clients had their sleep quarters on the second floor.



Bird alone had five children so the mansion was, most likely, very noisy at times. In 1938 the French Creek Recreational Demonstration Area acquired 214 acres of the original plantation. Mark Bird's remaining 15000 acres along with over 60,000 acres now makes up the Hopewell Big Woods Project. It was Mark Bird's Hopewell Furnace that gave birth to a multitude of other iron procession plants all over Pennsylvania. The new technologies from Hopewell made America the world leader in this industry.

9.11.2014-Saint Peter's PA



This is our second day at Warwick Woods in Pennsylvania. We're still a little tired but St. Peters is just down the road. Surrounded by the breathtaking beauty of French Creek, this is where you will find The Inn at St. Peter's Village. This village is geographically located about fifteen miles due south of Reading, just off of US-176. Listed on the National Register of Historic Places, the Inn at St. Peter's was built in 1881 by Dave Knauer. The construction of "Excursion House" marked the beginning of Knauer's realization of the village as a recreational weekend retreat. This truly majestic structure underwent a complete revitalization in 2005, bringing it back to its former glory.



As you relax with a cool drink or dine on the delicious Italian cuisine in one of the three outdoor patios, you will be serenaded by the flowing waters and dazzled by the amazing view of the ancient rocks and lush green landscapes of the French Creek. The Inn at St. Peter's offers six luxurious rooms and one suite. No two rooms are alike...each offers unique decorative touches tastefully recreated to match the bygone era of the original inn. For more information on the Inn please go to www.theinnatsaintpeters.com. A few more pictures on the picturesque town:

The French River flows behind the Inn and along St. Peters main road in town.



Quaint buildings for small business are so reminiscent of many years past.



Hopefully I'll be adding more about this little town before we leave.

9.10.2014-Pennsylvania Railroad Museum-Located in Strasburg, PA
The Railroad Museum in Strasburg, PA in Lancaster County.



This museum began with just a hand full of locomotives with the goal of preserving the industry that built this country. As you drive up to this museum your emotions will swell up with anticipation. Nowhere have I ever seen so many railroad cars in one place, and that was before we got inside.

Below is a picture of a train station offering a train ride should you have time to take a railroad train ride, we opted not to take it due time restraints.



You walk into a replication of an early 1900s village that borders the local railroad. Just a few pictures to help set the mood of this venue.



Then it happens!

This is not exactly what you see upon entering, but rather a little further into this museum you can go to a bridge that gives you access to view the entire museum from that location.

Looking left



Looking right



Now just a few close up pictures on the floor of this awesome place. These pictures were taken from a catwalk that's provided to visitors to try to grasp how big this museum hall actually is and how many refurbished locomotives and coaches they have for our viewing.



Just to give you an idea of what actually happens at this museum complex. Below is, most likely, the condition that they receive the donated cars. Above, thanks to donations and admission fees, is what the RR car will look like after it has been restored. They use the same materials that were used originally, like windows, seats and metal fabrications.



On display are specialty locomotives of days gone by. Below is a workhorse of the past.



In the pictures to follow are train cars and locomotives of old and for many uses.



The post office used to conduct business on board as well; in a sorting car. This car was there but we were not permitted to board, but they had some of the insides of the train on display. Above is a mockup of a postal rail car, however I'm thinking it might not have looked quite this nice. This model of a wood-framed car was built in 1891. It was part of the Chicago, Milwaukee & St Paul Railway. Some of these cars were seventy feet long. Railroads had schedules to meet and eventually a faster method of getting the mail on board was developed. The mail rack eliminated the train from having to stop, only slow down a bid.



There are plenty of antique furnishings on the floor as well. Here are just a few.





Let's go back and see a few more train cars. This train car had just been refurbished, and we're told, back in its day, it should have looked pretty much like this.



Just deviating a bit, I had to include these pictures as well. This car below, is representative of the earliest American type coaches, built around 1830s. It's a forty-eight passenger car.



To everyone's discomfort the windows in this car were fixed and could not be open for ventilation. Shutters above the windows were the only ventilation. These cars were originally built with wood. Later steel trusses were used for the sides and undersides of the body panel. Conrail is well represented here as well as Amtrak. This picture was taken to show the switching tracks, but notice the Amtrak locomotive in the background. You would think with all the money the government gives them they could take a little better care of the trains; just my personal opinion.



This picture is for my brother Dennis. Notice a ginger ale for just 15 cents back then, those were the days. Hope Paul Lango, a railroad engineer we know, husband to Cindy, might have more input on this car. By 1916 America's railroad construction peaked with more than 250,000 rail miles in total. 11,500 miles were in Pennsylvania alone. For the first time towns had greater accessibility and travel was much more convenient not to mention the commercial benefits the railroad provided. 1915 was known as the Golden Age of Railroading.

Just some random pictures. I have a hard time passing up a caboose. Back on the catwalk now looking right. This railroadd museum is about the size of two football fields or bigger...awesome! Below. Can you believe this was a refrigeration car? These men are packing cubes of ice and crushing the cubes up in an early effort to create a refrigeration car.



Dining on a railroad car was far cry from McDonalds. A picture of a dining car in the 1950s. How about those sport coats! This was during the Eisenhower Presidency, and yes, the nation had the Korean War going on, yet these folks seem so at ease. No one is looking at a tablet screen or texting on their phones, just all "talking" to one another...Priceless!



Many cars and locomotives await outside for funds to restore them some day. Below looks like another Amtrak car to me; might be wrong.



Did I mention my feelings for the old cabooses? Does the purpose of this car need any additional explanations?



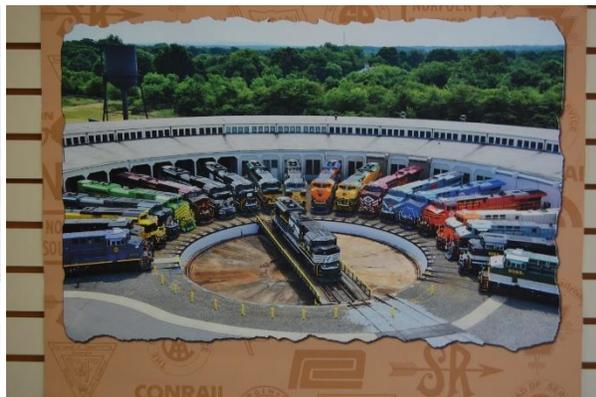
Where have all the old cabooses gone? Now you know. So much information next to each of these giants. This would make such a great family vacation venue. A family with kids could easily spend an entire day reading all the information the museum has available on each of the relics of the past. Not to mention the opportunity of having a train ride just outside.



A typical boxcar, not really what you see in the movies! Conrail, once again.



Pennsylvania RR is represented here as well. Another from Penn State.



A picture of a picture. I think this used to be here, I don't know? The museum had a major renovation and expansion some time ago. Those I asked could not be definitive about the location of this turntable or what happened to it. Did I mention that I'm prejudice on cabooses!



What more can I say. If you're in the Lancaster area please don't leave without visiting this place. This is definitely one museum the kids will definitely enjoy. This is such an interesting place. Even more wondrous is knowing the condition in which these railroad cars and locomotives are donated to this museum then seeing the awesome miracles this museum can accomplish restoring these treasures of our past, is awesome! I have over one-hundred pictures I'd like to include in this venue, but my purpose is not to show you everything, but rather to introduce you to something unusual and hope you might visit next time you're in or close to Strasburg, PA.

9.12.2014-QVC, West Chester, PA



The network we all know. We were not permitted to take pictures in any of the areas with windows, so we have few pictures. Beth C was our tour guide. She went to college and graduated with a communications degree, specifically to land a job at QVC. It took her 6 years before QVC picked her up, and then it was only as a tour guide. She was excellent. All staff people work four-days a week ten-hours a day. George Segel created QVC way back in 1986. The letters, QVC, stand for Quality, Value and Convenience. Can't get much more convenient than from your TV set. Not that everyone didn't know this, but QVC is one of the nation's largest mass merchandisers in the world. In 2014 it had gross revenues of almost nine-billion dollars. It was also viewed in over three-hundred-million homes in five countries, plus China. Items shipped topped 173 million pieces of product.



The QVC Network is also televised in Japan, UK, Germany, Italy and China. She spoke at length describing the different positions and how everyone in each department knows each other's jobs. Photo of Joan Rivers on the floor by her feet.



During the course of each shift after each break they will return to their individual departments and take over another job in that department. I make special mention of Joan Rivers for a reason. As a celebration of her eightieth Birthday she brought cupcakes for all the employees working at QVC that day. That in itself sounded a little quaint until Beth mentioned that on an average day, QVC has twenty-five-hundred staff on duty. Of the many positions Beth spoke of, graphic designs was one of the biggest departments. Carla's niece is thinking seriously of going into this field and, on occasion, Abby has mentioned an interest in this field as well. It was most interesting to learn of the many job types a company as big as QVC has to offer. This is definitely a visit every high schooler should take in their sophomore year as they contemplate their futures, especially if it might relate to communications, graphic design and Internet. Our last stop was the QVC Store.

9.17.2014-Valley Forge



I had a complete misunderstanding of the whole Valley Forge episode in our American History. I was definitely gazing out the window again in seventh grade when we discussed Valley Forge. There is so much to tell, I'll add more in the future. Nevertheless this is what we experienced. Once again, all venues begin at a visitor's center. Inside you will learn, on a month to month basis all that happened during that cold winter of 1777.



This was not a battle, siege or even a skirmish. This is a story of an encampment. Washington and his troops, about twelve-thousand, decided to camp at Valley Forge because of its ideal elevation. British troops had captured Philadelphia, about twenty miles away, and winter was setting in. With the capture of Philadelphia the Continental Congress moved to York, Penn. Believe it or not but wars were paused in those days until the warmer weather returned. The thing to remember here is that Washington's army was made up of farmers and everyday people. British troops, on the other hand, were a well disciplined and highly trained army. Washington will have to address this later. Getting back to the encampment. Of the twelve-thousand men in Washington's army, by the end of December as many as four-thousand would be unfit for duty due to illness, typhoid and other diseases. In January, Washington lucks out with the capture of a British ship. This ship was loaded with food and clothing that was vitally needed by the Colonialists. The key players during this encampment were Washington and von Steuben. Washington's army had to worry about survival with winter on its way. The construction of these huts, pictured above and below, kept the men busy. Washington even offered cash bonuses for creativity in the building of these huts. By the beginning of 1778, the army had built almost two-thousand of these huts to shelter the current army and additional enrollees. These cannons, above, many of which were built at Hopewell Furnace, a blog from the past, were positioned all around the encampment. Directly in front of each cannon was a "redoubt", seen above, used to protect the cannon and men manning the cannon.



Below is a picture of the inside of one of these huts. Up to twelve men would be assigned to each hut. This was a great idea, and for the men at that time, it met their basic needs and most importantly, kept them warm. By February of 1778, Washington was joined by his wife Martha and Baron von Steuben. They would be in charge of schedules. Von Steuben also recognized that the men needed additional training. Part of that training required musical instruments, so Washington petitioned the Continental Congress for those items as well as food and medicines. It was estimated they also needed almost thirty-five-thousand pounds of meat, one-hundred-sixty-eight barrels of flour each day to feed his army. General Wayne was put in charge of rounding up meat that was needed and was extremely successful at it. Parade grounds for the troops to exercise Von Steuben was from Germany and drilled Washington's army relentlessly every day in the open acres of Valley Forge. Above is the area the troops trained to both shoot and how to use a bayonet properly. Washington got exactly what he was hoping for. By April of 1778 he had a professional army and when they did go to battle against the British they were as good as the British, which the British had not anticipated. All the efforts of the army did pay off. The British, seeing how the Continental Army encampment was, decided to play it safe and never made an attack at Valley Forge. By mid-June 1778 the Continental Army battled the British and as a result, they relinquished Philadelphia. Many of Washington's men pursued the British while a sizeable group, as per Washington's orders, returned to Valley Forge and returned the area to its natural look prior to the time the encampment was established, which by April of 1778 was home to almost twenty-thousand troops. Cannon smoke would fill the open field in the above picture. It was also the location of the Grand Parade as thousands of troops performed "feu de Joie" / fire of joy. This occasion was to celebrate the signing of the French Treaty of Alliance on May 6, 1778 with France. The Grand Parade became a showplace for the newly trained and disciplined Continental Army- a tribute to Baron von Steuben's intensive drilling. Needless to say, England and France were on the outs as a result of this treaty.

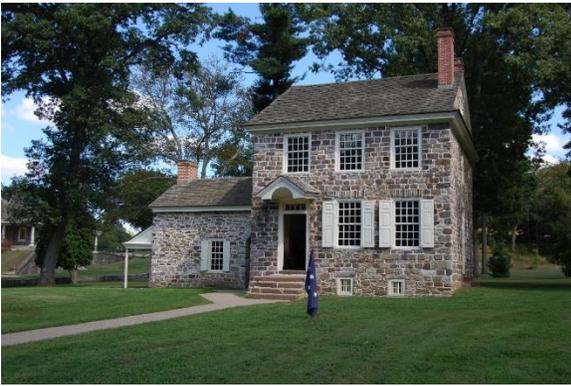


Once again a picture of the huts. The little one in the front right corner was a spring house which we mentioned in the Hopewell Furnace blog. Below Carla is standing on a raised portion of the floor. Around and along the sides of the shed, the dark-brown area, is where water would flow in from a local stream into this spring house. The very cold mountain stream would enter the spring house, circulate around the sides, and as a result would keep anything in the stream area very cold. This would act as a refrigerator. Items like meat, fruit and vegetables were placed in waterproof containers and the water would keep them almost as fresh as our modern day refrigerators.



The stream would then exit through the front of the shed. Our travel tour ultimately was to lead up to Washington's office. The building in which he orchestrated his war. I was expecting that he would have taken over the biggest plantation home around but that was not the case. Everything told me that this had to be his headquarters and temporary home, but no! This was the home of the person who owned the property.

This is a picture of the home the landowner, upon whose land Washington's home rested; not bad for the 1700's.



Ultimately this little home on the property served as both the temporary home to Martha and George Washington, and was also the headquarters for his army. A few pictures of the inside of the home. This was the office he used to conduct the war. It was barely 12x12 space. This building was perpetually busy from dawn till dark with military personnel coming and going all day long. Just a note. George Washington did recognize that he could not do this job by himself early on. He surrounded himself with fellow soldiers but it was imperative that they could

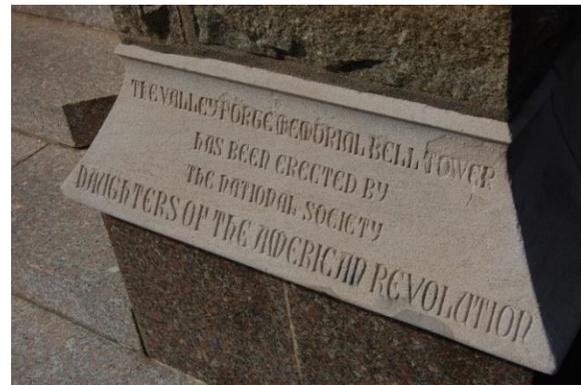
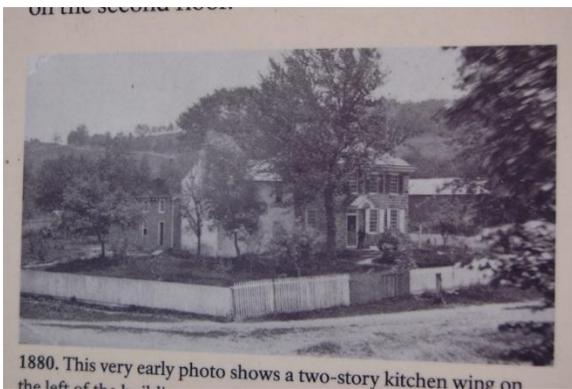
both read and write to his satisfaction. Far cry from our present day Pentagon.



These individuals were not seasoned officers. He consistently recruited soldiers as young as seventeen to their twenties to help him run the war. The kitchen area was that room off to the left in the picture of the house. Locating a kitchen away from the main living space was typical for the times. We mentioned this in the Hopewell Furnace Blog as well. Either the folks back then felt safer having the kitchen off to the side or possibly because they were usually very warm places. The living quarters for Mr. and Mrs. Washington, below.



Another look at the home and office George Washington. Below however, is a picture of what it really looked like in 1880. Yes! The kitchen back then had a second floor.



By 1800 the country was getting back on its feet and towns all over were growing and prospering thanks, for the most part, to the railroad. Valley Forge was no exemption. The Valley Forge Rail Road Station was established, however with the advent of better roads and cars, it was discontinued and is now a museum. The Washington Memorial Chapel, above, is on private land and is privately owned. It's at the end of our tour and I felt it deserved a picture or two. This chapel, an active Episcopal parish, honors soldiers of the American Revolution. The chapel is also home to the Justice Bell.



To summarize the months at Valley Forge the visitor's center has provided plaques with a timeline. The information below is a summary of the plaques they had provided.

Jan: The Continental Army arrived at Valley Forge in mid-December. Food and medical supplies were low and in demand. In order to combat the winter cold soldiers were encouraged to build their own huts from the trees in the area, as seen in the pictures provided. Troops were also at work building a bridge across the Schuylkill River in order to facilitate supplies. The British troops numbered fifteen-

thousand at the time.

Feb: The troops continue to weather the cold in their man-made huts. Musical instruments were requisitioned by the army as needed for training exercises Martha Washington and Baron von Steuben joined up with the troops this month. Baron von Steuben would be in charge of exercising and training the troops in everything they needed to know, to help them evolve into an actual fighting force.

March: The Continental Army, under the leadership of von Steuben, are beginning to look and act like real soldiers. Smallpox continues to be a threat and inoculations are taking longer than expected. Small skirmishes also occur taking its toll on both sides. The American Alliance join military forces with France.

April: Smallpox continues to be of concern, even after all these months. Von Steuben, on the other hand, is anxious to show off, not only the enlisted men but also the officers. He decides to have a demonstration on the parade grounds we saw a few pictures ago. The weather, at this time, is getting somewhat better, and the British are thinking of an assault in the near future. Lord Carlisle has been commissioned in London to lead the British troops with hopes of retaining the territories in America.

May: The Continental Army celebrates May Day and the alliance with France. Von Steuben is appointed by Congress to be "Inspector General." Paper, as well as, many other needed supplies are arriving on a regular basis. Women are employed in the army as nurses. The British do succeed to take Hatboro, Penn. And seize substantial supplies from the Continental Army.

June: This month the Continental Congress reorganizes the army, instituting upgrades in pay levels, supplies are restocked. The sick are cared for and troops clean up the encampment area. On June 19th the British evacuated Philadelphia.

9.20.2014-Saturday

Today's the 20th, Saturday. It's going to be a quiet day followed with Mass, pizza, beer and movie. I know, we're in a rut; but it's an enjoyable rut. Would not trade it in for anything. Sunday quiet day again. We are working on trying to set up a booster in the RV to enable Wi-Fi from our coach. Failed however! This will be on our wish list after we see how we make out financially, at the end of our first year on the road. Tuesday was a field trip day. We got an early start and made our way east for fifty miles to Philadelphia. I'm not a lover of big cities and, believe me, traveling in Philadelphia only confirmed those feelings. Parking our RAM 2500 wasn't easy. The streets are narrow and crowded not to mention Philadelphia drivers, in general, are worse than the seniors you find in Florida. We spent most of the day soaking in as much history on our forefathers as possible. We ended the Older City jaunt by visiting the Liberty Bell. The second half of the venture to the Liberty Bell ended well, thanks to Carla's watchful eyes for on-coming traffic. Lastly we finished the day by visiting the Eastern Pennsylvania State Penitentiary. Definitely someplace you've never heard of. Even campers from PA haven't heard of this place, so hang on, I could write a full book on just this place alone. One could easily spend an entire day soaking up all the history on this sad part of early Americana.

Philadelphia & Liberty Bell

Sept. 23rd



We decided to set out on our trip to Philadelphia about 8 AM. Sounded good to me but 6:30 would have been more prudent. Every decent parking area is full by 9 AM. Our only salvation, thanks to a Park Ranger, was to find 125 Second Street just off Market St. where he thought we'd find parking for bigger vehicles. This is just a comfortable walk to the Visitors' Center. A 2500 RAM is not average and does not fit comfortably in many public parking garages. Regular parking garages have maximum heights of 6 1/2 feet to 7 feet. The Ram comes in at 6 foot 10 inches. Most trucks towing a fifth might fall in this category or bigger. We found 125 Second St. and were delighted. Daily rate was a little more expensive, but it was worth it. Below this building was originally the Pennsylvania State House. This square in the late 1700's was often an area of great turmoil as the Continental Congress deliberated on the policies the British were imposing on the citizens of Philadelphia and the country in general.



The State House was taken over by the Continental Congress as its headquarters around 1790. It was here, in this square on July 6, 1776, that the Declaration of Independence was first read to the public. The Senate, as seen below and being a smaller group of men, had a different seating configuration and slightly more elegant by design. In the picture below is a representation of what this country's first Congressional hall might have looked like. It was located on the first floor. For ten years both the Continental Congress on the first floor

and the Senate on the second floor met and ran the country's affairs here since Philadelphia would be the Capital of the United States until 1800 when construction of the Capital in Washington was scheduled to be completed.



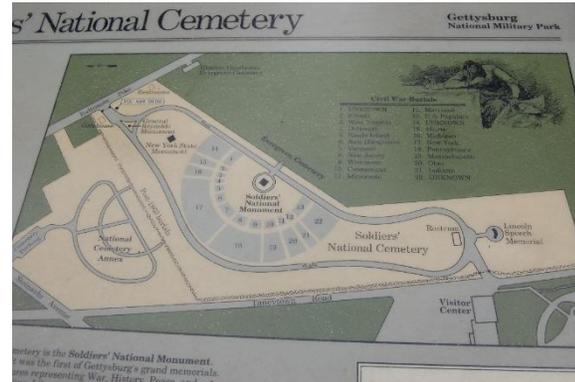
In this area we bought the tickets needed to enter Independence Hall. We finished our day here viewing the Liberty Bell. The Bell had significant duties to perform. It summoned members of the Pennsylvania Assembly, people like Benjamin Franklin, to meetings. The Bell also called citizens to protest Parliamentary "oppression." It is written that the Bell did not ring on July 4, 1776. In 1777 the British captured Philadelphia but the patriots had enough time to remove valuables to safety including the State House Bell. The Bell originally had a very thin crack in it. In 1846 workers

tried to fix the thin crack, then on George Washington's birthday celebration, the original cracked reappeared and lengthened. The crack got worse and spread to the top of the bell. *The Bell would never be rung again.* Carpenters Hall was built in 1778. It was here that an assembly of craftsmen used to meet. It was their responsibility to set architectural standards for construction. They were known as the Carpenters Company. Its members designed and built many of the buildings in this area. Some of the buildings were; the Pennsylvania State House, Independence Hall, Olde City Hall, Ben Franklin's Mansion and their own Carpenters Hall. Just one note on Ben's Mansion. Only the foundation is left. After his death family members tore down the mansion and built apartment homes on the property. I could go on for another five-hundred words, but, to make a long story short, this venue makes for a great family outing and even a learning experience.

9.27.2014-Gettysburg



The picture below is the National Homestead at Gettysburg. Built in 1869 as a dormitory and school for soldier's orphans. Before it would close in 1877 over two-hundred students would have attended the school.



This monument is found in the Soldier's National Cemetery just a quick walk from the Orphan's School. In this cemetery are the graves of over six-thousand US Servicemen. Over thirty-five-hundred are servicemen from the Civil War. Sadly almost half of the Civil War graves are unknown soldiers. The National Cemetery was the creation of Andrew Curtin, then governor of Pennsylvania, in 1863. Up to this time the bodies of fallen soldiers were hurriedly buried on the battlefields. In October 1863 the bodies were relocated to the new National Cemetery. Once again, as you can see, many of these graves are marked "Unknown."



This process took five months to complete. The monument in the picture two pages ago is the Soldiers' National Monument. It was dedicated in 1869. This was the first of many monuments to occupy this cemetery. Every state who lost soldiers in the civil war is represented here. It was at this monument that Lincoln spoke. In November 19, 1863, after all the bodies had been found and re-interred Abraham Lincoln, then President of the US, came and gave a few remarks. He was not very well liked and as a result, he would find himself being the fifth speaker to speak that day. It was on this day he would give his Gettysburg Address.

Four score and seven years ago our fathers brought forth, upon this continent, a new nation, conceived in liberty, and dedicated to the proposition that "all men are created equal"

Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation, or any nation so conceived, and so dedicated, can long endure. We are met on a great battle field of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of it, as a final resting place for those who died here, that the nation might live. This we may, in all propriety do. But, in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate — we cannot consecrate — we cannot hallow, this ground— The brave men, living and dead, who struggled here, have hallowed it, far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note, nor long remember what we say here; while it can never forget what they did here.

It is rather for us, the living, to stand here, we here be dedicated to the great task remaining before us — that, from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they here, gave the last full measure of devotion — that we here highly resolve these dead shall not have died in vain; that the nation, shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people by the people for the people, shall not perish from the earth.

In the Valley Forge visit we spoke of endurance. At Gettysburg, unfortunately, it's about carnage.





Above is a picture of the actual guns from an Ohio Artillery group. These guns used 12 pound cannon balls. The guns arrived in Gettysburg on July 1 and remained in the same position until the end of the battle. By the time the battle was over they would have lost only one gun and thirteen men would have perished. Our tour guide was Don Walters. This man was a historian from the word go, concerning the Battle of Gettysburg. I could not possibly reiterate all the details that he told us of the battle but would like to just mention just a few unique items. His entire narrative was conveyed to us as though he'd actually witnessed the battle in person...awesome!



Markers like this one and others both bigger and smaller, can be found throughout the battlegrounds. The initials on this stone tells a great deal of history on the battle. What we learned which ultimately would be the Yankees biggest advantage in winning this battle, was the battle strategy of outflanking the enemy. The Northern troops would anticipate where the Confederates would do battle, let's say from a southern position, which would be logical, then would strategically place their men perpendicular to the enemy at their east and west positions. This strategy

gave them a massive advantage in winning this battle. The marker above indicated the troops that fought. In this case it was the 151st Pennsylvania Volunteers. The "R and F" indicate the position they fought and held in this battle; namely Right Flank. You would find another marker, similar to this one, about 300 feet to the left. It would have the initials L. F. for Left Flank. Ironic I should be working on this episode of the book, since last night we re-watched the movie "The Patriot," starring Mel Gibson, when these tactics were so instrumental in his conflicts. Below is Little Round Top. This was a very decisive location in winning the Battle of Gettysburg. The hill gave the Northern troops a great advantage. The Confederates would have to shoot up the hill and eventually take the hill, which did not happen.



The Southerners were advancing from the woods behind this barn. This is the actual barn from that battle. From Little Round Top to the barn was about 300 yards. Both the rifles and cannons of the Union soldiers were accurate enough to hit the white doors of this barn. This picture was using a telephoto lens, the actual distance was unbelievable. Below is one of the cannons used in this battle. It too has documentation. It was forged in 1864, forged at WPFN (forgot this information), ninth cannon that day, it took a 3 inch cannon ball, RMH were the initials of the person who inspected the cannon before it went into action and it weighed 890 pounds.

The weight was important because 900 was the standard. If it came in significantly less than 900 pounds it would indicate an air bubble in the casting somewhere in the cannon. If so, it would be re-melted and forged again. This cannon was safe for only seventy rounds, after that it would be taken out of service. This cannon was used, I believe, for hundreds of rounds in this battle, and never malfunctioned. Normally those operating the cannon would engrave a mark on the cannon to keep track of the number of rounds. This battle was too fierce to bother keeping count, and thankfully it did not degenerate during the battle. I often wondered and so I asked; were repeater guns around at that time? Simple answer, Yes! Repeater rifles were not issued to the infantry men because the soldiers would use up their ammunition much too fast and the manufacturers could not guarantee an adequate supply for the duration of the war or even delivery should the ammo be available. The Civil War took its toll on both the Union Army and the Confederates. At the end of four years of fighting over six-hundred-thousand men would be lost in total. In today's terms, in proportion to our population, would be equivalent to six million deaths.

This battle was fought to resolve three fundamental issues.

1. The union of the country as one nation
2. The issue of slavery
3. And the common rights of citizens

The Battle of Gettysburg alone would cost the lives of eleven-thousand men in this four-day battle. Fifty-thousand men, both from the North and South, were wounded, captured or missing.

Sale of Slaves and Stock.

The Negroes and Stock listed below are a Private Sale, and being in the hands of THE LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY, and will be sold on Monday, 10th March, 1863, at the Public Sale, in the Court House, at 100 P. M. The Negroes will be taken in the presence of the Court, and the Stock will be taken in the presence of the Court, and the proceeds of the sale will be paid to the order of the Court.

The names of the new owners (and names) will be sent by mail, and will be taken from memory, unless they have been otherwise notified.

| No. | Name | Age | Value |
|-----|----------------|-----|---------|
| 1 | John Smith | 25 | \$1,000 |
| 2 | James Brown | 30 | \$1,200 |
| 3 | William Jones | 28 | \$1,100 |
| 4 | Robert Taylor | 35 | \$1,300 |
| 5 | Thomas White | 22 | \$900 |
| 6 | Charles Green | 32 | \$1,150 |
| 7 | Henry Black | 27 | \$1,050 |
| 8 | George Grey | 33 | \$1,250 |
| 9 | Edward King | 29 | \$1,100 |
| 10 | Richard Lee | 31 | \$1,200 |
| 11 | Samuel Hall | 26 | \$1,000 |
| 12 | Joseph Adams | 34 | \$1,300 |
| 13 | Benjamin Clark | 24 | \$950 |
| 14 | Samuel Baker | 36 | \$1,350 |
| 15 | John Wilson | 23 | \$900 |
| 16 | Robert Moore | 37 | \$1,400 |
| 17 | Thomas Young | 21 | \$850 |
| 18 | Charles Hill | 38 | \$1,450 |
| 19 | Henry Scott | 20 | \$800 |
| 20 | George Cook | 39 | \$1,500 |
| 21 | Edward Bell | 19 | \$750 |
| 22 | Richard King | 40 | \$1,550 |
| 23 | Samuel Green | 18 | \$700 |
| 24 | Joseph Lee | 41 | \$1,600 |
| 25 | Benjamin Adams | 17 | \$650 |
| 26 | Samuel Baker | 42 | \$1,650 |
| 27 | John Wilson | 16 | \$600 |
| 28 | Robert Moore | 43 | \$1,700 |
| 29 | Thomas Young | 15 | \$550 |
| 30 | Charles Hill | 44 | \$1,750 |
| 31 | Henry Scott | 14 | \$500 |
| 32 | George Cook | 45 | \$1,800 |
| 33 | Edward Bell | 13 | \$450 |
| 34 | Richard King | 46 | \$1,850 |
| 35 | Samuel Green | 12 | \$400 |
| 36 | Joseph Lee | 47 | \$1,900 |
| 37 | Benjamin Adams | 11 | \$350 |
| 38 | Samuel Baker | 48 | \$1,950 |
| 39 | John Wilson | 10 | \$300 |
| 40 | Robert Moore | 49 | \$2,000 |
| 41 | Thomas Young | 9 | \$250 |
| 42 | Charles Hill | 50 | \$2,050 |
| 43 | Henry Scott | 8 | \$200 |
| 44 | George Cook | 51 | \$2,100 |
| 45 | Edward Bell | 7 | \$150 |
| 46 | Richard King | 52 | \$2,150 |
| 47 | Samuel Green | 6 | \$100 |
| 48 | Joseph Lee | 53 | \$2,200 |
| 49 | Benjamin Adams | 5 | \$50 |
| 50 | Samuel Baker | 54 | \$2,250 |
| 51 | John Wilson | 4 | \$0 |
| 52 | Robert Moore | 55 | \$2,300 |
| 53 | Thomas Young | 3 | \$0 |
| 54 | Charles Hill | 56 | \$2,350 |
| 55 | Henry Scott | 2 | \$0 |
| 56 | George Cook | 57 | \$2,400 |
| 57 | Edward Bell | 1 | \$0 |
| 58 | Richard King | 58 | \$2,450 |
| 59 | Samuel Green | 0 | \$0 |
| 60 | Joseph Lee | 59 | \$2,500 |
| 61 | Benjamin Adams | 0 | \$0 |
| 62 | Samuel Baker | 60 | \$2,550 |
| 63 | John Wilson | 0 | \$0 |
| 64 | Robert Moore | 61 | \$2,600 |
| 65 | Thomas Young | 0 | \$0 |
| 66 | Charles Hill | 62 | \$2,650 |
| 67 | Henry Scott | 0 | \$0 |
| 68 | George Cook | 63 | \$2,700 |
| 69 | Edward Bell | 0 | \$0 |
| 70 | Richard King | 64 | \$2,750 |
| 71 | Samuel Green | 0 | \$0 |
| 72 | Joseph Lee | 65 | \$2,800 |
| 73 | Benjamin Adams | 0 | \$0 |
| 74 | Samuel Baker | 66 | \$2,850 |
| 75 | John Wilson | 0 | \$0 |
| 76 | Robert Moore | 67 | \$2,900 |
| 77 | Thomas Young | 0 | \$0 |
| 78 | Charles Hill | 68 | \$2,950 |
| 79 | Henry Scott | 0 | \$0 |
| 80 | George Cook | 69 | \$3,000 |
| 81 | Edward Bell | 0 | \$0 |
| 82 | Richard King | 70 | \$3,050 |
| 83 | Samuel Green | 0 | \$0 |
| 84 | Joseph Lee | 71 | \$3,100 |
| 85 | Benjamin Adams | 0 | \$0 |
| 86 | Samuel Baker | 72 | \$3,150 |
| 87 | John Wilson | 0 | \$0 |
| 88 | Robert Moore | 73 | \$3,200 |
| 89 | Thomas Young | 0 | \$0 |
| 90 | Charles Hill | 74 | \$3,250 |
| 91 | Henry Scott | 0 | \$0 |
| 92 | George Cook | 75 | \$3,300 |
| 93 | Edward Bell | 0 | \$0 |
| 94 | Richard King | 76 | \$3,350 |
| 95 | Samuel Green | 0 | \$0 |
| 96 | Joseph Lee | 77 | \$3,400 |
| 97 | Benjamin Adams | 0 | \$0 |
| 98 | Samuel Baker | 78 | \$3,450 |
| 99 | John Wilson | 0 | \$0 |
| 100 | Robert Moore | 79 | \$3,500 |

There will also be sold at the same time, and place, all the Stock and other property of the said Company, and the proceeds of the sale will be paid to the order of the Court.

Item #19 above I found particularly disturbing, actually the entire list was disturbing to me. That item concerned an *infant, strong likely boy, \$400*. The total value of the slave population of the South had a greater value than all the Railroad assets combined. The question of slavery among the Southern states was so intense that Southerners were fighting one another on this issue. Southerners could not fathom a life without the assistance of slaves. In the mid 1800's America had the largest population of slaves in their world.



Both the North and the South did survive the four-year war, however quite differently. The North had a very robust economy, thanks in part to the war. Industry giants would evolve during those years following the war like, John Deere, Smith and Wesson and FedEx Company, as well as many others. The South, however, was devastated. Hunger and hardship prevailed for all the Southern citizens. Women left their homes and took jobs in factories and offices and endured the loss of husbands and sons. By 1860 slavery was such an issue in Kansas that Proslavery and Antislavery men were murdering each other over the issue of extending slavery into the other territories. Everyone was hoping that the election of 1860 would resolve this issue. The rest, however, is history.

Let's visit the Visitor's Center with its Cyclorama on the upper level. The lower level is wall to wall information on this battle and the Civil War in general.



Actual items of clothing and guns are on display.



Items that were typical of the belongings of Gen Robert E Lee. Items from that time. On the upper level of the building is the Cyclorama. It's a drawing, recently restored, and depicting this battle. Let me introduce you to some of the pictures in this display. This was first displayed in Boston. Painted just after the civil War. It was painted and completed in 1883 and first displayed in Chicago. Painted by Paul Phillippoteaux and it depicted Picket's charge at the Battle of Gettysburg. It measured 42 feet tall by 377 feet long. If you visit Gettysburg only to view the Cyclorama, it will still be worth the trip. Some pictures from the Diorama



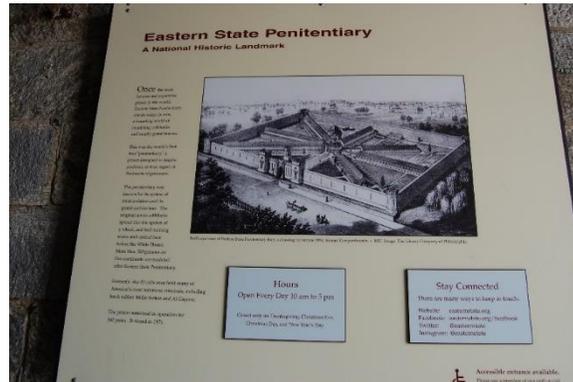
Enough of the Battle of Gettysburg. Much of this information was taken from plaques and documentation presented at the visitor's center. Thank you for so much information.



There's always a Gift Shop and Gettysburg should be no exception. Countless numbers of books, booklets and pamphlets are available. This venue is a must for everyone to visit, especially those with young families. If family members need additional coaxing this center has an awesome restaurant at decent prices.

9.28.2014-Eastern State Penitentiary

This state penal institution was built in 1822-1836.



It was the brainchild of John Haviland. He introduced the world to the “radial plan” for prisons of the future. He was an advocate for linking solitude with moral and instruction for prisoners. This would become the new prison format for over three-hundred prisons all over the world. With no exaggeration this was the “original penitentiary.” Prisoners served shorter sentences in those days; generally from 6 weeks to 2 years. Prisoners committing very serious crimes were placed in other institutions, usually in solitary confinement. Solitary was a key word in this facility. It was built for prisoners to reflect on the crime they may have committed so they would not come back to Eastern. This facility was so advanced for its time that it had running water and central heat before the White House did. Below is a picture of what the institution looked like in the early 1800’s.



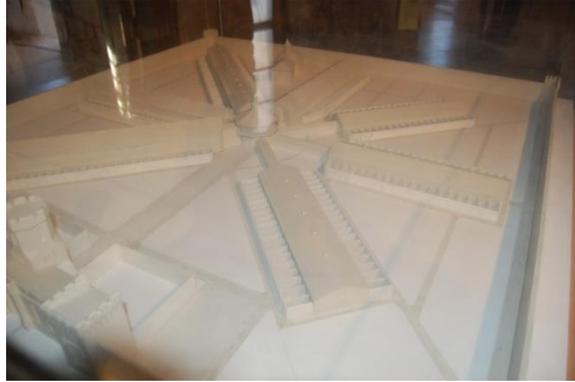
Sadly this is what it looks like today. Looks more like Dante’s Inferno. The entrance, in the center picture, was changed from this clean cut, almost welcoming look to what it looks like today in the picture above. The Gargoyles, really two of them no less, must have instilled a homey feeling in every prisoner. In the picture below the inmate and guard are in the prisoner’s personal courtyard. They are about to enter the prisoner’s private cell. As I mentioned before solitude and contemplation were the key words in this type of prison.



Getting back to the early days. From this picture you can see how prisoners were brought into their cells, from the outside; as seen above with the open door. From the outside they would walk into the individual prisoner's private "outside" courtyard where the figurines are seen now. Below you see the "feeding doors" that were found in the halls in the prison itself back then. This "cathedral" looking area is the cellblock walkway in the prison. Yes! Prisoners, during their stay, would never see the actual inside of the prison itself. The picture above is what the prison hallways looked like. Most guards at the prison never had to even carry a gun. They were basically servers. It was through these brown little doorways that the prisoners were fed. If you look past the small brown feeding doors on each side and pristine wall you'll see what the cellblock hall looked like. Below is what the inside of the cell and the feeding door. I don't know about you but the entire idea appealed to me and seemed well thought out. All went well till they needed more space; not extra space in the cells but more cells to accommodate more prisoners. Please note the immaculate condition of the walls and floor of the cell. Each cell even had its own skylight (not shown) and private outdoor space. Not the exactly the Hilton, but for a prison, not bad.



This is the prisoner's private courtyard, as it looks today, or exercise yard, be it ever so humble, was available to every main-level cell mate in the early 1800's. This area was for contemplation and prisoners were not permitted to speak to fellow inmates on either side. I have no pictures of what it might have looked like then, only what it looks like currently. Inmates would have thirty minutes in this yard to himself twice a day. That was all to change in the early 1900's, for the better, I'm not sure? Did I mention that this facility also housed women prisoners as well? After all, solitude is solitude.



In the 1900's the enlightened minds of Pennsylvania. decided that John Havilland's ideas were outmoded, hence the birth of the system we have today. The feeding windows were removed. Private courtyards were replaced with the large community-type courtyards we have today. A second level was added in order to accommodate more prisoners; hence the birth of overcrowding. Below you see modern day, with the assistance of reconstruction, you now see a two-level cellblock. This cellblock will eventually be rebuilt to resemble its original look and character. At present only the roof has been rebuilt but this renovation is subject to funding and contributions. The refurbishing process is slow and very dependent on donations but in time the State hopes to refurbish two cellblocks.

Renovated cellblock as it might have looked in its time.

Pennsylvania is not shy in saying that only *cellblock one* will be thoroughly renovated. All the roofs will be repaired eventually, however, most of this "penitentiary will remain in a state of suspended and stabilized ruin." Seven cellblocks were spun from the center core of this institution.

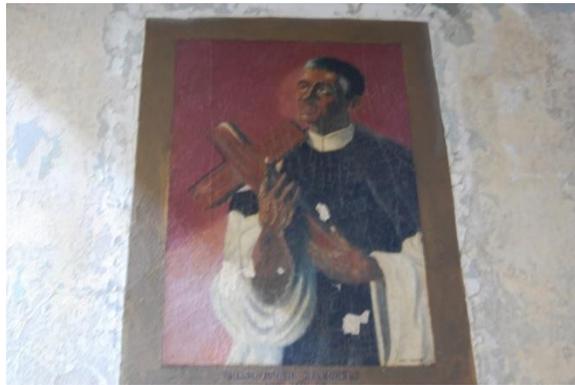


In the picture below is what three of those corridors looked like from the center of the hub. Not all cells were equal. These three cellblocks reflect the thinking in the early 1900's. *I personally prefer the original idea of the 1800's. The entire idea of having a facility that was universally appropriate for both male and female prisoners, not to mention younger individuals seemed priceless.*



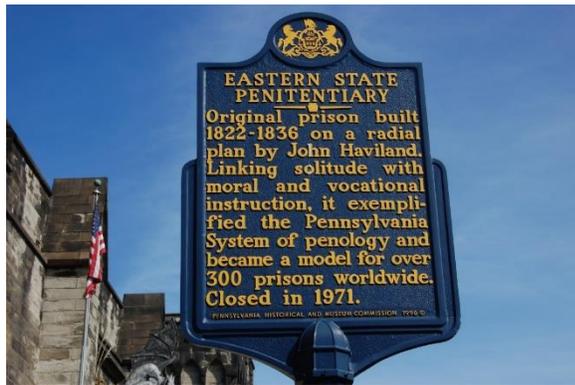
This was the cell of Al Capone. It is not known why he was given such special treatment. However, the fact that he was serving a one-year term, may have influenced the staff in charge to be nice to him. Each cellblock had a barbershop. In its own way it was a gathering spot for convicts, guards and even family members of guards who were inclined to have a cheap haircut would hang out here.

In the years preceding his release in 1955 Lester Smith was recognized by the current pastor at the prison, Father Edwin Gallagher, for his talent as a painter.



What that cell looks like today

It wasn't until after his death that his friends and relatives would learn about his stay at the prison. While a guest at the prison he painted twenty-three murals in and around the Chaplain and Wardens Offices. Just a couple of pictures on the works he'd done during his stay are seen below. Sadly, as you can see, these paintings were cared for in much the same compassion as the facility itself.



I could continue to dwell on the condition on this facility and give you at least a hundred plus more pictures about its current status but it sounds like Pennsylvania is adamant on keeping it in a "Suspended state of ruin."

The bright side of our visit to the prison is that we were free to leave at the end of our visit.

9.30.2014-Warwick Woods RV Park...

Without any doubt, this is not just another campground; more like a Destination.



Anyone, especially younger families, living within fifty miles of this campground should make this a weekend event or longer as often as possible. This blog will be a little different. There's so much to show you about this campground that I will be just dropping pictures here and there. Hope you enjoy this tour of Warwick Woods...The lake.



Does the center have a pool? Yes, as a matter of fact, but it closes when the ambient temps drop. It does have an awesome lake, as you've seen above, that is stocked. Most of all Warwick Woods has an irresistible attraction for all, young and older, who pack up for so many weekends and enjoy an atmosphere of pure enjoyment. I've met folks that have been visiting this campground for forty years, under different ownerships, of course. Times they spent here four-wheeling, riding horses even with a blanket of snow. All this emulates from the co-owners, John and Patti. As soon as you meet either of them you know your time here will be priceless.



This area is the Group Area. On weekend nights you can't count the number of campfires and strings of lights all over this area. When we walk back to our campsite after Bingo on Friday or Saturday nights the number of folks here are impossible to count.



Kids abound everywhere, but all are very respectful of their neighbors. Just last weekend Joe and Brenda from Reading, PA were in the campsite next to ours. They had family visiting as well. This was a very envious family. Parents who, without a doubt, have done everything right in raising their kids. Kids, yes, they had a bunch. It was awesome just sitting by our fire watching their families enjoy each other, I would give anything for an evening like that. Getting around this campground, either walking or pulling a camper, as you can see in the picture below is not a challenge. However, I'm always the exception. The camp owners did find us a second site that was more accessible than the original. There is not a day that I don't walk by #5 and wonder why I had trouble backing into it. Hope by next year I'll be more experienced than I am currently in handling the truck and fifth. Outside toilet areas and showers are located throughout the property. Given my fixation on toilets these are well maintained including the showers. Every site has either a fire rim or stone fire pit. Wood is available, in bundles, buckets and large load.



The office above is extremely well stocked. Their ice cream fountain serves up the best cones we'd ever had, Hershey Ice Cream I believe. And DVDs for all ages, really excellent selection for all ages!



Additionally there's a great selection of hard-back, soft covered and children's books. The selection could challenge most small town libraries.



The ice cream they serve up is awesome tasting; either hard or soft serve, in regular, waffle or sugar cones at a very decent price. This camp even has its own fire truck. Not sure if it works, but it is reassuring should something happen. Once again, it's the end of the month and time for us to experience a new setting. Our next stop will be in the Chesapeake Bay area, at a Thousand Trails resort called, Chesapeake Bay Resort. October should be filled with even more memorable venues we have yet to experience. It will be during our stay at Chesapeake we will learn more about Thousand Trails camping package and Equity Lifestyle Properties in general.

OCTOBER-DECEMBER 2014**10.01.2014-Intercourse, PA- Amish country**

Intercourse, PA, home to the Amish ended up being shorter than I expected.



3



Thought we would be going back to the town, but after we ate at the Plain & Fancy Farm Restaurant we took care of some loose ends then headed on home. But like all seniors we made it a point to eat this time. We don't make a habit of dining out generally, but Plain and Fancy had to be an exception. The food was just as good as I'd remembered it from over forty years ago; glad we're getting out a little more. Our waitress was excellent and even tried to take our picture, till I checked back only to find she'd forgotten to push the camera button all the way; *what the heck!*



When we arrived at the Plain & Fancy Restaurant we were about the only ones there. By the time we had finished eating two bus loads of Canadian tourists had joined us in the restaurant. In the picture below we were at the Intercourse Pretzel Factory, learning all about pretzels; even how to create a pretzel. It really wasn't that hard, even I was able to accomplish this feat.



Show off! The factory had an awesome array of unusual goods for sale. Most unusual were copies of really old newspapers covering new discoveries for that time, as well as, the latest prices on new cars for as much as \$999.00. Needless to say they also sold pretzels in all shapes and sizes. Carla especially liked the herb flavored pretzels.



The farms and the land they farm are impeccable.



It's that time of the year when corn is being harvested. Carla had a chance to speak to an Amish farmer and he told her that alfalfa is planted after the corn is harvested. This both protects the top soil from dying out and blowing away and also replenishes the nutrients in the soil for replanting the following season. In the picture above are fields, brown in color. These areas are either corn stalks fields waiting to be harvested or what the ground looks like after harvesting and before the alfalfa begins to grow. The green areas are alfalfa growing. *All having been said*

and done, except for the Plain and Fancy restaurant and their food, the trip was not all that I'd expected. We should have spent a little more time in the town of Intercourse. Oh well! Maybe next time.

10.09.2014-Jamestown, VA

So much to say about Jamestown and its importance in our history. Like all of our field trips they begin with the Visitors Center. This is just the outside, let's go inside.



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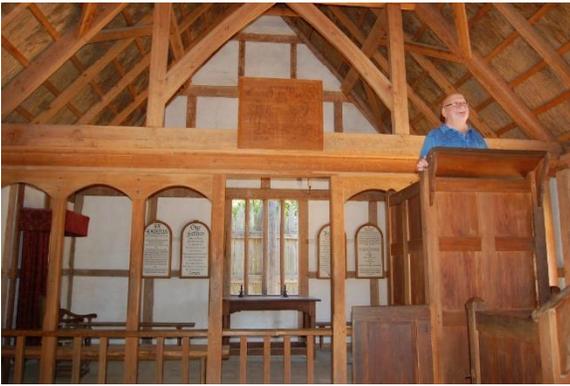
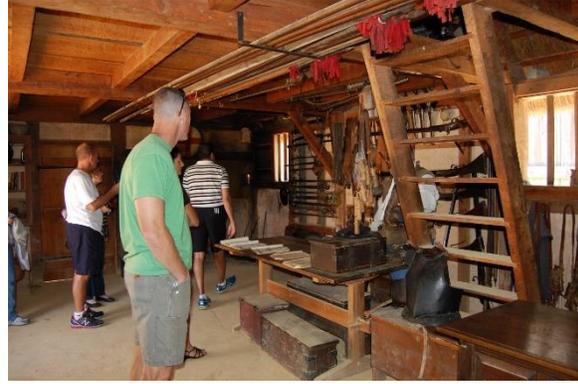
On May 14th, 1607 about 100 settlers sailed up the James River and established America's first permanent settlement. They sailed on 3 ships. Names of the ships were: Godspeed, Susan Constant and the Discovery. These, of course, are replicas.



This expedition was bankrolled by the Virginia Corporation. It was supposed to be a money making proposition eventually for both England and the stockholders of the Virginia Corporation. The word "Virginia" in the Virginia Corporation Was actually an English name. It was named after Elizabeth I who was known as the "virgin queen." The objective of the settlers was to search for gold and silver and ship it back to England. Sounds like something I'd heard before except it pertained to harvesting trees. The early settlers had to cope with primitive living conditions. The settlers had the Algonquin Indians to thank for insights on the construction and insulation of their primitive huts.



Getting up and down the River was imperative, especially for fishing. The cut-out log was Indian technology of the day. In 1610 additional settlers came to Jamestown with two more ships. Forts began to spring up in many other areas up and down the James River especially to protect themselves from the Powhatan Indians. Skilled tradesmen worked in their shops in the forts, and generally lived in the shops as well. Below, a guard house/armory was always one of the first buildings built in the fort.



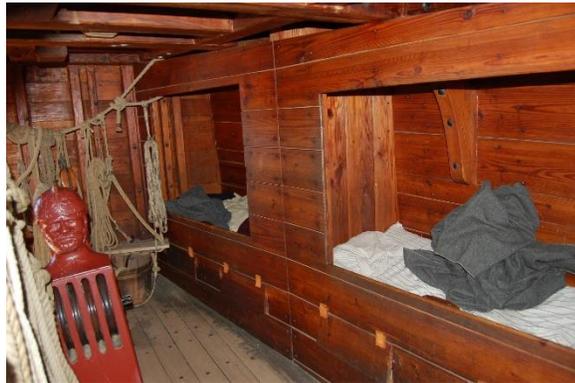
A chapel or house of worship was also one of those initial buildings. Standing at the pulpit in this early chapel was an actual minister trying to capture the moment in this venue. Below- With a Publix Supermarket still way into the future, storage buildings were also built. Clearing the fields and farming took time. It took until 1611 before the settlers had a decent crop.



Provisions included food. Gun powder and cannon balls were stored in various buildings.



Peace was very tenuous. 1614 brought about a much needed period of peace with the marriage of tobacco planter John Rolfe to Pocahontas. She was the daughter of Chief Powhatan. The peace was short lived. Pocahontas and family left the colony for England where she later died in 1617. Her father the Chief died in 1618. With his death the Algonquin Indians became very frustrated with the insatiable appetite of the colonists for more and more land. At the same time disease spread throughout many of the Indian tribes and reduced their numbers substantially. Although somewhat successful, the colonies were a disappointment to England and, as a result, King James I dissolved the Virginia Company and made Jamestown a colony of England. Please enjoy some of the many other pictures from this trip. Below is a modest home in the fort, most likely an officer's home.



One of the three ships'. Crew quarters. Crew members often ate and slept in the area of their responsibilities on the boat. This is the level below the main deck. Slaves and new settlers would reside down here as they sailed to Jamestown. Below is the view as seen from the visitor's center as we prepare to return home.



10.12.2014-Yorktown

As always we begin at the visitors' center.



The siege of Yorktown took place on October 19, 1781. The Continental Army was being led by George Washington. A unique statue of George Washington is seen below.



At this time, thanks to Ben Franklin, we were also getting assistance from the French army as well. Comte de Rochambeau was leading the French. The British Commander was Charles Cornwallis. Although this may have been thought of as strictly an American battle, it was International as well. Prior to the beginning of the actual siege at Yorktown the French and British navies were in a naval engagement amongst themselves at Chesapeake Bay. Both fleets were fairly evenly matched although the French supposedly sustained more damage to its fleet. The French and the British weren't on the best of terms and their entering this battle on the side of the Continental Army made things even worse. An old friend of Washington was Baron von Steuben a Prussian who was instrumental in recruiting many German sympathizers to the American cause. He was given a detachment in the battle as well. As part of our aligning ourselves with France we also benefited from an agreement the French had with Spain. As a result this American conflict now benefited from a large force from Spain as well. The British had the help of Prussian (German) mercenaries, paid to fight soldiers. *Oddly you can almost imagine Prussian forces being led by von Steuben in a conflict with their countrymen under the command of the British.*

Even Australia eventually became part of the mix. In the end the British were defeated, as we all remember, at Yorktown and some of the terms of the surrender forced the British to discontinue sending its prisoners to Georgia, a British colony.

Now the British had to find another location to send its prisoners; *thus Australia was born*. Had it not been for the siege at Yorktown, Australia might have developed entirely differently.



Redoubt #10 was to the left (very small American flag). Redoubt #9 was on the right, white flag.

A siege is defined as: "Siege warfare is a form of constant, low-intensity conflict characterized by one party holding a strong, static defensive position." And this is exactly what happened on October of 1781. The British commander, Cornwallis, had his army at redoubt numbers 9 and 10, flags in the picture above on the right and left, with about 150 various heavy weapons going against the American and French armies and having over 250 cannons and an arsenal far greater than the British. *The biggest gun (cannon) at the time, and the Continental forces had dozens of them.*



We've spoken about redoubt in the Valley Forge Blog

Area behind a redoubt.

The French stormed the British at redoubt #9. (Above) For days the American's bombarded the British forces with as many as 1500 cannon balls at a rate of one shelling every minute for several days.



Redoubt #10



Alexander Hamilton was to lead the assault on redoubt #10. In organizing the siege of redoubt #10, he instructed all of his men to leave all their ammunition behind. His men approached #10 in the dead of night with bayonets only. The battle would begin at first light. Reason for this thinking; Hamilton did not want any of his men tripping and accidentally firing his gun thereby making the British aware of the oncoming assault. The British were caught by surprise and the end came quickly with few casualties. The British were left with only one option, *surrender*. Even with the defeat of the British at Yorktown the American forces would not culminate the surrender until 1783 when the United States and Great Britain negotiated the final terms of the surrender with the Treaty of Paris. So as not to completely bore you with 7th grade history, the visitor's center has an elaborate replication of the conditions of those times as well as actual weapons of the times. The young man in the picture below gave an excellent presentation on the medical options at the times. Some of his accounts, especially concerning hygiene and operating procedures, made many adults cringe as well as some of the kids present.



This tent would be representative of what George Washington might have had as a battlefield command post. The area below had everyone guessing. This would be the cooking area. Each unit had a section to cook. This system minimized smoke and with each unit having its own cook, men were fed faster. A typical representation of a home at that time. Virginia is tobacco country and below is how it was dried in those times.



Six soldiers would be assigned to a tent this size. Usually only 4 would sleep at a time, two were usually on watch.

There is so much more I could add to this blog but 700 words is plenty. This is an awesome venue for families young and old to experience.

10.05.2014-Chesapeake Bay RV Resort (TT/Encore)-Chesapeake Bay, VA



We made a decision to begin our trek to Chesapeake Bay RV Resort on Sunday and finish on Monday. The trip would be about four-hundred miles so taking a break half way would make it more palatable. Before resting we were able to circumvent both Baltimore and Washington. As I passed through Fairfax, VA I noticed exit 50 and wondered how much further it would be to reach an old friend, Paul. We've kind of lost touch with each other a couple of years ago, my fault mostly. Even an annual Christmas card was great just to know all was well with him and Sharon. We dry camped over at a rest area which was acceptable, but would prefer not to do it again. It was early to bed that evening and we were up just as early to finish our travels. Below. No!, our camper is not right on the water, Social Security is not that generous, but we are just up the street from the water.

It was a bit of a change from what we'd enjoyed the last thirty days. Warwick Woods, in St. Peters, PA would be a layover we will never forget. Chesapeake is a different format all together. *It's a corporate owned campground*, part of the Thousand Trails group of properties. Currently we are not members of Thousand Trails (TT). We do, however, have a two-week trial membership. Our attitude toward TT will change dramatically over the next "three" weeks. Below is the Trading Post. We we're told the ice cream here is awesome.



Miss Patty, owner of Warwick Woods with her husband John offered up awesome size ice cream cones while we were there; she set the standard pretty high. We'll find out tomorrow, since this trading post is not open every day like Warwick Woods was; Chesapeake is already down a mark. In a few days we would be very pleased with the ice cream cones served. Just got here a couple of days ago, first day is set aside to just rest up from the trip. We took a walk around the campground and here are just a few pictures of the place. Nicely paved road surrounds the camp, which is nice and dirt roads lead to the individual camp sites. Picture below taken from our site. Our neighbors are Bob and Carol and they travel in a Mandalay Motorhome. Really nice people and an awesome home on wheels.



Fishing dock with boats, canoes and kayaks are available to rent. Canoes rent for very reasonably. This appears to be a lake, but it's really the Piankatank River. It's an estuary leading into the Chesapeake Bay, which empties into the Atlantic eventually. What a great place to have a boat. This is the most protected location for those with boats we've ever seen. Oct 16th.

We're going on two weeks here and we've decided not to leave next Monday, but we're going to bypass Shenandoah and spend an additional week here at Chesapeake RV Resort. This will save us a couple of hundred dollars in fuel as well as the inconvenience of all the hitching and unhitching.



Trying to beat Carla at Miniature golf still. Our friends Don and Carol left a couple of days ago and Pete and Joyce left yesterday. Learning how to play pickleball is still on our to-do list. I have no doubt that we will re-visit this beautiful campground sometime in the near future. During our stay here we will try to visit Williamsburg and the Battleship Wisconsin. I'm betting the Battleship Wisconsin will take the prize for awesome places visited this year.

10.13.2014-Williamsburg, VA

Once again Carla and I seek out the Visitor's Center.



It's never very hard finding new places with Carla navigating.

We park the Ram, follow the signs and this is what we see as an intro to the Visitors Center.



This was our first stop which would literally take us the entire day to experience. This building below, was the Capital of Virginia. It contained the highest court of the colony. On the first floor, East Wing, was the House of Burgesses.



Two elected members from each county served this court. They were elected by landowners only. They convened in April and October to hear both civil and criminal cases. Below is the Council Chamber in the West Wing. Twelve colonist, counselor's, were appointed by the King of England and met with the governor to help govern the state.



We next visited an Apothecary of the times. Having once been a pharmacist this should be interesting. This guy was excellent. Answered my questions and others without blinking an eye. Below a doctor would occupy part of the Apothecary Shop, at times.



This was the Secretary's Office. It was built to protect public papers. City officials felt this was important since the first capital burned to the ground in 1747 and all was lost. This building was built to be fireproof. Below- Notables of the time were buried here.



Examples of the architecture of the times. Another example. Many of these homes were not open to the public. They serve as residences for the many individuals that roll-play characters of that day...their jobs.



First building was a residence, followed by a tavern which has everyone waiting to be served.

Below is a jeweler and millinery shop. Barber and Peruke (Wig) maker. Definitely an expense we don't have these days. This Peruke maker went into great detail into what is involved in the wig business. One

item of interest; Back in the day many young girls could earn additional money for the family by letting their hair grow quite long and then selling it to the local Peruke tradesman.



James Craig Jeweler shop.



These pictures demonstrate how the small cup with yellow/green flowers below was created from a single piece of silver plating about six inches across. The jeweler, with several types of hammers, would carefully mold this silver plate into the flower cup. The various forms on the workbench below shows the various stages of the process.

Assorted tool of a jeweler back in those days. Some of the tools the local jeweler would need to have to create various pieces. View the items on left side on table in the pictures above.



Reproductions of carriages of the times



The tailor and dressmakers shop.



The forge showing the iron maker with his apprentice. Very typical for the times. It may only be me, but we were there for quite a while and it looked like the apprentice was doing all the work. *Things haven't changed in two-hundred years.* We leave the main road and step down to tradesmen who work in other areas.



The printers' shop below with the Master Printer with the assistance of an apprentice could set the printer up for a full page in the course of a working day. In those days the term "course of a working day" meant sun-up to sunset.



This shop was definitely one of the more interesting shops we'd seen that day. The furniture tradesman. His home...looks like he's doing a little better than the average villager.

The Cooper Smith above. Is not to be confused with the Coppersmith, should the town have one. His trade is to mold the wood slats that are needed to build barrels of all sizes, even a butter churn. Examples of his work lie all over. Yes, the tradesmen in this town are who they represent. Not sure of the pharmacist though. Below is a picture is of a typical professional's home/office, let's say lawyer, with his office off to the side of his home.



Typical brick maker's setup. He would not generally have a location in town. Bricks were not made ahead of time, since the town had no Home Depot yet. Instead he would contract with a client, move all of his building materials and actually build his furnaces on the property of the client. Clay is readily available in Virginia only a foot or two below the top soil. When his job, be it a chimney or home, was finished he would pack up and pray for another job to present itself. Below is the Peyton Randolph House.

From 1721 to 1775 Peyton Randolph served the Colony of Virginia as President of the Continental Congress and other political offices.



The Continental Congress consisted of representatives from each colony and was the government of the times until we separated ourselves from Britain. (From the plaque outside of the Palace) The Governor's Palace and Gardens was the home of five Royal Lieutenant-Governors, two Royal Governors, and the first two Governors of the Commonwealth of Virginia, Patrick Henry and Thomas Jefferson. The Palace was completed in 1722 and destroyed by a fire in 1781 while being used as a hospital for American wounded in the battle of Yorktown, not far from here. The palace was reconstructed on its original foundation and the furnishings are representative of the times. This is the official end of this trip back in time. Enjoy some of the pictures of the inside of this palace.



The entrance to the Palace. Most of the villagers only got to see this much of the Palace if any of it. The palace was not only a home for the Governor it was also an office.



The Ballroom



Grand Dining Room



Central heat for the dining room.



Gardens outside



Above and below, the Palace back yard...The Governors got to live here free. The average settler, if lucky, was making 50 pounds a month, on the other hand the King was paying the Governor 2000 pounds a month.



Storage Cellar





Storage/ supplies.

The significance of this building is not so much the building but the name of its owner George Wythe. George Wythe had many achievements. Primarily, especially in Williamsburg, he was involved in the Patriot movement in Virginia. He was a member of the Continental Congress and was the first signer of the Declaration of Independence. The House, in 1776, would also be a home to Thomas Jefferson's family.



Below, see a close-up of the writing. I've always been fascinated with the writings on tombstones. No! The settlers of the day did know how to spell. The second word in the writing is "sleeps." In the 1700's it was customary to substitute lower case "f" in place of an "s." This would not happen at the beginning of a sentence however. Now were getting very hungry. The dress style and décor inside would be typical for the 1700's except for the plastic wrap and the coolers in the back of the shop.



What a great day. Should you visit, plan on getting here early so you might see this entire colonial settlement before it starts to close around 4:30.



As you can probably tell from the picture above, Williamsburg can be an exhausting experience. As with a few other venues, Williamsburg, especially for a family with children, should be started early in the morning. Spend the extra money for the live interactive format. There's so much to learn here it would be a shame not to experience every ounce of it. We arrived too late to participate in the better program. Wear comfortable shoes, and possibly avoid a hot day, if possible. Right now we need a break before we start on our drive home.

Time for an Ice cream!

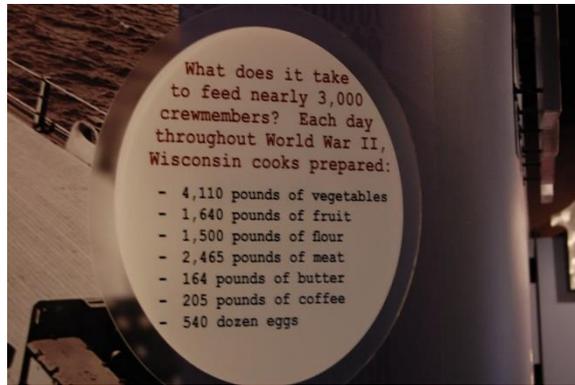
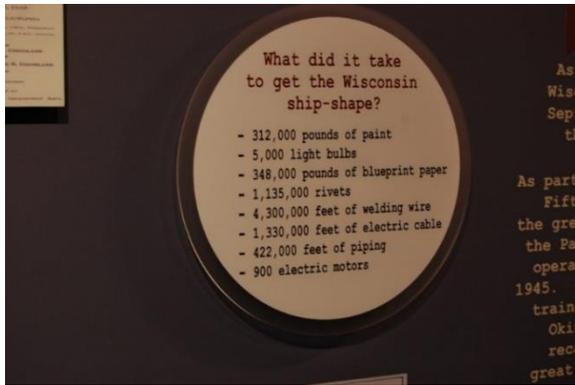
10.16.2014-St. Therese, Church in VA



The Church of St. Therese, although very modest looking from the outside, it is so charming on the inside. Just a shot of the inside

11.05.2014-Battleship Wisconsin Norfolk, VA

The birth of the Battleship Wisconsin. In 1941 America found itself, once again, on the threshold of another war. The president at that time, President Roosevelt, authorized the construction of the USS Wisconsin and on January 25, 1941 its keel was laid in Philadelphia. In a relatively short amount of time, thirty-nine months, construction was complete. It was launched on December 7, 1943. It is customary with naval vessels to be addressed as "USS and the state." However, because of the awesomeness of this vessel with the might it was capable of, it was most often referred to merely as the "Battleship Wisconsin." It received its orders in 1943 and headed out to the Pacific theater. Just some of its stats;



And how much food does it take to feed its crew of 3000 men, EVERY DAY? The Battleship Wisconsin was decked out with nine 16 inch guns that had a range of twenty miles. It also had three of these massive guns aft as well.

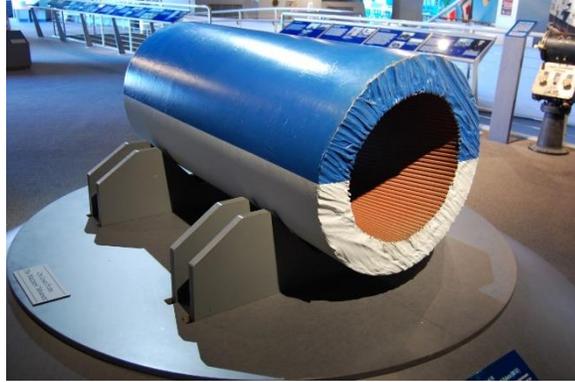


The missile below weighed in at about the same weight as a vintage VW Bug; 1900 pounds. In 1998 the VW was revised and so a new warhead was developed. The new war head was the Mark 8 AP and it weighed in at 1700 pounds each.

Each one of these guns (cannons) weighed in at almost 107 tons, and the Wisconsin had nine of them.



It took six of these individual explosive powder units to fire each 16 inch gun once. Below is a picture and example of how many layers of skin,(metal plates,) which comprised the skin of the Wisconsin.



This cut out portion of a 16 inch gun measures two feet in length and weigh two tons/four-thousand pounds. The Battleship Wisconsin served with distinction however on December 7, 2000 she was decommissioned exactly fifty-seven years for the date she was launched. She was recommissioned twice, believe it or not. She served in WWII, the Korean War, and throughout the Cold war. Then again on Jan 17, 1991 in the Gulf War she coordinated the first Tomahawk missile strikes against Iraq. CNN reported that the Wisconsin lit up the skies as she launched the opening hostilities of the Gulf War.



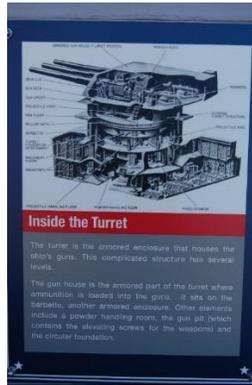
Her dimensions were awesome at 45,000 tons, 887.3 feet long (almost three football fields), and a beam of one-hundred-eight feet. We were not permitted to view the Command Bridge that was an all-day ticket and we were too late to purchase that, but they had a mock-up in the museum which, they say, closely resembles the actual area.



Below is a picture of a wall mural of the Commanders and enlisted men of the Wisconsin in 1944 when it was commissioned. Let me just briefly list the fire power the ship had. 9- sixteen inch, 50-50mm guns, 20-five inch guns, 80-40mm guns and 4920mm guns. The sixteen-inch guns could accurately reach distances of twenty-four miles. Her guns were so powerful that the deck of the ship had to be built of teak, since metal would have been torn apart from the stress it exerted whenever they were fired. It was designed to carry 1900 sailors but during WWII and the Korean War it carried as many as 2700 sailors.



Looking out to the bow of this ship. Makes the anchor line we had on the PJ&CO look like a toy.



This is the top third of the picture above. This section rotates. The rest of the gun turret is below deck. Occasionally someone will offer take a picture of us, usually after we do the same for them; whatever. Not bad looking for old folks



No idea who these girls are in the mess hall of the Wisconsin, but they offered their smiles at no charge.



A truly awesome picture of the Battleship Wisconsin as seen as you enter the visitor's center.