

MAY:

TENNESSEE:

5.01.2015- Shiloh National Military Park, Tennessee

Shiloh, awesome visit coming up. Tremendous story about several battles to gain control of the railroad lines in Corinth, MS. In the end 3500 Union and Confederate soldiers never returned home again. The story of Shiloh is a short but very interesting one.



However, like all my blogs I will again let the pictures do most of the talking. But first we begin in the visitors' center for some background information. Picture of the Visitors Center



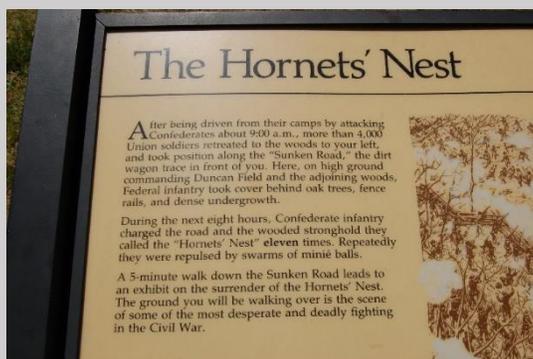
Gift shop inside



Cemetery for the Northern/Union Soldiers only in the battle of Shiloh. I learned that Confederate Soldiers cannot be buried in National Cemeteries. In 1866, however, the United States Government established a cemetery for Union soldiers. A plaque nearby states that two-thirds of the soldiers buried here are unknown. Many of the tombstones either have a number or simply reads, "S. Soldier."



Memorial to the Southerners who fought so bravely in Shiloh. A couple significant items of the memorial. On the right you will notice heads held high and looking up, to represent the optimism of the Southern soldiers. On the left a different story, heads looking down as they return home in defeat. The person in charge of this cannon was called the Gunner. Couriers on horse-back and drummer boys were the primary modes of communication. On April 6, 1862 at 3am the bell to "call to order" rang furiously.

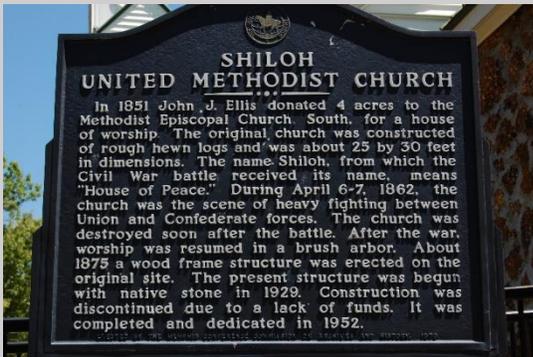


(Information provided from a plaque courtesy of the Shiloh Nat'l Military Park)

Grant would be the Command of the Union troops. He was a graduate of West Point. He served along with Lieutenant Colonel Buell who, as the battle unfolds, will save Grants butt half-way into the battle

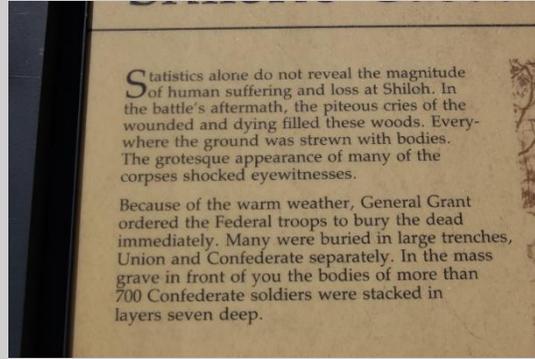


In those days the Union boys, Northerners, that is, were called Billy Yanks. The Southern fighters were referred to as Johnny Rebbs. The Southern Commanders were Johnston and Beauregard. Johnston was very highly thought of by his men; in fact, it was said that without Johnston the South would have no Commander. Sunken Road: The Hornet's Nest Battle was fought on these grounds. After eight solid hours of fighting, the Confederate infantry, by end of day, they would surrender in one of the deadliest battles in the Civil War. Below a view of the battlefield called the Hornet's Nest. Sunken Road is the location of the surrender. Fraley Field: The picture above is of Fraley Field grounds where the battle was fought on. The Confederates were commanded by Brigadier General Benjamin M Prentiss. The Confederates crushed the Hornets' Nest on the first day of fighting, but Gen. Grant, the next day, had a successful counterattack



(Information provided from a plaque courtesy of the Shiloh Nat'l Military Park)

This building was the Methodist Church on the Shiloh grounds where the battle was fought. It later served as a hospital and meeting house.



(Information provided from a plaque courtesy of the Shiloh Nat'l Military Park)

This monument tells the story of this monument to the Confederate soldiers that died in this location. See below. Many of the Southern soldiers escaped during the battle, but in the end over two-thousand perished. The battle was all about controlling the railroad lines coming in and going out of Corinth, TN. The North, ultimately, controlled the RR lines as a result of this battle.

CASUALTIES			
Battle of Shiloh			
April 6-7, 1862			
UNION ARMY	Present for Duty	66,812	
	Killed	1,754	
	Wounded	8,408	
	Missing	2,885	
	Total Casualties	13,047	
CONFEDERATE ARMY	Present for Duty	44,699	
	Killed	1,728	
	Wounded	8,012	
	Missing	959	
	Total Casualties	10,699	
COMBINED TOTALS	Present for Duty	111,511	
	Killed	3,482	
	Wounded	16,420	
	Missing	3,844	
	Total Casualties	23,746	

(Information provided from a plaque courtesy of the Shiloh Nat'l Military Park)

This, in turn, hastened the end of the Civil War because the South, in time, was not able to feed its soldiers nor resupply them with ammunition.

5.02.2015-

Saturday. What beautiful days. Right now, there's no sign of rain till next Friday. We woke up, as usual, with a good chill in the coach. Hopefully by end of month Winnebago will put that problem behind us. Thankfully RVs carry propane, so it barely takes longer than fifteen minutes to remedy that chill.

5.03.2015- Saturdays are usually our church day,

but Mass isn't till 6pm, so we wouldn't get back to the coach till close to 8pm, too late for pizza, beer and movie; so, church will be on Sundays this month. We had breakfast and then about 11am decided to do Sudoku and finish coffee under the awning. For now, there's not a cloud in the sky, just blue skies. This afternoon the campground is supposed to be holding a hot-dog cookout. No idea on the time or place yet. Since we have no church obligations this evening, we decided to gather up some kindling in hopes of having either a cookout of our own or just a sit around the fire pit. As we were sitting, having coffee, Sandy came over to talk before she left to go shopping. As she was visiting Al Ingram, wife Mary (they have the Mountain Air that I mentioned earlier) came over as he was walking his dog, cute pup! They also belong to Family Motor Coach Association (FMCA) as we do. We began talking about Alaska, after Sandy left. He and Mary are going to do Alaska in June of 2016. They've signed up for the 48-day tour, we're still giving it some thought. What a super evening Carla and I just had. We enjoyed a campground sponsored hot-dog roast at one of the parks three campfire rings, see the pictured above.



We're the first to admit that we're not much on getting out and socializing but this evening thanks to the TT/Encore campgrounds and Jason's excellent company we enjoyed an evening to remember.

5.05.2015-Graceland-Cinco de Mayo

Today we trekked to Graceland. The temps were perfect, right around 80, with no clouds in sight. Viewing Graceland was an all-day venture but worth every minute. Learned a great deal about Elvis. Did you know that Elvis had a twin brother, at birth? Did you know the he was deeply religious? And, lastly, did you know that he shunned alcoholic beverages? Just some of the many insights we discovered during our tour of Graceland.



The temps were perfect, with no clouds in sight. The crowds were minimum with no wait times and the venue itself was extremely well organized. Right, Elvis had an identical twin at birth, but he died at birth. We were told that Elvis was a deep believer and into various religions during various times of his life. As far as liquor goes, he had bars throughout his home and planes for family and friends, he personally preferred juice drinks. Everyone is given a digital pad with earphones to expand the experience. Without a doubt it did make the experience more informative.



The homestead, if I remember correctly, was built in 1939. Elvis bought it in the 50's. The home, except a few accent pieces could easily pass as a home belonging to a average rich person, let alone a multi-millionaire.



Living Room



Dining Room



The Kitchen.



The game room.

By all respects, it was a typical sized, but this was a 24/7 kitchen. Elvis' home was always full of guests. The Jungle Room- This room was once used to record several songs.



"Elvis' birthplace on January 8, 1935."



It was now time for us to leave the main house and we were escorted to the Trophy Room. This room consisted of acknowledgements from so many charitable organizations it would take too long to count. There are three more walls just like this one.

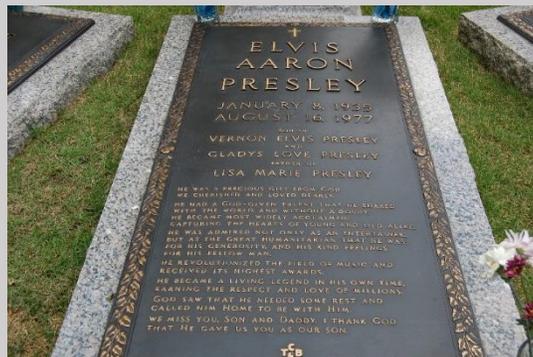


Now it's off to the Racket Ball Court; This is in the Racquet Ball Courts building. In this room alone there are two more walls just like this. To make a long story short, there must be, at least, three more rooms, from floor to ceiling, filled with awards, and first kinds. An entire blog could be centered on just all the records he'd recorded and/or all the awards and certificates he'd been awarded. Now were off to the family back yard. The Meditation section;

Family burial plots



Elvis investigated many of the world's religions, he was profoundly religious.



Burial place for the Presley family. The only member not here is Elvis' twin brother, who died at birth. We were told that his body had "passed to the earth." It was decided to leave him where he was. This concluded our visit to Graceland. I will end by showing you some of the pictures of his homestead.



Elvis' toys; The family plane, Lisa Marie, named after his daughter.



The jet was called Taking Care of Business in a Flash.



This Cadillac was purchased by Elvis in 1956. He had the interior individualized and then had the original white car painted purple. The car is seen here after thirty-thousand dollars in restorations.



Above is a 1975 Ferrari Dino. This Mercedes was a gift from Elvis to Priscilla in 1970. She treasured it dearly. There was a slew of cars, too many to put in this journal, but were very interesting.



This John Deer Tractor was built in the sixties. n 1967 Elvis bought the Circle G Rance in Walls, MS. He used it for years maintaining the property. After the ranch was sold a group of college students from the Northwest Community College offered to restore it and it was returned to Graceland, once restored. In 1970 Elvis acquired a Midnight Blue Limousine. This vehicle was generally built and owned by dignitaries and royalty, of course. This was a Mercedes Benz 600 Gross Pullman model. I could fill an entire book with the remaining 300 pictures and information on Elvis, but that would spoil it for the readers. This is a destination every family should experience. 7th Just like everyone else, this was a shopping day. Dark clouds are setting in for a rainy Friday. Next days would be wash-day. Then haircuts and balance checkbook. Got excellent haircuts at "Cutting" just North out of Middleton on the road to Bolivar.

5.12.2015-Memphis, TN Pyramid

Visible for miles on the ground and definitely the physical structure that identifies Memphis as a city of the future.



Construction is still in progress. Originally conceived in 1959 then shelved for so long that it was the son of the original contractor who resurrected the project and finally finished it. A typical Bass Pro Shop on Steroids. Please go to the Pyramid in Memphis blog for the rest of the story.



More than an abundant amount of easy parking and the roads to Bass are not bad at all for a big city. The entrance to this business is so awesome. This is truly a destination venue.



This is, of course, Bass Pro Shops. If it has to do with the outdoors and hunting, every kind of hunting, you can find it here in spades. Hard to see in this picture but this is a live fishpond. Great for the smaller kids.



As we walk through the floorspace you find these separate little shacks. Each of these is a different department for like shirts, jeans etc. We're at shoes, sneakers and boots department. *If it's not here, it's not worth selling. They have it all.*



We're about to exert ourselves, in a few minutes and climb the stairs and yes, there's an upper level. The second level is specific for guns, duck everything, bows and arrows and camping equipment. Now at the upper lever and there's an ice cream fountain with assorted sandwiches, for those who did not pack a lunch before they left their homes.



No way does this look like any Bait and Tackle shop I've ever patronized, but then this is Bass Pro Shops. Fishing gear next, only makes sense. Of course, you'll see only the best clothes to wear when you go fishing.



I believe this was a memorabilia shop. Yes! The two individuals sitting outside the doorway, are real people. This is a huge aquarium with fish.



Remember when I said everything. Here we have big toys for the big boys. Not just a couple, but a cluster to choose from. *Just in case you left home today to go hunting and you forgot your ATV.* Then, of course, if you left your boat at home, there's a bunch of them to choose from in all sizes.



This is a colorful elevator shaft, which goes straight up to just below the point of the pyramid. There's not even the slightest chance of going hungry here as you visit.



Yes, this is how you get to the top of the pyramid. The elevator will zoom you almost three hundred feet above Memphis. Welcome to Memphis and this, of course, is the Mississippi river.



Plenty of parking below for the attraction. Yes, this is a destination, not just a sports shop, with activities for young and older. A full-service restaurant will await you at the top, if you're not already full.



Must get back to shopping. We're still on the second level and we find tents for every size family. The roof-top looks down to a restaurant on the first level. This place has everything. I wouldn't be surprised if they have a section on RV's or at least travel trailers.

5.12.2015-Wed. - getting together with Rick and Wendy

Had an awesome evening getting together with Rick and Wendy in their Redwood 5th. Here we go again, the countdown. Hard to believe we've been here almost three weeks. In three days, we'll be packing up again. Rain is projected for these days, so we've wrapped up the mat out front in preparation for our next move. Had good experiences and met great friends. It's nice to meet up with folks that say their good-byes with we'll keep in touch and catch up with you in the future.

5.13.2015

Rick and Wendy left us this morning on their way to Arley, AL; where we had just come from last week. So, it is with the full-time RVer's life. Both retired from careers at FedEx. I'm certain we'll be running into them quite often in our travels. My brother, on a positive note, is beginning to dissolve his real estate empire and cruise into retirement. Abby is on a countdown as well with high school ending in the next couple of weeks. She's our surrogate granddaughter and "world" traveler. From time to time our thoughts drift back on the many trips and vacations we'd taken with her; priceless!

5.15.2015- Sunday is our go-day.

Sunday is our go-day. We'll travel about 160 miles to Conway, AR and overnight at Cracker Barrel just off 265, never a hardship. Monday we'll finish the trip when we arrive in Branson, MO. Just a short stay, about six days. We'll be camping at Branson Views Campground, a non-TT property. It's a small park, about 45 sites but it will do just fine. Here just long enough to say we visited. Carla has just finished baking some muffins for our mornings and some brownies to keep me fortified for the trip. Total miles for this trip should be around 360.

5.17.2015- Travel Day

We were on the road by 9 am, early for us. Our destination for today would be a Cracker Barrel in Conway, AR. About halfway in our journey the alarms went off in our Winnebago Itasca SunCruiser, indicating the jacks "were in a down" position. We stopped and discovered two of them were down just a tad but needed to be addressed. Traveling cautiously for the next thirty miles we arrived at Camping World in Galloway, AR. Unbelievable service! The Service Manager personally came out to the coach and remedied the problem. Turns out the springs on the jacks are, of course, nine years old and should be attended to. Asked him if Camping World could do it and he said they had to be special ordered. We checked with Winnebago, since we would be there on the 27th, and they had them in stock. The service manager spent over an hour with us and our jacks and said no charge... *Priceless!* Right from the beginning he did not seem concerned. With rag in left hand and a can of silicon spray in the right hand, he got down on the ground and began diagnosing our problem. Within a few minutes he began activating the jacks, both as a group and individually. He proceeded to wipe down and clean the jacks, spraying each one of them. He then reassured us we only had a minor problem. He demonstrated how I could manually retract the individual jack if it was not doing so on its on. Just as we thought he was finished; he was back on the ground repeating what he had previously done. Said he wanted to be doubly sure each was as clean as possible.

As a plus he brought me over to a section of the coach behind the drivers' side. He took the time to show me how to reset the jacks to better balance the coach... *priceless!* We left Camping World as

very happy campers. His attention to detail in remedying our situation will always be remembered, not to mention the gratification in finding this Camping World open on a Sunday. Thank you, CW, for having such caring staff.

5.18.2015-Branson View Campground (MO)

Had a very restful sleep and got started first thing after a light breakfast a CB. Arrived in Branson, MO in early afternoon.



Getting around here is not difficult, but this campground, like Branson, is very hilly. Like so many campgrounds, it also has a swimming pool. It's not that big, but it's very clean and nicely located on the grounds.



All the sites here are a little tight, but the location and the views from the edges of the campground are truly awesome. Just look at some of the RV sites here.



Did I mention the views!

Thanks to Thousand Trails and Equity Lifestyle Properties we were fortunate enough to stay here for only \$10/night. *Great place to stay!*

18th-Ripley's Believe It or Not

And visited Ripley's. Not too much to say about this venue, always interesting.



All the Ripley's are interesting. A great place to visit, especially on a rainy day. Took a bunch of pictures, but honestly, decided to leave this blog with just one picture.

19th-Gilley's in Branson, MO.

To help me through my divorce, back in the '80s, on Sunday afternoons, after I closed my Pharmacy, I would travel to an Indian RV Park Campground in Webster, MA and enjoy live performances of country western music stars, like Willy Nelson, Johnny Cash and so many others, but never experienced Mickey Gilley. Guess who was starring, in person, at the Mickey Gilley Theater.

You're right! A little older and, as a result of a very severe accident, does not play the piano. So much to talk about concerning this awesome personality, but this is not the place.



Above is the lobby of his theater.

What I did not know is that Mickey's cousins were Jerry Lee Lewis and Jimmy Swagger, the world-famous Evangelist. The entire evening was very intense. Forty-five minutes prior to his performance was a video-album of his life in show-business. Truly awesome sight to see him and his cousins with Johnny Cash and so many greats of past days. He sang virtually every song I could remember, and many more.



All three struggled to get their careers in full gear. Jerry Lee Lewis was the first to achieve success but struggled off and on for the next twenty years. They struggled with family relationships as well.



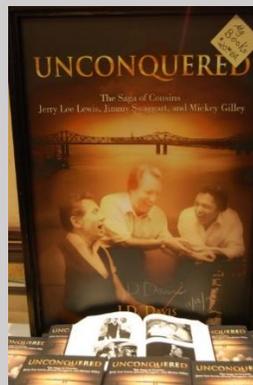
Yes, Gilley's in Branson went up a blaze, no casualties however; later rebuilt.



A picture of all three cousins. The fourth person I'm not sure of, probably the host of the show they were on. Mickey was on the Letterman show several times. On this occasion David was fascinated with the mechanical bronco at Mickey's; so, Mickey brought one to his show one night. Letterman did get on it but it ran at a very slow pace.



Gals have been with Mickey for years. The banter off one another is priceless. For a man in his mid-eighties he gave us a show that lasted almost three hours.



You see him recuperating from a very serious fall helping a friend move. It took several months before he would go back on stage again. As a result of this fall, he plays little piano. Difficult for a person like

Gilley to sit back and not play any longer especially since he was as proficient on the piano as his cousin Jerry Lee Lewis. Throughout his entire performance he did not cease to expound on just how lucky he had been to have received assistance from friends in the music industry. A very humble individual, unlike cousin Jerry. He authored the book "Unconquered" by J D Davis. I am currently reading it. This book is for everyone. It describes in detail the struggles each of the cousins endured. It's an excellent book for a teen that enjoys reading. Sadly, like so many Amazing Acrobats from China other theater greats who were fixtures in this city, Mickey will be going back on the road.

21st - Amazing Acrobats from China

We attended a seminar for a time-share this morning, and as expected, they're all the same. For enduring this two-hour seminar, we were rewarded with two tickets to the Amazing Acrobats from China. This group was so awesome, sadly we were supposed to go back to the coach, but didn't, so I did not have my camera, so no pictures. Only pictures could describe how great they were, sorry! For doing the seminar they also gave us tickets to the "Bunkhouse" dinner theater, which we enjoyed immensely.

22nd The Bunkhouse Dinner Theatre

This event turned out to be as good as the food was delicious. On stage the group sang, joked and there was banter between them all night. Just to break up the skit, for what it was worth, one of the players met this gal in the audience, she said she had a joke:

Dolly and Queen Elizabeth ironically got to the pearly gates at the same time. St Peter answered the door but said he had room for only one of them. Dolly kind of shimmied a bit showing how well-endowed she was, while the Queen polished off a Perrier Water, went to the bathroom and flushed after she was finished. She then proceeded back to St Peter and St Peter said, "come on into the Queen." Dolly was a put out and asked St Peter how come she got in first. St. Peter replied that "royal flush" always beats a pair.

Met a Wisconsin farmer and his wife at the Dinner Theatre. Interesting to hear others describe their area or what they do for a living. We did not attend the Shepherd of the Hills Theatre, only the Bunkhouse Dinner Theatre, but I've read that this we be their final year. Not sure of the Bunkhouse Theatre.



Like the “good ole’ boys, the characters on the stage continuously poked fun at each other. Occasionally they even tried a joke or two. During the stage songs, skits and during the meal large monitors, on the wall, continually displayed country scenes. Just take a short walk to the edge of the driveway and enjoy an awesome view of the area.

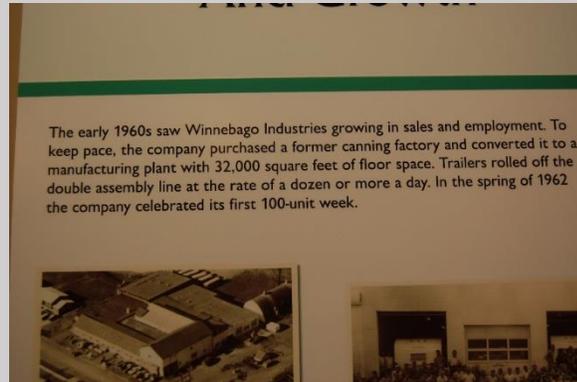
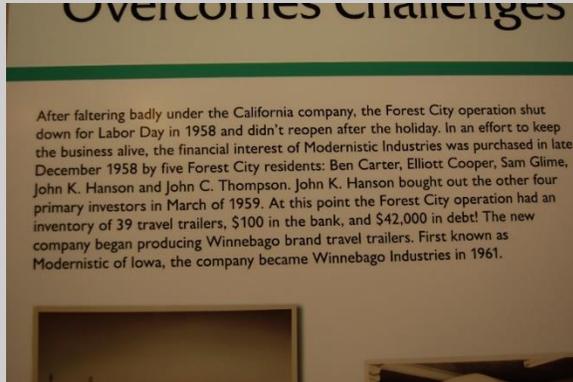


We found the gift shop here very interesting as well. Just a little like a Cracker Barrel, but much less congested. Driveway as you enter this venue. To say that it is a “must-see” probably not, but it was a very enjoyable evening, not to mention, an excellent family style meal.

23rd

Got a great start this morning and reached Cracker Barrel just outside of Kansas City by 2:30. Showers this evening and thunderstorms for tomorrow, Sunday. It's got to get better. We traveled today, 24th, to Des Moines, IA, at a Cracker Barrel there. Only staying the night. Tomorrow, 25th, we're off to Winnebago in Forest City, IA to have a couple of items fixed on the coach.

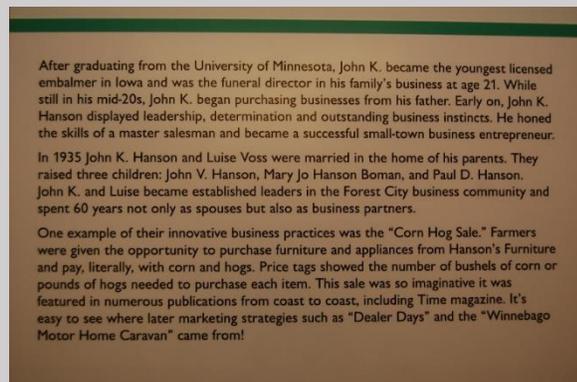
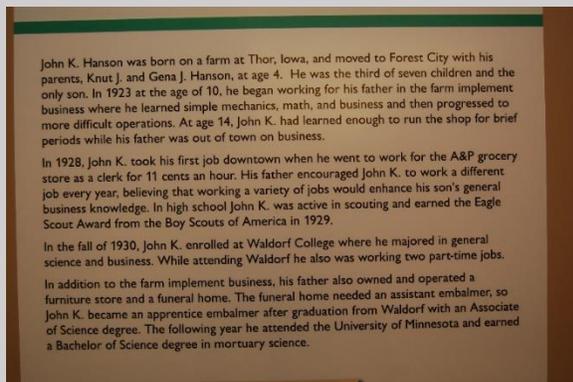
Winnebago Industries, in Forest City. 25th The founders of Winnebago.



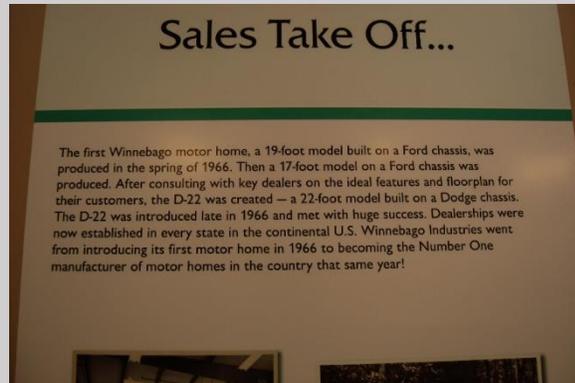
Info plaques courtesy on Winnebago Ind.

That would not last very long. By 1958 five Forest City residents bought the company. It would now be called Modernistic Industries of Iowa, in Winnebago County, *not much imagination in that name*. By 1959 John K Hanson was the controlling partner. Now the new company, Winnebago Ind. needed to expand. A little history on John K Hanson.

Info plaques courtesy on Winnebago Ind.



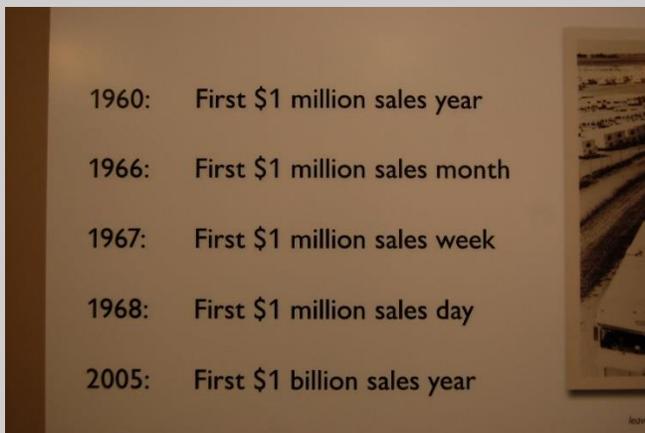
Info plaques courtesy on Winnebago Ind. Bet he didn't have an uncle Horace, family inside joke. Info plaques courtesy on Winnebago Ind.



The rest is now history. Info plaques courtesy on Winnebago Ind. Some at Winnebago were toying with some innovative ideas.



If you look closely, in the lower left corner of the picture of the showcase, you'll see a Class-A Motorhome strapped to a Saturn Rocket, I think NASA passed on that idea. And another idea, in the next picture. This idea did not make it either.



Info plaques courtesy on Winnebago Ind.

Even without NASA's help the numbers above confirm Winnebago's success. We've covered just over 700 miles the last 3 days rambling through some of Americas' nicest farmlands, *priceless!* Our purpose for this trip is to have Winnebago fix a couple of items and some minor glitches. Still at Winnebago, but we did get to take a field trip or two.

Grotto of the Redemption.

28th

Father Paul Dobberstein (1872-1954) was the first pastor and wanted to give his church a significance in the area. His idea was to create a grotto on the church grounds. This began as a one-man project but as his venture grew, he had to seek some outside help from the parishioners.



This church is truly awesome! In the background you can see the Christmas Chapel located on the far wall.



The Christmas Chapel was built by Fr. Dobberstein in 1927. The chapel contains a Brazilian Amethyst stone weighing almost 300 pounds and valued at over \$5000, just one stone. The main altar of the Church won first prize at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. The grounds are adorned with statues of many saints. This would be St. Joseph with Jesus.



Pictured above is Carla speaking to a volunteer who was supposed to walk us through this Grotto. We lost her to a bus load of schoolchildren. Our next guide did her best but we could not cope with a bus load of seniors; so we picked up a paper brochure and did the tour ourselves, it can be done.



This statue, of course, that of St. Michael the Archangel, which is why he's first in line. (My son is named Michael), and he lives up to his name. Here Michael is representing good and evil is represented the devil being crushed under his feet. Next would be Moses, displaying the Ten Commandments.



Fr. Dobberstein's depiction on the Stations of the Cross. The grotto portion was completed in 1956 and the statuaries arrived in early 1970's.



The birth of Christ in Bethlehem. The manger scene makes use of 65 tons of petrified wood from Montana and the Dakotas. This is the Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church. The Parish was established in the late 1800's but this stone structure was built in 1921.

31st St. James in Forest City, IA

We prefer Saturday services, but in this lifestyle, you take what's being offered, and what a pleasant surprise.



On this beautiful Sunday morning we attend Mass at St. James' in beautiful Forest City, IA. It was such a breath of fresh air to experience this delightfully simple, friendly Catholic Church. Only one mass was offered, at 10:30. What a great attendance. Take time to read a little more on this church, the parish and visiting priest Fr. Heeman (forgive me if I misspelled your name.) The Mass service was light, personalized and the pastor's personality filled the church. We met him as we walked into the church, and he did not hesitate to introduce himself and make polite conversation on our being full-time RVers. Parishioners filled this church, almost to capacity. What awesome mix of parishioners in attendance; from the very young to seniors. For such a small parish it can boast an organist that is very accomplished, a choir that sings very much on key, a deacon and alter servers, one of whom was given a check for \$250 from the Knights of Columbus for exemplifying the best qualities that make up an alter server; *priceless!* Something must be in this Iowa air and water; *Carla and I are getting hooked on whatever it is!* We've attended Mass from as small as store-fronts to 50-million-dollar cathedrals, and quite frankly, I feel the Church should invest more in home-town churches like St. James and spend less building multimillion-dollar churches and embellishing their own Cathedrals; *but that's my own opinion!*

JUNE

6.01.2015-CEDAR RAPIDS, IA-Squaw Creek RVP in Cedar Rapids, IA

We had a very unexciting trip from Branson. We arrived in Squaw Creek about 1pm on Mon. the 1st. Squaw Creek is one of the nicest campgrounds we've ever stayed at.



Not sure if all the county campground Web Sites are the same as Squaw Creek, but this one was exceptional. When we were asked which site we wanted, we were able to view each site online to see which one we wanted... awesome! Every site, I mean every site, has this heavy-duty fire ring.



This campground offers all the amenities including 30/50-amp power all over.



Only item missing is washer-dryer; not available, not a big deal. Laundromats are a short drive away.



This is one of the few parks were paying to stay at, around \$30/day. The accommodations are well worth the price, not to mention the proximity to Don and Joyce. If this park is on your way, you will enjoy your stay. We were up at 4am on Wed. and I was on Delta going south at 6:30; very nice flight. Dennis picked me up at Palm Beach International and it was off to see mom. 71st birthday for me, *yuk!* Good old June 6. So many called, nice to be part of a bigger family. On the 29th our mail will arrive with Birthday card greetings from all the Ozdarski's; *priceless!* We're squared away on this beautiful site for another 7 days. Saturday, we attended Mass at St. Joseph's. *Awesome!* parishioner participation and great service. Next day I had a chance to partially wash the coach, then we enjoyed delightful evening with Don and Joyce. Anamosa Reformatory is scheduled for tomorrow the 8th (Mon).

8th Anamosa Reformatory Prison



1691-This is the Anamosa Reformatory Prison.

9th This is the Anamosa Reformatory Prison. In this picture you can see the Administration Building in the center and some of the prison cells on the left. This is the extreme left section of the prison.



In a little more detail once again is the center left prison cell section.



Above is the right portion of the prison. Much of this section is administrative. Morning bell, at the prison, is at 6am.



Virtually everyone has a job at the prison. The prison pays between 30 to 50 cents an hour. What a prisoner cannot buy is cigarettes yet, every day, the cleaning crews find butts somewhere.



Prisoner earnings go to pay such items as everyday needs, funds to be paid to victims and room and board. Yes! Prisoners pay to stay, no option on that. Rent is around \$10 per month.



The kitchen employs the greatest number of prisoners.



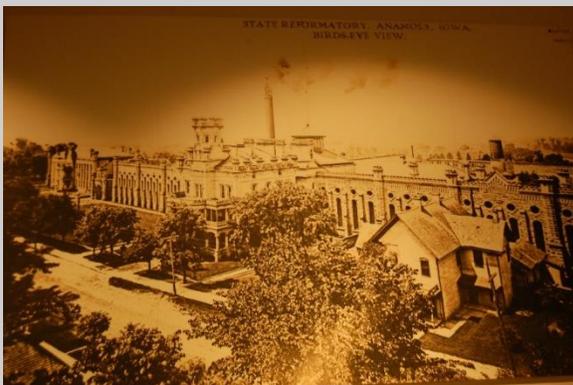
Weightlifting is the #1 pastime, who would have thought.



The current warden of the prison. In the picture above, left corner, you'll see an "arched" entranceway. Back in the construction days the state purchased a quarry to reduce the cost of construction.



Stone, used for the walls of the prison, was railroaded into the prison through this arched opening. The tracks are no longer visible but if you look at the picture of the prison you can see the corridor the train traveled into and out of the prison. Above are just pictures about the construction on the prison in the late 1800's. In those days many prisoners convicted of lesser crimes, of course, assisted in the construction process.



Smaller buildings, located inside the walls, are all used for work or education as purposes.

Kirkwood Community College is responsible for all prisoners obtaining their GED diploma, if they do not have a High School diploma. Higher education courses, including culinary, may also be offered but may come with tuition expense to the prisoners. Inmates have baseball fields, numerous basketball courts, tennis, golf and many other sports, including horseshoes. We found that to be questionable, but we were told the prisoners know if they abuse or misuse an activity, it will be taken away, possibly to the displeasure of fellow inmates. The inmates are asked if there might be other sports or activities they'd like to have if the facility could work it into their budget. A running track was requested, possibly around the outside perimeter of the prison! *Request denied!*



From the picture above you can see I am not able to continue this blog. I was later released.

8th- Picnic with Don and Joyce

The first day of our arrival, June 8th, Don and Joyce introduced us to Noodles, we highly recommend this eatery. Fast counter service and your food at your table in about 2 minutes. Next afternoon Joyce and Don came to over to the campground to enjoy hot dogs.





Seldom do we have a chance to enjoy an evening with old friends. One dog left over, Don and I decided to split the left over to save Carla from having to deal with it.



Enjoyed an excellent wine as well.

9th

Tuesday evening, we had a great chicken meal with Don, Joyce, Marion (Don's sister-in-law) and Al (a colleague of Don's living in England—*Little did we ever expect that within a year Al would no longer be with us.* The meal was great followed with pecan pie and ice cream. Then we enjoyed critiquing America's Got Talent... *Priceless!* Thursday we're scheduled for dinner w Joyce, Don and all the family at their home.



12th

Friday, we celebrate the 50th Anniversary for Don and Joyce with the MacDougall family. After a considerable amount of discussion, Noodles was chosen for the restaurant. Everyone was pleased and ate well; thank you Don and Joyce.

13th

Saturday was truly awesome as we, once again, celebrated the 50th as well as Don's 73rd birthday. Pretty smart thinking, on Don's part, planning his birth around his wedding anniversary!



This party was in a neighboring campground. Awesome facility! Tuesday afternoon Joyce, Don and Al came to over to the campground and invited us to dinner that evening... *awesome!* Thursday we're scheduled for dinner with Joyce and Don and all the family at their home

14th. Curling

We've been watching Curing on the Olympics for the past 12 years, finally had a chance to experience it personally. I got to know the ice quite well. Dan, the big guy in blue, created this Curling league. Above and below he is explaining to us the rules that govern Curling. Teams have four persons. Each person will have two "rocks" to send down the ice-covered alley to position it, as close as possible to the rings called "home", center ring is called the bubble. Unlike bowling at 43 pounds each you do not throw these rocks, just slide them gently to home, one hundred fifty feet away.



Above each team has two sweepers and they use the brushes in this container. When you brush the ice vehemently enough it creates heat which facilitates the rock to move faster and even to vary its direction. These are the league players. *And, it's cold here.* OK, that sounds easy, just push to rock and watch it travel. Ladies first, so Don and I watch to see if she was listening the last twenty minutes. This can't be that hard, so Carla tries...!



Oops! How hard can it be? You're even provided a slider for your left foot and a push-off item to get you moving. I did not do that much better. It's a lot like bowling except for all this ice.



Not fair, I slipped! Have a bad knee! *OH whatever!* This is harder than it looks. Once again, the ice is really cold. Was really hoping Don would not show us up, after all, he's a Wisconsinite now. However, he met with the same results we had.



Dan is demonstrating another option for all of us, since we're not negotiating the ice that well. A teammate suggested, if we are really interested, we might be better on a senior league.



Let's do it again, OK guys! Like Dan is here every weekend, but we'll try doing it again. This time we're using an aid for this game. Didn't work for Carla, she got the same results. I, on the other hand, used two different gadgets, (second not shown), embarrassing I ended up same as last time, I'll spare you the pictures. It was a fun time. Dan gave us almost three hours, much more than we were expecting, and in the end, we were all still talking and still friends. There's little more to say on this topic but I wanted all my subscribers to my website to see just how awesome this facility really is. Enjoy the remaining pictures.



I think we're all going to have a better appreciation for the Curling sport in the next Winter Olympics. I want to thank Joyce, Don's wife, for taking all these pictures, even the embarrassing ones. For the record, if we were scheduled to spend any length of time in this area, I would join and learn more.

15th, Arrowhead Resort

We arrived at Arrowhead Resort on Monday the 15th around 4pm. This is in Wisconsin Dells, WI. This is also a Thousand Trails campground.



Tuesday we both slept in, that is 8am. Scoots only got up once last night and Carla took that shift. First full day after traveling is usually shopping, that is for food. Yup, Carla wanted the night off from cooking, so outside we went. Got the shopping done and spent the next three hours in the pool. Met up with Ralph (Popcorn, don't ask) and wife Judy, a trucker-farmer from these parts. Spent Wednesday experiencing the Upper Dells.

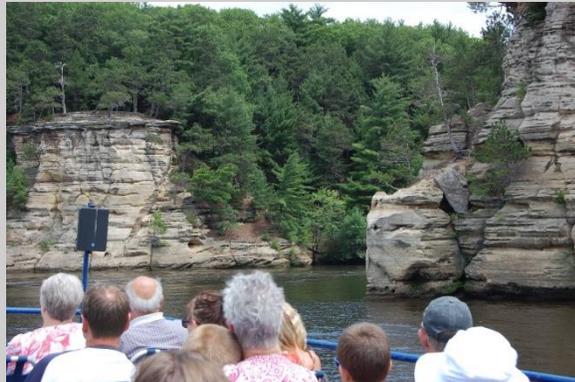
17th. Upper Dells



We not only enjoyed a great boat ride on the Wisconsin River, but awesome exploring as well. Beautiful day so we decided to spend the day on the water. Location, the Upper Dells. Upper Dells refers to that body of water before you reach the dam. Our vessel for this beautiful day trip on the water.



Prior to what you see here now, the dam, the water level would have been twenty feet lower. Our guide for the day.



Rocks and boulders, you see here are actually sandstone. Sandstone is a calcified sand and not a product of the continents colliding millions of years ago, as we've seen in past blogs,



Treacherous bend in the river. In days of old, barges and boats carrying wood, met with deadly outcomes here if they did not navigate this bend properly.



This is not a creation millions of years in the making, but rather a byproduct of the ice age some 14,000 years ago. This is a soft stone and is much more sensitive to the elements than basic stone. Your basic rock came from below the ground, was cooked in the earth's inner core, and millions of years later was pushed to the earth's surface thanks to Africa.



Moss on the walls everywhere. Above is the Witches' Falls



Someone is always hungry!



At this stop we will climb almost three-hundred feet then back down again,



Awesome sights! Natural rock formation, about 75 feet high.



On our trip we met Judy and Joe Wright from Clearwater, FL. Nice folks. ...Captain of our vessel.

20th Drive-In Theater in Wisconsin Dells

Saturday, movie night. Thursday and Friday were quiet days, since I twisted my ankle exiting the coach. Saturday it's ice cream at the campground lodge then pizza in the afternoon and Mass and a drive-in movie to top the night off.



Saturday is usually Movie night. Today would be Drive-in movie night, very enjoyable. Enjoyed watching Jurassic World. We got to leave around 11:30, *who can stay up for the second feature, ending around 2am?*

Father's Day,



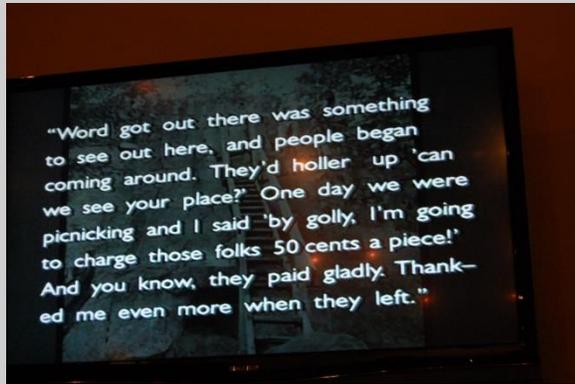
Father's Day, unlike many other special days, always turns out to be a day of heavy reflection on my part. Unlike many fathers, my dad did not have the luxury of growing old. he missed out on watching us claw our way through college, so many marriages; and not to mention grandchildren. So, I guess he missed out on quite a bit. Worst of all he left our lives before I had a chance to really grow up. Christmas's, birthdays and Father's days we usually lavish dads with so much stuff, especially Father's Day Cards. It's mundane and inconsequential, if you're lucky enough to receive them. For the last twenty years or so, especially in my current lifestyle, stuff is so over-rated. It took me so long to grow up. Right now, I would give anything for a mere chance to share a beer with him and just enjoy a nice talk; but the talk will have to wait a few years until we get together again. I wasn't the best of sons, not bad, just never appreciated all he went without and how hard he worked to give us all we had. What he did have, that I envied all my growing years, was the full life, surrounded by a family that loved him as much as he loved us. I mentioned once, many years ago, that I really longed for a family in my life.

That was a selfish wish, and should have asked for what my father had, family that would love him back. Life has a way of coming full circle, not complaining, you reap what you sew. In hindsight I would have done things very differently.

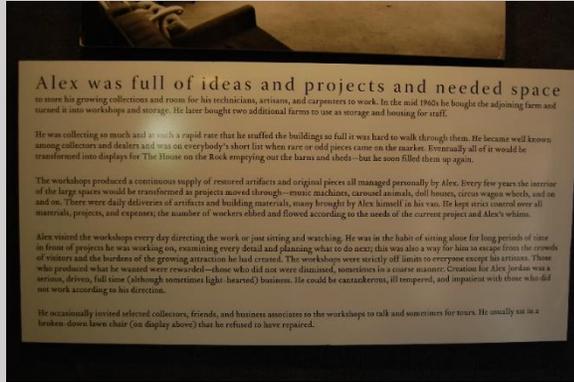
23rd. House on the Rock:



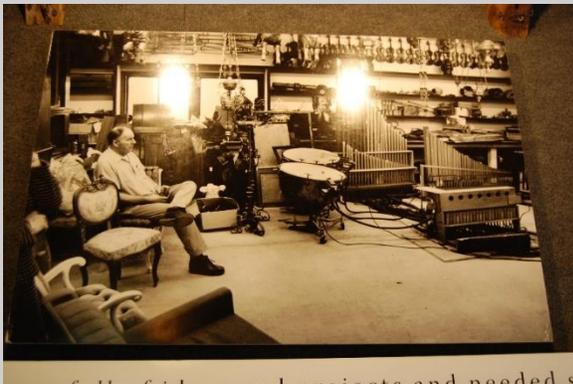
This, of course is not the house, but it is the back yard. This is a unique story of a man with a dream to build his home in the area he used to picnic in, as a child. I'd taken over four-hundred pictures of mostly stuff on display. This blog cannot do this house justice. I can only try to entice you, the reader, in hopes someday you will try to experience this House on the Rock for yourselves. Go early, wear comfortable shoes and allow at least four hours to see it all; awesome!



Does it get much more serene than this? After reading this it almost makes you want to build something and see if they will come. Early admission was only 50 cents. This was his only source of income.



Original owner and the current owners. The picture below will give you a deeper insight in work ethic. From the previous and next pictures this was definitely a person with too much time on his hands.



The area to follow dealt with dollhouses,



Doll houses numbered in the hundreds.



Picture courtesy of House on the Rock. This was a picture of a picture. In this picture you can see Alex behind one of the teeth of this creature. The reason for the explanation was so you'd appreciate just how big this critter was. This is the actual picture of the creature without Alex, it's BIG!



Many pictures of circuses to come, but I'd never seen circuses built on barges or very big riverboats, have you? Circus pictures to follow. Picture of the below-level structure of the air-handlers for one or two of the seven cathedral-size organs Alex has displayed.



Player pianos.

Player piano rolls and how the music sheets are created. Pictures of his home and maybe some random pictures to finish off this post. This was just one of many gathering places.



Entry to the house. His music rooms. All these instruments, after you insert a coin, will play a musical rendition. All these different instruments were mechanized to play in harmony several songs on their own.



Dining room...Another entry way into the house.



Another one of many fireplaces.

The Infinity Room:



Eatery prior to the walkway to another building, not that we haven't seen enough of his stuff already, but this section is interesting. I guess you could call this building the Carousel House. Picture courtesy of House on the Rock. These are digitals of pictures. The carousel was beautiful, and I tried but failed to get a good picture of it.



Pictures of a four-level carousel...

A cathedral-like structure in the carousel venue.



Stain glass windows from a cathedral somewhere.



Showcases and cases and cases of original guns on display, showcases and even more showcases. I liked this one. Once again cases and cases could be described as mechanical devices as the one next.



Don't ask me! If it was unusual, big and interesting he had to have it.



A diesel engine and prop of a ship. The propeller to the engine was so big I had to wonder how they managed to get it into the building. World's largest chandelier. This turned out to be an exceptional venue, never expected to be this surprised. Be prepared to take many pictures and wear comfortable shoes and allow at least four hours to complete this tour. Older kids should truly enjoy this trip. We returned to the coach exhausted. We rested Wed thru Friday enduring some rainy times and a cook-out each night. Hard to believe in three days it will be jacks-up once again. We travel next to Plymouth Rock Campground in Plymouth, WI.

Plymouth Rock RVP

Saturday noon and were still at the breakfast table. Nothing is planned except for our departure this coming Monday morning. The park is brimming over with weekend campers, priceless! We close our stay at Arrowhead, this Sunday evening, by watching Finding Neverland. Where oh where did the Johnny Depp, who played James Barrie, ever go to. I wonder if he has a copy of Finding Neverland as we do. I wish he would take it off the shelf and give it another viewing, and possibly look for acting parts that resemble more his character Barrie. Everyone needs this of type sincere acting. Before any trip we always check and double check our routes. Our confidence is boosted in the fact that our Rand McNally GPS travels along with us. But at less than two years old, after having been exceptionally well cared for, it had a stroke, and passed away. This was one of those fancy 7720 models, I think specific for RV and truck drivers. Think twice before spending that much money on this unit. Navigator Carla whipped out her printouts and maps and got us here safely. We finally arrived at Plymouth Rock Campground around 1 PM and they graciously allowed us to enter a bit earlier than they were expecting us.