

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 goodwill 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.

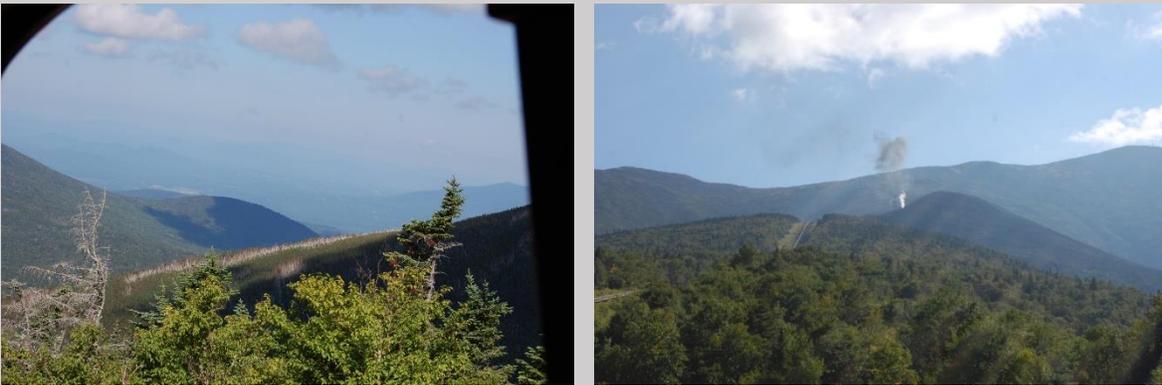


As you can tell this is a picture. Many years ago free-riding daredevils rode down the rails, a sport for the very brave.

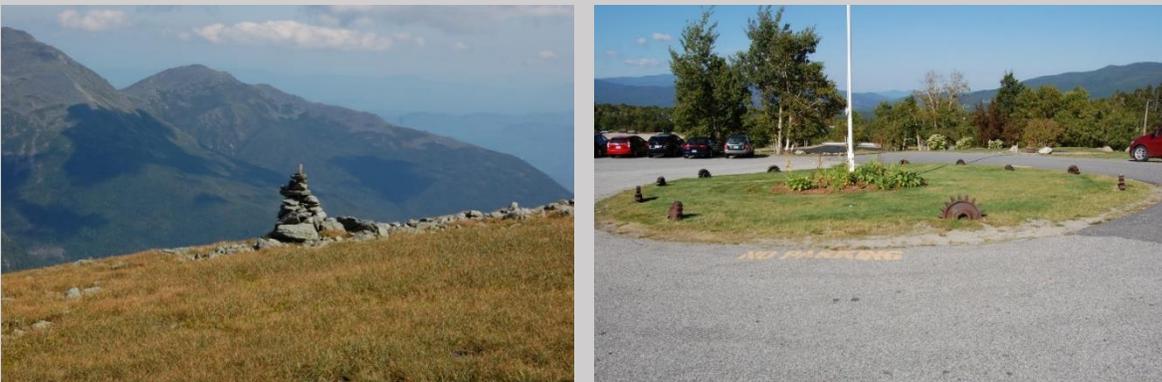
We were told the riders would reach speeds of up to 60 mph and would have to take the brake very seriously if they wanted to stop. A newspaper was published, I believe, on top of the mountain and this was one way to bring the paper and down the mountain. Passengers are permitted to get up and move around. 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 a 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 cumin!



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 block 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 thicknesses 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.

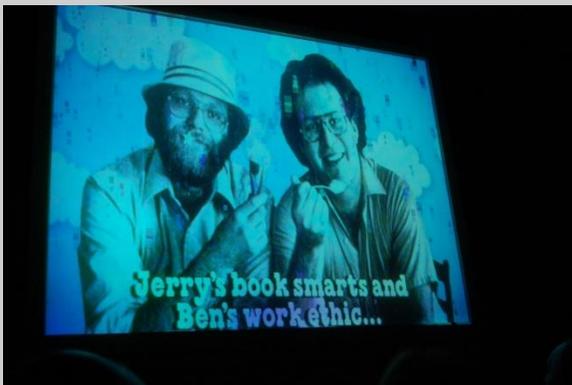
This is one of those venues where, for the most part, pictures are not permitted. The grounds and items on the grounds are uniquely tailored for kids of all ages.



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.



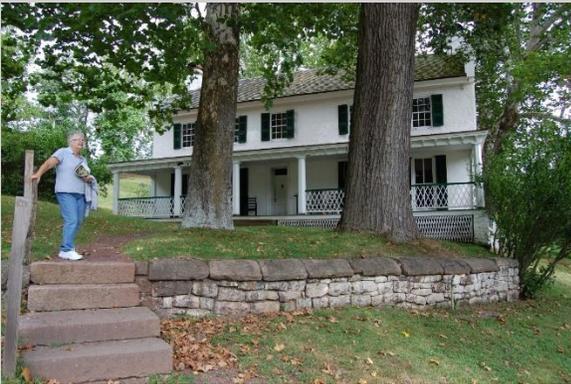
The blacksmith shop, in this picture was a vital area in keeping the 36 horses in the barn shod, not to mention other implements needed. It was always a warm area and, as a result, was a great gathering place. The Ironmaster, as Bird was called, also provided a schoolhouse on the plantation. Only the 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 bit.



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 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 caboose? 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.

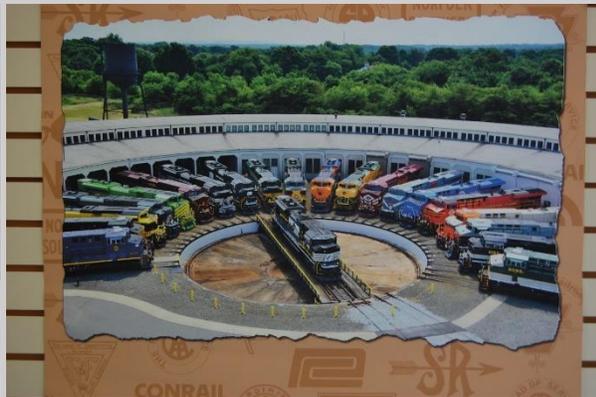


A typical boxcar, not really what you see in the movies! Conrail, once again.



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.

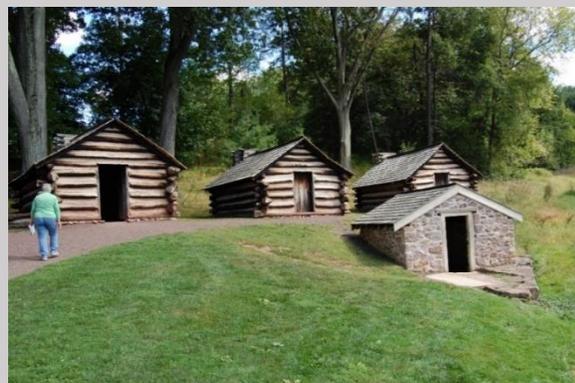


The QVC Network is also televised in Japan, UK, Germany, Italy and China. She spoke at length describing the different positions and how everyone in each department knows each other's jobs. Photo of Joan Rivers on the floor by her feet.



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



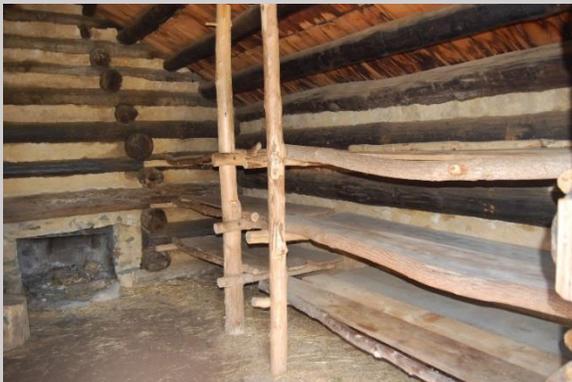
I had a complete isunderstanding of the whole Valley Forge episode in our American History. I was definitely gazing out the window again in seventh grade when we discussed Valley Forge. There is so much to tell, I'll add more in the future. Nevertheless this is what we experienced. Once again, all venues 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.

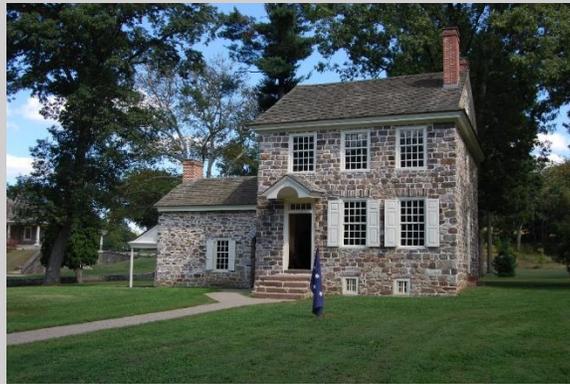


Once again a picture of the huts. The little one in the front right corner was a spring house which we mentioned in the Hopewell Furnace blog. Below Carla is standing on a raised portion of the floor. Around and along the sides of the shed, the dark-brown area, is where water would flow in from a local 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.



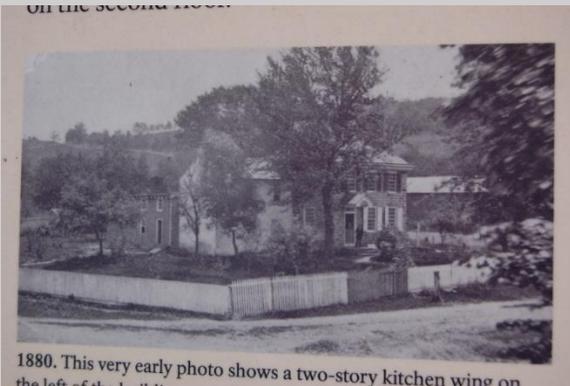
Ultimately this little home on the property served as both the temporary home to Martha and George Washington, and was also the headquarters for his army. A few pictures of the inside of the home. This was the office he used to conduct the war. It was barely 12x12 space. This building was perpetually 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.

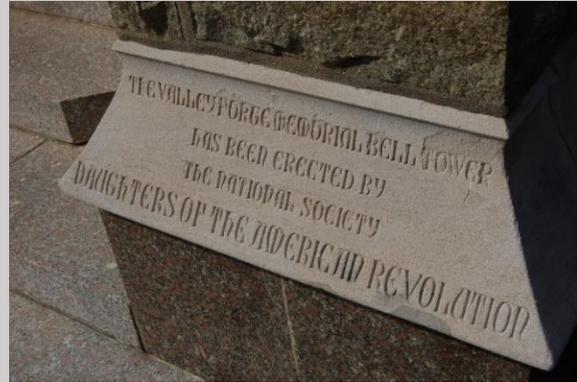


Another look at the home and office George Washington. Below however, is a picture of what it really looked like in 1880. Yes! The kitchen back then had a second floor.



1880. This very early photo shows a two-story kitchen wing on the left of the house.





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 itizens 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 countries 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."

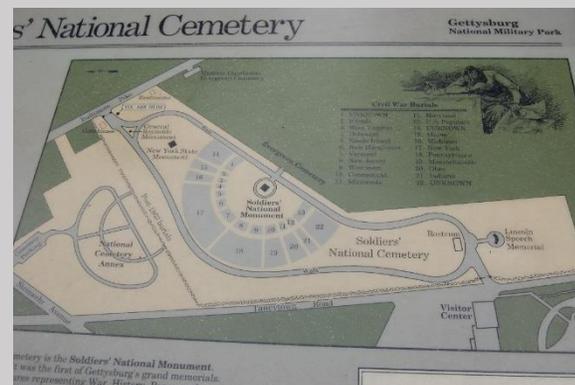
It is written that the Bell did not ring on July 4, 1776. In 1777 the British captured Philadelphia but the patriots had enough time to remove valuables to safety including the State House Bell. The Bell originally had a very thin crack in it. In 1846 workers tried to fix the thin crack, then on George 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 a 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 Lot, and belong to the OFFICE OF THE LIFE SAVINGS SOCIETY, and will be sold on Monday, Sept. 22nd, 1863, at the Fair Grounds, in Missouri, between 10 and 12 P. M. The Negroes will be taken to the grounds ten days previous to the date, so that they may be inspected by prospective buyers.

The names of the live prime stock below, they will be sold for cash only, and must be taken here immediately within five hours after sale.

No.	Age	Sex	Color	Value
1	10	M	Black	\$2,250.00
2	10	M	Black	2,000.00
3	10	M	Black	2,000.00
4	10	M	Black	2,000.00
5	10	M	Black	2,000.00
6	10	M	Black	2,000.00
7	10	M	Black	2,000.00
8	10	M	Black	2,000.00
9	10	M	Black	2,000.00
10	10	M	Black	2,000.00
11	10	M	Black	2,000.00
12	10	M	Black	2,000.00
13	10	M	Black	2,000.00
14	10	M	Black	2,000.00
15	10	M	Black	2,000.00
16	10	M	Black	2,000.00
17	10	M	Black	2,000.00
18	10	M	Black	2,000.00
19	10	M	Black	2,000.00
20	10	M	Black	2,000.00
21	10	M	Black	2,000.00
22	10	M	Black	2,000.00
23	10	M	Black	2,000.00
24	10	M	Black	2,000.00
25	10	M	Black	2,000.00
26	10	M	Black	2,000.00
27	10	M	Black	2,000.00
28	10	M	Black	2,000.00
29	10	M	Black	2,000.00
30	10	M	Black	2,000.00
31	10	M	Black	2,000.00
32	10	M	Black	2,000.00
33	10	M	Black	2,000.00
34	10	M	Black	2,000.00
35	10	M	Black	2,000.00
36	10	M	Black	2,000.00
37	10	M	Black	2,000.00
38	10	M	Black	2,000.00
39	10	M	Black	2,000.00
40	10	M	Black	2,000.00
41	10	M	Black	2,000.00
42	10	M	Black	2,000.00
43	10	M	Black	2,000.00
44	10	M	Black	2,000.00
45	10	M	Black	2,000.00
46	10	M	Black	2,000.00
47	10	M	Black	2,000.00
48	10	M	Black	2,000.00
49	10	M	Black	2,000.00
50	10	M	Black	2,000.00
51	10	M	Black	2,000.00
52	10	M	Black	2,000.00
53	10	M	Black	2,000.00
54	10	M	Black	2,000.00
55	10	M	Black	2,000.00
56	10	M	Black	2,000.00
57	10	M	Black	2,000.00
58	10	M	Black	2,000.00
59	10	M	Black	2,000.00
60	10	M	Black	2,000.00
61	10	M	Black	2,000.00
62	10	M	Black	2,000.00
63	10	M	Black	2,000.00
64	10	M	Black	2,000.00
65	10	M	Black	2,000.00
66	10	M	Black	2,000.00
67	10	M	Black	2,000.00
68	10	M	Black	2,000.00
69	10	M	Black	2,000.00
70	10	M	Black	2,000.00
71	10	M	Black	2,000.00
72	10	M	Black	2,000.00
73	10	M	Black	2,000.00
74	10	M	Black	2,000.00
75	10	M	Black	2,000.00
76	10	M	Black	2,000.00
77	10	M	Black	2,000.00
78	10	M	Black	2,000.00
79	10	M	Black	2,000.00
80	10	M	Black	2,000.00
81	10	M	Black	2,000.00
82	10	M	Black	2,000.00
83	10	M	Black	2,000.00
84	10	M	Black	2,000.00
85	10	M	Black	2,000.00
86	10	M	Black	2,000.00
87	10	M	Black	2,000.00
88	10	M	Black	2,000.00
89	10	M	Black	2,000.00
90	10	M	Black	2,000.00
91	10	M	Black	2,000.00
92	10	M	Black	2,000.00
93	10	M	Black	2,000.00
94	10	M	Black	2,000.00
95	10	M	Black	2,000.00
96	10	M	Black	2,000.00
97	10	M	Black	2,000.00
98	10	M	Black	2,000.00
99	10	M	Black	2,000.00
100	10	M	Black	2,000.00

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 Philippoteaux 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



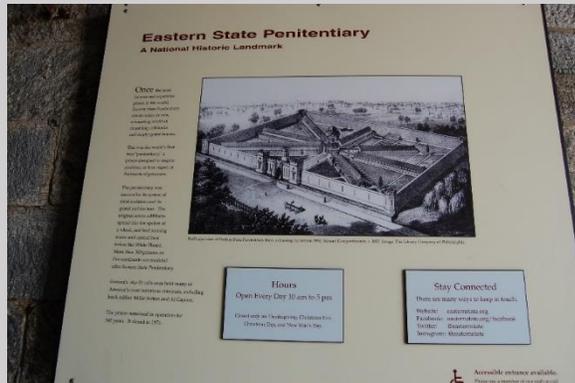
Enough of the Battle of Gettysburg. Much of this information was taken from plaques and documentation presented at the visitor's center. Thank you for so much information.



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 prisoners private cell. As I mentioned before solitude and contemplation were the key words in this type of prison.



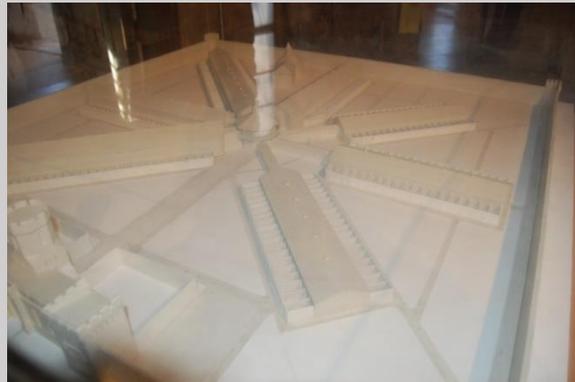
Getting back to the early days. From this picture you can see how prisoners were brought into their cells, from the outside; as seen above with the open door. From the outside they would walk into the individual prisoner's private "outside" courtyard where the figurines are seen now. Below you see the "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 asit 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.



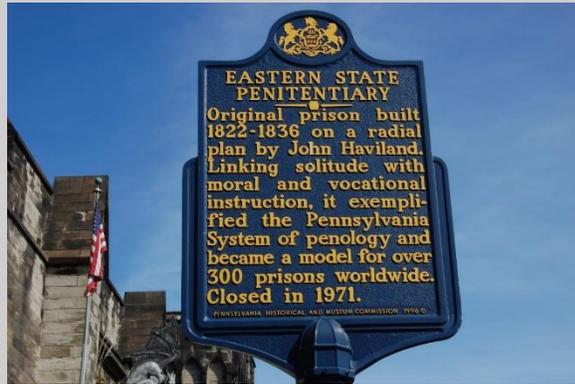
In the picture below is what three of those corridors looked like from the center of the hub. Not all cells were equal. These three cellblocks reflect the thinking in the early 1900's. *I personally prefer the original idea of the 1800's. The entire idea of having a facility that was universally appropriate 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.