

# de Stolfe *Journal*.....

## May Vacation

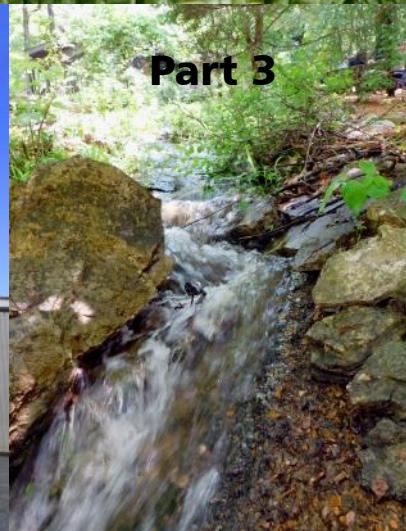
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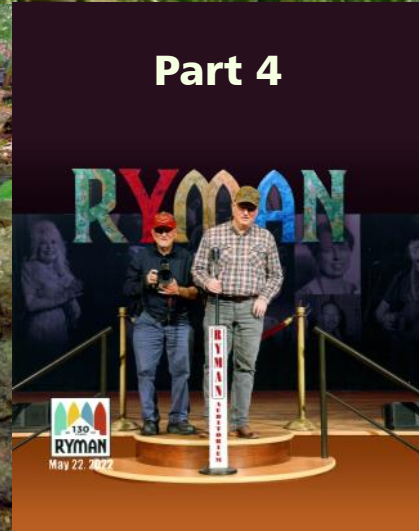
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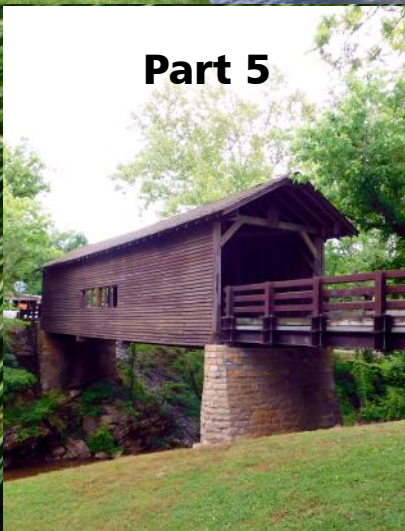
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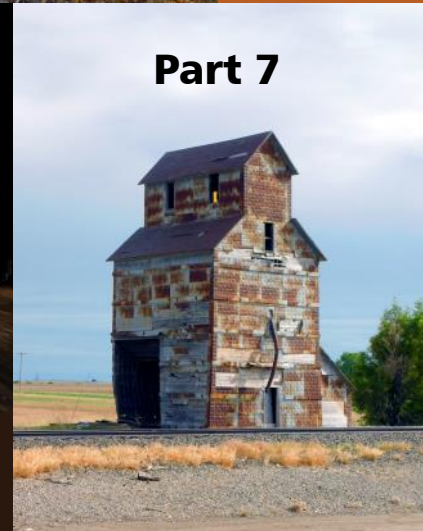
**Part 5**



**Part 6**



**Part 7**



**Including Some Extras**

**May Trip 2022—All | 11.3 - 11.9**

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May Trip 2022—All | 11.3 - 11.9

*Covers full vacation destinations, May 3-June 5, 2022  
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[www.destolfe.com](http://www.destolfe.com)



# Comments by RG

## Long Awaited Vacation Finally Done!

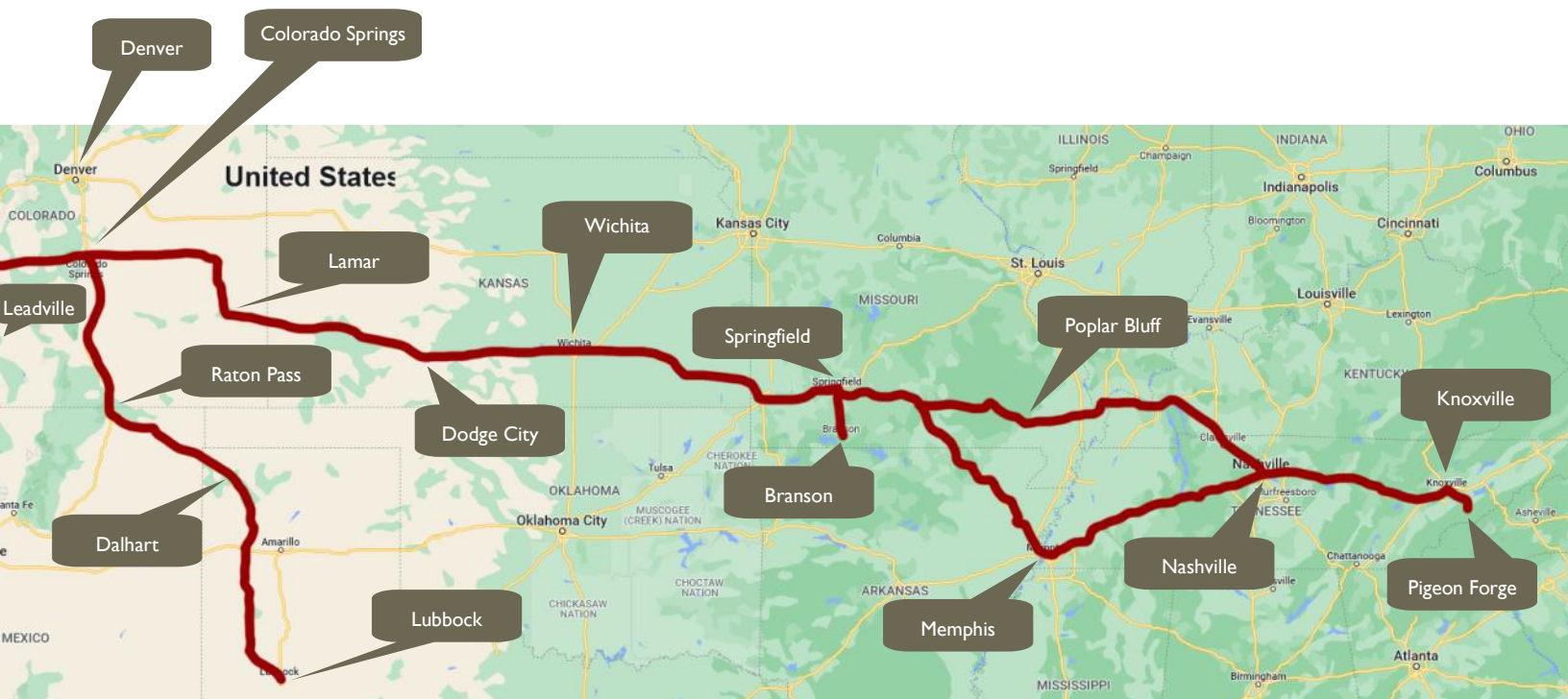
So Dad and I had talked sometime last year about going on a trip to somewhere as our 2022 vacation. After talking about the options, I wanted to go back to Branson and Silver Dollar City, since I had not been there since 2005. Dad wanted to go to the Grand Ole Opry and to Dollywood. So, I figured let's string several places together and make a long trip from Colorado to Tennessee! Over several months, I checked on the places, mapped out a route, and decided on the other places we wanted to go to besides the main places. There are a lot of places to see between Colorado and Tennessee! Here is general itinerary. The

general route is to go from Colorado Springs to Dodge City as the first attraction, then to Springfield/Branson area. Then, we will go down through Arkansas to Memphis, then to Nashville. From there, we will go to Knoxville and to Pigeon Forge. After that, we planned to go up to Louisville and over to St. Louis, Kansas City, and I-70 over to central Kansas for another stop. However, even the best plans can change! Most of the trip through Pigeon Forge was more or less as planned. But, the part after Pigeon Forge ultimately did change! Most of this issue is focused on



Producer, RG de Stolfe

the trip with a small few other things. I will break up telling about the trip into five issues, possibly more. Here is the first issue, so enjoy! (Each issue will be a little better than the last!)



# May Vacation—Part 1

## Planning a Trip

Dad and I had been planning a trip in 2022 over the last several months. I thought May would be a good month because we had already travelled in May back in 2020 when dealing with Mom's estate and the weather was generally good. We had first thought about exploring Wyoming and other areas north of Colorado. But we decided instead that we would go to Tennessee and areas in between. I started by planning out a route and what places we wanted to visit. From there I figured out a game plan of routes and days to spend at each destination as well as decided on hotels. The plan is a general guide and is certainly subject to change!

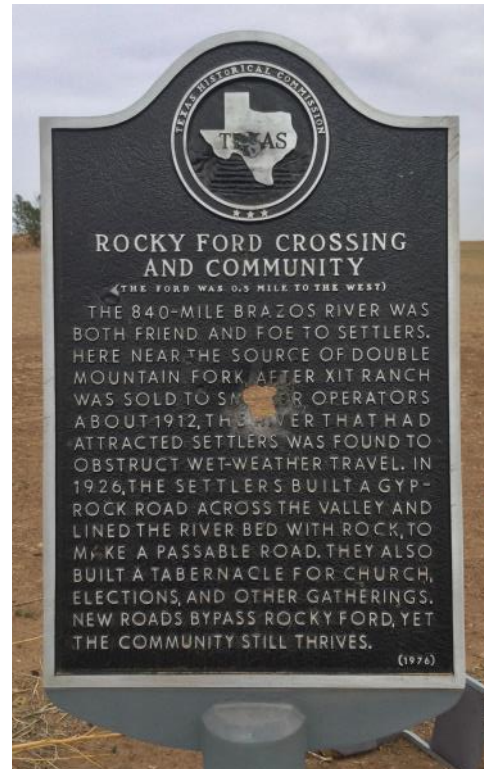
## Going to Colorado Springs

I decided that I would drive up to Colorado Springs on Wednesday, May 4, 2022. However, I decided that I would instead leave a day early on that Tuesday and stay the night in Dalhart to chop the driving in half so I would not be in any rush. I loaded up, had lunch at La Madeleine, and was on my way at about 5:00 PM. I also decided to take a route I had not taken in many years. A route where I go to Littlefield, then take 385 all the way to Dalhart. Along the way on 385, I stopped several times to photograph historical markers that I found by the road.

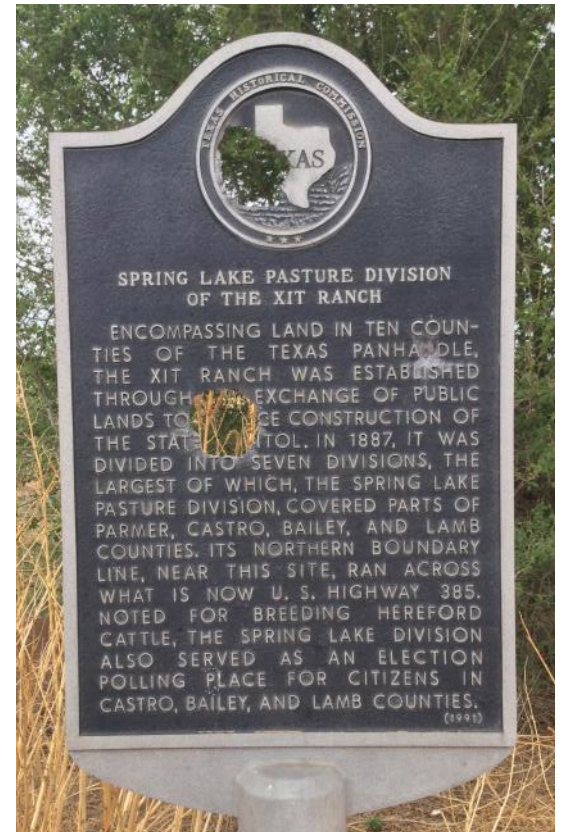
*I stopped by the courthouse of Castro County in Dimmitt. This Ozark trail marker was on the corner.*



*Historical marker for Spring Lake Pasture of XIT.*



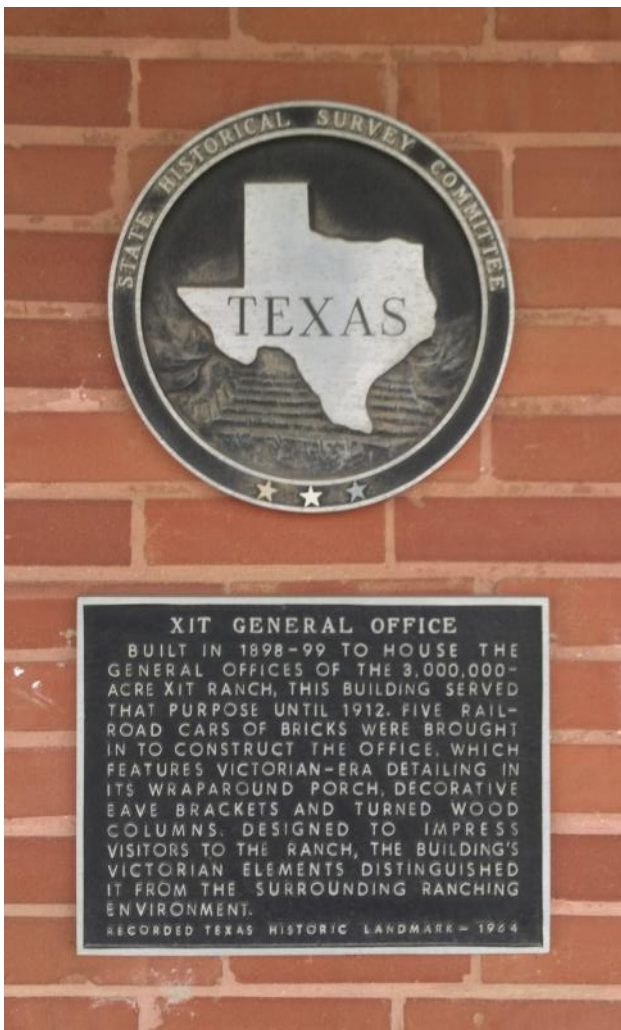
*Historical marker about the Rocky Ford Crossing and Community. (Someone thought it was only worth as a target!) Arrow is a Quanah Parker Trail marker.*



# May Vacation—Part 1

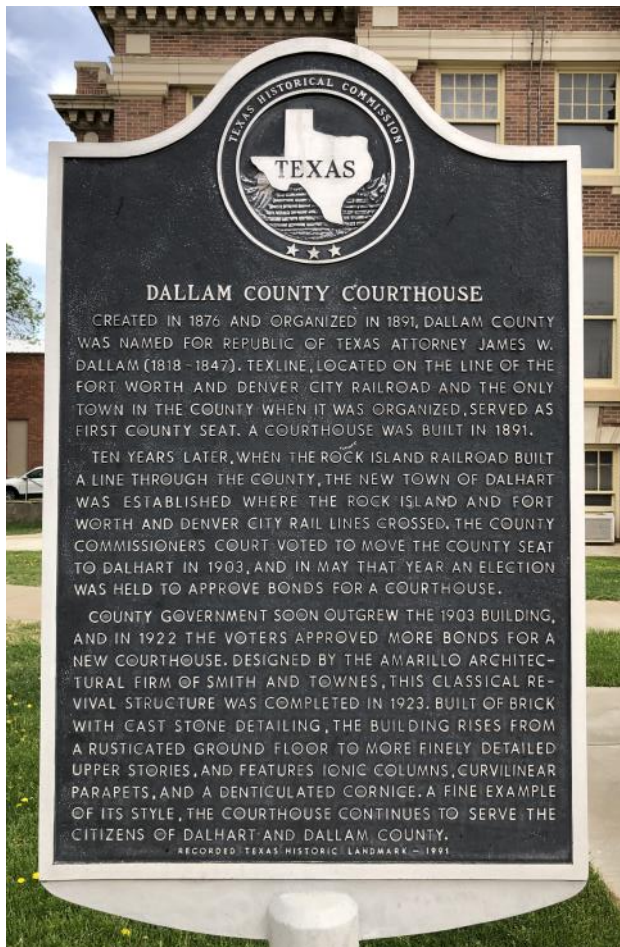
The one main other stop I planned was in Channing to photograph the XIT office, which was temporarily closed. But that didn't stop me from seeing the place! I arrived in Dalhart at sunset a little before it got dark and checked into my motel before getting some dinner.

*The general office of the XIT Ranch in Channing, Texas.*



# May Vacation—Part 1

When I planned to stay in Dalhart, I knew that the next day I wanted to go to the XIT Museum before continuing on to Colorado. I parked by the courthouse and took photos of the courthouse and the historical markers around it. I then toured through the XIT Museum.



# May Vacation—Part 1

Once I got some gas, I went on my way leaving a little after 1:00 PM. From Dalhart, I headed towards Clayton, New Mexico. On the way, I stopped at this abandoned, crumbling building in Perico, which used to be a gym. I don't know much about the gym or why it was there, but Google Maps shows evidence of the foundation of a building about the same size right behind the gym. Across the street near the gym are some silos near the railroad tracks.



*In "the early 1900s, Perico grew as a result of the W. P. Soash Land Company's promotional campaigns. A post office was opened in November 1907. As the number of farms grew, the town became a center for supplies and education in the vicinity. The first school, a two-room concrete building, was replaced in 1924 by a larger complex, including a 200-seat auditorium, a teacherage, and a gymnasium." (Shown above)*



# May Vacation—Part 1



I continued to Texline, then to the Texas/New Mexico border, and to Clayton, New Mexico. Just passed Clayton a short ways, I stopped to photograph a nice view. From there, I continued on and went through Mount Dora, Grenville, and Des Moines. I then stopped to photograph the Capulin volcano and a spot that had a living snow fence.



*I stopped to get a photo of the Capulin Volcano above and found in the same area a living snow fence as shown by the sign to the left.*



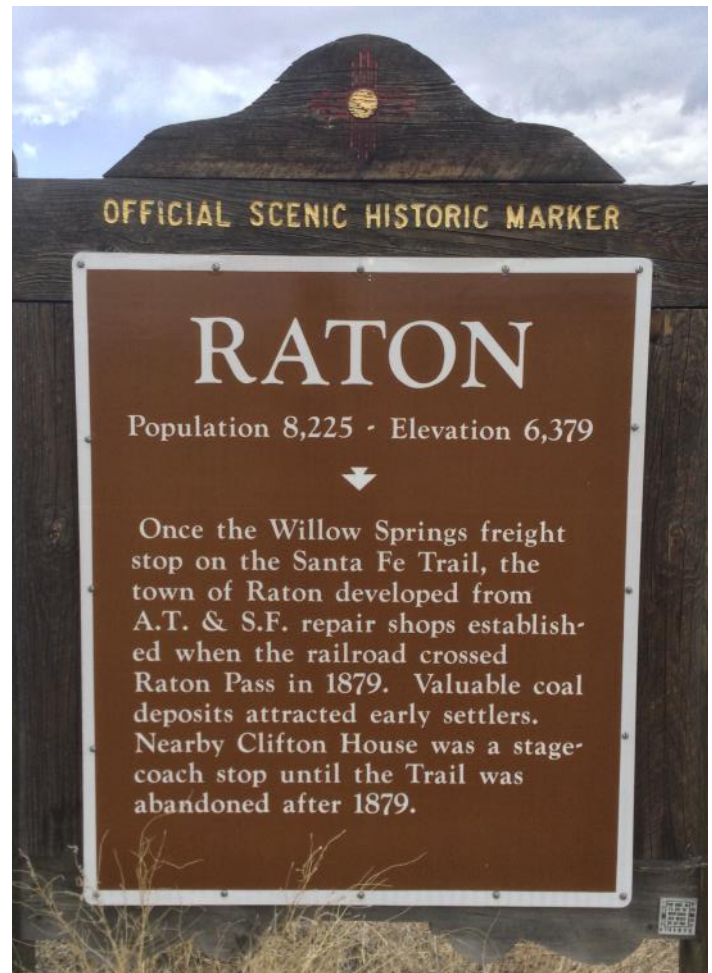
# May Vacation—Part 1

I then stopped at that windmill near Capulin I've photographed so many times before the last 15 years! However, this windmill and the nearby barn I have not seen since 2020. Just before Raton, I stopped at another historical marker, then took a break in Raton before continuing north on I-25.



*That old windmill and barn I first photographed in 2004.*

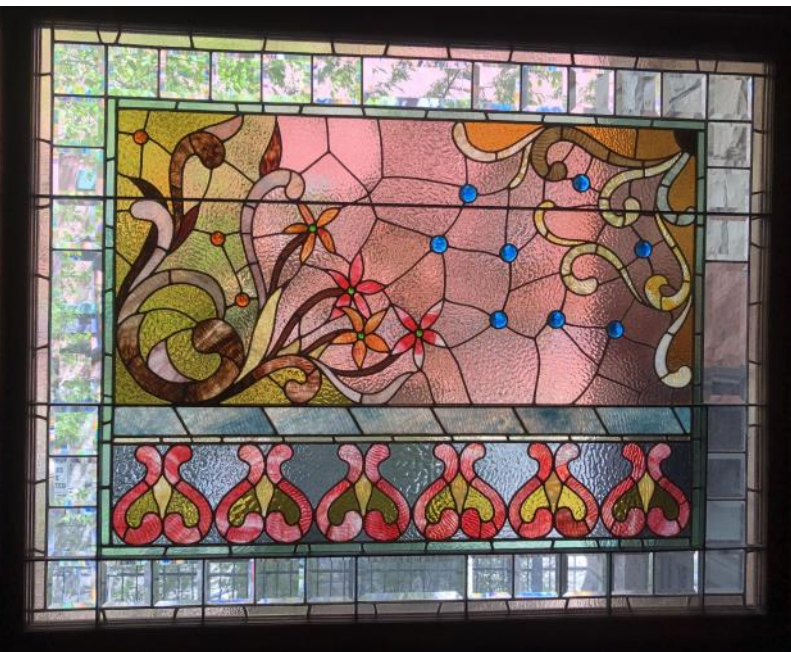
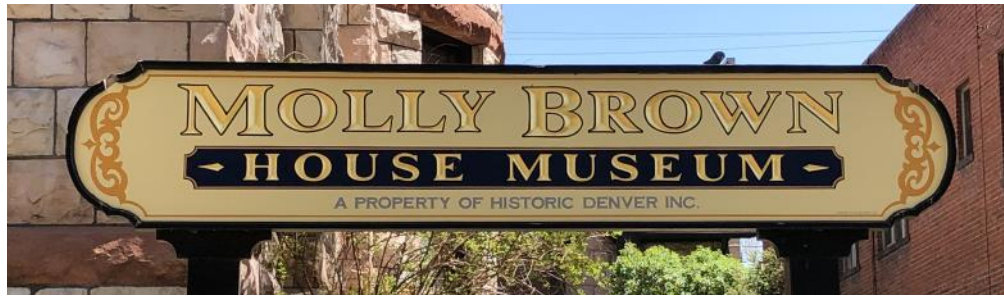
The Raton Pass tops at 7834 feet before descending to Trinidad. From here, the route is straight north to Colorado Springs. However, the weather became contrary! From a little north of Trinidad all the way to Colorado Springs, I went through varying levels of light to extremely heavy rain, even with some hail in a few places, along with some lightning. Somewhere through all of this nasty weather, a gauge on my car told me that my one tire was critically low on air for no explainable reason. Perhaps going through water puddles and large splashes might have done something. I kept driving until I got back to some civilization, which was all I could do. Once I got to Fountain, I went to one place that wanted \$2 for air, so I went somewhere else. I then went to another place, and they also wanted \$2 for air! So, I said heck with it and charged \$2 for air through moderate rain. Unfortunately, the car noted that there was no change in the pressure, even all the way to Dad's house. I took I-25 until I got near downtown Colorado Springs. With the heavy rain and the going home traffic getting heavier and backing up, I turned off the interstate and went through the downtown and took a route I've gone before. It was probably not any faster, but I did keep moving more than the interstate, which got to a standstill! I finally got to Dad's house a little before 6:30 PM.



# May Vacation—Part 1

## A Day in Denver

Originally, I was going to drive up to Colorado Springs in the weekend. But, there was a documentary film presentation Thursday evening relating to the museum in Leadville where I worked. That is why I drove up several days earlier to attend the presentation. We decided that we would make a day of it in Denver. On Thursday, May 5, we drove up to Denver arriving to our first destination right when we reserved. However, parking was lacking, and it took us a little time to find a spot and walk to the place. The first stop was the Molly Brown house. We reserved a guided tour of the house, which lasted about an hour. We joined up with our tour in progress and continued with the tour going through all three floors. After, we visited the gift shop, which was in the old carriage house.



*These photos show the outside and inside of the Margaret Brown house. The photo to the right was her bedroom.*

*Columbine at the Molly Brown House.*

# May Vacation—Part 1

Our next planned stop was to go to a wonderful Italian restaurant we have been to before called Maggiano's. We drove downtown to where the place was and first thought they were closed. But it turned out that the outside seating was still packed in winter mode. We just needed to go to the other set of doors, a revolving door. We got our seat, missing the lunch rush, and looked at our options. I did notice one thing I had not seen before. In order to use the bathrooms, even inside the restaurant, you had to have a code to get in! Apparently, downtown Denver has had excessive problems of transients using the bathrooms even as makeshift showers! At any rate, Dad had a chopped salad and rigatoni with meat sauce. I also had the chopped salad along with four cheese ravioli with pesto Alfredo sauce. It was delicious! I took advantage of their special, a five dollar classic entrée to take home. What a deal! Especially since this is more of a pricy restaurant! As we left, there was a bakery/sandwich shop next door that Dad wanted to see what they had. Dad bought some cookies, and we went to back to the car.



*Chopped salad and four cheese ravioli with pesto alfredo.*

The afternoon became impromptu. Originally, I wanted to go to the Denver Botanical Gardens again like we did in 2009. However, they closed at 2:00 PM this day for a special event. Nearby the restaurant was a firehouse museum. So, we decided to go there. This building was the first fire house in Denver. It is two floors and quite large covering fireman history in Denver.



*Denver Fire Department Museum.*

# May Vacation—Part 1

Another place we wanted to visit was the US Mint. While it was closed indefinitely, Dad wanted to drive by it to see it. We then continued past the Colorado capitol building. I looked on the map to see what else we could do, and I thought we could go see the Cherry Creek Park. Cherry Creek is a suburb area with a large park. Stopping there would get us a little closer to the theater. We went through lots of traffic before getting to the Cherry Creek State Park. We drove around the park a little and stopped at the visitor center. This park has a lake that was formed by a dam. The grounds included areas for RVing, camping, fishing, picnicking, and other such things. One thing noticeable in the park and all around Colorado was that spring comes late! There was no green yet on the trees, grass, and shrubs, but they were just about to start budding or leafing. After the visitor center, I started driving the car. With the time we had, I drove towards the theatre. We wanted to

get there at 6:00 for a 6:30 screen time. With more traffic on the way there, we stopped at the grocery store across the street from the theatre. We then went to the theatre and parked right about 6:00 PM.

This film was called Jews of the wild West. It is a documentary film talking about the Jewish contribution in developing the western United States. The director of the Temple Israel Museum where I worked was included in the film. We met up with said director and a couple of the board members chitchatted until just before the film started. The film was probably about 90 to 100 minutes, and included a brief in person, seated discussion afterwards. After the film, we met back in the lobby briefly before leaving to go home. I drove back to Dad's house from Denver on I-25. We did come to a traffic slowing area from some night road work. We got back to the house 10:30 PM.



*Me, Mike, Bill, and Dad*

# May Vacation—Part 1

## Leadville Side Trip

Part of the May trip was an intentional side trip to Leadville, like I do once a year. I left from Colorado Springs to Leadville on Saturday, May 7 and came back to the Springs on Tuesday, May 10, 2022. The route there is to take US 24 through Ute Pass past Old Colorado City and Manitou Springs and to Woodland Park. While there, I planned a stop to The Cowhand, a western store I've been to before including last year. I found a few items I wanted and went back on my way. For the trip out, I made no other stops until I got to Leadville, but I did make some mental notes of

places I wanted to stop when I came back. The drive was roughly 3 hours. My purpose for being in Leadville is to do some work for the Temple Israel Museum where I worked before for those three separate summers. (I did this same thing last year where I came up to stay for a few days to do some work in person.) The several days consisted of working at the museum, doing some personal errands, having dinner, and visiting a few sites



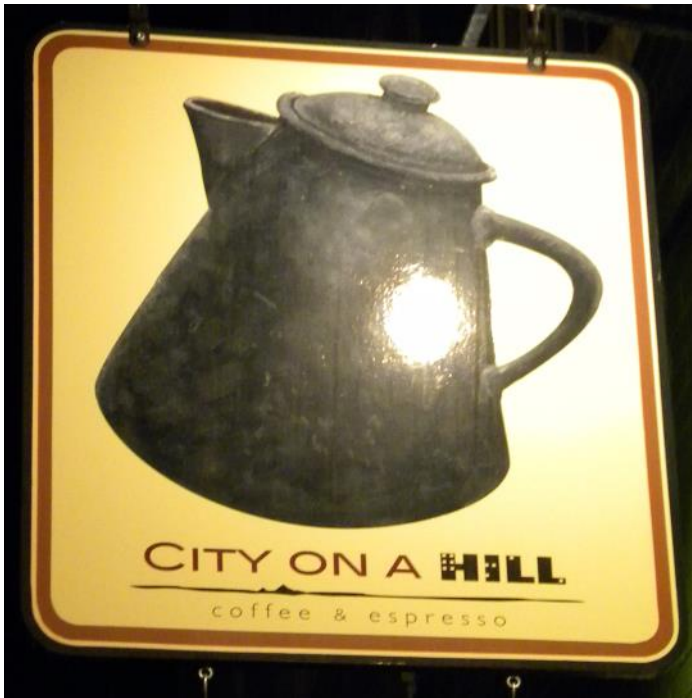
*The Cowhand western store in Woodland Park, Colorado. Neat little store!*

around town. Saturday night, several of us went to a newer restaurant called The Silver Llama for their Italian food night. In the mornings, I went some of the time to City on a Hill for coffee and an light breakfast. Sunday and Monday, I worked at the museum from late morning to close. For Saturday, I went over to Western Hardware for my customary search for vintage photos. (I did find a few more things, though!)

*The view I've shown before of the mountains in Leadville. The peaks are over 14,000 feet!*

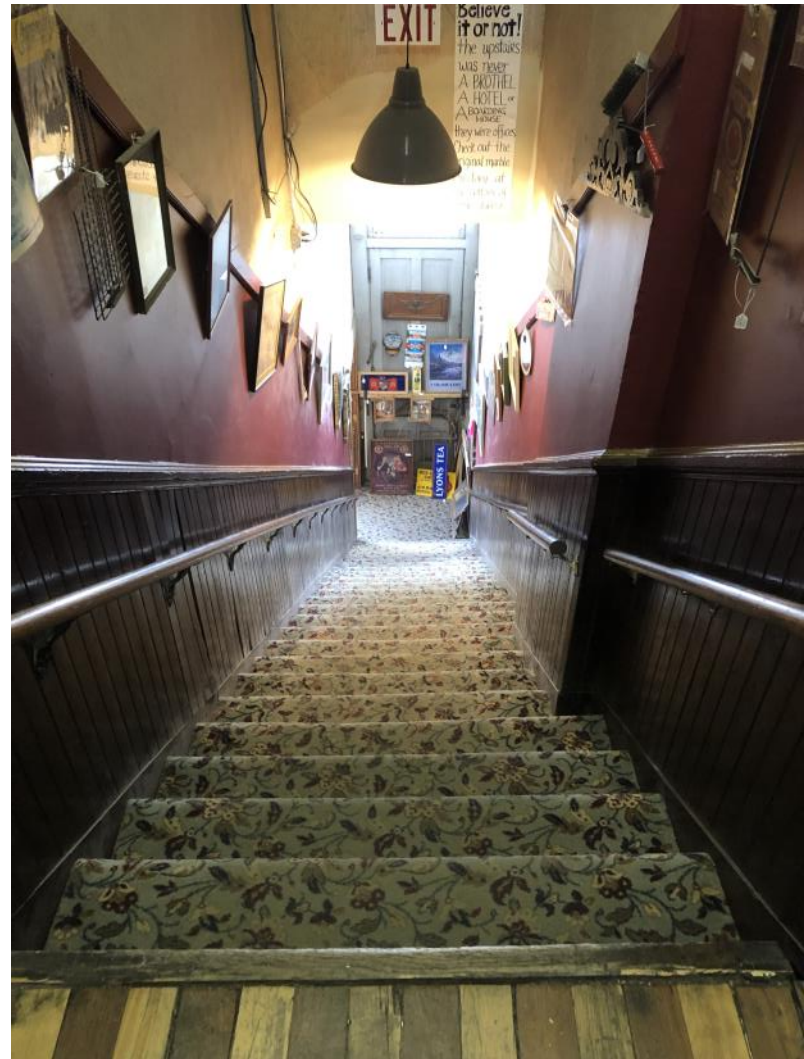


# May Vacation—Part 1



*City on a Hill coffee shop*

I walked through the two floors and the many rooms and booths. I ended up spending nearly an hour and a half. For dinner, we went over to High Mountain Pies and each got a pizza. I missed going there last year. After that and before it got dark, I wanted to walk a ways along the Mineral Belt Trail during the sunset light. I got back to the house by dark with the walk being well over an hour. The walk was in the cool of the evening with a brisk breeze and gusts at times enough to almost push me over! I took various photos along the trail and was quite tired by the time I got back to the house, especially at over 10,000 feet! I felt like I lost 10 pounds walking that nearly two plus miles.



*Remember these funhouse stairs from last year? Here's looking from the top down! Western Hardware Antiques.*



*Walking along the Mineral Belt Trail, parts of it will provide nice sunsets!*

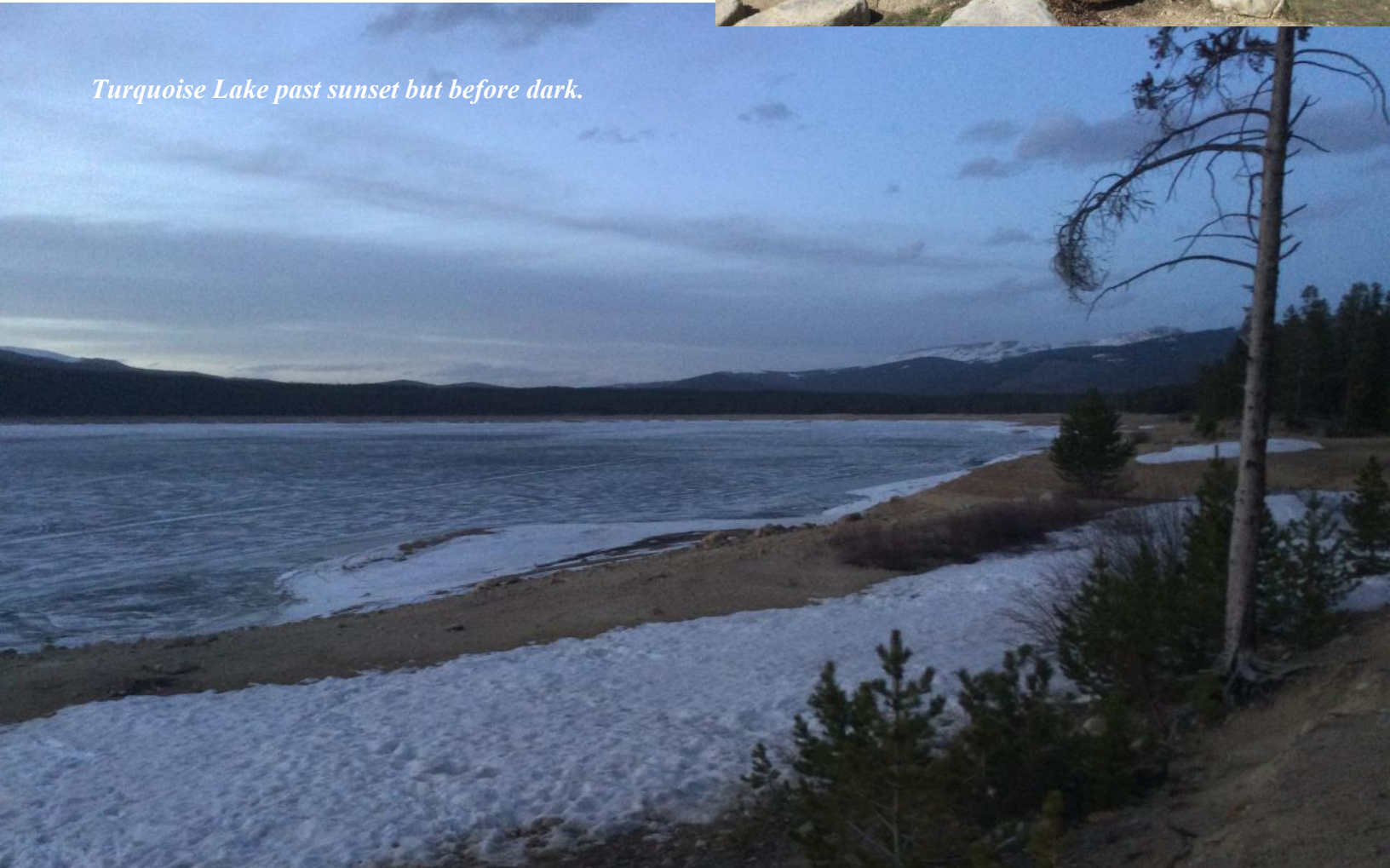
# May Vacation—Part 1

My day on Monday was similar to Sunday except that another guy who works at the museum was up for the day from Denver. I finished the work I started Sunday. We went to dinner at a local Mexican restaurant after we closed up the museum. Similar to yesterday, I took a drive to another place I wanted to go. I went over to Turquoise Lake around sunset and a little after. I walked down to the shore. The lake was quite low but nearly fully frozen over still. It was the same last year when I went to it. I got a few photos and enjoyed the cool weather. In the summer, this lake is completely clear, and you can see the various rocks on the bottom of the waters. On the way back, I took a nice leisurely drive through the forest at twilight heading on the road that ultimately would get me over to the main road north of the town. I also wanted to stop to get photos of the new We Love Leadville sign before getting back to Where I was staying.

*The We Love Leadville sign at night and the next day. This sign replaced the old one that was torn down from the development.*



*Turquoise Lake past sunset but before dark.*



# May Vacation—Part 1

## Back to the Springs With Many Stops!

On Tuesday, I did a few errands before leaving Leadville. I wanted to get daytime photos of the I Love Leadville sign, then went over to the bank, breakfast at City on a Hill, and a few other stops. I had a request while on my trip to get some pricing for the EV charging stations I would find. The hospital had two that apparently was not public. But I did find one along Harrison Avenue, but it was not functioning correctly! These were some other company, not Tesla like the ones I saw in Shamrock. As I was leaving town, I stopped along Malta Curve where the Malta schoolhouse is (*see my Late Spring 2021 issue for more about that building*) to get some photos of the mountains, all 14k+' peaks. I went a little further on the road that goes to the fish hatchery finding a really nice spot to photograph the mountains and surrounding area with the blue skies, a few wispy clouds, and a nice brisk breeze with some heavy gusts.



*Views near Malta Curve west of Leadville a few miles.*



# May Vacation—Part 1

I continued on to Buena Vista making a quick stop at a building just off the side of the road that looks like it was either a school, possibly a church, or perhaps a person's cabin. I don't know. A few miles past Granite, I stopped near the metal truss railroad bridge for a few quick photos. I continued to Buena Vista intending to find another charging station. I did find one for some photos and as I was leaving I saw a shop with spinnny things out front. I doubled back and looked at the spinnny things, choosing one I liked. After getting gas, I left Buena Vista heading east towards South Park.



*This is that unknown building that might have been a schoolhouse, a church, or a residence. Whatever it was, it has a nice view!*

*The truss railroad bridge near Granite.*

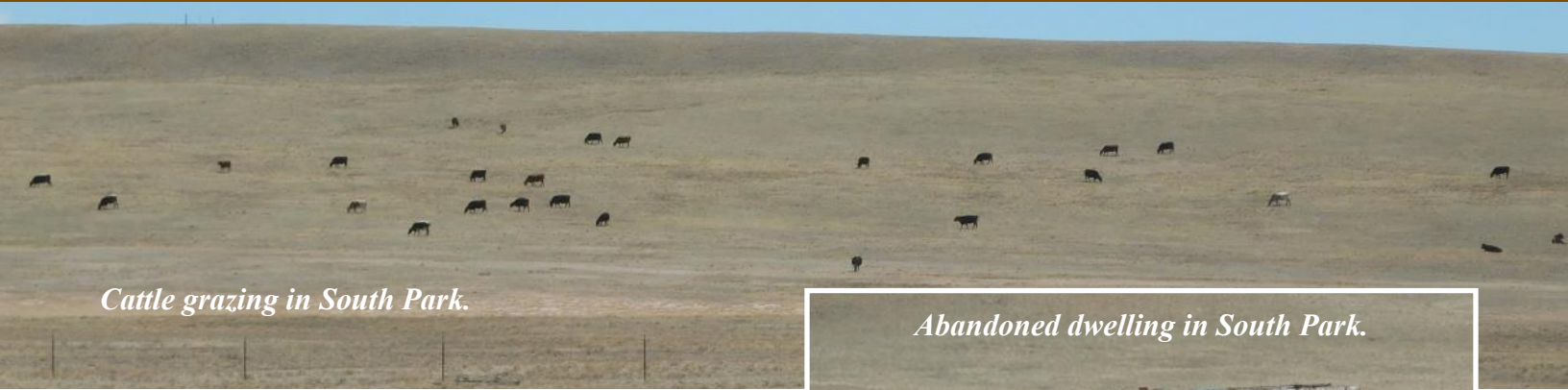


*The spinnny thing I bought from the shop in Buena Vista now put together and at home.*

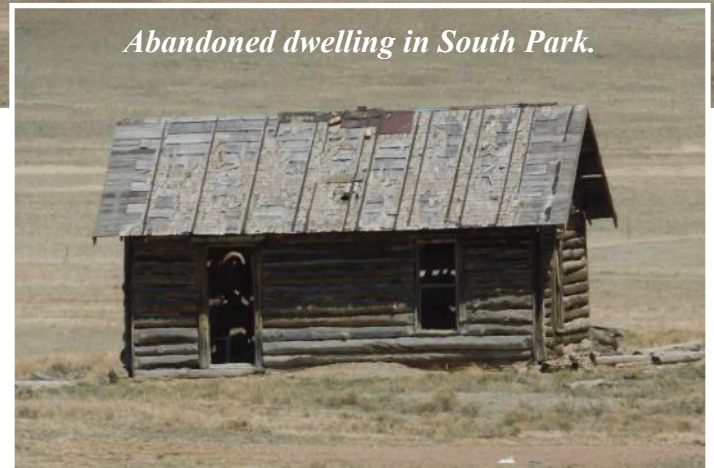


*The charging station I found in Buena Vista near downtown.*

# May Vacation—Part 1



*Cattle grazing in South Park.*



*Abandoned dwelling in South Park.*

Once I got to South Park, I stopped briefly where a cabin was off in the distance for a few quick photographs. I continued on to Wilkerson Pass, which peaks at 9507 feet. Less than 10 miles further down, I came to a place where about five or six miner cabins were. I spent a good 20 minutes photographing them from different angles. I also saw several concrete road markers that apparently defined the edges of the old highway easements.



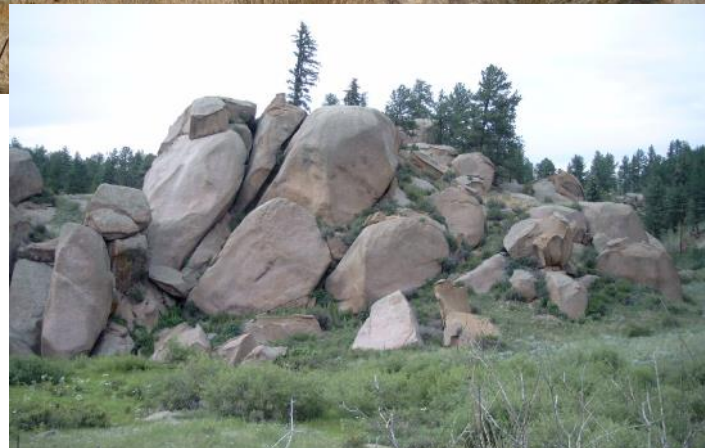
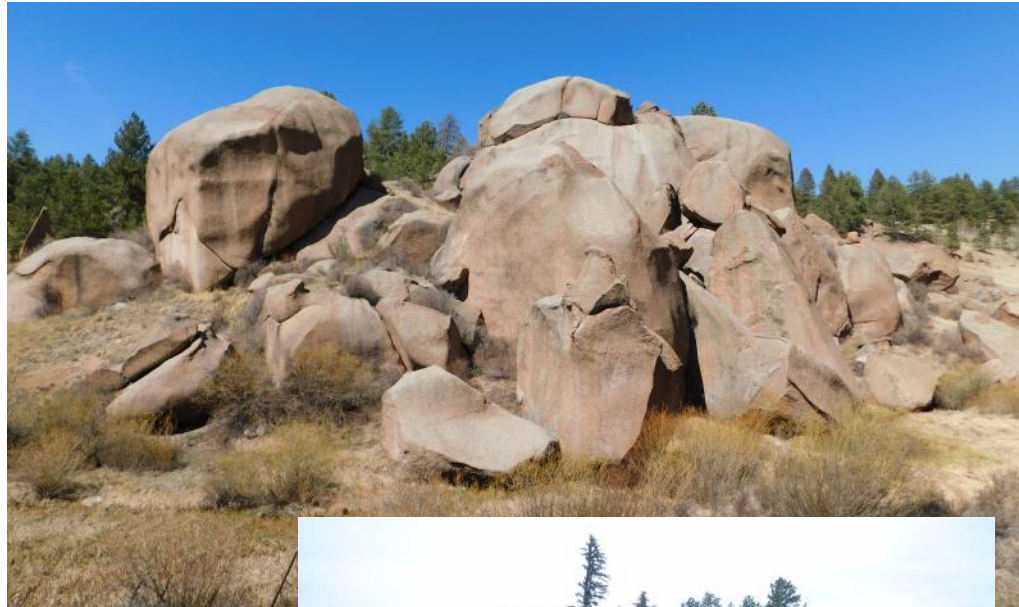
*Several abandoned log cabins probably for miners.*



*Old concrete highway markers.*

# May Vacation—Part 1

Roughly 30 minutes later, I stopped at the other spot where I made a mental note to see again. Right off the road are these giant boulders where I photographed many years ago when Dad and I traveled through this area before (2006, I think). I got back to Woodland Park and stopped at a rest stop in the town. At this rest stop, they had some historical markers and a cog railway car. I also found another charging station. I ended up being there about 30 minutes. I got back to Colorado Springs a while later.



*Below: a few things seen from the rest stop in Woodland Park. Cog car, metal sculpture, antler arch, and clock.*

*Above: The big rocks along Highway 24. Right: The same rocks from a different angle taken in July 2006.*



# May Vacation—Part 1

## Going On The Real Trip

Up to this point and for a few more days, these activities were just the things I did before we actually went on the trip! I got back to Colorado Springs on Tuesday, May 10, 2022. Dad wanted to leave on Friday, May 13, 2022. So for a couple of days, I rested and we did a few misc things. On Friday, we left the house around 9:30 AM and did a few errands. (I also wanted to get some coffee from Dutch Brothers!)

We decided that we would take a route that went due east from Colorado Springs CO 94 instead of going down to Pueblo and taking US 50 as we have done before. The road, with a few turns, catches up with US 50 in Lamar. We kept driving east until we got to US 287 that goes southeast to Kit Carson then south mostly until near Lamar. For the most part, the road was a good road except for a couple of construction areas. We stopped for a bathroom break and drinks at Love's in Eads then continued until we got to Lamar. We drove around Lamar to find a restaurant and eventually settled with a very local place called Hickory House. The place used to be an old truck stop and was converted

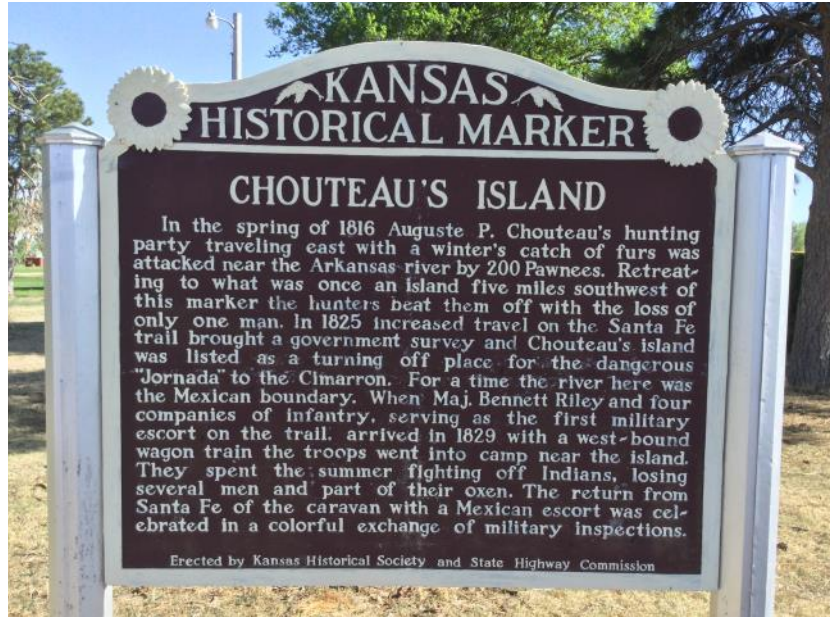


to a restaurant sometime in the 90s. The place still had décor from the 90s, but it looked clean and is apparently a busy place. We got there after the lunch rush. Dad had the fried chicken, and I had an open face steak sandwich dinner with mac & cheese. After we were happily full, we continued east on US 50 until we got to the Kansas border, about 30 minutes. On the way to Dodge City, I stopped at a couple of Kansas historical markers, but also ended up skipping a few too. Apparently, the time zone border is not at the Colorado/Kansas border, but rather another 30 miles or so further east! Weird! We made no other stops until we got to Dodge City. Overall, the drive time was a little longer than I thought, estimating it to be about five hours. We did make a few stops, but the drive time ended up being more like seven hours. Once we got to the hotel, a Comfort Inn, we checked in, took our bags to the room, got partly settled, then left again. We knew it was too late to visit the museum in Dodge city, but we thought we would drive around the town to see what was there. We sort of went on a driving tour through the roads of the old downtown going up and down and zigzagging assuming that what we saw were the original roads of the town. After that, we got some gas at Casey's and went over to Freddy's for some frozen custard, the same one we went to the last time we were in Dodge City. (The hotel is the same too.)

We drove from one end of Dodge City to the other end on the main road called Wyatt Earp Boulevard. We got back and settled in for the night knowing that tomorrow we would go visit the museum.



# May Vacation—Part 1



*The two Kansas historical markers I stopped to get photos.*

## Dodge City Activities

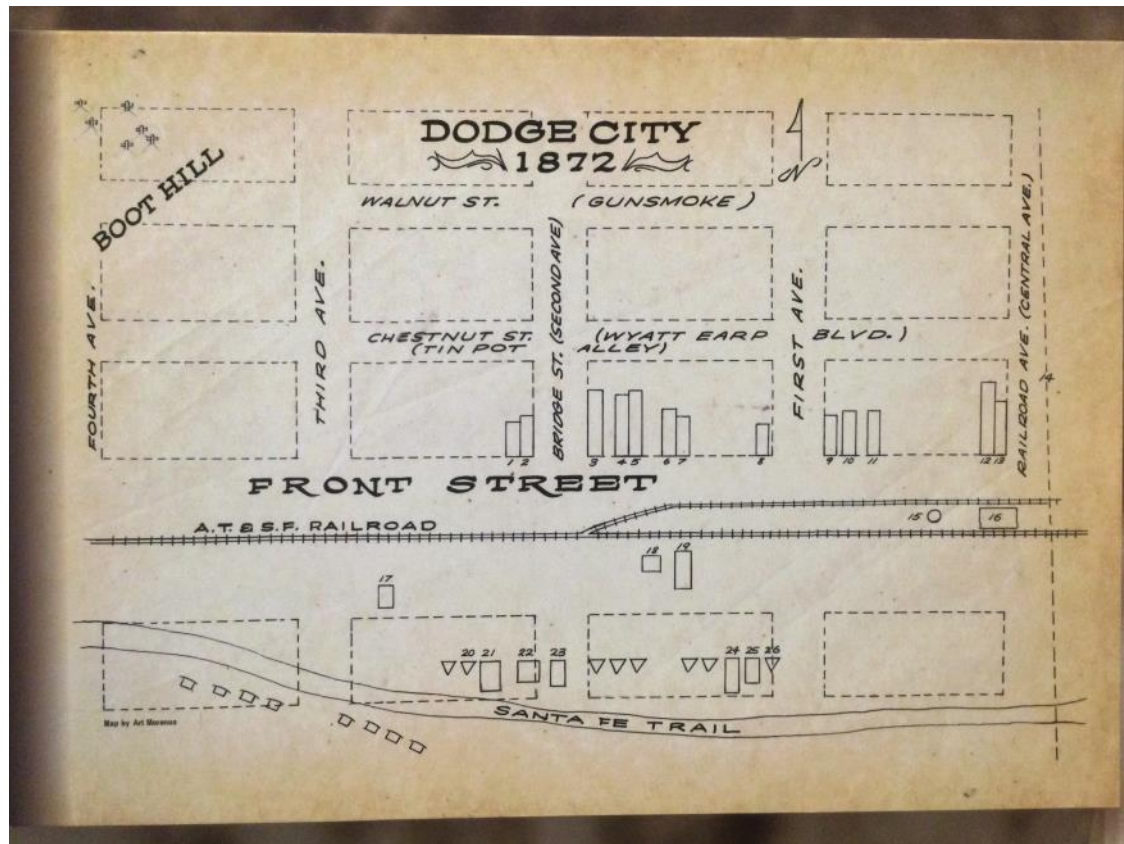
In usual manner, we got cleaned up and ready to go. I just had some toast and jelly from the hotel breakfast, and we left about 10:00 AM. We decided yesterday that we would go to the Boot Hill Museum today. We stopped there in 2020 on our way back to Colorado Springs, but it didn't open until the afternoon with it being a Sunday and so we never got to see it. We arrived and it was fully open. We

paid our fees, and they gave us wristbands to move about the museum. There were two main buildings, the new building we entered and another older building that was a replica of the old town storefronts. We started in the newer museum building as we were already there. The new part of the museum was extremely well done and well thought out with various surprises and interactives. The mostly layout guided gallery format had us walking through each space themed with a different topic relevant to the area. The end of the new



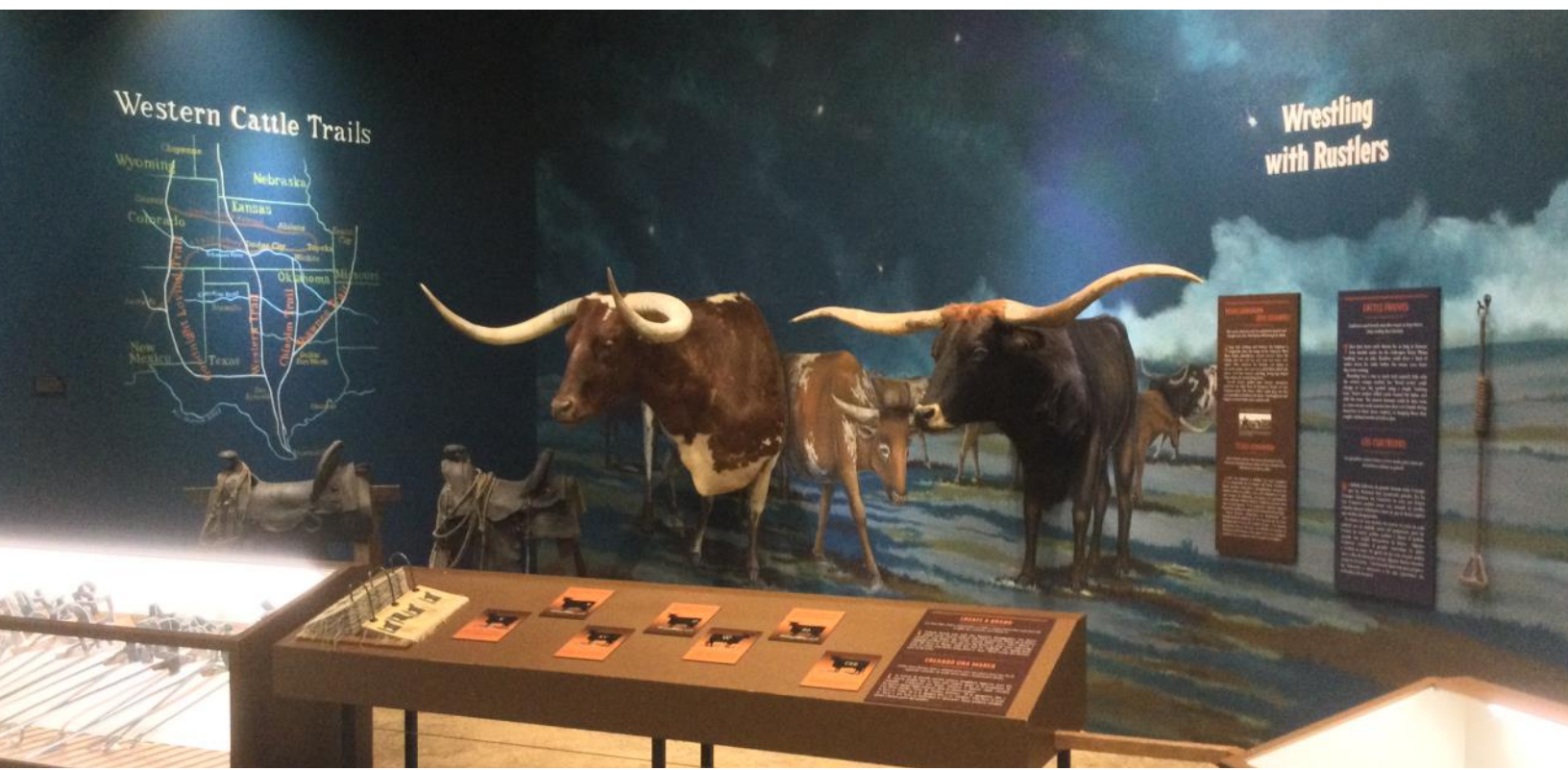
# May Vacation—Part 1

building led to the outside where you “crossed the street” (a grassy area) to the other building that was recreated to look much like the original storefronts. These original storefronts were in a different area of town than where this replica is, especially since the museum sits on what was the original Boot Hill Cemetery. The graves were all moved to the new cemetery elsewhere in town. From what they told me, none of the people originally buried in the original Boot Hill Cemetery were anyone of note, so to speak, just unknown common people of the town. The first stop was the General Store where they had actual items for sale and a clerk dressed in period clothes to cash you out, and which we each bought something. Right next to the general store was a saloon but not an exact replica inside but adapted for museum use. The bartender had a photo of what the original



*Layout of the original Dodge City as of 1872.*

*One gallery in the museum with creative exhibit display.*



# May Vacation—Part 1



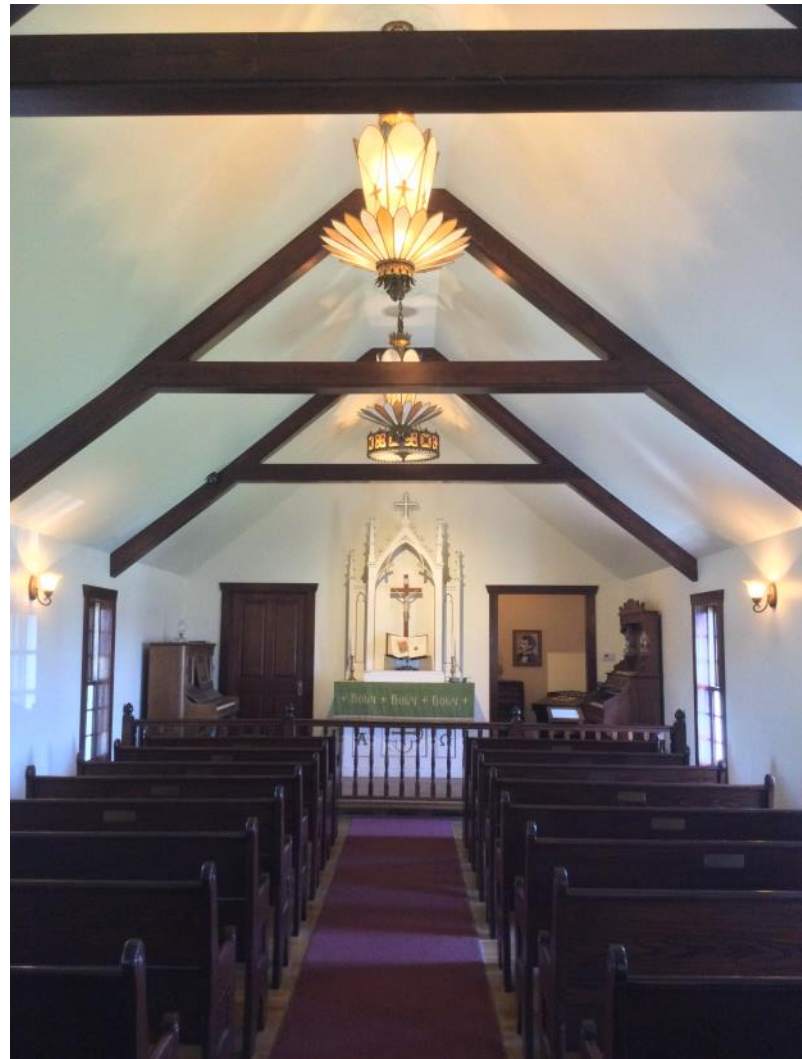
*Recreation of the buildings on Front Street.*

saloon looked like on the inside. From there, we wandered through the rest of the interconnected little spaces, which were obviously older exhibits. The site also had several stand alone buildings we could walk through, including a mansion and church. Once we were back in the main building, we bought a few things from the museum gift shop. We ended up staying at the museum for a good two and a half hours before we left. After we left, I was hungry and too hungry to wait a few more hours of driving before we would get to another main town that had any variety of food options. However, I figured that we would probably eat again in the evening once we got to where we would go next. So we went to Freddy's again and got burgers and fries, then we went on our way. From Dodge City, I wanted to stop by the Hudson Flour Mill, but there were not open to the public on weekends. That changed our route slightly to where we instead got on US 400 and went east. At the time of writing this, we didn't know yet where we would spend the next night! With this cliffhanger, you will have to wait until the next issue of the journal to find out where we went next!

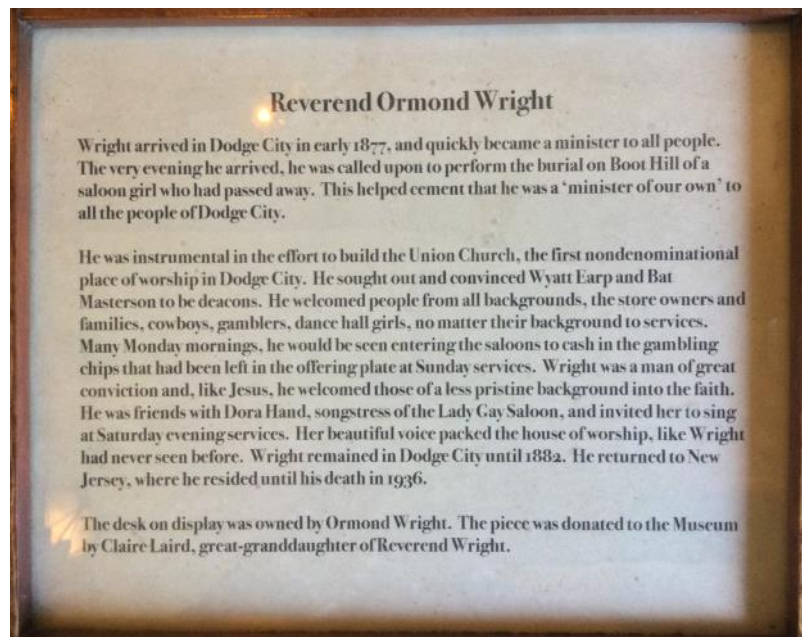


*A two holer.*

# May Vacation—Part 1



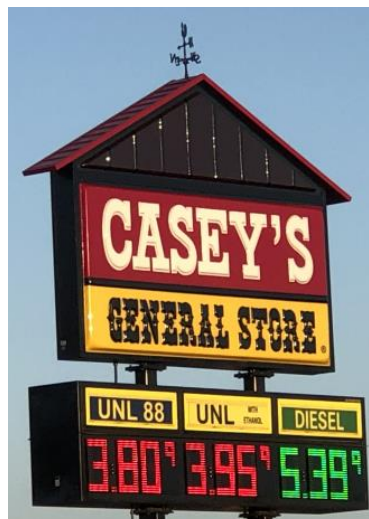
*These photos are of the Union Church as restored at the Boot hill Museum.*



# May Vacation—Part 2

## Cliffhanger Mystery Removed

From Dodge City, we knew that we would head to Wichita then over to Joplin and Springfield and ultimately to our first multi night stay in Branson, Missouri. But, that was not for this night. We did not leave Dodge City until about 1:30 PM, and we ultimately decided only to go as far as Wichita for the night even though technically it was only about three hours away from Dodge City. We could have tried to push it to get to Joplin or Springfield, but we didn't feel like it since we were on vacation.



*In a future issue, I will recap the variation of gas prices across the many states we travelled and provide a summary of how much gas we used and the prices with each fill up.*

*We saw many of these Casey's stores.*

## Quick Side Stop

A little after 2:00 PM, we stopped briefly at a little place in Mullinville, Kansas where we came across a field with welded objects and spiny things that were along the fence. We saw it before on our second trip in 2020 when we last went through Kansas. This time we stopped at a little interpretive center down the road along the field where these things were. We only spent about ten minutes only to find out what the stuff was. The objects were made by someone named M.T. Liggett, who was born in Mullinville during the Dust Bowl. He died in 2017 at age 86, and several nonprofit groups formed to preserve his work. Their website is:

[www.mtliggettartenvironment.org](http://www.mtliggettartenvironment.org)



*This is the M.T. Liggett Art Environment interpretive center, a new building just in the last couple of years.*

*Some of his work lines along the fence of this road and the highway. That is a lot of work!*



# May Vacation—Part 2

## Getting to Wichita

A little further down the road, we got to Pratt and stopped at a Walmart for about 40 minutes while dad needed to find something he wanted. I just stayed in the car while I made the hotel reservations in Wichita. Once we got into Wichita, I turned onto a road too early. We then stopped at a QT for gas and a bathroom break while I tried to figure out where we were. I thought I found a way to the hotel, but the street names didn't match with what the map on the phone showed, and we ended up going way out of the way before hooking back towards the hotel. Sheesh! (I wish cities would put BOTH names of a road on their signs! Lubbock, I'm staring at you!) Once we got there, we checked in and left again shortly after. We thought about going to Texas Roadhouse, but dad wanted to go to Golden Corral

since there was one in town, so we settled on Outback! Ha, ha... (When we were in Wichita in 2020 after packing up Mom's house, we stopped at this Texas Roadhouse for dinner.) While I thought I remembered seeing where the restaurant was, I somehow ended up turning or not turning or something onto the right road and again went way out of our way before somehow looping around. Once we were in the area of Outback, we stopped at Tommy's Express Carwash to get the bugs off the car. We had a good meal of the Outback Special including dessert. On the way back, I once again missed the turn I needed and again went out of the way to get back to the hotel. At any rate, driving in Wichita sucked, and we soon went to bed!

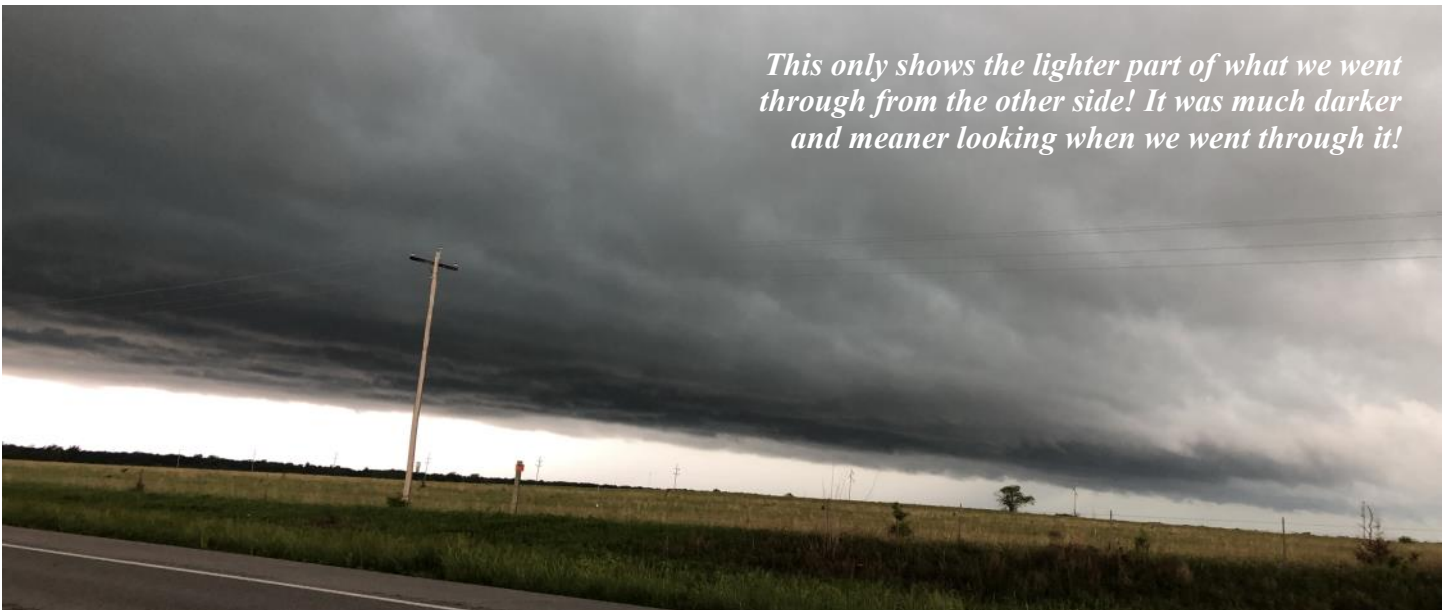
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## Wild Weather

This day was Sunday, May 15, 2022. We left the motel in Wichita around 10:00 AM. We got on US 400 going east, which would take us to Joplin. Less than 30 minutes down the road, we hit a large patch of rain that got progressively worse and worse! It started out as light to moderate rain, then got heavier to an outright slamming rain with increasing hail! As with other times before, I could not see two car lengths ahead of me! Even driving 40 mph was too

fast in some stretches of it! We had almost an hour of waves of this rain and varying hail under some dark, nasty clouds! We finally got out of it before we got to Fredonia. We stopped at a truck stop for gas and a break and wanted to get something to eat, but not seeing anything we wanted. We also tried a Pizza Hut in town, but they did not have the pizza and salad buffet Dad wanted. We ended up just continuing on. There was lighter rain in other areas.

*This only shows the lighter part of what we went through from the other side! It was much darker and meaner looking when we went through it!*



# May Vacation—Part 2

## Changing Landscapes

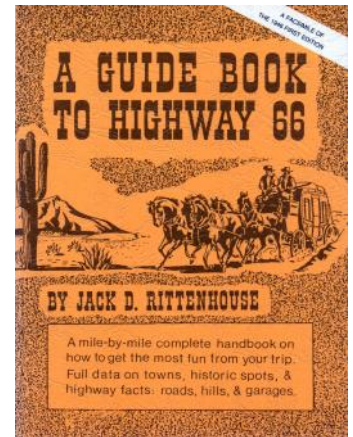
We got to a point where US 400 went south, but we stayed going east on Kansas Road 171, which took us right to Joplin. We got to the Kansas and Missouri border at about 1:40 PM then the road turned going mostly south to southeast. We got near Joplin around 2:00 PM and stopped at a Casey's for a quick break. Dad was dead set on eating at a Golden Corral, and there happened to be one in Joplin. So, we set out to go find it. We drove down one stretch of road that was part of the old Route 66. According to *A Guide Book To Highway 66*, the author Jack Rittenhouse stated,

*“The Joplin district is one of the greatest producers of zinc ore in the world, and also leads in the production of lead ores. Several large quarries produce 99% pure limestone, from the limestone which underlies all southwest Missouri.”*

The book is from 1946, and needless to say, this is probably not the case anymore! I have included parts of this book before in previous journals over the last few years. After about an hour at the Golden Corral, we got on I-44 towards Springfield. Last night we

decided we would go to Branson instead of staying in Springfield, which made more sense. After an hour we got to Springfield and turned onto US 65 south to Branson. The landscape kept changing from Wichita to Branson. Branson is very much hillbilly haven and the hills did not disappoint on the way down. A few miles north of Branson,

we stopped at a nice tourist welcome center that looked like a large log cabin to get more information about Branson. We also stopped at another tourist information place in town before making our way to the hotel. Because of all of the hills and the dense trees, it took me a little while to figure out where the hotel was. This was the case everywhere we went in the area! Very different landscape from the treeless, flat plains of West Texas!



*A Guide Book To Highway 66*  
Jack D. Rittenhouse

*This view was from the Henning Scenic Overlook northwest of the town. This overlook is also the entrance to the White River Balds Natural Area. A bald is a hill with no trees. (I walked through this area in 2005.)*



# May Vacation—Part 2

## Three Full Days in Branson

Once we got to the hotel, we check in and put our stuff in the room. Then, we then set out to explore the town and see what we could see with the couple of hours of daylight left. Our first stop was to get some frozen custard, which we got from Andy's. I knew this place was good, because I stopped at one after leaving Magnolia in Waco last summer. For a while after that, we just drove around town looking at everything even after dark. The town is hilly with very few flat areas. This whole area is full of hills rolling and waving making driving the roads very interesting! Some background information. I came to Branson in September 2005, the day and night hurricane Katrina hit and came up through the area. I spent about three weeks from mid September to early October. I was there as additional help from when I was working for Flint Boot and Hat Shop. We had a booth at Silver Dollar City as part of a fall cowboy festival with Buck Taylor. From what I remember of the town itself, it looked nothing like what it looks like now! Previously, the town was like where retired performers went to live out their last decades, and it was a haven for older tourists. However, we found



*This is the Andy's Frozen Custard in Branson. I think their character looks a little like Elmer Fudd!  
Photo from Trip Advisor.*

out very quickly that most of those retired performers have since died and the town had to adapt to a new form of entertainment. I refer to it as a little Vegas because much of what we saw was like smaller scale things you would find on the strip in Las Vegas. We ended up extending the stay by another night in order to do and see what we wanted.

## Branson, Day 1—May 16, 2022

We started out the day getting cleaned up as usual. We went down to the dining area and got breakfast. They had this iron that cooked these little Belgian waffles that are only about 3" in diameter. I have never seen them anywhere else. (In Texas, the motels have waffles in the shape of Texas, of course!) We stopped at the gift shop in the hotel where they had a desk to buy tickets for the various venues in town, much like at the visitor center we stopped at yesterday. We ended up being there a while, but we got tickets for some things we wanted to do. As soon as we finished there, we left immediately to get to the Titanic Museum experience. (I remember that in 2005, there was supposed to be a Titanic museum, but it looked like it was under construction and a long way from being done.)



*Just like with the rest of Branson, the sign out front is fancied up and with an LED screen.*

# May Vacation—Part 2

There is more than one Titanic Museum and every so often, they will change out the theme on exhibit. For when we visited, they had the museum set up to honor Jewish passengers and crew. The outside of the building looked like a scaled replica of the ship hitting an iceberg. When we arrived and submitted our tickets, they gave us boarding passes. The boarding passes had names of actual Jewish passengers on the ship. We would be able to find out later if that person survived or drowned! No photos were allowed on the first floor per donors' wishes, while the staircase and the second floor were open to photography. There were interactives throughout the museum with audio guides and docents in period clothing (think post Edwardian era) all over the building. We spent over 2 hours walking through the two floors of the fantastic museum! We also spent way too much money in the gift shop!



*Part of the outside of the museum was made to look like the ship, but in a much smaller scale, of course!*



# May Vacation—Part 2

*The current installation of the museum (they change it out every so often) is focused on the Jewish passengers and crew.*



TITANIC MUSEUM HONORS

JEWISH PASSENGERS & CREW

Every year the Titanic Museum Attraction has introduced special passenger and crew tributes:

- 133 children
- 187 Irish
- 8 musicians
- 712 Survivors
- 8 brave clergymen
- 10 dogs

Now Titanic Museum pays tribute to the RMS *Titanic* Jewish Passengers & Crew.

Did you know there was a kosher kitchen & kosher chef on *Titanic*?  
Learn their stories.

TITANIC  
BRANSON, MO • PIGEON FORGE, TN  
Reservations Required as many days we are sold out.  
[www.TitanicAttraction.com](http://www.TitanicAttraction.com)  
800-381-7670

RIP

The Titanic Jewish Experience

Did You Know Titanic Had a Kosher Kitchen & a Kosher Chef On Board?

Jacob Cook  
3<sup>rd</sup> Class Passenger Age: 43  
Residence: Russian Empire

Did you know that the actual number of Jews on board *Titanic* was a mystery? White Star Line's estimate was around several hundred, and thought that most were Third Class passengers like me, **Jacob Cook**, a first-class wood carver from the Russian Empire.

There were wonderful woodcarving pieces throughout *Titanic* I hoped to see, including the magnificent *Honour & Glory* clock that graced the central landing of the Grand Staircase.

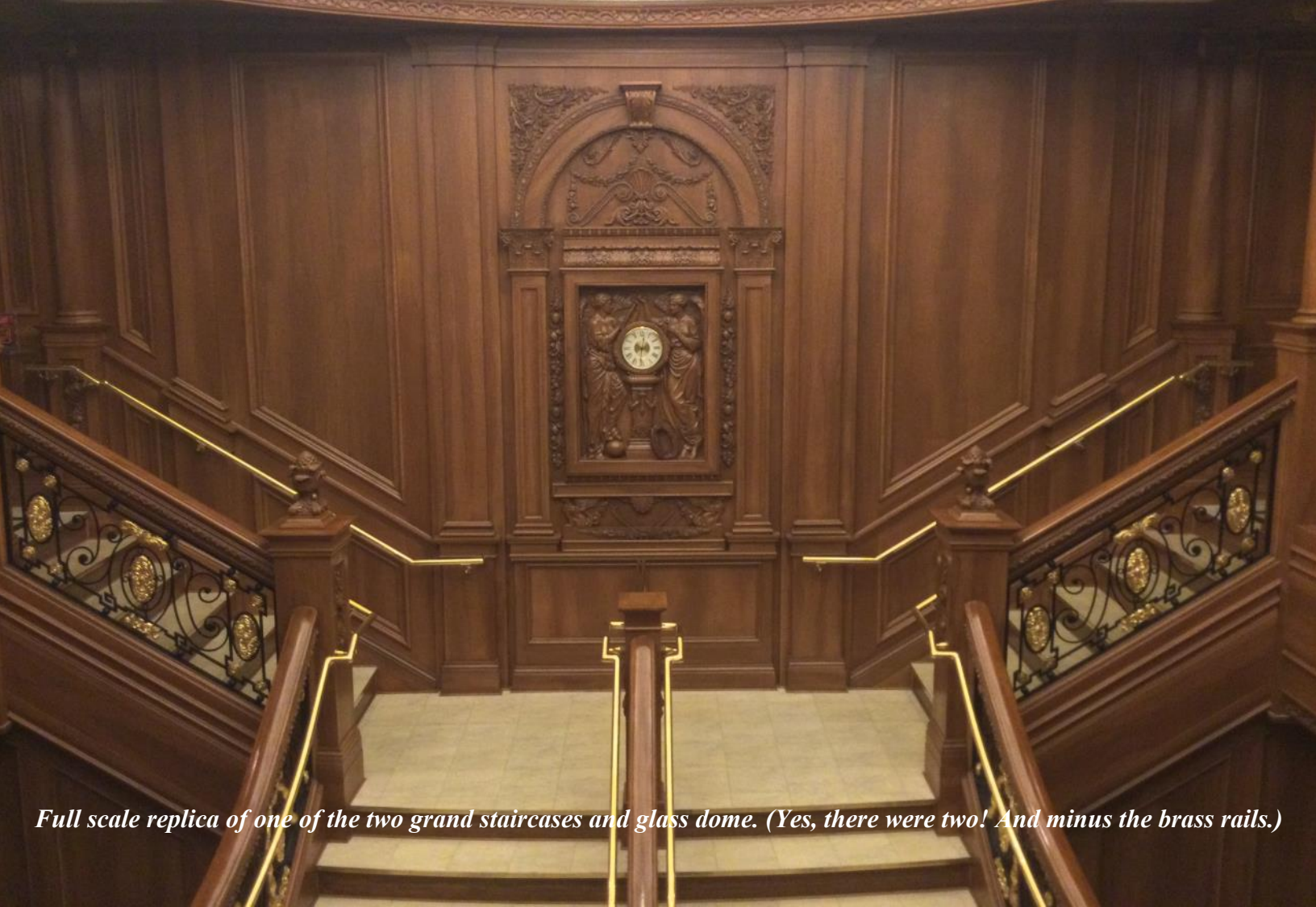
Third Class accommodations were amazing. I had a bed and blanket, fresh water in the room, and optional kosher meals. I felt I had gone from persecution to resurrection on *Titanic*.

I shared a cabin with other men in a low part of the ship, so when tragedy struck, I felt it. As seawater gushed into the engine room below me, I raced to the staircase leading to the deck above.

Find out if Jacob made it to a lifeboat in the Memorial Gallery.

[www.TitanicAttraction.com](http://www.TitanicAttraction.com) • 800-381-7670  
— OPEN YEAR ROUND —

*All of the boarding passes given out have a name of a Jewish passenger. Of course, the names rotate as there are more visitors than there were total passengers on the ship!*



*Full scale replica of one of the two grand staircases and glass dome. (Yes, there were two! And minus the brass rails.)*



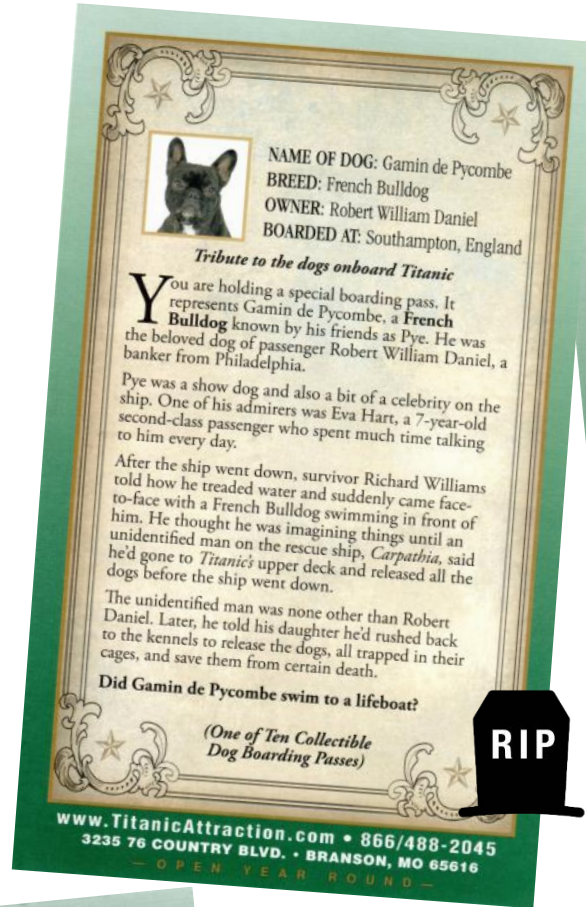
Actual deck chair from the ship!



# May Vacation—Part 2

There were 10 or 12 dogs on the Titanic (sources disagree) and other animals including a ship cat named Jenny, chickens, other birds, and rats (hence why an official ship cat!) Three dogs survived, mainly because they were with the owner, which was not allowed! The dogs were supposed to be in the ship's kennels! Sometimes sources would claim that various other animals were also on the ship, but those photos referenced are typically of other ships, not the Titanic.

(Not portraits of the actual animals.)



**NAME OF DOG:** Gamin de Pycombe  
**BREED:** French Bulldog  
**OWNER:** Robert William Daniel  
**BOARDED AT:** Southampton, England

*Tribute to the dogs onboard Titanic*

You are holding a special boarding pass. It represents Gamin de Pycombe, a **French Bulldog** known by his friends as Pye. He was the beloved dog of passenger Robert William Daniel, a banker from Philadelphia.

Pye was a show dog and also a bit of a celebrity on the ship. One of his admirers was Eva Hart, a 7-year-old second-class passenger who spent much time talking to him every day.

After the ship went down, survivor Richard Williams told how he treaded water and suddenly came face-to-face with a French Bulldog swimming in front of him. He thought he was imagining things until an unidentified man on the rescue ship, *Carpathia*, said he'd gone to *Titanic's* upper deck and released all the dogs before the ship went down.

The unidentified man was none other than Robert Daniel. Later, he told his daughter he'd rushed back to the kennels to release the dogs, all trapped in their cages, and save them from certain death.

Did Gamin de Pycombe swim to a lifeboat?

(One of Ten Collectible Dog Boarding Passes)

www.TitanicAttraction.com • 866/488-2045  
 3235 76 COUNTRY BLVD. • BRANSON, MO 65616  
 — OPEN YEAR ROUND —



**NAME OF DOG:** Frou Frou  
**BREED:** Unknown  
**OWNER:** Helen Bishop  
**BOARDED AT:** Cherbourg, France

*Tribute to the dogs onboard Titanic*

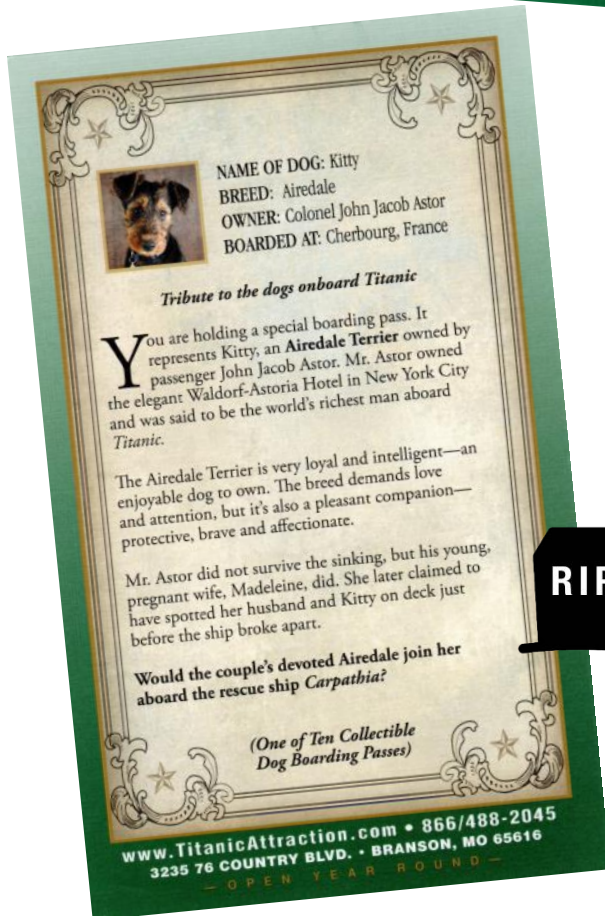
You are holding a special boarding pass. It represents Frou Frou, the **small white dog** owned by passenger Helen Bishop who was on her honeymoon. Her husband bought Frou Frou for her while the couple travelled abroad to celebrate their wedding.

Though little Frou Frou's breed was unknown, the crew thought her so cute that she was allowed to stay in her owner's cabin. When *Titanic* struck the iceberg, Helen kept Frou Frou in the cabin while she went to see what had happened.

Was there time to rescue this adorable mutt?

(One of Ten Collectible Dog Boarding Passes)

www.TitanicAttraction.com • 866/488-2045  
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 — OPEN YEAR ROUND —



**NAME OF DOG:** Kitty  
**BREED:** Airedale  
**OWNER:** Colonel John Jacob Astor  
**BOARDED AT:** Cherbourg, France

*Tribute to the dogs onboard Titanic*

You are holding a special boarding pass. It represents Kitty, an **Airedale Terrier** owned by passenger John Jacob Astor. Mr. Astor owned the elegant Waldorf-Astoria Hotel in New York City and was said to be the world's richest man aboard *Titanic*.

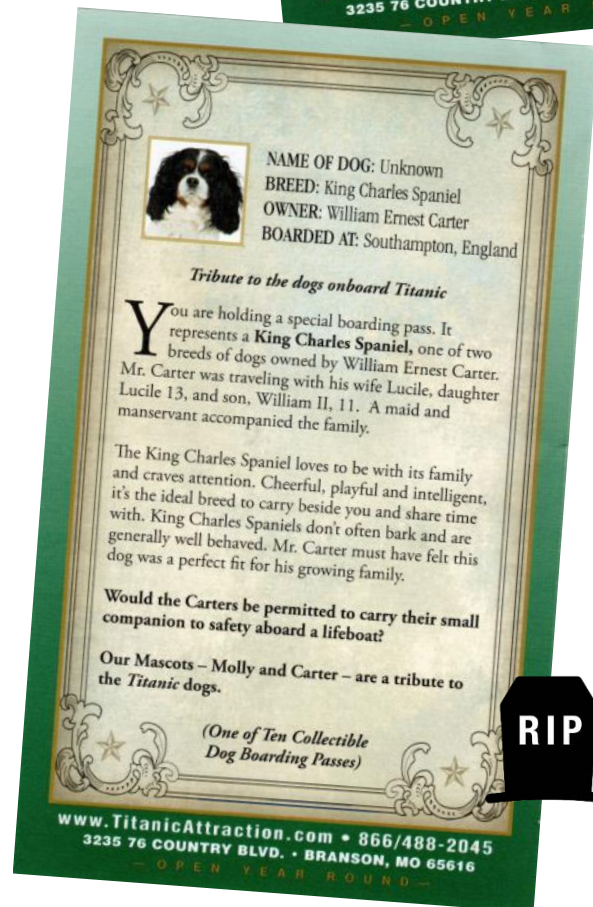
The Airedale Terrier is very loyal and intelligent—an enjoyable dog to own. The breed demands love and attention, but it's also a pleasant companion—protective, brave and affectionate.

Mr. Astor did not survive the sinking, but his young, pregnant wife, Madeleine, did. She later claimed to have spotted her husband and Kitty on deck just before the ship broke apart.

Would the couple's devoted Airedale join her aboard the rescue ship *Carpathia*?

(One of Ten Collectible Dog Boarding Passes)

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 — OPEN YEAR ROUND —



**NAME OF DOG:** Unknown  
**BREED:** King Charles Spaniel  
**OWNER:** William Ernest Carter  
**BOARDED AT:** Southampton, England

*Tribute to the dogs onboard Titanic*

You are holding a special boarding pass. It represents a **King Charles Spaniel**, one of two breeds of dogs owned by William Ernest Carter. Mr. Carter was traveling with his wife Lucile, daughter Lucile 13, and son, William II, 11. A maid and manservant accompanied the family.

The King Charles Spaniel loves to be with his family and craves attention. Cheerful, playful and intelligent, it's the ideal breed to carry beside you and share time with. King Charles Spaniels don't often bark and are generally well behaved. Mr. Carter must have felt this dog was a perfect fit for his growing family.

Would the Carters be permitted to carry their small companion to safety aboard a lifeboat?

Our Mascots – Molly and Carter – are a tribute to the *Titanic* dogs.

(One of Ten Collectible Dog Boarding Passes)

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 3235 76 COUNTRY BLVD. • BRANSON, MO 65616  
 — OPEN YEAR ROUND —

# May Vacation—Part 2



*There were eight musicians on the Titanic as the oval portraits above show. Hard to see in the photos, but the ovals are two sided and the mirrors along the walls behind them allow you to see what is on the back of each oval! (A little surprise for those who pay attention!)*

*A musician playing a piano as you walk around the gallery.*



*This was the first of several “photo interceptions” (or hostaging!) we would experience on the trip where an attraction takes your photo before or after then tries to sell you a photo package before you leave!*



# May Vacation—Part 2

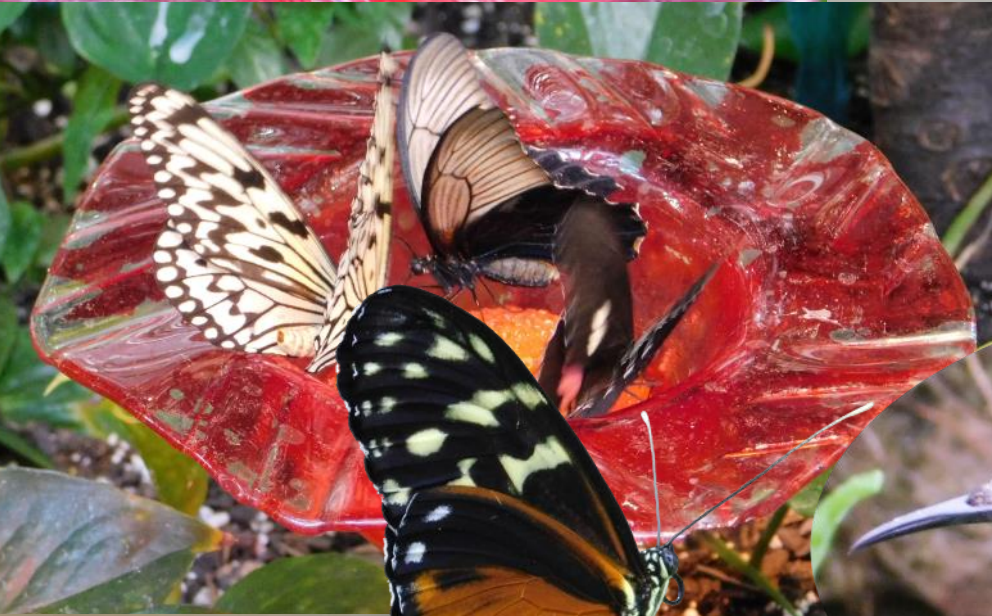
After the museum, we went to get lunch at Fuddruckers because that was what Dad wanted. In the same shopping area as the restaurant was a little leather/military shop selling various military themed items and handmade leather goods where we bought a few things. At this point even after one day, we knew we wanted to extend the stay a little longer, also partly because Silver Dollar City was closed on certain days making us need to wait until the next open day if we were going to go. We went back to the hotel for that purpose and to get more tickets for another attraction. After we left, we went over to The Butterfly Palace. We got there less than an hour before they closed, but we were able to see the main attraction, the butterflies, in that time. The other parts of the place we did not have enough time to visit. They gave us wristbands that they said would allow us back in for up to three days. BUT, we could not remove the wristbands in order to get back in a later date. (Ultimately, I said heck with that and cut off the band later.) We spent a good 45 minutes to an hour looking at the butterflies and taking lots of photos of them and the plants and flowers in the greenhouse. The climate in the greenhouse was warm and humid as appropriate for the thriving of the butterflies and the plants. It was mazing to see the large variety of butterflies as well as the different sizes and colors. There were also a few birds.

*Photographing the butterflies was difficult because they kept fluttering and were not still for very long!*



# May Vacation—Part 2

*Some of the many butterflies we saw.*



# May Vacation—Part 2



*We had these fake flower nectar vials that butterflies would come to.*



*A runaway trying to escape on my hat!*



The Butterfly Palace was at the base of a hill, and the road past the place up the hill went to the scenic overlook that was closed yesterday. We went back to that overlook, which was open, and we could see most of the “little Vegas” part of the town along with a large part of the area and the White River Balds Natural Area. After a stop and a bunch more driving along the curvy, hilly roads, we went over to the Old Branson downtown area.



# May Vacation—Part 2

The place was packed with people! We stopped and walked around Dick's 5 & 10 store, and old style five and dime store like what used to be all over the country many decades ago. However, I was disappointed that the prices were not in fact 5¢ and 10¢! :-) Although, the prices of some of the items were very reasonable, while other items were a little expensive. You definitely could find things of all types that are not easily found in other places. (For example, remember those tomato pincushions with the strawberry emery?) I stocked up on some cheap cotton thread (and bought a tomato pincushion)!



By this time of day, the light was getting sunsety, and we went over to the big Ferris wheel on the main road. We had our tickets and got on. The line was light, and so we went around two times. The wheel goes around slowly giving us plenty of time to take photos of all over the town from the wheel.



# May Vacation—Part 2



*Some of the wheel's lights were out or broken.*

After we left there, we drove up and down the strip for a while to see what the main road looked like at night, which was quite a visual transformation! I wanted to stop to see the giant octopus that was right by the road, but our attention was quickly diverted when music started playing by the colored water fountains and the fountains became active! Apparently, the waters do a performance (like a very small scale Dancing Waters at the Bellagio) every hour for two songs. I recorded the two songs of the crazy waters! After it was over, then I went around to photograph the octopus. We decided to go to the Papa John's pizza across the street for some pizza before we went back over to the Ferris wheel for photos of the wheel from the ground once it was dark. We got back to the hotel well after 10:00 PM!



# May Vacation—Part 2



*This was the most Vegasque thing I saw in Branson!*



# May Vacation—Part 2

## Branson, Day 2—May 17, 2022

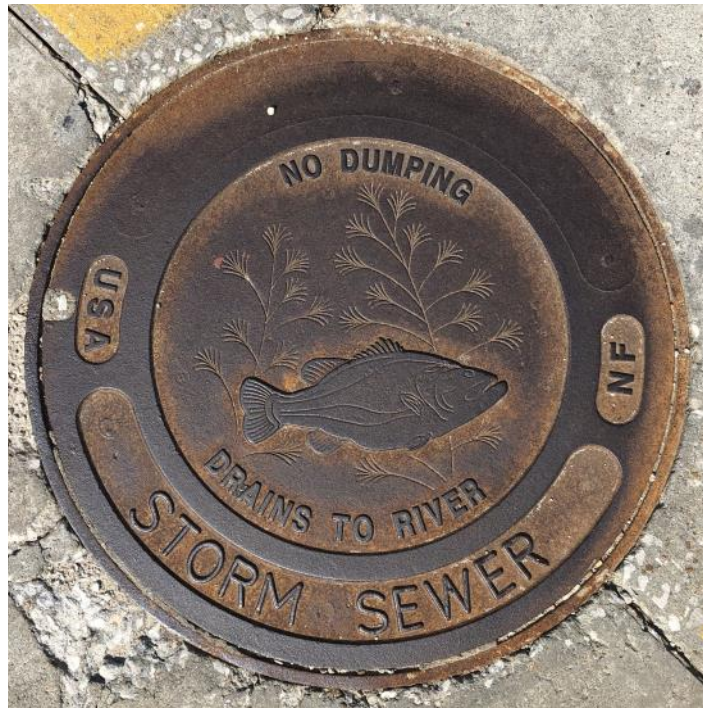
After we got cleaned up and ready to go at about 10:00 AM, we wanted to go to a store called Menards. We saw an ad slick for them and wanted to check out a few of the sale items. The closest store was in Hollister about three or four miles away to the south. On the way, we really could see the sizes of the hills and the cuts through the hills to put in the highway! Once we got there, the store was huge! I had only been in one once I don't know when, but the store had about everything you could want! And far better than a Walmart! We looked around nearly two hours and spend far too much money!

After that, we decided to get lunch at Bob Evans. We went to the one in Jacksonville in 2020 and in 2021 when we were there last. They are a Midwest restaurant styled in a plain Midwest farm feel, which is much plainer and simpler than a farm style found in western states, think more Amish like in look. We got the turkey dinner, and it was really good! All homemade. After lunch, we went back to Old Branson. We ended up parking in front of a flag store, which Dad got a few things. Nearby, Dad also wanted to go to the As Seen On TV store that was closed yesterday when we went by. We looked around, but didn't buy anything. Most of the items with that branding were frankly junk! We decided to catch the free trolley to tour the downtown. We went as far as the one end of the Branson Landing before getting off. We stopped briefly at Belk for a bathroom break but ended up buying something. We got back on the trolley and took it the entire route around the old town and by the lake/river. It was a nice ride seeing the historic town and the “once was a river but is now a lake” body of water called Lake Taneycomo.

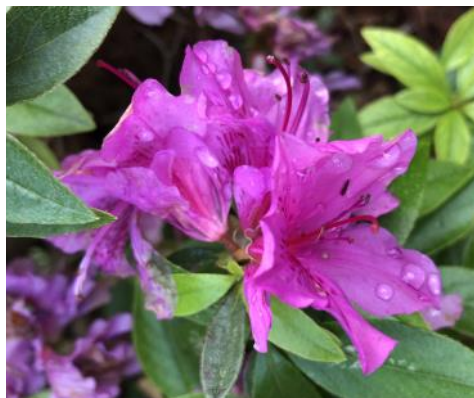
It was warm enough that we wanted some ice cream and went over to Culver's a few miles to the north. We took another trip up and down the strip to find something Dad remembered he wanted to see. We found it, but it was indefinitely closed. We went back to the hotel for a little while before our evening event.



*Menards in Hollister, Missouri.*



*This manhole cover I saw in old downtown Branson looks very similar to the one I saw in Pueblo last year. Although, this one is not as nice.*



*I got the very tail end of the azalea blooms on a bush in front of the hotel where we were staying.*

# May Vacation—Part 2

Dad was set on going to some theatre while in Branson to watch a show. But after he found out that nearly all of the people he would want to see were dead and that most of the shows were impersonators, magic shows, comedy shows, or something else, he had to rethink about going to a show. But it turned out that the Texas Tenors were performing while we were in Branson. They were performing at the Grand Shanghai Theatre, which used to be the Mickey Gilley Theatre. It turned out that Mickey Gilley had died just 10 days prior to this concert. The concert was at 7:30 PM and we left a little after 7:00. There was a long line once we got there, but we already had our tickets. Here was episode number two of the “photo hijacking”! They photographed everyone before they went into the theatre and had the photo

packages ready by the time the concert was over. The concert was about two hours, and it was fantastic! The Texas Tenors were winners of America’s Got Talent, which they featured during the concert. Afterwards, we got some souvenirs—and yes, the photos—and left. We drove up and down the strip again while it was dark, because why not. We went back to the dancing waters over by the octopus to watch the show, which was at 10:00 and lasting for ten minutes with two songs. We then went back to the hotel. It turned out that the bathroom had a leak in the ceiling (I thought I heard dripping noises before we left) where water was all over the floor. We transferred over to the room a couple of doors over, which was exactly the same, and settled in for the night.



*What was the Mickey Gilley Theatre is now the Grand Shanghai Theatre.*

*Mickey Gilley died on May 7, 2022 at age 86.*



# May Vacation—Part 2

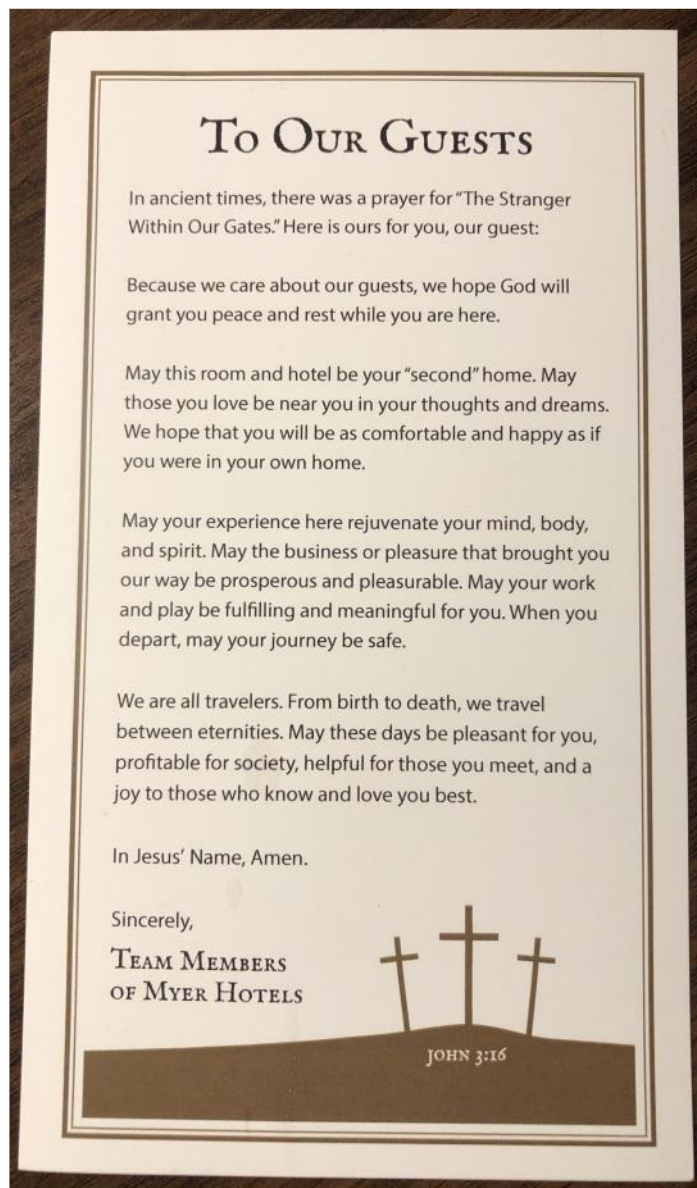


# May Vacation—Part 2

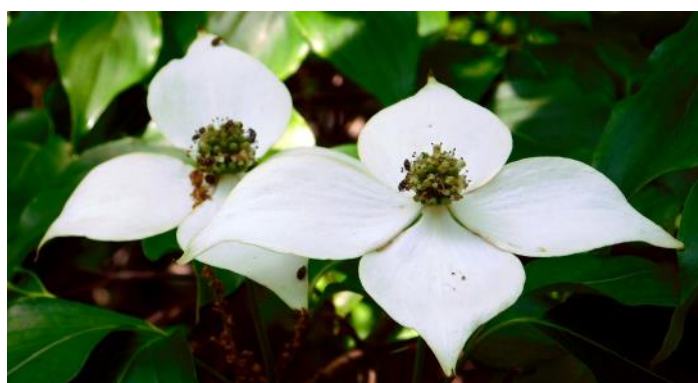
Here are a few items that didn't quite fit in the formatting for this issue but that I did not want to leave out.



*While at the QT in Wichita, I saw this interesting wood silo across the street.*



*Our hotel in Branson had this card in the rooms, which I thought was really interesting.*



# May Vacation—Part 3

## From Where I Left Off

With where I left off in the last issue, we went to the Texas Tenors concert and did a few things along the main road before heading back to the hotel. What I did not mention was that we had one more day left in Branson, and that this last day was reserved to go to Silver Dollar City!



## Branson Miscellany

One thing I did not mention about Branson in the last issue was the number of mini golf courses! Everywhere we looked, there were courses scattered all over the main road and on several of the other roads. I counted about 16 mini golf courses, and there may be more! A few of them were basic courses, but most of them had specialized themes that were highly decorated and well lit with various colors at night! If I ever get to Branson again, I am definitely going to some of those cool courses!



*The Ferris wheel in Branson we rode on was in other places. The above sign told about where else this ride was.*

*Much to the surprise of one fan, Marcus Collins of the Texas Tenors took her iPhone and pressed record to sing directly to her device!  
(Photo by Robert A. de Stolfe)*

# May Vacation—Part 3

## Silver Dollar City Day

The day is Wednesday, May 18, 2022. We were going to go to Silver Dollar City on Monday after we arrived, but we found out they were closed on Mondays and Tuesdays in May. So that is why we stayed an extra day to account for going to Silver Dollar City.

After we got cleaned up, we headed straight there. It is way on the other end of town. We parked in the handicap area, which was closer to the entrance, though we still had to walk a little ways to the entrance gates. Once there, security scanned us and checked bags and we set out to get dad a motorized cart. Once ready to explore, the first thing we did was stop by the bakery near the entrance and got some large cinnamon rolls. Then, we walked around for a while in the central area. We came to a leather shop and looked around. We each found a few things to get. SDC has many carts and stands along the pathways throughout the park. Dad came to a cart that made custom metal signs and ordered something he wanted, which would be available for pickup before we left. From there, I looked around and saw an old time photo place where they do those 1800s saloon type photos. I decided that I wanted to get one made since the last time I did one was in 1994!



*Sign of Silver Dollar City near the entrance.*



*Wilderness Church in the Homestead Ridge section of the park.*



*Inside the Wilderness Church.*

# May Vacation—Part 3

The 1800s saloon vignette was one series of options. But instead, I went with a 1920s gangster scene. I went through the process of getting dressed up and establishing the scene. They took a series of photos which I reviewed afterwards. I decided to go with the tintype option with a faint colorized black and white filter. They did give me a website I could go to see all of the photos they took as well as the option to order more (of course they would!) Allowed or not, Dad snuck a photo of them photographing me!



*Obviously, I have no idea how to hold a Tommy Gun! Gotta love the zoot suit!*



*After I got dressed up and over to the scene, the photographer took several shots with different angles and expressions. I could go to their website later and look at them and, of course, make additional purchases of the photos. Otherwise, they put these stupid watermarks on the photos!*

# May Vacation—Part 3

We went further down a path, and Dad wanted to go on the narrow gauge train that went around the park. The ride went about 20 minutes at different elevations and stopped about halfway for a hillbilly holdup! It was goofy comedy, but added to the whole hillbilly theme of that region. After that, we decided to get lunch. Dad in his usual manner wanted a buffet. So I found where one was and it was okay, not great, but obviously overpriced for what you got. I know there was better food out there. (But Dad wanted a buffet!) Interestingly, this buffet was the same place where we had breakfast that first half of the time when I was in Branson in 2005 working our booth at SDC for Flint. Even then, SDC was closed on Mondays and Tuesdays.



*This is part of the locomotive that pulled the narrow gauge train cars (where we sat). The tracks made a loop around the park and brought us back to the station.*

*One of many stand alone interactives throughout the park.*

*About halfway through the train ride, we stopped because of a hillbilly “holdup” by this “hillbilly homestead”!*



# May Vacation—Part 3

We continued walking around the park for a while looking at what there was to see. We came to a ride called The Flooded Mine ride. This was a mild boat ride going through, well, a mine that was flooding! But the other part of it is that you could shoot at targets throughout the ride. The animatronic characters were prisoners wearing the old style black and white striped jumpsuits. We ended up going through the ride twice, not even getting off! We saw others doing the rides many times too. One thing we saw on this ride that we liked were these lanterns that looked like they had flaming fire in them (which is not exactly how lanterns are supposed to look). They had a really cool look that we liked (remember this for a future reference)!

Throughout the day, we walked (well, I walked and Dad was on the motorized cart) and were continually on the move. It was quite warm and of course fairly humid. We headed back to the front of the park, and somewhere near there, Dad went to a small shop that had something he wanted. While Dad did that and before we left, I wanted to go to an attraction called Grandfather's Mansion, which I remembered from 2005. It was quite the gravity defying place! This was a sort of funhouse that challenged your sense of gravity, perspective, and balance! The kids loved it!



*The fire lanterns we saw at the Flooded Mine (arrow above) were different from this one, but I got this lantern on Amazon that has a similar look of the flickering fire.*



*The first room you come to is this upside down bedroom to give you a sense of what's to come.*

# May Vacation—Part 3

I went through Grandfather's mansion once, and since Dad wasn't done yet with his thing, I went through it again! Apparently, the kids were doing the same thing! Oddly, I didn't really see any adults going through this attraction!



*In this mirrored hallway, I am standing straight, believe it or not! I oriented the camera to be level with the hallway!*

*Your whole sense of level and gravity are thrown out of whack in this room!*



Grandfather



*This is how you think you see this room...*



*...this is how the room actually is!*

# May Vacation—Part 3

*Here's a sampling of the flora we saw in the park, both natural and*



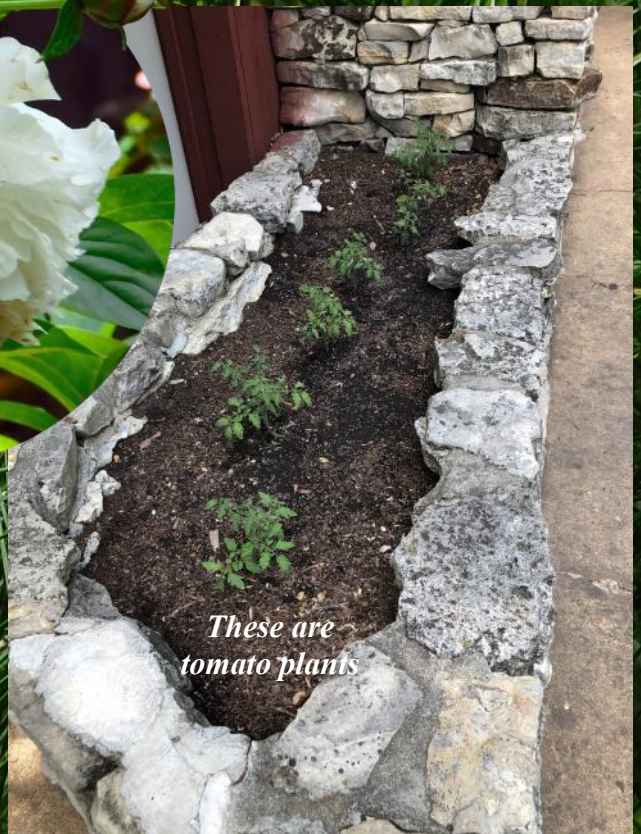
*Mock Orange*



*Camilla*



*Dogwood*



*These are  
tomato plants*

*Background: pine trees*

# May Vacation—Part 3

*Here is a bunch of other random things from Silver Dollar City.*



*This water clock is very similar to the one in Cañon City, Colorado.*

*Wildfire is one of the crazy rollercoaster rides.*

*This reproduction stagecoach was near where I got my old timey tintype photo.*

*I am suspicious of the validity of this Ozark Tree!*



# May Vacation—Part 3



*This no thank you ride is called American Plunge.*

*One of the many decaying items of yesteryear around the park.*



# May Vacation—Part 3

On our way out, Dad picked up the metal sign he ordered and got another souvenir from the conveniently placed giant gift shop you had to go through to exit!

## Rest of Last Day

With the walking, heat, and humidity, we were understandably drained of energy and tired. We drove straight back to the hotel. Well, I did stop briefly at this one spot on the main road to get a quick photo of this large head sculpture of Ronald Reagan. We had seen it several times in the days we were there, but Dad thought it was the image of some other actor. But no, all references to it showed it to be of Ronald Reagan.



*There's no explanation as to why this sculpture of Ronald Reagan is here, nor where it came from. But this seemingly abandoned spot on the main road appears to have been some sort of attraction at one time before being razed.*

Once back at the hotel, I stripped off the sweat soaked clothes for clean ones, and Dad slept for a little while as I did some miscellaneous things. Once we were rested enough, Dad wanted a pizza. A quick severe storm developed by nightfall and came over Branson. So, in the heavy rain we went back over to the same Papa John's for pizza. We also stopped briefly to watch the dancing waters again, then went over to a local grocery store called Price Chopper just to see what the store was like. It was still raining with lightning. By the time we got back to the hotel, the rain was light and eventually stopped once we were back in the room for a little while.



# May Vacation—Part 3

## Moving On To The Next Town

The next day was Thursday, May 19, 2022. As usual, we got cleaned up, had a quick breakfast, and left Branson. We knew we wanted to go as far as Memphis for the next night, and we had two ways we could have gone. I thought the better way would be to go back north to Springfield, then continue east through southern Missouri and down through part of Arkansas, the same route we took in 2020.

We then headed to Springfield taking 54 north, the same road we took to get to Branson. Once we got to Springfield, I first wanted to stop at a leather shop from where I had previously bought some stuff online. We looked around, and I got some items I wanted for some craft projects. No sooner than we left and were on our way to the next stop, my phone blew up with thunderstorm warnings and tornado warnings. We went the few miles to the west to get to the Bass Pro Shops.



*Google Maps Street View*

I knew that I wanted to go back there like I was there in 2005. Now, when I was there before, I remember the place being away from town and being of moderate size, considering that it is the largest Bass Pro Shop in the country! But now, the town grew past it, and the place is in the middle of town and has expanded to be double the size it was in 2005! A soon as we got into the parking lot, the sky just let loose of rain! We got into the store (a little wet) and started at a welcome station. (Yeah, it's that big to need a welcome station!) Dad got a motorized cart (yep, a big enough attraction now to have motorized carts!), and we



# May Vacation—Part 3

spent some time exploring the many things to see. We did not explore the museums that were apparently added since 2005, but we did look around at the dioramas, fish tanks, stuffed animals, the original shop setup, and various other stuff on the two floors. It was a huge place! We did not even attempt to look at everything. Even when we left, the rain and lightning was heavy.



# May Vacation—Part 3



*This is on the ceiling!*



# May Vacation—Part 3



# May Vacation—Part 3



# May Vacation—Part 3



# May Vacation—Part 3



*Yesteryear way to go camping!*



*This has got to be the ugliest fish I have ever seen! Look at those bulging eyes and lips that are bigger than on humans!*



# May Vacation—Part 3

## Continuing On

We drove through the heavy rain to a camera shop that someone recommended. Dad was looking for something he needed, which he didn't find, but did get a couple of other things. By this point, the rain stopped and moved on elsewhere. The last things we did before leaving was to get some gas and to get something to eat. We decided on going to Zaxby's after getting gas. Once we were done, it was a little after 3:00 PM, and we finally got on the road taking US 60 going east.

One thing I remember about taking this route before in 2020 was that we went through one town where we saw a bunch of Amish people (families) in buggies or carts going up and down the sides of the roads. In 2020, that was a Saturday. The town was Seymour, Missouri and on this trip, we only saw one Amish presence, an Amish woman driving a single horse cart with two or three children in the back (hard to see). Although, the horse droppings showed that there were others on the road earlier in the day.

A little over an hour of driving, I felt the need to stop for a rest because I was getting tired. I ended up going past a turn for a roadside park I wanted to stop at and turned around at the next available exit. On the way back to the park, these two young deers just came out from the side of the road, and I almost hit them, but swerved out of the way (as did the car behind me)! It rather startled me, but probably also scared the deers! (And yes, I'm saying deers instead of deer!) We stopped at this roadside park and stayed about 45 minutes while we rested and tried to get back some energy. (Too many carbs from Zaxby's maybe?) We drove some more through the hilly Ozarks of Missouri and Arkansas and got to one point where I made a wrong turn but conveniently stopped at McDonald's for a snack. By this point, it was nearing near sunset, but we kept going. We finally got the Mississippi River and went over that large metal truss bridge into Memphis. We took the interstate south to get to the hotel on the south side of the town. We stopped first to get gas at a rather sketchy gas station, then headed to the hotel. We checked in and got settled for an overnight stop in Memphis. We were somewhat near the airport, but I was wondering why the hotel had a large metal fence fully around the property.



# May Vacation—Part 3

## Cabool Rest Stop



*This little rest stop was southeast of Cabool, Missouri.*

*Google Maps*



# May Vacation—Part 3

## Bypassing Memphis

So, it was Friday, May 20, 2022. We got going a little after 10:00 AM. During my research for the trip, I looked into some attractions we could see within a couple of hours while in Memphis. We had considered going to Graceland, to the Fire Museum of Memphis, or to The Cotton Museum at the Memphis Cotton Exchange. But instead, we decided that we wanted to keep going and use that time for other places where we really wanted to spend our time and for the real reason of the trip. Then, Nashville was our next multiday stop.

Before we left Memphis, we did make a stop at Best Buy for Dad to find something. The drive from Memphis was straight forward and easy. We simply got on I-40, and it would take us right to Nashville, about a three hour drive. After about an hour and a half, we stopped to get something to eat in a little town called Parkers Crossroads near Wildersville. Looking at what was around, we ultimately stopped at a restaurant that had a bunch of cars around it called Patty's Restaurant. This was a local place that turned out to be a good stop! At first, we weren't sure about the place, but we just stayed and eventually a waitress came. Our waitress, with a very Tennessee accent, helped us with the menu and with what was good to get. Dad chose to get the spaghetti, while I thought I'd try the hamburger steak. (Yeah, I know! Very odd choices! But it is what sounded good from their menu.). The waitress also asked if I wanted some A-1, Heinz 57, or some Country Bob's for the burger steak. I was like, "What is Country Bob's?" She got all excited, and said that I just had to try it! I got a little worried! Anyway, while we were waiting for the food, we saw this little shelf behind us with a bunch of cans of potted possum. Frankly, I wasn't surprised to see them! After all, we were in Tennessee! Ha, ha... We got a few cans along with some pie for dessert before we left. We would definitely go there again the



*Country Bob's was quite tasty!  
I looked around and bought some.*



# May Vacation—Part 3

next time we were in the area. I didn't know it at the time, but that area has some Civil War history that I would want to explore if I ever got that way again. Before we left the town, we stopped at the Dollar General next door.

We continued for another hour and a half before we stopped in Belle Meade for gas and a break. We got into Nashville before 5:00 PM, but it took a while before I found where we needed to go. Besides that, the traffic was horrible! I ended up taking an unintentional tour of the airport because of a wrong turn!

Where was I going? What was next on the trip now that we were in Nashville? That will be for the next issue!



*Occasionally along I-40 in Tennessee after leaving Memphis, this sign would appear. I only counted three or four times that I saw the sign, and finally stopped to get a photo as soon as I saw it ahead.*



## Clues Of What Is In Future Issues

Believe it or not, I have only covered probably 25% of the May trip! There is so much more we did that I have not yet gotten to in these issues! Here's a photo sample of a few things to come!



*Grand Ole Opry*



*Ryman Auditorium*



*DollyWood*



*The Hermitage*

# May Vacation—Part 4

## Getting to Nashville – Friday, May 20, 2022

After the brief stop in Belle Meade, we were less than an hour from Nashville. While we got into Nashville before 5:00 PM, we were just in time for Friday going home traffic! Three major interstates intersect in Nashville and made figuring out where to go absolutely horrible! I ended up making a wrong turn where I thought I needed to go only to find out that it was an airport only road! I unhumorously took a tour of the Nashville airport! We finally left the airport and kept going and finally saw the road we needed. Our first stop in Nashville—even before checking in to the hotel—was to the Grand Ole Opry! We wanted to find out how much tickets cost and when the shows were. We looked around outside and got some photos before going to the ticket office hoping that it was open. Dad originally wanted tickets for Saturday night, but it turns out that the Opry has shows on Fridays, Saturdays, and Tuesdays, at least during the time we were there. But since it was Friday, we knew it was a good night to go, especially since the shows are broadcasted on Fridays, as we would find out later. Dad decided to go tonight and so we stayed for a while until they let people in. Mind you that we haven't even checked into the hotel yet. While waiting, we checked out the gift shop and probably spent too much buying lots of souvenirs! After a little while longer, the doors opened and we went in and got our seats, somewhat close to the front and a little over to the left.



*Here I am with giant guitars outside of the Opry.  
Photo by Robert A. de Stolfe.*

*Outside of the Grand Ole Opry.*



# May Vacation—Part 4

The seats were like long pews with long padded cushions. The concert was fantastic from the beginning to the end! It ran so smoothly with good sound, good lighting, good flow, and fantastic management! The Opry artists performing were Jeannie Seely, Runaway June, Bobby Osborne & The Rocky Top X-Press, Mandy Barnett, Connie Smith, Michael Feinstein, Rhonda Vincent, and Lauren Alaina. For me, I did not recognize any of the names for I am not in tune with country music anymore like I was in the 1990s. But I did recognize the Rocky Top song. And speaking of the 90s, the Opry was honoring 90s country music artists this summer, which is the country music that I remember listening to, well, in the 90s! We left about two and a half hours later and finally got to the hotel. I chose a hotel that was only a mile away on the same road. Once we got settled into the room, we basically crashed since it was pretty late.



*While not open at this point, this old tour bus is a food truck!*



*The host of the show was Charlie Mattos.*



*The auditorium was large with high ceilings.*

# May Vacation—Part 4



**Jeannie Seely**



**Runaway June**



**Mandy Barnett**



**Bobby Osborne & The Rocky Top X-Press**



**Michael Feinstein**



**Rhonda Vincent**



**Lauren Alaina**



**Connie Smith**

*After the show.*



# May Vacation—Part 4

## Tours—Saturday, May 21, 2022

While I intended to get breakfast, I ended up sleeping in and was ready to go by 11:00 AM. (Breakfast ended at 10:30.) I thought that today we should go on a bus tour of downtown Nashville. It was too late to go on one of the tours we wanted that included going to the Ryman Auditorium. But we reserved two bus tours with Grayline Tours, a general tour of the town at 1:00 PM and an evening tour that started at 7:30 PM, both this same day. Since we had a little time before the afternoon tour, we went downtown to get there early and ended up driving in circles around the town to figure out where to park. We finally did find a parking lot and one that had spaces nearly across the street from where the bus left. However, that parking

lot was expensive! While we were driving around downtown, I couldn't believe all of the activity going on at noon! (Although, it was a Saturday, but still.) The places were FULL! All up and down the roads were these pedal bars or huts or wagons. There had to be at least a dozen of them. Then the bigger ones were converted buses cut open on the top with dance lights, audio, and a bar with a dance floor in the middle. Some of them were even large tour buses, while most of them were converted school buses. The more redneck variations were open trailers pulled by tractors. It was a crazy, crazy sight to behold! Just as crazy was seeing how people were dressed, or perhaps more like the lack of dress! The downtown area was like a combination of tailgating, parading, concerts, and street festivals all rolled into one.



*Downtown Nashville has a ridiculous number of mobile bars/party busses that run up and down Broadway! Here are just a few when this photo was taken. Also, the traffic was like this continually!*

*Photo by Robert A. de Stolfe*

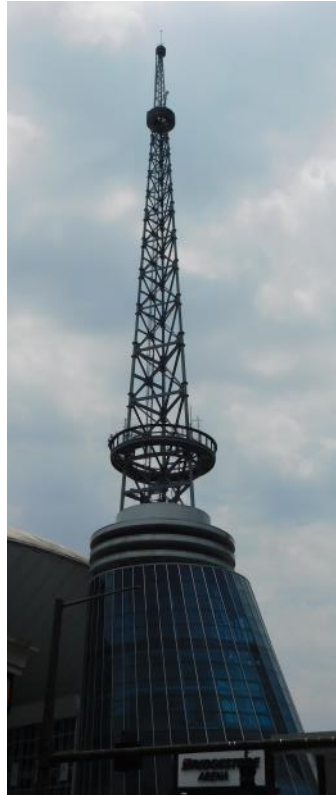


# May Vacation—Part 4

Anyway, our tour bus for the afternoon tour was an open topped double decker bus. We sat on the top despite being sunny, but we knew that the view would be better to see everything. The tour was an hour long and went around to survey the highlights of Nashville. We had a really good knowledgeable guide while someone else drove the bus.



*AT&T Building  
("Batman" building)*



*Nashville Visitor Center*



*Hard Rock Café*



*Nissan Stadium*



*Looking south along 3rd Avenue.*



*The Parthenon*

# May Vacation—Part 4



*One building of Vanderbilt University*



*Ted's  
Montana  
Grill*



*Tennessee Capitol building*



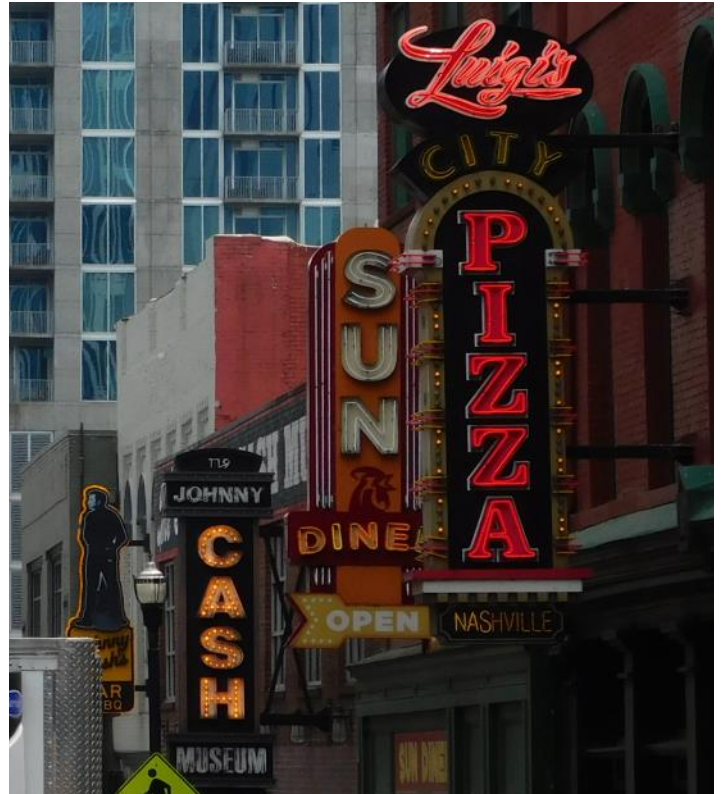
*Frist Art Museum*



*Piggly Wiggly!*

# May Vacation—Part 4

*Luigi's City Pizza, Sun Diner,  
Johnny Cash Museum,  
Johnny Cash's Bar & BBQ.*



*Jimmy Buffet's Margaritaville*



*Acme Feed & Seed, since 1891 (restaurant)*



*Cotton-Eyed Joe of Nashville*

# May Vacation—Part 4

All along Broadway are these fantastic signs, some newer, some older, that create a sort of old Vegasque stream of eyecatchers that also look great at night!



*Robert's Western World*



*Ernest Tubb Record Shop*



*Nashville Crossroads*



*Broadway Bowl & Bull*



*The Second Fiddle*



*Mellow Mushroom*



*Tootsie's Orchid Lounge*



*Nashville Music store*



*Redneck Riviera Bar & BBQ*

# May Vacation—Part 4



*Kid Rock's Honky Tonk*



*Jimmy Buffet's Margaritaville*



*Ole Red, Blake Shelton*



*Noelle (4 star hotel)*



*Luke's 32*



*Alan Jackson Good Time Bar*



*Dierks Bentley's Whiskey Row*



*Nudie's Honky Tonk*

# May Vacation—Part 4



*Jason Aldean's Kitchen*



*Wanna B's Karaoke Bar*



*Hard Rock Café*



*Glen Campbell Museum*



*Casa Rosa, Miranda Lambert*



*The Stage On Broadway*



*Big Time Boots*

# May Vacation—Part 4

After the tour, we were hungry. So, we drove back to the Opryland area and decided to try the Paula Deen's Family Kitchen. There are only six locations, and we were in three of the towns on our trip that had them. As a family style restaurant, the menu was in a fixed arrangement where the food was served family style and we simply had to choose what meats we wanted, for how many, and what sides. In good Southern tradition, it is like a "meat and three". We went with the least quantity option, which was still more than enough food to feed at least two more people! There were no to go boxes, but even if there were, we were travelling and it made no sense anyway. We decided on the fried chicken (Dad's choice) and the pot roast with rice (my choice). As for the sides, we got salad, mashed potatoes with gravy (Dad's choices), green beans, and mac and cheese (my choices). The meal came with drinks and delicious cheddar biscuits! The meal was top notch delicious, and frankly it had better be for \$25 a person! But, we did get a lot of food! It came with a dessert to go, since people would be too full to suck down a dessert after all of that food! We chose the banana pudding. Before we left, we looked around the gift shop and again spent way too much money buying a few things! We went back to the room to put the pudding in the fridge to let it get really cold since we were not far away from the hotel. By this point it was 5:30 PM and the evening tour was at 7:30 and decided best to head back to downtown.



## Family Style Dinner

In true Southern tradition, we serve a family style spread of hearty Down Home Dishes with Paula's Famous Sides to be selected and shared by the table. And sure as day follows night, dessert will be served!

*The Albany* 24.99 per person  
Choose 2 Down Home Dishes and 4 of Paula's Famous Sides for the table.

*The Savannah* 26.99 per person  
Choose 3 Down Home Dishes and 4 of Paula's Famous Sides for the table.

*The Georgia* 28.99 per person  
Choose 4 Down Home Dishes and 4 of Paula's Famous Sides for the table.

Kids ages 3 - 5 4.99 Kids ages 6 - 10 11.99

Enjoy Unlimited Refills... Happy Eating, Y'all!  
(To-go boxes are not available)

*Paula*

## Down Home Dishes

Dad

### BEST EVER SOUTHERN FRIED CHICKEN

Our specially seasoned, hand-breaded chicken, fried crisp and golden. "Some things in life can't be improved upon!"

Me

### BEEF POT ROAST

Slow roasted 'til tender and full of flavor. Lovingly shredded, ladled over buttered white rice. "Comfort food at its finest!"

### CHICKEN-FRIED PORK CHOP

Boneless tender pork coated with seasoned flour, then fried golden on the stovetop. Drizzled in the best gravy ever created by its own flavorful pan drippings.

### OL' FASHIONED SOUTHERN MEATLOAF

Thick-sliced, sweet and tangy meatloaf covered in crispy tobacco onions. No wonder Paula's recipe has a reputation all its own!

### SPARE RIBS

Slow roasted, fall-off-the-bone pork ribs smothered in tangy barbecue sauce. "The perfect blend of sweet and spicy, Y'all!"

### CHICKEN & DUMPLINGS

Tender pulled chicken and hand-rolled dumplings simmered in a savory chicken gravy. "It's been a staple at my family table for as long as I can remember."

### GEORGIA FRIED CATFISH

"We love our fish lightly fried with a flour and cornmeal coating, and you will, too!" Served with Paula's zingy tartar sauce.

### ROASTED CHICKEN

Mouthwatering, tender, slow roasted chicken. Seasoned with Paula's signature blend of savory spices.

Me

## Paula's Famous Sides

Dad

Dad

GREEN BEANS  
CREAMED POTATOES  
COLLARD GREENS  
FRESH CANDIED YAMS  
CREAMED CORN  
COLE SLAW

POPPYSEED TOSSED SALAD  
BAKED MAC AND CHEESE  
BLACK EYED PEAS  
BROCCOLI CASSEROLE  
TOMATO & CUCUMBER SALAD  
BUTTERED WHITE RICE

Me

## Southern Desserts

(Everybody gets one)

### OOEY GOOEY BUTTER CAKE

Paula's signature melt-in-your-mouth dessert. An experience all its own!

!

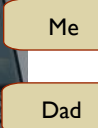
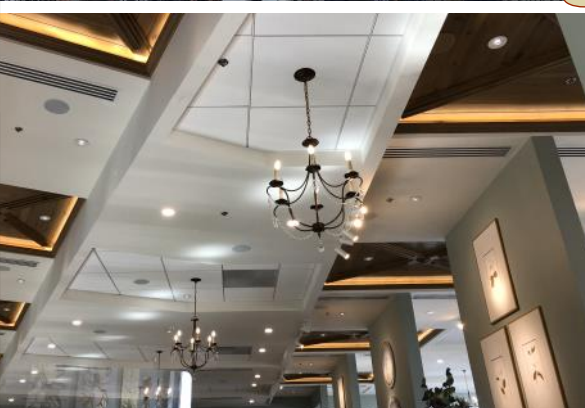
### BANANA PUDDING

"Mouthwateringly delicious, Y'all!" Rich and creamy custard with fresh bananas and sweet vanilla wafers, topped with a dollop of whipped cream.

### SEASONAL COBBLER

Paula's Cobbler lovingly baked to create a bubbling Southern favorite.

Your well-being is important to us. If you have allergies, please alert us as not all ingredients are listed. \*We are obliged to tell you that consuming raw or undercooked meat, seafood or eggs may increase your risk of foodborne illness.



# May Vacation—Part 4

After fighting the traffic again on the main roads, we got downtown just before some strong storms hit near where we were. I ended up driving in circles four times to get back to the parking lot where we parked before because of various construction zones and the many oneways. By this point, it was 7:00 PM and the rain was getting heavy. The cops had blocked off part of Broadway, apparently something they do regularly to keep the drunk pedestrians safe at night! (You know they are not sober on a Saturday night!) The evening tour was on a single level trolley bus with rolled down clear plastic sides. This tour was more detailed and expanded on what the other tour told us. With it as evening, we would see a different aspect of the town with it all lit up. However, the rain never did stop, and the “clear” sides of the trolley were very difficult to see clearly through. All we could see were colors, shapes, and streaks, but zero clarity. For our own safety as well as to stay dry, the driver, who was also the guide, left the sides down for the entire tour, but also hoped that it would stop raining to put up the sides. It certainly would have been better if it was a clear night, but oh well. We did have one stop where we could get out, even though there was still light rain. We stopped at the Parthenon for photos of it lit up at night. After we got back to where we loaded, we went back to the car and briefly drove back to the same spot to get some photos pointed down Broadway with everything lit up. From there, we drove back to the Opryland area.



*The Parthenon, a full scale replica of the one in Athens, Greece.  
(Just happened to click the camera when lightning lit up the background!)*

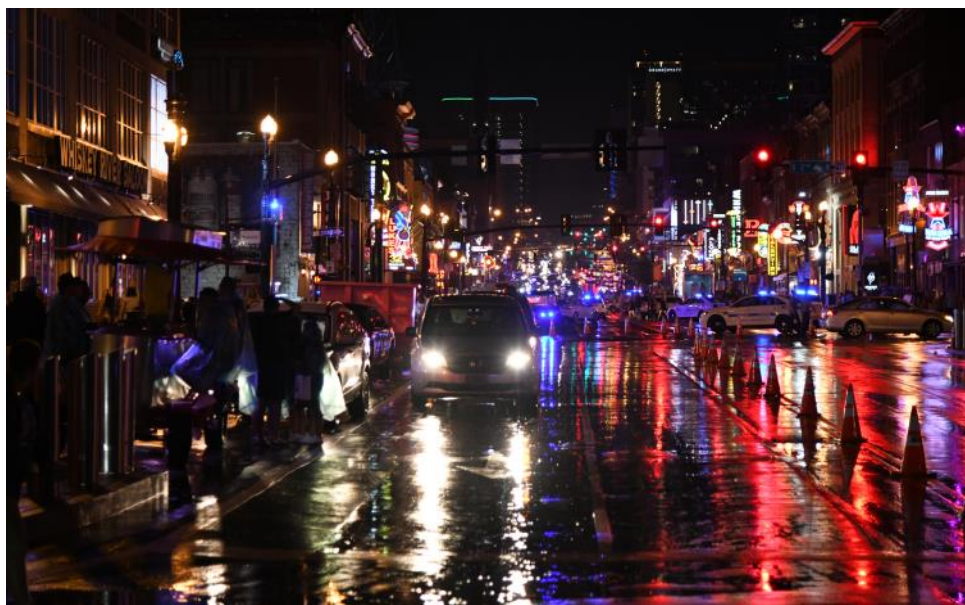


*View up one of the fluted columns to the Doric capital.*

# May Vacation—Part 4



*Acme Feed & Seed (restaurant)*



*Dad's photo down Broadway (after a couple of hours of rain).*



*Korean Veterans Memorial Bridge*



*Had to pay to park everywhere downtown.*

# May Vacation—Part 4

The Opryland area included not just the Grand Ole Opry, but a whole development of a mall, free standing stores and restaurants (like Paula Deen's Family Kitchen), a river cruise boat ramp, and the Gaylord Opryland Resort and Mall. When we found out that the Gaylord mall had a Carvel, Dad wanted to go get some of their ice cream. However, the place was very exclusive and required a parking fee of \$33 beyond the first free 20 minutes. We decided that it was not worth the money and skipped it. Since

it was rather late, the only option we could find was an open McDonald's for sundaes. There was a line in the drive through, and it took so long to get through it. For a short time, we thought that maybe the employees skipped working or that maybe it was only one person working! We ate the sundaes in the parking lot and went back to the room. We eventually ate the banana puddings too. Yes, we had two desserts! (The banana pudding would not have been as good the next day. Bananas get mushy fast.)

## Last Tours—Sunday, May 22, 2022

After we got cleaned up and ate some breakfast, we packed up our bags and loaded up the car. We had a few things we wanted to do before we left Nashville. Dad still wanted to go on the backstage tour of the Opry. So, we went over to the Grand Ole Opry back to their ticket office to see when we could take the tour, which ran every 15 minutes. Unfortunately, they were booked solid until 4 o'clock. We knew that we did not want to wait around that long knowing that there was about a four hour drive to Knoxville then to Pigeon Forge, our next destination. What we did instead was to drive back downtown and go on the backstage tour of the Ryman Auditorium instead.

Almost like Groundhog Day, we took the expressway back up and around over to downtown with the usual traffic and the crazy people driving. I ended up taking a long way around partly for forgetting where I was going and partly because I made a wrong turn or rather missed a turn I needed to take. But we finally got downtown. We found a parking lot really close to the auditorium and parked about a block away. We walked over to the Ryman Auditorium and got our tickets. We took the self guided tour of the auditorium, but we started with a short video on the second floor first. The video was very well done that included various projections and multi layered screens and TVs explaining the history of the building.



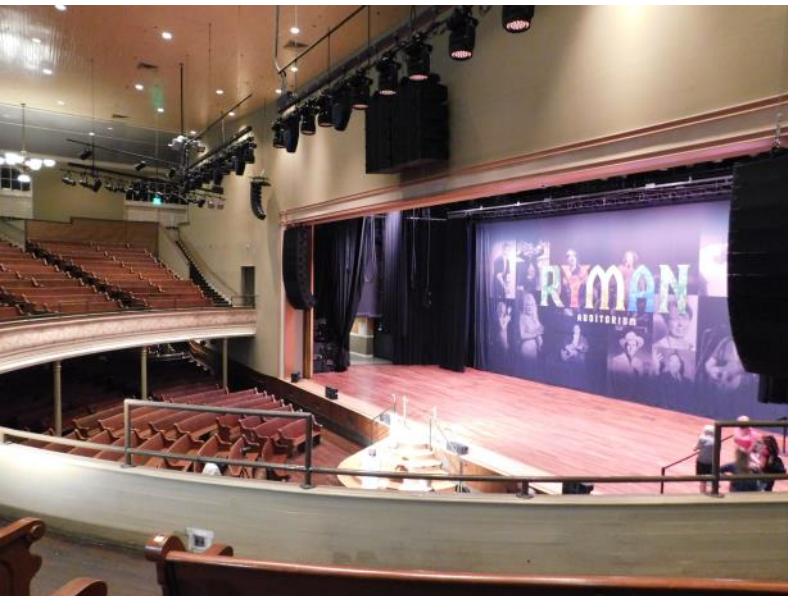
*Union Gospel Tabernacle 1891*



*Ryman Auditorium near Broadway*

# May Vacation—Part 4

After that we walked around on both floors of the original Ryman Auditorium looking at everything we could see. They had some display cases with clothing and personal effects of various musicians. They also provided a free photo standing on the stage behind a mic. When we were done looking around, we went to the gift shop and once again bought a few things. Before we left, Dad wanted to get a clear photo of the front of the auditorium with no cars or people in the way. Despite all efforts, he got close enough with maybe one car in it.



# May Vacation—Part 4



**THOMAS GREEN RYMAN**  
1841 - 1904

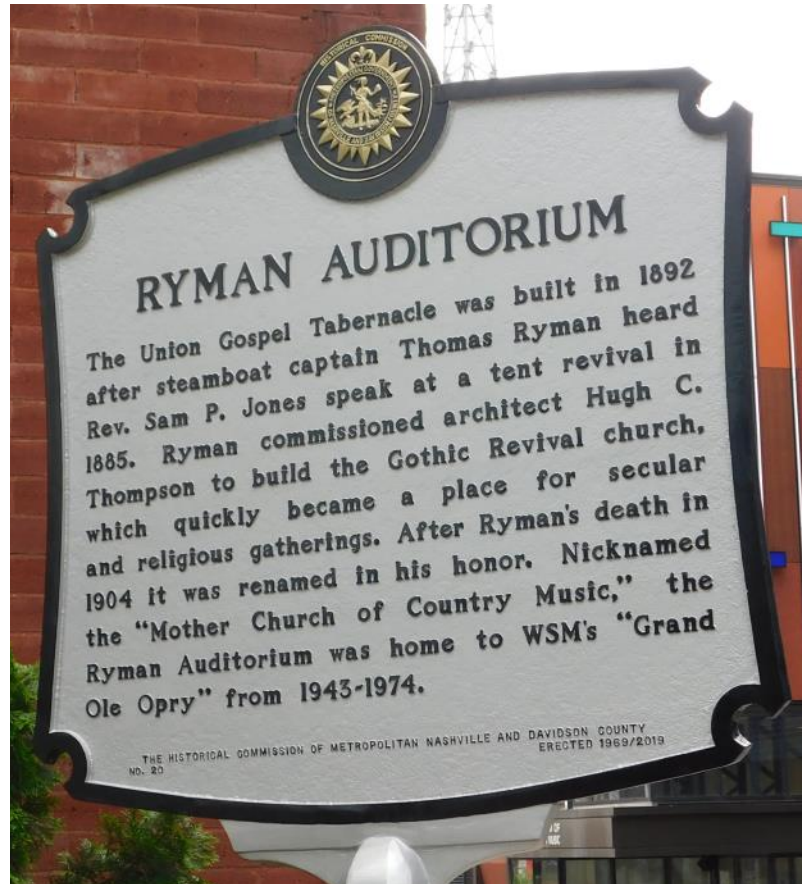
A prominent riverboat captain and Nashville businessman, Thomas Ryman was known for his generous contributions of time and money to the construction of the Union Gospel Tabernacle. In 1904, the Tabernacle was renamed the Ryman Auditorium in his honor.

Sculptor - Steve Shields

*Thomas Green Ryman  
1841-1904*

*A prominent riverboat captain and Nashville businessman, Thomas Ryman was known for his generous contributions of time and money to the construction of the Union Gospel Tabernacle. In 1904, the Tabernacle was renamed the Ryman Auditorium in his honor.*

*Sculptor—Steve Shields*



*Ryman Auditorium*



*They took our photo, and I think this was the only free photo we got!  
(Although, we spent enough in the gift shop!)*

# May Vacation—Part 4



**Bill Monroe**  
Installed 2017

**Loretta Lynn**  
Installed 2020

**LITTLE JIMMY DICKENS**  
1920 - 2015

Little Jimmy Dickens first debuted on the Ryman stage in 1948 and went on to become one of the longest tenured and most beloved members of the Grand Ole Opry. His rhinestone-studded outfits, wild novelty hits, and infectious country humor captured the hearts of millions. A member of the Opry for 49 years (1948-1957 & 1975-2015), Dickens was one of the Opry's greatest ambassadors and a mentor for new generations of performers. His deep reverence for the Opry was best stated by the man himself: "The circle can't be broken."

*Statue by Ben Watts*

*This sculpture is actual size!*



**"OH, ROY"**

This bronze sculpture is dedicated to the love and friendship that was shared with millions by two of country music's greatest performers: Roy Acutt, the King of Country Music, and Minnie Pearl, the Queen of Country Comedy, performed at the Ryman Auditorium from 1943 to 1974.

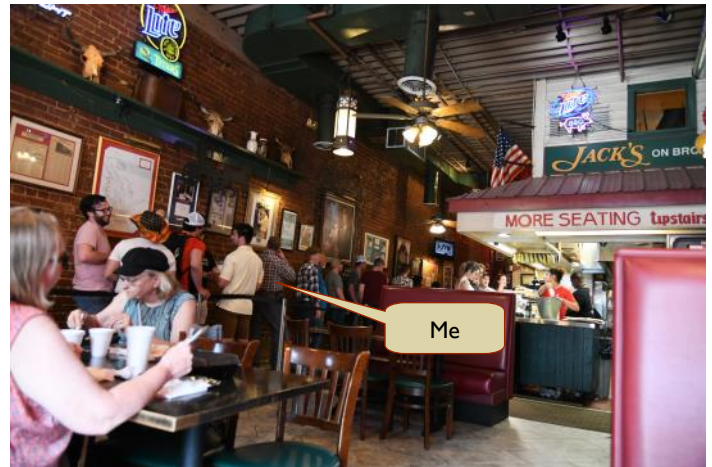
*Sculptor: Russ Fason*

# May Vacation—Part 4

Since we were downtown and near Broadway, we decided that we wanted to try Jack's BBQ located on Broadway. I went and put our stuff in the car, or more like tried to put the stuff in the car, but I didn't have the fob. I also need to renew the parking meter for the time we would eat. We walked and turned the corner onto Broadway, and Broadway was just as crazy and loud and just as in your face as it had been every time we were there! We went down about half a block and there was Jack's barbecue. (We saw the place on the bus tour.) There was a long line even out the door, but we looked at the menu, and I decided on a brisket sandwich with coleslaw and a drink while Dad got the brisket plate with mashed potatoes and gravy, corn, and a drink. They had various barbecue sauces, and I went with the Kansas City barbecue sauce which was really good. I bought a bottle before we left. Once I got back to the car, I picked up Dad while he once again tried to get a photo of the auditorium, but without success. Just too many cars and people in the way.



*If there are THREE flying pigs, it must be good!*



## Leaving Nashville

From downtown, we went on our way to I-40. Once on I-40, we headed straight for Knoxville. The road to Knoxville started out flatter as we left Nashville, but became more curvy and hilly along with slightly higher elevation. We were getting further into the mountains and the mountainous hilly areas of the Blue Ridges. We only made one stop while on I-40 at a rest stop in Crossville which also tourist information. Before we left the rest stop, I saw this unusual tree with leaves I have never seen before. The leaves were shaped like a fan somewhat similar to what you would see in Art Nouveau designs of the 20s. I had no idea what it was!



*Google Maps*

*Rest stop in east Tennessee near Crossville.*

# May Vacation—Part 4


I used my plant identification app on my phone and posted a photo of it to a gardening group. I found out later that the tree was a *Ginkgo biloba*, also called maidenhair. The leaves had a nice shape, and the tree overall was nice. After we left the rest area, we crossed over the time zone into the Eastern Time Zone a few minutes later. We went as far as Knoxville with just a little bit of traffic at one point, but otherwise, we kept going. Southeast of Knoxville, we turned onto US 441 a little after 8:15 PM. We continued southeast and stopped at one point at a gas station for gas. Once we reached Sevierville, we went south to Pigeon Forge which was not far away. Along US 441 in this area is a string of three towns: Sevierville, Pigeon Forge, and Gatlinburg. We got into Pigeon Forge around 9:15 PM. We did several things before we settled in for the night at the hotel.

You will need to wait until the next issue of the journal to find out what and why we were in Pigeon Forge!




*Ginkgo biloba*, also called maidenhair.



 Rg de Stolfe · May 23 · 🌍


We came across this tree in central Tennessee at a rest stop. Have never seen one before! It is apparently called *Ginkgo biloba* or maidenhair. Here is some more info:  
<https://www.arboday.org/trees/treeguide/TreeDetail.cfm...>





👍 2 3 Comments Seen by 21

👍 Like 💬 Comment

View 1 more comment All comments ▼

 Frank Lloyd Wright used the ginkgo leaf motif in many of his designs.  
Like Reply 9w

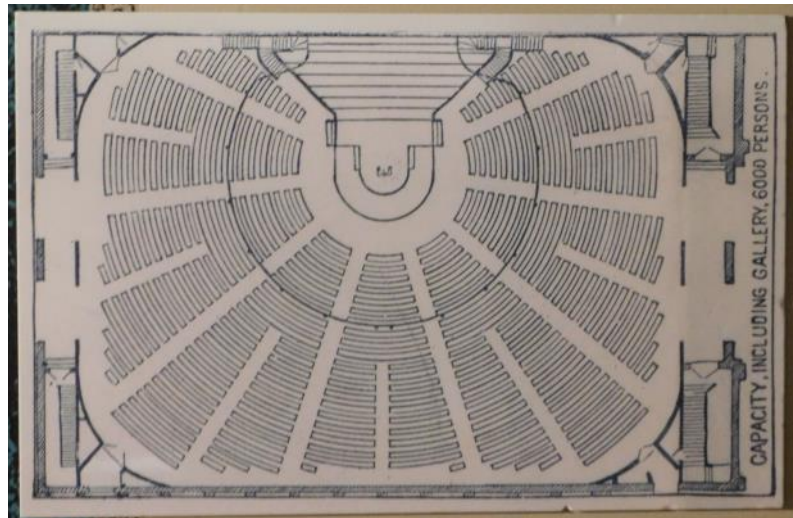
 I know they grow them in the Dallas area.  
Like Reply 9w

 Write a comment... 😊 📷 📺 🗨️

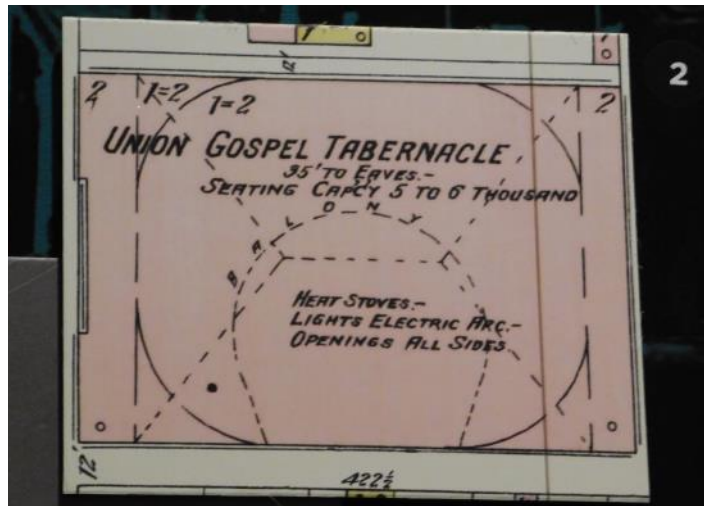
# May Vacation—Part 4



*Along the Cumberland River.*



*Drawings of the Union Gospel Tabernacle.*



*Happy Mallard in Dollywood*



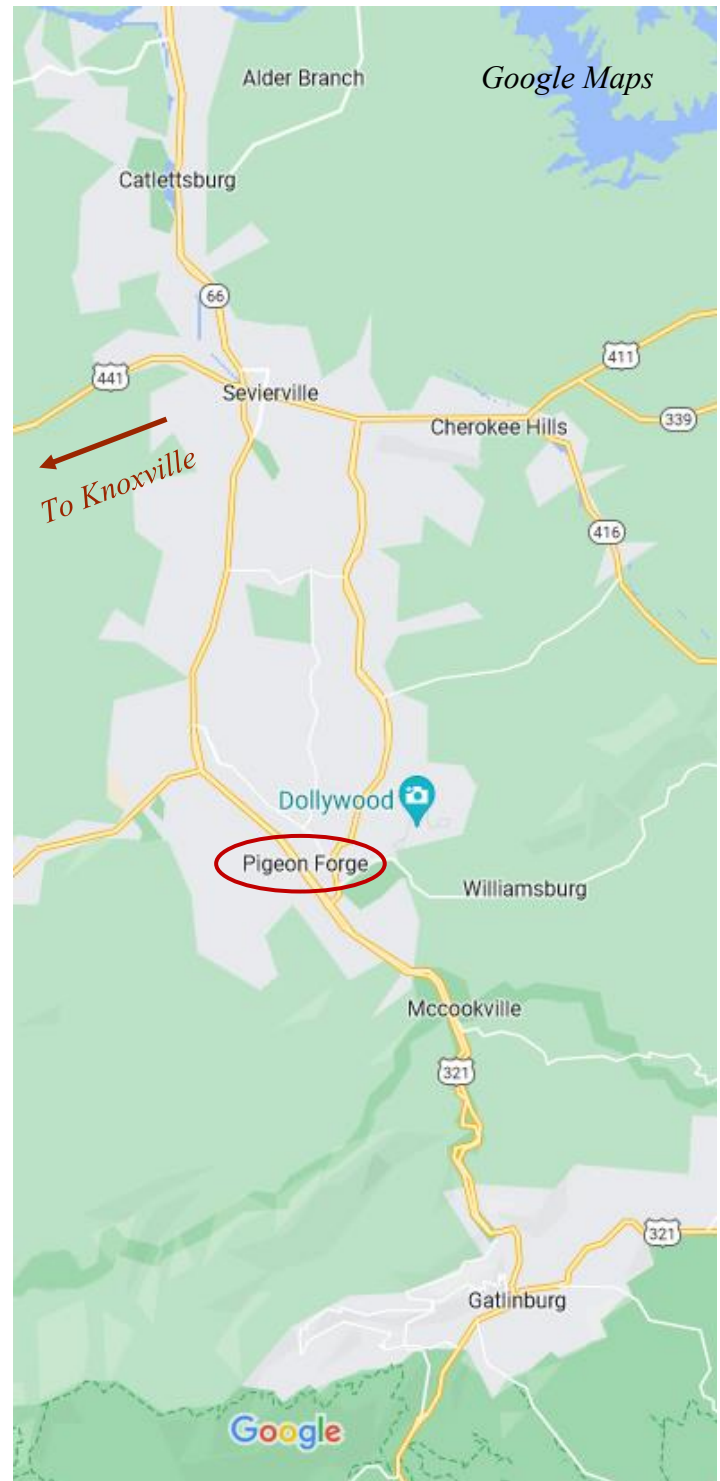
*Catfish in the waters of Dollywood*

# May Vacation—Part 5

## On To The Next Destination

In the last issue, we had left Nashville and went our way on I-40 east to Pigeon Forge. After we left the rest area in Crossville, we crossed over the time zone into the Eastern Time Zone and went to Knoxville. From there, we went off I-40 southeast of Knoxville on to US 441 a little after 8:15 PM. We continued southeast and about halfway there stopped briefly at a gas station for gas. Once we reached Sevierville, we turned south onto US 321 to Pigeon Forge, which was not far away. Along US 321 in this area is a string of three major towns: Sevierville, Pigeon Forge, and Gatlinburg a little further down. We got into Pigeon Forge around 9:15 PM about an hour later after Knoxville. One thing that surprised me as we were driving outside of Pigeon Forge, and even through it, was with how built up the area was! The area was full of businesses and attractions and lights almost like what we saw in Branson. Some parts of it were nearly the same as Branson. We would find out later in the stay that the developer of Pigeon Forge (as well as along 321 into Gatlinburg) was the same as the developer in Branson. There was even a Ferris wheel that also looked similar to the one in Branson, as well as some of the same third party attractions. It really surprised me just how touristy it was.

We decided (well, Dad decided) before we got to Pigeon Forge to stop at a Denny's for dinner if we could find one. We did find one near the south end of town, and we had a late dinner. Dad wanted a club sandwich, but they didn't have them anymore, and so he got a similar sandwich. I decided I would get breakfast knowing that if we did stop at a Denny's that I would want pancakes, especially after finding a rack card about a pancake house in Gatlinburg. I ordered pancakes, scrambled eggs, hash browns, and turkey bacon. Interestingly enough, I saw several pancake house type restaurants along this main road. I guess East Tennesseers like their pancakes!



*The three main town in this area are Sevierville, Pigeon Forge, and Gatlinburg. But as you can see, there are many other smaller towns shown and not shown on this map.*

# May Vacation—Part 5

After we ate, we left Denny's and finally went towards our hotel. However, when we left, we noticed that a good rain had started. We saw lightning in the distance as we were coming into town, but thought the storms were going away from where we were. But it turns out that the rains were headed straight towards where we were. The roads were getting wet even while we were eating. The rain varied in its downpour. We drove in the rain until we got to the hotel and checked in. We stayed at the Comfort Inn Suites. The hotel was located at the top of a hill and had seven floors. With this part of the trip, we stayed in separate rooms, each king bed suites. I had a room on the sixth floor while Dad was on the fourth floor and both rooms faced west towards the mountains so that when it is sunny and clear will be able to look out onto the view. (Well, they call them mountains. But compared to Colorado, they are just deep rolling hills!) It was dark after we left Denny's, so we could not see the hills, er, I mean mountains, off in the near distance from the balcony of our rooms. Okay, so a note about the separate rooms since I know you are questioning the reason for that choice! Dad likes his room to be very warm, but I was getting quite

annoyed of sleeping in a room warm enough to cause me to sweat in the bed! (After all, this was mid May and in the late Spring.) Enough said.

We decided that we would spend three days and four nights in Pigeon Forge. Part of the reason for that was because of the days that Dollywood was open. In similar manner to Silver Dollar City, they were not open every day in May. Dollywood was closed Tuesdays and Thursdays through May. We had a two day pass, but none of the days were consecutive for when we were there. While that wasn't actually the problem, the rain was! We were planning to go to Dollywood tomorrow, Monday, as one of the two days with the pass. The weather forecast pretty much showed continual rain for Monday all day and into the evening. We thought about going anyway, but that would have been miserable. With Monday out and Tuesday closed, we would have to wait until Wednesday before we could go to Dollywood. We would figure out other things to do for the next two days until Wednesday. For the rest of the evening, we piddled and did whatever until we each decided to go to sleep.

*The view from my hotel room.*

Light flares from double paned glass.

Lights and signs on the mountains.



# May Vacation—Part 5

## First Day in Pigeon Forge – Monday, May 23, 2022

Today I slept in for a while before getting cleaned up. The forecast showed rain, and indeed it was raining quite fully, but not always heavily. Dad wanted to go to Knoxville today to go to a camera shop there because he forgot his battery charger and spare batteries for his camera. (This is what we were trying to find at the camera shop Springfield.) It was raining most of the night and was forecast to rain all day and even into the night. While we thought about doing a few things before leaving to Knoxville, Dad insisted just to go straight up to Knoxville. However, as I was driving, I missed a turn I needed to take. Remember that note from yesterday where I said US 441 made a right turn south? I missed that right turn I needed and ended up turning in the opposite direction as it was not obvious where I needed to turn. Needless to say, I was a little turned around. We ended up on another road that took us far away into a different direction than where we needed to go to get to Knoxville. I knew that something was off when the road got very narrow and had no traffic. Although, while on that road, I saw an interesting sign. More on that later. I had to backtrack to Sevierville to get back on the road we needed and continued on our way. The rain was steady, a slow steady rain, until we got to Knoxville. However, again not knowing the roads, I made several wrong turns or more like missed several turns to get onto I-40. We eventually did get to the camera shop with it still raining only to find out they didn't carry what dad needed, nor much else for that matter, they seemed to be basic in their supplies and were more of a throwback camera place by several decades.

We continued on I-40 west to the west side of town to find a Best Buy. Along the way, there was a major backup on our side for several miles from an accident, while another bad accident was further down on the other side of the road with traffic backed up down that side. We got over to the shopping center where the Best Buy was and tried to find the batteries Dad needed. Turned out that they did not have the batteries he needed either, but we did find a nice little icemaker on sale that is similar to the one Dad has. (The maker forms little thimble shaped ice and really fast.) Not far from the Best Buy

was a Publix, and so we stopped there to get some desserts from the bakery. We also decided to get lunch there. They have yummy sandwiches! If you remember reading about our trips in 2020 and 2021, you will recall that we stopped several times at Publix—Where Shopping is a Pleasure—to get sandwiches. We ate them at some tables they had in the store.

We assumed that the traffic on I-40 was probably still backed up, so I thought I'd take a back way around to Pigeon Forge. However... I once again missed some turns—several times—and ended up getting back on I-40 east of Knoxville. I knew there was another road in that area to get back to Pigeon Forge, but it just added a bunch of extra time and distance to the drive. We finally got back to Pigeon Forge about 6:30 PM. We went over to Dollar Tree for a few misc things, then went over to the Smoky Mountain Coin Laundry to wash clothes since it has been a little under two weeks since we left Colorado Springs. We were there for a couple of hours, and we also stopped at a Mexican ice cream shop next door while waiting. Once the clothes were done, we loaded up and headed back to the hotel.

Relatively speaking, today was rather a wasted day where we didn't do much because of the rain, but it was fine. While we got a two day pass for Dollywood—at very little cost more for two or even three days versus one day—we might or might not actually get to use the second day. We thought about extending our stay so we could go to Dollywood Wednesday and on Friday and leave Saturday. Somewhere in the mix, we did extend the stay by a day, but to leave on Thursday. The reservation systems get confusing as to exactly what nights you are paying for with using the “check out day” terminology! It turned out that I was a day short anyway, and the day we added just extended it for the time we were planning to be there anyway not factoring the closed days of Dollywood. Either way, these next two days should be drier with some sun, and I think we'll go exploring these three towns and see whatever else we can do tomorrow with Dollywood on Wednesday.

# May Vacation—Part 5

## Exploring The Area – Tuesday, May 24, 2022

Since Dollywood was closed today, we had a free day today. We are planning to go to Dollywood tomorrow, Wednesday, when they are next open. We also talked about some changes in our plans for the rest of our travel for there is a possibility of rain for several days later in the week and the weekend. Since Dollywood is closed Thursday, we would have to wait until Friday to use the second day of our passes. Rather than spend several more hundred dollars and still possibly be rained out, we decided to do something different after Pigeon Forge. More on that later.

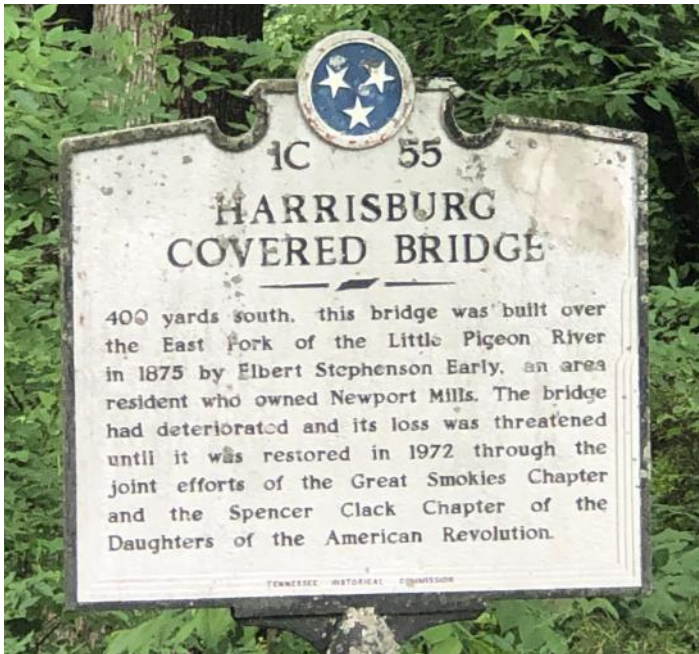
We got cleaned up and left the hotel. The first thing I wanted to do was to go find the covered bridge from that a sign I saw yesterday when we made that wrong turn in Sevierville. From what I remembered, I retraced those steps of the wrong road we took to find the covered bridge sign. Except for a quick stop at Walgreens, we eventually made our way back to the sign and turned on to the road where it pointed. The bridge was in a residential area of houses with lots of land around them. The road was very narrow and quite curvy and hilly until we got to the bridge. We found out that the bridge was restored about 20

years ago still with wood, but with a steel frame, or undercarriage, to increase the weight capacity for modern driving requirements. The bridge is only wide enough for one car to go through at a time with just a little space on each side for someone to stand or walk on one side. It was a lovely old bridge that looked like it was maybe 20 feet above the water of the creek. We ended up talking with a guy, whose name was Woody with a heavy Tennessee accent, who owned the land on the one side of the bridge, and he told us about the restoration of the bridge and how he was involved with it by letting the crew use his land to restore the bridge. It was craned off the stone piers and placed in his yard. He also told us a little history of the bridge and how he lived as a kid within a couple houses of the bridge. A wonderful guy, he gave us a postcard he made of the bridge. As I said, the bridge was lovely, especially since they are rarely found. After we talked, we took the car with the windows down and drove over the bridge both ways. Then, we went back to the main road. Before we left, Woody told us about a water mill that is down the road a ways after we get back to the main road.

*The view from my hotel on a rainy morning.*



# May Vacation—Part 5



*Signs for the Harrisburg Covered Bridge*



*The bridge goes over the East Fork Little Pigeon River.*



# May Vacation—Part 5

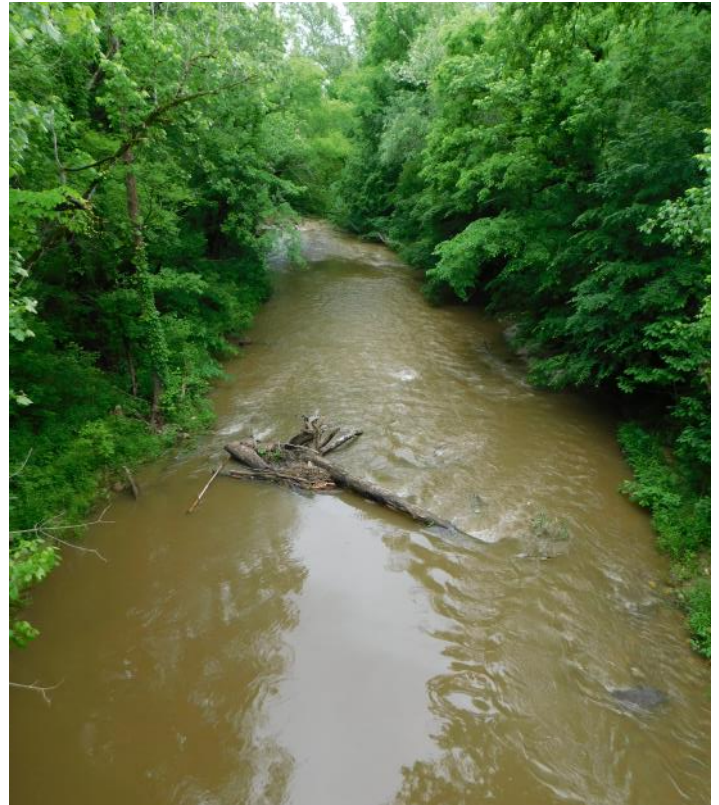
*I am not certain how much of the bridge contains original wood after the second restoration in 2005, but the restoration was done to closely reflect the original bridge. One necessary modification was with the steel undercarriage to meet modern standards and to avoid the bridge being completely removed and replaced.*



*This covered bridge is only wide enough for one car to pass at a time with just a little room left on each side. Yes, even the floor has planks of wood like a boardwalk.*

# May Vacation—Part 5

We got back to the main road and turned and drove about ten miles in the direction Woody said. With no particular plans for the day, we decided next to go find this mill for some photo ops. The ten miles turned out to be right about the spot where we turned around yesterday to go back in the right direction to Knoxville. We turned and went down another narrow road. It was maybe a mile or less down the road. We found the building with the water wheel situated to the left on the inside of a sharp curve of that narrow road. We parked on a small gravel spot. There were small creeks in the area that might have been connected. We took a bunch of photos around the building. While we were there, this guy in a truck drove up and stopped near where we were and was asking if we needed any help with something. I guess there were “eyes” around the place (or maybe security cameras) or perhaps someone might have tipped him off that there were some people looking at his property. Either way, it turned out that he was the owner, and he was in the middle of remodeling/restoring the place to make it into a business. He would have let us look around on the inside and show us what he was doing, but he apparently did not have the key with him. We talked a little more, and he went on his way.



*The East Fork Little Pigeon River  
view from the covered bridge.*

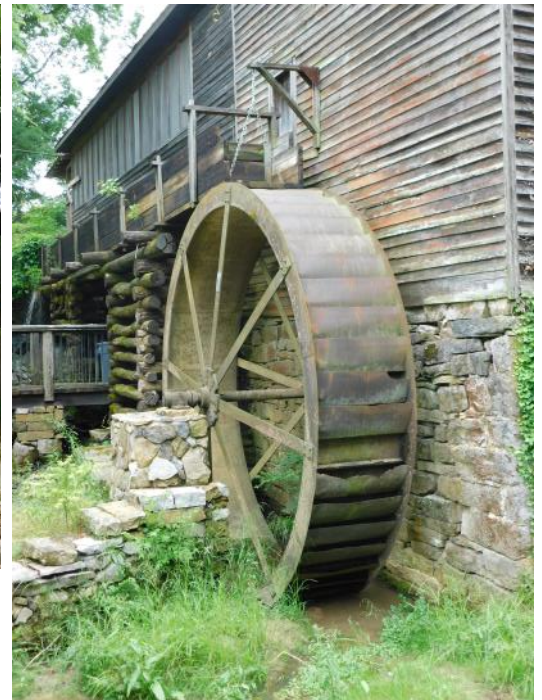


*Blowing Cave Mill,  
Established in 1880.*

# May Vacation—Part 5



*The other side of the mill.*



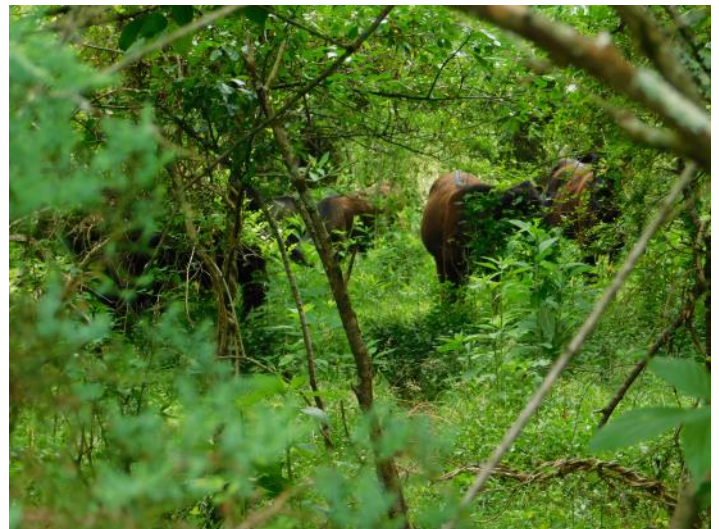
*The water wheel.*

We went across the road to a wooded area where there was a creek. I kept hearing mooing and splashing in the water. There was a small herd of cows wandering around the creek and through the forest. I got a few photos of them and of some little flowers and the fences.

We then drove back to the main road and drove back into town. We stopped and got gas at a place that was 20¢ cheaper than everywhere else we've seen and apparently everyone in the town knew it! It took us a little while, but we got the gas and continued on.



*Blowing Cave Mill  
Established in 1880  
[www.theapta.org](http://www.theapta.org)*



# May Vacation—Part 5



*I see you!*



*How now brown cow? (Red cow?)*



*Amur Honeysuckle? or Blackberried Honeysuckle*



*Blue dragonfly?*



*Bumble bee. (Not dead)*



*The creek near the mill.*

# May Vacation—Part 5 EXTRA!



This is Blowing Cave Mill in Sevierville, Tennessee. I took this top photo, but I came across some other photos of what the 1880 structure looked like only a decade earlier or less. The mill was clearly a single freestanding two story building with a water wheel. Later, an aqueduct was added, and even later, the large addition was added to the one side by the street.



*From Leo Boudreau via Flickr, August 2017.*



*From landmarkhunter.com, Pam Phillips, October 2015.*



*From www.millpictures.com, Robert T. Kinsey, Sept 2010.*



*From www.millpictures.com, Robert T. Kinsey, Sept 2010.*

# May Vacation—Part 5

By this point, we were hungry, so we decided to try a place we saw called Wood Grill Buffet. Certainly, this would please Dad by going to a buffet again! We would find out that the place was owned by Western Sizzlin'. It was a pretty large buffet with a bunch of stations ranging from salads to meats, ethnic foods, and desserts, and we basically stuffed ourselves! The meats were grilled, and the food seemed fresh and tasty. Once we left, we wanted to do something fun. I thought it would be a good idea to check out a place called WonderWorks. We saw a similar one in Branson. There are apparently six of them throughout the Southeast. They are known for their upside down buildings that have crashed onto another structure. Here is what their website says about those buildings.



*From WonderWorks*



*WonderWorks began as a Top Secret research laboratory on a remote island in the Bermuda Triangle. During an experiment, something went awry, and the power of a tornado was unleashed inside the laboratory. This created a swirling vortex that was strong enough to rip the laboratory from its foundation. It was carried thousands of miles away and landed upside down ... the rest, as they say, is history.*

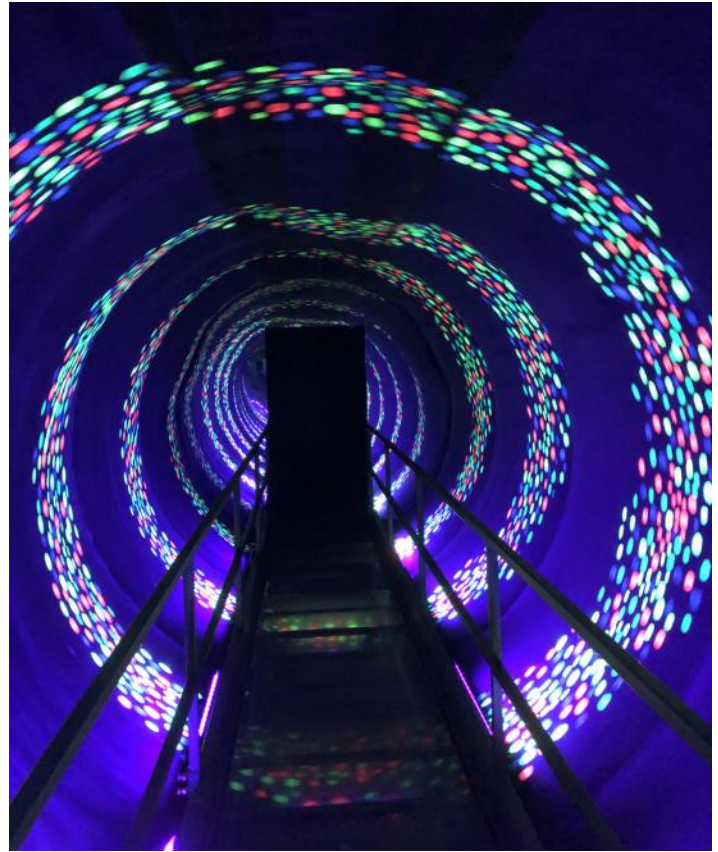
Well actually, the rest is science! That's what they are, a pumped up science museum. The one in Pigeon Forge looked like a courthouse building that crashed onto a brick building. Even the inside shows the insides of each building crashed together! It was quite interesting to say the least! They had two floors divided into sectioned areas (like galleries) focused on different subjects, such as science, sports, things related to maps, art, a whole bunch of different things. And it wasn't just specifically for kids, they had many different things for all ages. It is mostly like a museum of science with its educational elements, but it also was much like a carnival attraction too.



*Upside down foyer at WonderWorks.*

# May Vacation—Part 5

We looked around and did what things we wanted to do. There was this one theatre ride where we wear 3D glasses with the seats moving and vibrating to what we see on the screen. We did that twice with different short movies. The first one was like a roller coaster, and second one was more of a cartoony rocket ride through a town. The ride had various lights and fans and really made it immersive. Before we left, we got some photos of the outside. While doing that, we noticed a convoy leaving the parking area next where we were, and it consisted of a road scraper type of machine (whatever you call it) and several dump trucks and other equipment needed to pull up the load to prepare for laying down a new road. The police were also with them. Since it wasn't raining like it had been for several days, they must have had the small window of opportunity to get the work done.



*Spinning tunnel. (You NEED the hand rails!)*

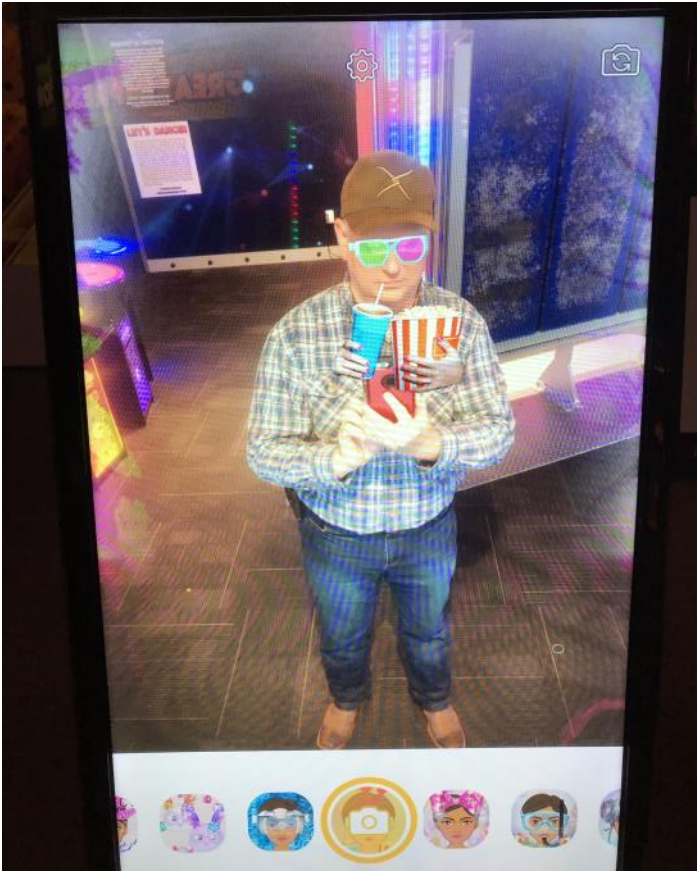


*These spin in a full circle... both directions!*

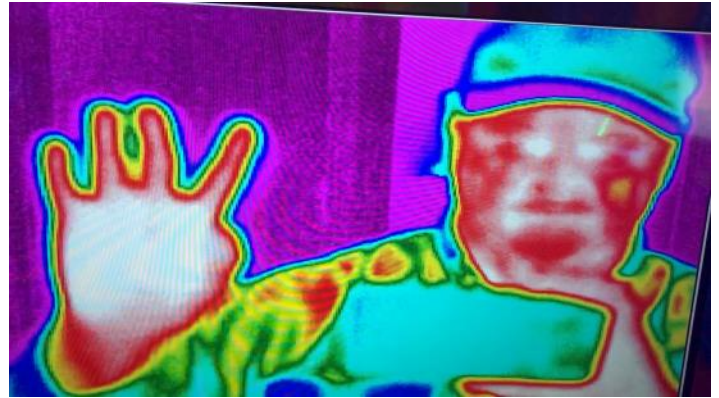


*NASA suit.*

# May Vacation—Part 5



*"Instagram" type of filter photo booth*



*Temperature thermal screen*



*Remembers these?*



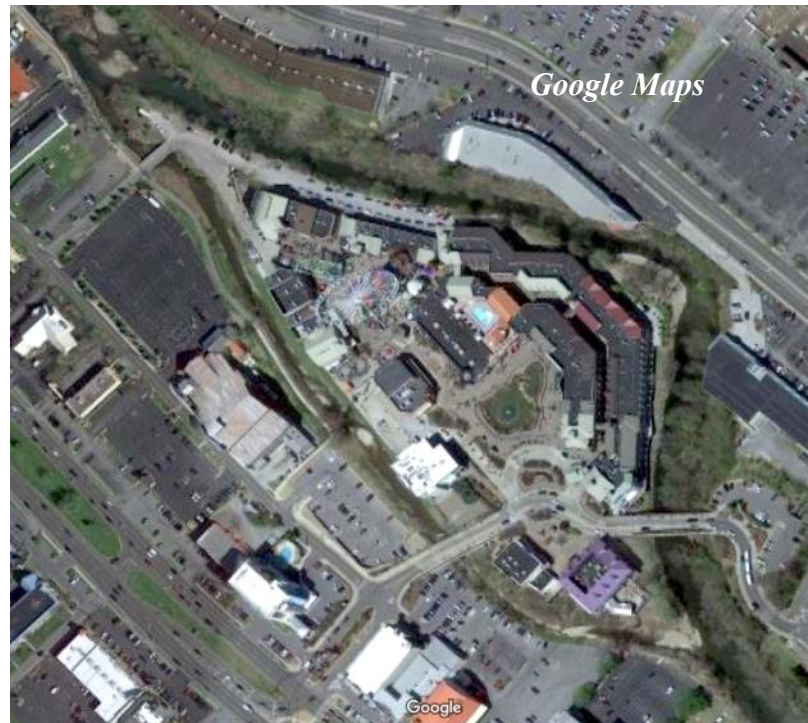
*Silhouette screen*



*Convoy of road pavers*

# May Vacation—Part 5

From the time we got to Pigeon Forge, we had been seeing a big lit up Ferris wheel down the road from the hotel. Dad wanted to go on this Ferris wheel, so we set out to find where it was. We discovered that the Ferris wheel was in a whole other attraction called The Island. It is called The Island because some creeks surround some land creating an island of sorts you need to cross over on a bridge to get to. This is an entire group of attractions, rides, restaurants, and stores, and I think it even has a hotel. Some of the style of The Island resembles what we saw in Branson, and I think this was another area developed by the same people who developed some of the areas in Branson. Existing for about ten years, this place was amazing, but it was also crazy busy! There were things going on everywhere and lights and various rides from kids to adults and lots of stores. It was a really neat place, and the parking lot was packed with hundreds and hundreds of cars. We had no idea this place was here, and no idea what we were getting into! There were trams going from the parking lot to the entrance and back.



*A river and creek surround some land creating an island of sorts where bridges are needed to get to it.*



# May Vacation—Part 5

Going to The Island was free, but the rides were not, needing special tickets. One of the first things we saw walking in to the place were the exact same dancing waters we saw in Branson, even same songs and water actions. The main difference here was that there were chairs all around the pool to watch the shows when they happened and shops behind all of that. We were there just as the next hourly water show started. It was near sunset, but not dark yet. We watched the dancing waters and laughed when many people got sprayed with the water from the slight breeze! We then walked around to see what was there. We did stop at one shop and bought a few things.

I then went over to the ticket office to get the tickets for the Ferris Wheel. The tickets are these little cards with a magnetic stripe similar to a credit card. We got in line. Like with many other places we have visited, they took our photo against a green screen before getting to the ride. They stopped loading just before we got up to it. They did it where they load the entire wheel and let it go around a bunch of times before then letting everyone off. It is a much newer wheel with enclosed cabins that are air conditioned (and quite cold!). After the current round, they let the people off and loaded the next round of people. We got on and after everyone was loaded, they let the wheel go around five, six, or seven times before we got off. We tried to get some photos, but with it being dark and some areas hard to focus on, we got some blurry photos. As we were leaving, they did exactly what I thought by trying to sell us the photos they trapped us with when we were in line! But of course, we bought the photos! They were about \$25 and showed the background of the Ferris wheel.



*Dancing fountains on The Island.*



*The ambushed photo op! (Yes, we did buy the photo though.)*



*The gondolas were air conditioned, and some people even brought blankets for the ride.*

VIP gondola!



# May Vacation—Part 5

We thought about going on this other ride called SkyFly, but I understood that it was very, very short and rather expensive for how short it was, so we decided to skip it. I understand that it is like an Omnimax in a ride form. Before we left, we decided to sit in some rocking chairs they had in front of a small stage where some guys were playing bluegrass. We were in the last few minutes before the park would close for the night and near the end of the performance. We sat there for a little while as they played. (It seemed like they had a good bit to drink!) Interestingly, right behind them was a moonshine shop. Am I the only one who thought moonshine was illegal?? I decided to go look in the shop to see what they had. The store had, count them, 18 flavors of moonshine in pint mason jars, with three of them having produce of pickles, cherries, and pineapples. The others were all various colors of different flavors while the original moonshine was clear, of course. We then got on the trolley and went around the entire parking lot before getting to where we were parked.

*Am I the only one who thought moonshine was illegal??*



*SkyFly ride.*



*Live bluegrass music.*



*The store had 18 flavors of moonshine in pint mason jars, various colors with various flavors and original clear.*

# May Vacation—Part 5

We went back to the hotel where we piddled before going to sleep. Tomorrow is the day we go to Dollywood, which was the whole point of why Dad wanted to come here. We just didn't know that it would be rainy the Monday after we arrived causing us to be rained out. The weather looked to be cooperative, but we will see. More than likely, we should be able to see most everything in one day.



*In a parking lot near The Island, we saw these Tesla car chargers.*

## Day of Dollywood – May 25, 2022

One of several main places we wanted to go to on this trip was to Dollywood. Dad specifically wanted to go there while I wanted to go to Silver Dollar City. We left the hotel a little after 9:00 AM and headed over to the park, which did not open until 10:00 AM, but we wanted to get there earlier so Dad could get one of those electric scooters (or whatever they're called) so that Dad wouldn't have to walk through the whole park. We did the same thing at Silver Dollar City. By the time we got the scooter, the park opened and we went in to look around. We came across a bakery and went to the bakery for cinnamon rolls, also like with Silver Dollar City. We ate them at a table outside, then went over to the main street. One feature of spring at the park was an installation of colorful umbrellas over the street. It was in this area where Dad sort of moved quickly down the path while I was looking at other things that he ignored. Basically, for about half of the visit, Dad went his way, and I went mine with each of us looking at different areas of the park. As I was looking around, I took a lot of photos and went through a few stores

and looked at some of the rides. I went over to see one of Dolly's old tour buses and waited in the line for a while since only a few could fit in the bus at a time. It was a little warm while waiting our turn!



*The spring theme was a Flower and Food Festival!*

*Once of Dolly's tour buses, "Home on Wheels"*



# May Vacation—Part 5

*Living, dining, and kitchen on the tour bus.*



*Dolly's bedroom on her tour bus.*



Me

*Dolly's*  
*Blame-on-Wheels*

**Answers to the Most Asked Questions...**

- ✔ Cost of \$750,000
- ✔ Built by Prevost Car, Inc. in Saint Claire, Quebec, Canada in 1994
- ✔ Interior design by Dolly's personal friends, Don & Ann Warden
- ✔ Interior built by Royal Coach in Elkhart, Indiana
- ✔ 45 feet long, 9 feet wide, and 13.5 feet high
- ✔ Self-contained with a 17,000 watt AC generator (big enough to supply an average home with electricity)
- ✔ Bus Driver - Don Warden (for fifteen years)
- ✔ Diesel fuel; 7 miles to the gallon
- ✔ Tank capacity with the ability to drive 2,050 miles in 32 hours from Nashville, Tennessee to Los Angeles, California without refueling. Don tells they made more than 100 trips non-stop. However, this rarely happened - a country girl has to stop and eat some barbecue!
- ✔ Over 600,000 road miles traveled
- ✔ No driver has ever received a speeding ticket or any other traffic violation

# May Vacation—Part 5

Then, I continued on to see some of the named areas of the park. Silver Dollar City was set up in a similar manner, also like Disney World. I stopped at one store and bought a few items. Dollywood has a bunch of roller coasters and some other wet and dry style rides, and they were aggressive and crazy types of rides! Another spring feature at the park were these living “sculptures” of plants on wire frames in the shapes of various animals sitting in gardens by the sides of the paths. I made a point to get photos of all of them.



*Lightning Rod wood roller coaster*



*“Topsy Turvy” umbrella*



*“Family Time” bears*



*Smoky Mountain River Rampage ride*

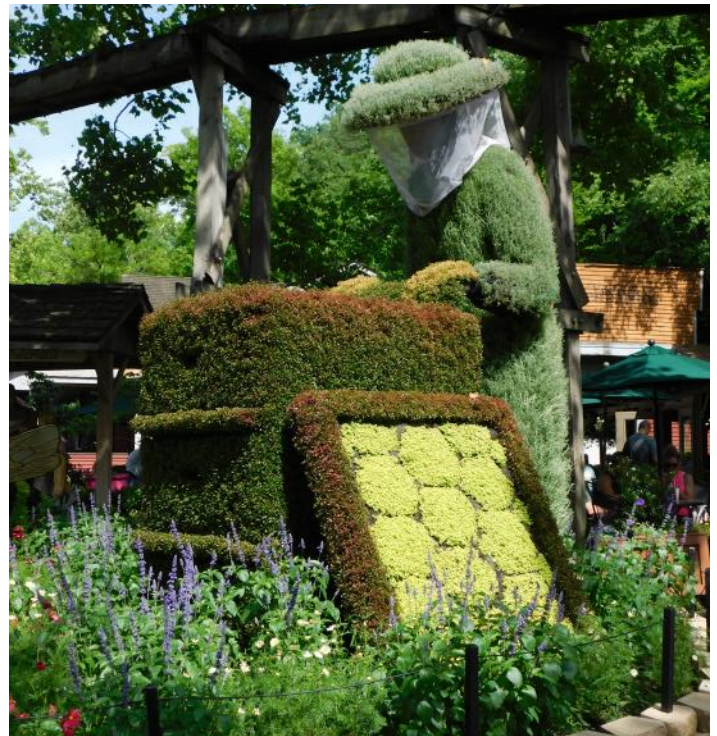


*“Fun Amphibians”*

# May Vacation—Part 5



*"Fun Amphibians"*



*"Busy, Busy Bees"*



*"Fun Amphibians"*



*"Busy, Busy Bees"*



*"Ducky Days"*



*"Proud As A Peacock"*

# May Vacation—Part 5



*“Ring Tailed Rascals”*



*“Coat Of Many Colors”*

By the early afternoon, Dad called so we could figure out where to have lunch. It took a little while to figure out where we each were at and where to meet. We thought about going to Aunt Granny’s restaurant, but Dad decided that he wanted to ride the train first. We eventually found each other and found where the train depot was. The train was already loaded and about to leave when we were getting to the depot. Nearby, we saw a place selling pizzas and decided to get some pizza. It was right across the path from the depot. The pizza was shaped like a long rectangle cut into triangles and was rather tasty, actually. By the time we were done, the train came back around, and we got in line and loaded up on the train. The train was very crowded with little spare room. This train was really nice. Here is what the Dollywood website states about the train:

*“Our authentic 110 ton coal fired steam engine takes you on a breathtaking five-mile journey through the foothills of the Great Smoky Mountains where you’ll enjoy pastoral scenery and some of the most beautiful views that nature has to offer.”*

The ride definitely took us all around the park and to some areas just outside of the main park. The tracks were set up like a dumbbell where there was a circle of track at each end to make one continuous loop. (I’m sure there were also spurs to take the train to a trainyard and other areas.) The stack was definitely full of black smoke, and it certainly a loud whistle! The train was certainly well worth the time to ride!



# May Vacation—Part 5

After the train, we did stay together (mostly) and we continued looking around. One thing we were not really interested in doing was to go on any rides. The train was basically it, but we did watch other people ride the rides, especially the roller coasters. We looked around some more and stopped at some shops and looked at what else was in the park. I stopped earlier in the day at a booth that made custom rings, custom engraved that is. Right above the booth, which was outside, was a magnolia tree with a nearly perfectly open magnolia flower. Since Dad has wanted to get some good photos of magnolia flowers, I made sure to tell him about the flower, and we went back later to pick up the ring and get photos of the flower.



*Awesome magnolia flower*

We went around to some other areas and came across an area where craftsmen were, the area called Craftsman's Valley. We went to the Valley Forge Blacksmith, who also did blacksmithing demonstrations, and dad ordered a custom little something for his house, and I found and bought a horseshoe forged into a heart and painted red. Dad ordered a custom plaque with house numbers that will be mailed to him later. Then I came to another shop that had a stuffed black bear kit of sorts. The animals were unstuffed, but then were stuffed after you chose one and paid for it. The bear I got was already stuffed and looked slightly different from the other bears. It was the one I wanted. We got a few other things and continued on.



*House number plate*



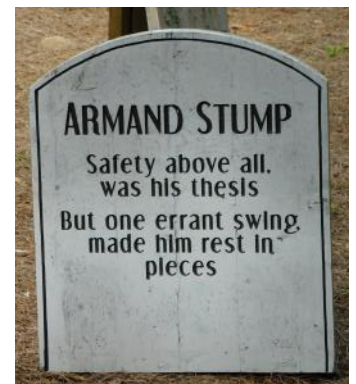
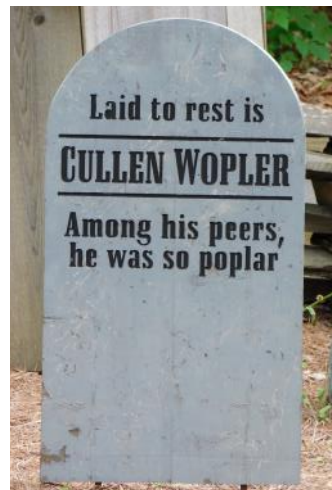
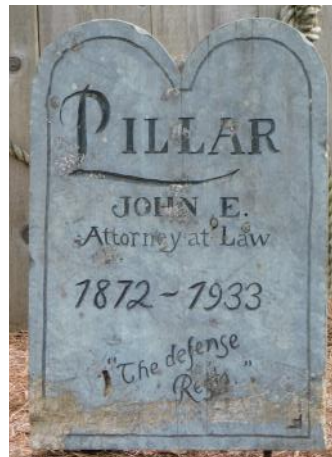
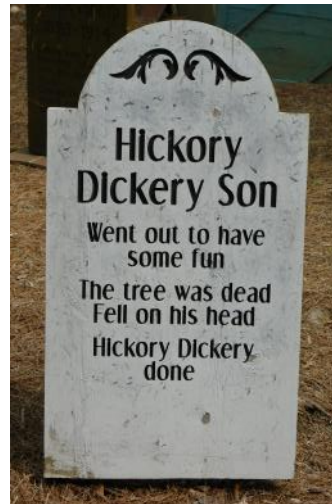
*Horseshoe heart*

We headed in the opposite direction of the way we went and went over to another spot that Dad thought was a dead end, but it took us right to another area of the park we have not yet been to, or at least that I had not been to. I knew that the park went into a circle. We found the little path and made our way to that other part. This part of the park was where several crazy roller coasters were. We were within the last hour of the park being open, so we quickly went around to see what was in this area. Dad went somewhere, and I went by myself for a little while.



# May Vacation—Part 5

One area I thought was interesting but nearly shut down getting ready to close was also in the Craftsman's Valley. It showed as if a tornado went through the area! Before we left, we stopped at the big gift shop at the front of the park and found a few items buy. After that, there was a little chaos and confusion, particularly with returning the cart, but ultimately we got it taken care of and by a suggestion, I went over to the car to get it and go around to an area mentioned to pick up Dad. Doing this cut out a lot of traffic and wait time! We then left the Dollywood theme park and followed the roads to the exit.



# May Vacation—Part 5



*This cabin is a replica of the Parton homeplace where Lee and Avie Lee Parton raised Dolly and her 10 brothers and sisters. The replica cabin was constructed by Dolly's brother Bobby, and the interior was reproduced by her mother Avie Lee. Most of the items on display are original family treasures. The original cabin still stands in Locust Ridge.*



Once finally out of the park and on our way out, I thought it would be a good idea to go down to Gatlinburg to see what was there, since we have not gone there yet. The road eventually turned into two lanes and went through the hills and valleys of the area. It was very narrow and curvy and was full of trees. Very pretty! Once we got to the town and realized that we were in the town, it looked much like what Pigeon Forge looked like, but narrower and with closer hills. There were a lot of little restaurants, attractions, and rides that seemed similar to Branson. Gatlinburg was very crowded and quite busy for a Wednesday evening, and it seemed like everyone and their parents were out and about! It definitely lived up to being a thriving tourist town. We were looking for a restaurant for dinner since we basically skipped eating at Granny's in Dollywood, besides the pizza. It was also getting late and getting darker with the

narrow valley, and we could not find anything specific we wanted to eat. Besides that, Dad slept for most of the ride down. (I still thought about the pancake place in Gatlinburg, but I wanted something else.) We ultimately turned around and drove back to Pigeon Forge. It took about ten minutes, and we got back to Pigeon Forge. As we got back to Pigeon Forge, we looked at what restaurants were around and open. We got caught up with some traffic that was first caused by an accident, but also because they were repaving the roads at night. Ultimately, we decided that we would go over to the Shoney's we saw. However, I realized that when we got there, it was another buffet. We have already eaten at buffets several times on the trip. We ultimately went over to Denny's for dinner. Dad got a chicken plate with some sides, while I had a California club with avocado and a side salad. Afterwards, we went back to the hotel.

# May Vacation—Part 5

I looked at the weather forecast and noted that most of the days at our next destination, Louisville, were full of rain, hindering what things we wanted to do at those locations. Ultimately, we decided to cancel the northern circle back to Colorado I had originally suggested when planning the trip of going to Louisville, St. Louis, and Kansas City and instead to take a different route. We would head back towards Colorado by going westward in the direction we came. We also decided to skip the second day visit to Dollywood and leave Thursday. I checked to see what hotel options were at the new next destination and found a place that was very affordable and not too far away from the things we wanted to see, especially considering that it was Memorial Day weekend, but... we would find out that it was a building that had just changed ownership and was slated for a full remodel. That was why it was so cheap! More about the motel in the next issue! (I won't call it a hotel. It wasn't, not even close!)



*I'm not quite sure what the story is about this Amish buggy at the hotel and especially the police tape! I inquired about it later after we left, but no one at the hotel knew anything about it. I also could not find anything online either.*

## Travelling To The Next Destination – Thursday, May 26, 2022

We woke up later in the morning and got cleaned up. Before leaving, we went to Publix to get some pastries. We then got on our way even though it was raining a little. We took 441 back up to Knoxville. We made one stop at a Food City to see what it was like and to check if they had that steak sauce we had discovered at the restaurant earlier in the trip. They did have the steak sauce, and they also carried the Hudson flour. We got back on I-40, we just kept going. Less than an hour later, we stopped at a Cracker Barrel in Harriman for lunch. What's funny is that from the time we left Knoxville, we would drive along and see a sign for Cracker Barrel. A few miles later, we saw another sign for a Cracker Barrel. Then a little further down, we saw yet another sign for Cracker Barrel! This went on for most of I-40 in Tennessee. Just between Knoxville and Lebanon along I-40, there were six Cracker Barrel restaurants within 150 miles! Of course, Cracker Barrel is based out of Lebanon, Tennessee. So, I guess it is only natural to have so many! After we got full of the turkey dinner (because it was Thursday), we travelled on. We drove about another hour, also

crossing over the time zone, and had a little bit of rain at the end of that hour. Also through this drive, I saw where the next new Buc-ee's was being built. It was still a long way off from opening, but I thought that was cool. We stopped at a Love's Truckstop in Baxter because the rain was getting too heavy, and I didn't particularly feel like driving in it. The rain lightened up after about 45 minutes. We had roughly an hour left until getting to the next destination. With that, I will tell you what's next in the next issue!



*Remember this from a long time ago?*

Spring installation of *Umbrella Sky* at Dollywood.



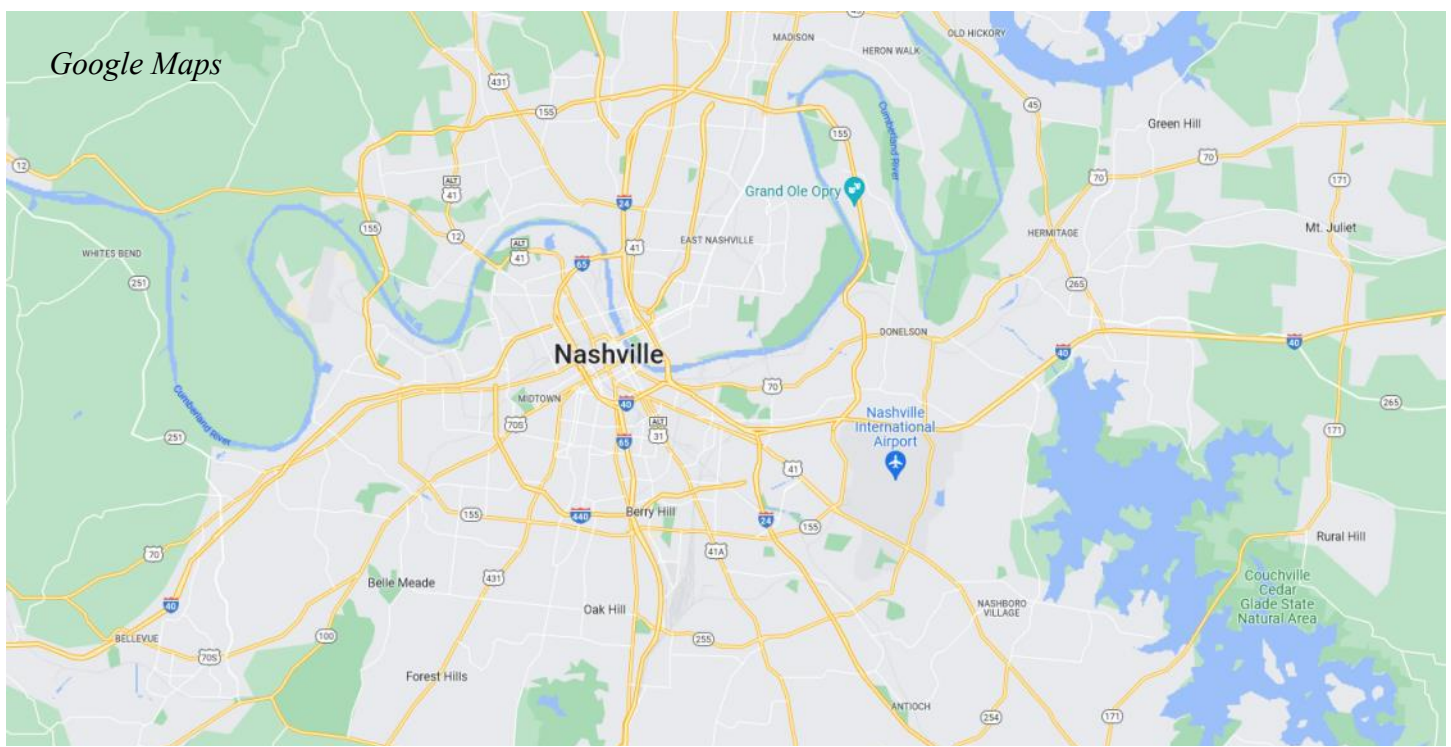
# May Vacation—Part 6

## Arriving To New Destination – May 26, 2022

In the last issue, I left off where we were at a Loves truck stop for about forty five minutes to wait out the rain for I didn't particularly feel like driving in it. Once the rain stopped, we continued on our way. We had about another hour until we would get to next destination, which was... Nashville! Since, we were basically rained out for going to Louisville and St. Louis and that route back home, we decided to head back to Nashville to do some of the things we ran out of time to do when we were there last week.

Okay, so now about the motel that I left you hanging about in the last issue! I had made a reservation at the only place that was available and that was not several hundred dollars a night. It was in the town of Hermitage. Hermitage was a good ways from downtown Nashville and a few miles away from the Opryland area. The motel was a Rodeway Inn. Now, we were never much impressed by past Rodeway Inns we stayed in over the last three years. But while this one was unusually cheap, less than \$100 a night on a Memorial Day weekend, it kept bothering me why the motel was so cheap as compared to all of the other hotel options! Once we got there, we found out why! And here is what we saw...

Once we got to the hotel, we thought we had arrived at an abandoned hotel! It had a big chain link fence around it as if it was condemned and about to be torn down! Several other buildings around it also looked the same way. Once we figured out how to get to what appeared to be the office, we would find out that the complex was just sold to new owners who were literally only there for a few days! They were in the planning stages to remodel the entire complex into little kitchenette suites, but they still keep a few rooms available during the process. We waited for a little bit and finally checked in and got our room. Generally, the room was okay, and we rested. After a little while, Dad wanted to go directly over to the Opry to get tickets for the backstage tour that we were not able to do before we left the last time. I took a back road I found on the map to avoid the stupid interstates! The entire time we were in Nashville this time, we took this route many times over. Once we got to the Opry and was walking up to it, we were rather surprised how empty the place was. We found out that they were closed that day, no tickets, no performance, nothing. So, we turned around and went back to the motel taking that same route we came. We rested in the room for maybe less than an hour when Dad wanted to go do something.



# May Vacation—Part 6

I wanted to go to Zoë's for dinner, and it happened that nearby the restaurant was the Bluebird Café. Although by this point, it was getting dark, and I found out that Zoë's was closed, but we went anyway to check out the Bluebird. I was surprised that such a famous place was nowhere near downtown Nashville, but was actually in an upscale area called Green Hills southwest of Nashville a few miles. Once we got there, there was a short line outside waiting because the occupation limit was maxed. But we did not have to wait for very long until we were able to go in, but only to stand at the counter near the door since all of the tables and chairs were taken. For the night we were there, two songwriters were performing. We were able to hear part of one lady performing until she switched over to another songwriter. Then he performed for a while. At one point before the performance was done, they told us we needed to leave. We knew that going in because of fire codes. Before we left, we bought a few items from their small gift shop. We were there for about 15 or 20 minutes maybe before we left. Before heading back to the motel, we wanted a snack. So, we stopped at a McDonald's because I couldn't find the Whataburger that I wanted instead. We barely made it before they closed. (The inside was actually closed, door was open.)



*Unfortunately, I do not recall the names of these songwriters who performed at The Blue Bird Café.*



# May Vacation—Part 6

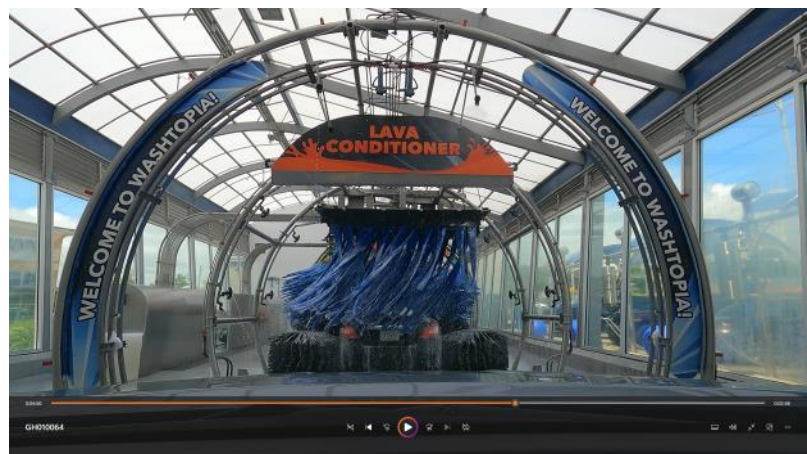
## Downtown and the Opry – Friday, May 27, 2022

Once we got cleaned up and going, we did a few things. First, we went to the post office, then over to the Dutch Brothers across the street for some coffee (for me since Dad doesn't like coffee). Right next door to that was a car wash and so we went through it. (Dad likes to keep his car clean while travelling! I got a video of going through the car wash.) We went further down the road and stopped at Publix for doughnuts and desserts. From there, we headed back to the Grand Ole Opry, which was open, where we managed to get tickets for the performance tonight, along with tickets for the backstage tour for Monday.

Dad wanted to find that burger place the tour guide of the first bus tour last week had told us. We checked on one place that someone else of the tour group told us, but that wasn't it. Ultimately, we never did find it or even find out what the name of it was. So instead, we went back downtown to see what else we could find. We parked in a parking garage by the Printers Alley and decided to go to Shake Shack. We went to a Shake Shack in Las Vegas at New York New York in 2017. We got burgers and fries, and dad also got a shake. Afterwards, I went back to get the car and pick him up.



*The Dutch Brothers in Hermitage, Tennessee.  
I got a medium iced decaf mocha with oat milk.*



*The Washtopia car wash in Hermitage, Tennessee.*



*Shake Shack in downtown Nashville.*

# May Vacation—Part 6

**THIS** is a very good reason why I like Publix! Look at the wonderful options in the bakery!



*Little cakes, big cakes, cupcakes, fruit tarts, macarons, chocolate covered strawberries...*



*Cake slices, puddings, eclairs, napoleons, tiramisu, cheesecakes, chocolate cakes, key lime pies, fruit pies...*



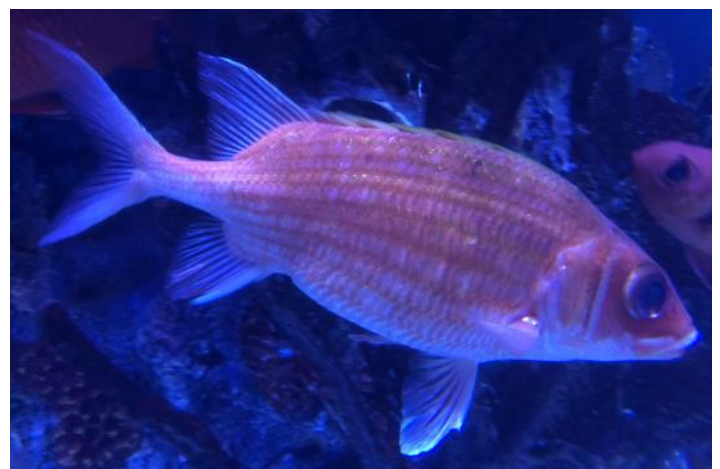
*Doughnuts, cinnamon rolls, fritters, turnovers, palmiers, bear claws, cookies, black & white cookies...*

# May Vacation—Part 6

We finally got away from downtown and headed over to the Opryland area. We stopped to check out the mall near the Opry and looked around. We took a look in the gift shop of the Rainforest Café, then we went over to the Bass Pro Shop, where we bought a few things. By that point, we needed to get over to the Opry for the night's performance.

## Rainforest Café

[www.rainforestcafe.com](http://www.rainforestcafe.com)



# May Vacation—Part 6



I thought the performance started at 7:30 PM, but it turned out that it started at 7:00 PM. We got there a little after 7:00 but it took a few minutes to find a parking spot, which ended up being way the heck out there! We only missed the first group, Riders In The Sky, even though they were the ones I especially wanted to see, but we did see all of the others. The finalé was also the biggest group, The Beach Boys! They had never performed on the Opry stage before! They sang various songs for at least 30 minutes, closing the night with them. The Opry had leis for everyone to wear! We stopped by the gift shop briefly before leaving after 10:00 PM and headed back to the motel.

*The host of the show was once again Charlie Mattos.*



# May Vacation—Part 6



**Riders In The Sky**



**Darryl Worley**



**John Conlee**



**Steven Curtis  
Chapman**



**Lorrie Morgan**



**LOCASH**

**The Beach Boys!**



# May Vacation—Part 6

## Running Around – Saturday, May 28, 2022

We got cleaned up and got going by 10:30 AM. We went over to Lebanon Pike Road, the “back road” we’ve been taking, and got doughnuts from the Doughnut Palace. From there, we headed over to southwest Nashville. We stopped at a Batteries Plus store and bought a few things, then went over to Best Buy and to Costco for gas. We then headed over to another direction and made an unplanned stop at the Moonshine Harley Davidson location for Dad to find something he wanted. We didn’t find it there. So we decided to get lunch and went over to Zoë’s, which was near the Bluebird Café. While Dad did eat something there, the stop there was really for me since I have very few options left to go to Zoë’s. (My only option near me is in Fort Worth, so not very close at all.) I got the chicken kabobs with grilled potato salad and white beans. I also got a side of pita with pesto hummus and the yummy Yaya’s chocolate cake.



In the area by the restaurant, I saw some nice flowers planted in the medians of the outdoor shopping area. We then went over to an upscale mall, The Mall at Green Hills, to check with Dillard’s for the item Dad wanted. We walked around the mall to check at another store. The mall had some very high end cars on display from a local dealer. The mall also had a theater, but we decided instead to drive over to the theater at the mall near the Opry. While I wanted to visit some museums, it was too late to visit any of them today. I drove over and spent 15 minutes driving around the parking lot to find a parking space because there was also an Opry performance tonight. We wanted to see the new Top Gun movie in the IMAX, but we got there just a little too late to watch it in that theater. There was a regular screening of Top Gun at 7:30 PM. So we watched it in that theater instead. The movie was really good! The quality of the video and sound was fine. It was late by the time we left and went back to the motel.



*The medians in this shopping center had some nice flowers and ornamentals planted.*

*While running around, we came across this Tesla. I have never seen one in person!*



# May Vacation—Part 6

## Touring the Hermitage and Homestead – Sunday, May 29, 2022

We got cleaned up and got ready to leave as usual. Today was the last full day we would be in Nashville. I didn't know what exactly we would do today, but I thought we would go to the Andrew Jackson homestead called The Hermitage. We stopped first to Kroger for doughnuts and drinks like we often do when traveling. I got two doughnuts, a banana, and bottle of coffee. We ate it in the car then headed over to the museum. I was thinking we would go there, then go downtown to another museum or two. However, after we got there, the earliest tour of the mansion was at 4:00 PM. We got there about

noon. So, we went ahead and got our tickets for the house tour. We started in the indoor museum, a separate series of buildings from the homestead. The museum had a permanent exhibition telling about his life, his presidency, and post presidency until his death. We then went out on the grounds to look around, a rather large homestead. We got as far as the mansion and went through the gardens. Beautiful gardens! Lots of various flowers and trees. In the one corner of the garden was the family cemetery with the main grave and structure for Andrew Jackson along with graves of other family members.



*The Tennessee Gentleman* by Ralph E.W. Earl

*Timeline of the early life of Andrew Jackson.*



*Entrance of the permanent exhibition, Age of Jackson.*

March 1767	Andrew's Father dies
March 15, 1767	Andrew Jackson born
1778	Revolutionary War spreads to the Carolinas
1779	Brother Hugh dies at the Battle of Stono Ferry
1780	Jackson and brother, Robert, volunteer in the local militia
August 5, 1780	First wartime experience, the Battle of Hanging Rock
1781	Jackson and Robert, now prisoners of war, both contract small pox; Robert dies
November 1781	Mother Elizabeth dies during cholera epidemic; Jackson is orphaned
1784	Begins studying law in North Carolina
1787	Admitted to the bar; begins career in northeastern Tennessee, then part of western North Carolina
1788	Appointed Prosecutor of Western District; moves to Nashville
1788	Meets Rachel Donelson Robards
1791	Marries Rachel unofficially (remarries her lawfully in 1794)
1796	Elected delegate to the Tennessee Constitutional Convention
1796	Elected Tennessee's first U.S. Representative
1797	Elected to first U.S. Senate term (1797–1798)
1798	Elected Judge of Tennessee's Superior Court (1798–1804)
1801	Appointed commander of the Tennessee Militia, rank of Colonel
1802	Elected Major General of the Tennessee Militia
1804	Buys a 420-acre plantation near Nashville and names it Hermitage

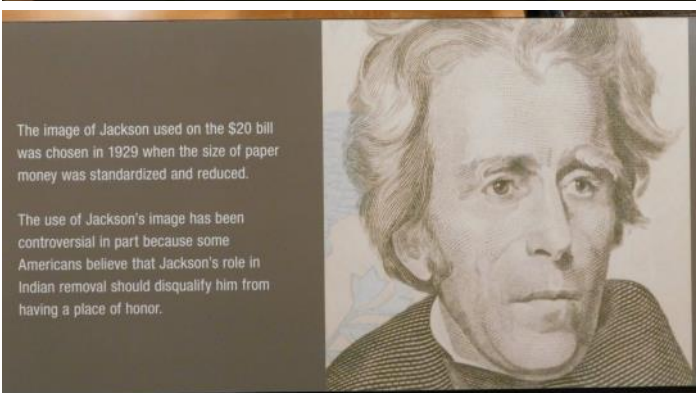
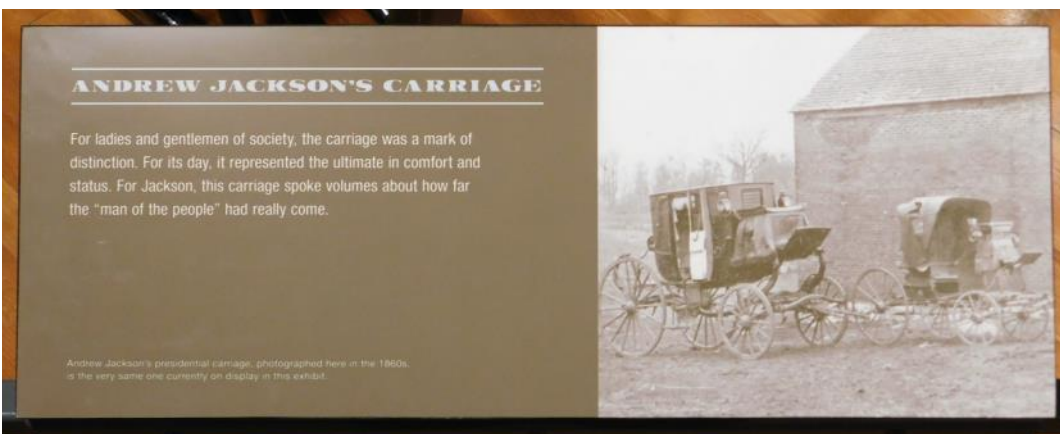
# May Vacation—Part 6



*Andrew Jackson's presidential carriage, luxury mode of transportation in the 1830s.*

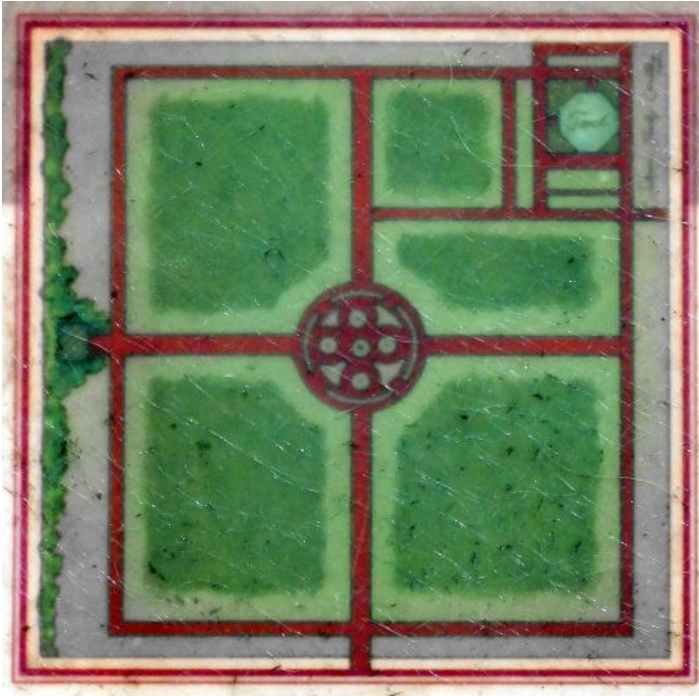


*United States flag of 15 stars, 1795-1818. Jackson purchased the Hermitage in 1804.*

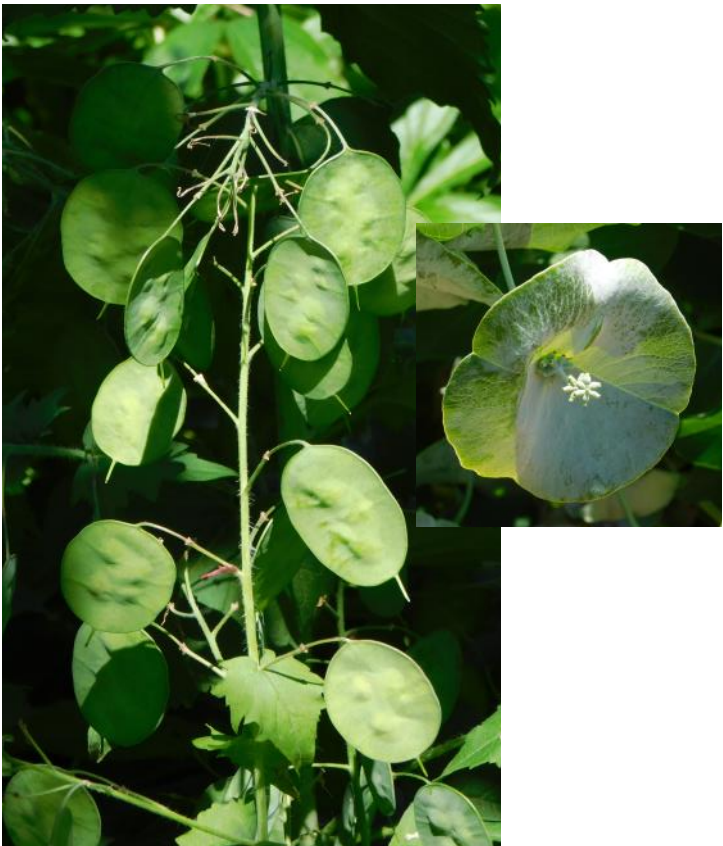


*The engraved image of Andrew Jackson as used on the \$20 bill. Jackson's treatment of the Indians in North America cannot be ignored, and some want to remove his portrait in favor of a minority, although not of an Indian.*

# May Vacation—Part 6



“The four-square garden design with center beds dates back to the middle ages. The Hermitage garden plan reflects this English tradition.”



# May Vacation—Part 6

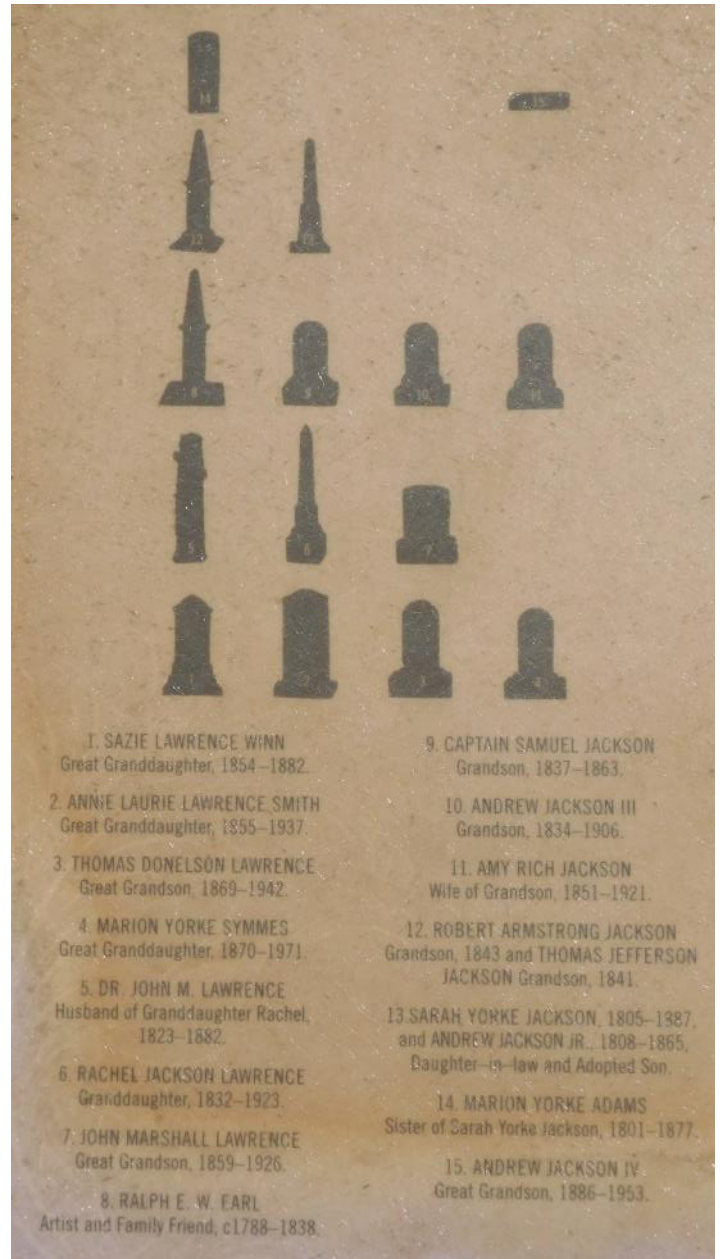
## Bumble Bees!



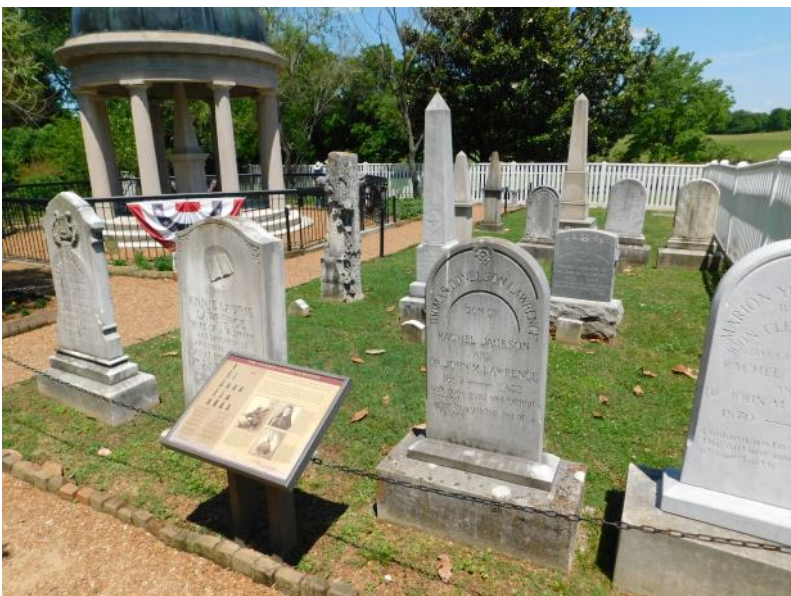
# May Vacation—Part 6



*Andrew Jackson's grave.*



*Jackson family graves.*



# May Vacation—Part 6

We had some time and decided to drive over to another part of the Hermitage grounds. It turned out that there were four things to see: a confederate cemetery, a section of graves from the 1830s, a memorial for slaves, and a church building. I saw the cemetery on Google maps and from the road as we initially drove by to get to the Hermitage. We looked

around for a little while once we got there. As we left, we drove a little further down the road and arrived at another smaller mansion of similar style that was called Tulip Grove. We got a few quick photos along with some photos of the magnolia flowers on the trees around the mansion. As we left, we saw a wild turkey.



*Hermitage Church, 1823*



*Donelson Family Cemetery, removed to this spot in 1948.*



*Relocated burials of slaves from the Ingleside Plantation and the Cleveland Hall Plantation, both owned by nephews of Rachel (Donelson) Jackson, wife of Andrew Jackson.*

*Confederate Soldier's Cemetery, 483 graves, most died while in the Confederate Soldier's Home that was located about a mile north of this spot.*



# May Vacation—Part 6



*Tulip Grove*



*Wild turkey roaming around Tulip Grove.*



*A nearly perfect magnolia flower found in Tulip Grove.*

# May Vacation—Part 6

It was after 3:00 PM by this point, and we headed back to the museum despite being hungry. We parked and headed back to the mansion on a golf cart. We got in with a slightly earlier group and toured the whole mansion by guided tour. Their setup was good! They had different people starting from the outside and into the various other rooms of the house moving each group from one guide to another with each giving their memorized speech for that part of the house. In total, we had four guides and a fifth one checking tickets, efficiently running people though every 15 minutes. (A rather grueling schedule for 8+ hours every 15 minutes! But I imagine that they probably rotated the docents.) Photos were not allowed inside the mansion.

After the tour, we then looked at the parts of the house accessible from outside along with the detached buildings. We then went to look at some other buildings on the property, mostly by myself. I went to look at the foundation of a once triplex house, a historic garden, slave houses, and a spring house, among a few other things. We requested the golf cart again and a lady picked us up. She was nice enough to run us around other parts of the grounds before returning us to the front. She gave me some information about the historic vegetable garden along with the trees on the grounds. We then visited the gift shop and bought a few things before we left.



*Jackson plantation house called The Hermitage.*



*Foundation of a triplex structure on the Hermitage, more than likely slave quarters.*

*Historic vegetable garden recreated.*

# May Vacation—Part 6



*Alfred's Cabin.*



*Slave cabins.*



*One of the ground's draft horses*



*Spring and stream.*



*Anyone know what this is? ... They are pawpaws!*



*Horse and cart going by the vegetable garden.*

# May Vacation—Part 6

We then headed straight over to Golden Corral for dinner (what Dad wanted). We stuffed ourselves after being hungry for most of the day! Happily full and no longer dehydrated, we left and went over to Home Depot to get something Dad wanted. We then went back to Kroger briefly. Since we were not sure what else to do on a Sunday evening, we headed back to the motel. I did stop to get a cup of ice. On the way, we did see some fireworks in the distance

but didn't know what they were for. After we got back to the room, we did a few little things for the rest of the evening. One thing to note about the motel. For the last several nights, we've heard a very loud croaking from a very small frog that was by the empty pool. I couldn't see them to get a photo since they stop croaking when someone is nearby. Although, I did see them the first night we were here. They were just little things, but croaked very loudly!

## Back Stage Opry Tour and Leaving Nashville – Monday, May 30, 2022

Today was the last day we were in Nashville. We got cleaned up and packed up and left around 10:00 AM. We headed towards the Opry area. First, we stopped at Publix for breakfast and desserts like usual. Then we headed to Opryland. We got there early and parked. We went to the gift shop (again!) for a few things then waited for the backstage tour. Our tour was at 12:30 PM. They started with a cool multimedia video in a small theater with nice couches, chairs, and tables. We then went to the back areas of the Opry to see the artist entrance, hallway, dressing room, and their "green room", which they

call their "family room". We went to a small stage, Studio A, where Hee Haw was recorded, which ran from 1969 to 1993, although the Opry was still at the Ryman Auditorium until 1974, and Hee Haw was not recorded yet in this studio until 1982. Then we walked on the Opry stage. There, we each got our photo taken on the circle. After the tour, we went back to the gift shop to pay for the circle photos and got a few last items. We then toured the Acuff House next door to the Opry and saw the 90s Country exhibit in the former house.



*An awesome multimedia presentation in a small theater telling about the history of the Opry hosted by Garth Brooks and Trisha Yearwood.*

# May Vacation—Part 6



*Private entrance for Opry members.*

*Grand Ole Opry Post Office.*

*Gibson guitars  
assemblage with lighting.*



# May Vacation—Part 6



*Hee Haw was recorded in Studio A from 1982 to its end in 1993.*

*Dressing rooms for the Opry members. Each one is decorated very differently.*



# May Vacation—Part 6



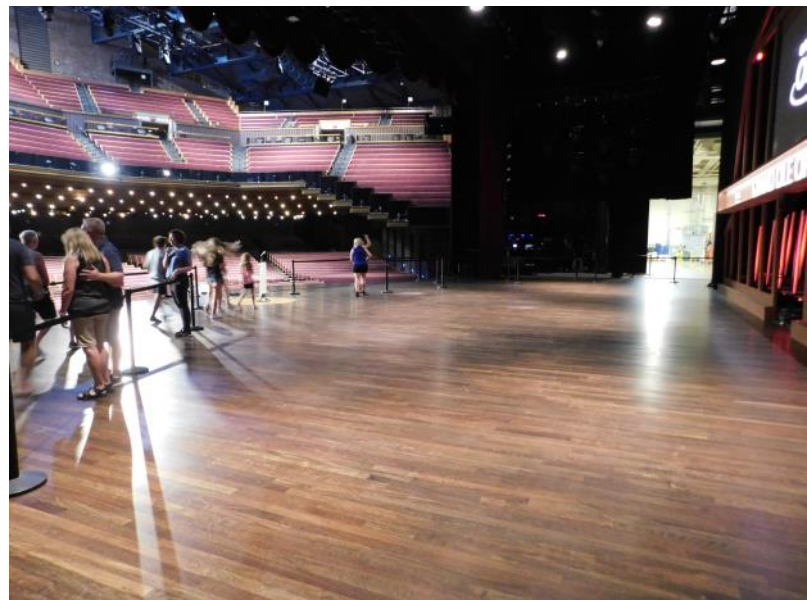
# May Vacation—Part 6



*The “Family Room”, otherwise generically known as a Green Room.*

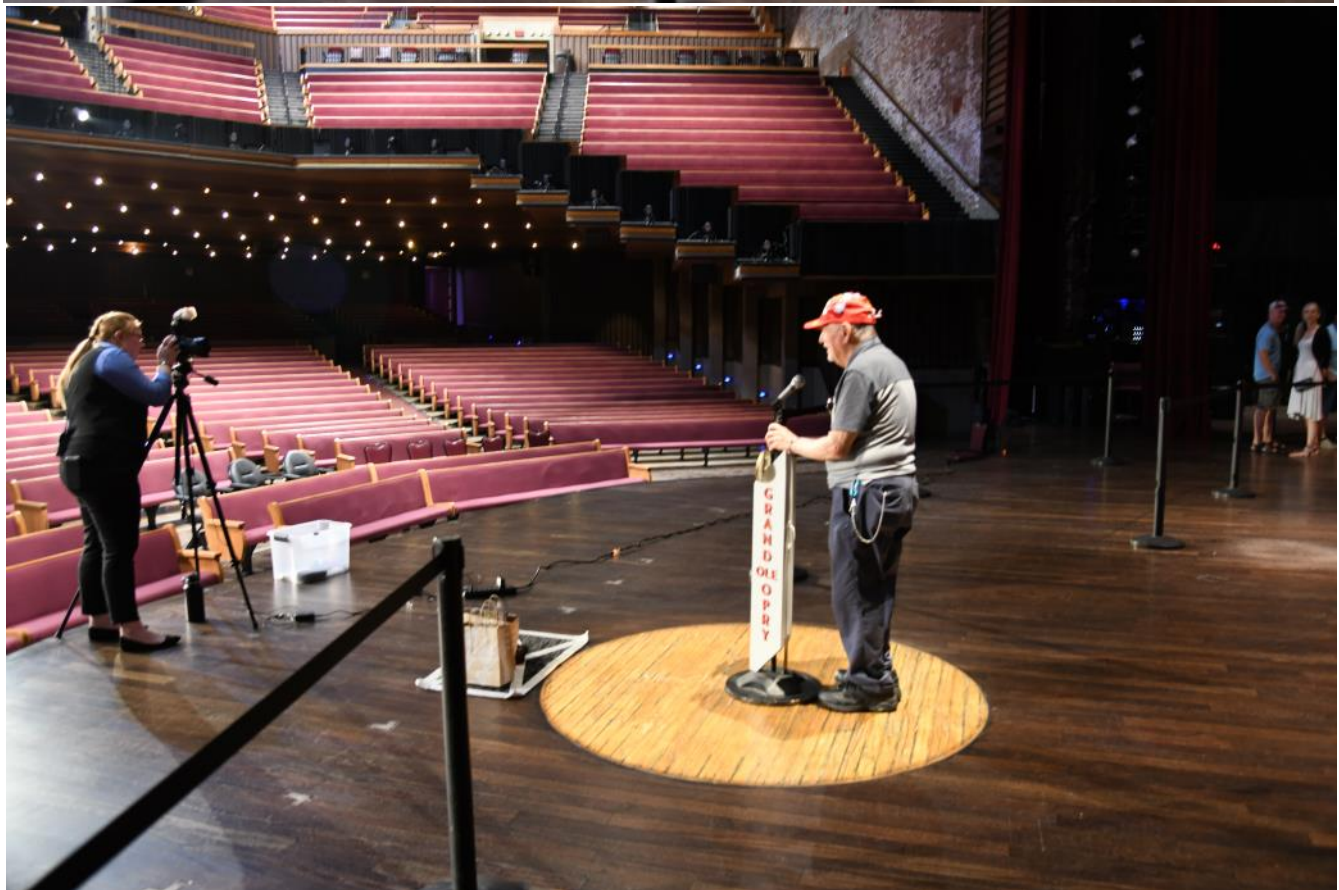
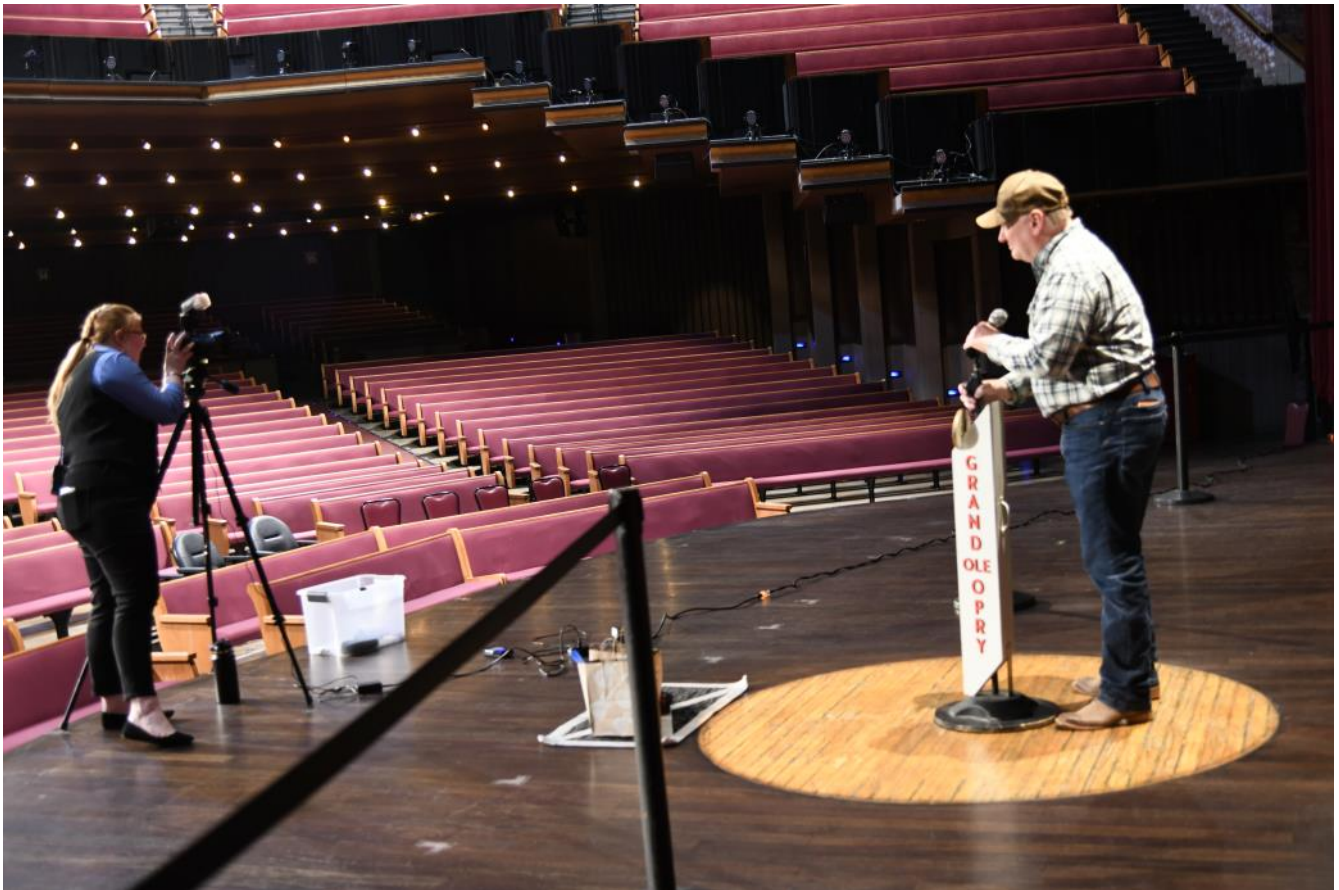


*Backdrop of the Opry stage.  
(This entire unit can be raised up into the attic space.)*



*The Opry stage. The floor is modern after the flood in 2010.*

# May Vacation—Part 6



# May Vacation—Part 6



*The Acuff House*



*Opry Loves The 90s*



*A couple of views of the Opry Loves The 90s exhibit inside the Acuff House highlighting popular 90s artists.*



*They had an Instagram/Snapchat style selfie booth with a choice of filters. I took a photo of the device and here is the photo it took and emailed me.*



# May Vacation—Part 6

By about 2:30 PM, we were in the car and heading away from Nashville back towards Colorado, although it would still be a couple more days before getting back. We went north on I-24 northwest towards Paducah, Kentucky. The travel was sunny and clear and warm going through the beautiful Ozarks. Shortly after we crossed over into Kentucky, we stopped at a beautiful rest stop for a short while before continuing on to Paducah. Once there, we exited on to US 60. There was a Bob Evans, so we decided to stop for dinner, even though it was only about 5:00 PM. We have eaten here several times between this trip and the trips over the last two years. The turkey dinner was really good! After we were full of food, we left and only went a few miles before we saw a Menards. This was the store we stopped at just south of Branson earlier in the trip. We looked around and found a few items we wanted and ended up spending about an hour and a half! The next stretch of road on US 60 was a narrow two lane that went through a few small towns. When we got to the Ohio River, we crossed over on an old, narrow metal truss bridge and a short distance further crossed over another higher narrow metal truss bridge that crossed the Mississippi River. This area is where the Ohio River dumps into the Mississippi River. I would find out later that the land between the bridges was a very narrow strip at the very south end of Illinois! We were then in Missouri. The sun was just setting below the horizon while we were crossing over the bridges. The bridges were too narrow to safely stop for any photos even though there was no traffic.

We continued a while longer until we stopped at a Flying J truck stop for gas and a short break. The road transferred on to I-57 until that interstate ended but still continued as US 60. However, I didn't know that at first and went by the exit but quickly realized that I missed it and turned around. The confusion was also because I-55 crossed over in the same area. After about another 30 minutes, we got to the motel in Dexter where we planned to stay the night. It was a rather old motel and somewhat small, but it was clean. (It was probably some small local motel in the past before Econo Lodge took over.)



*From Menard's, I got this fake magnolia leaf wreath.*



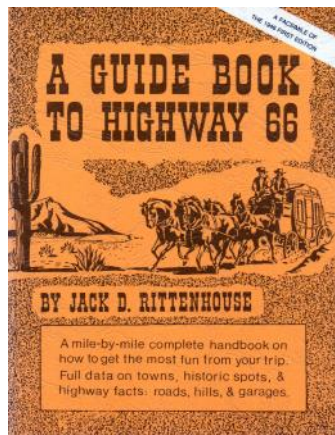
*This map shows the quick trip through Illinois from Kentucky to Missouri. We went over two narrow metal truss bridges that crossed over the Ohio River and over the Mississippi River.*

# May Vacation—Part 7

## Day Of Light Travelling – Tuesday, May 31, 2022

As usual we got cleaned up and checked out of the motel. We drove over to the next town, Poplar Bluff (which was where the other more expensive hotel option), to find a grocery store for breakfast. We looked around town for a little while until we found a Kroger. We got our usual breakfast items and noted how much higher food was at that store as compared to Colorado or even my own stores at home. Then we continued on to Springfield, Missouri. Once we got there, we saw a billboard for a pizza place. The name was Arris' Pizza. It is apparently a Greek restaurant that has Greek pizzas and other options. We got the lunch special of 10" pizza with a salad, and frankly, it was really good!

There was no direct route from Springfield to Wichita, and we were still about halfway from Dexter to Springfield. We left taking a bunch of state roads and county roads according to what Google maps recommended, and it was a route similar to how we came going east at the start of the trip. Although, we did bypass Joplin this time. It was a very scenic drive even though it was quite a bit slower than if we had taken any bigger roads. Once we got into Kansas, we stopped at a gas station for gas and a bathroom break. The land was much flatter and had fewer trees, which told us that we were back in Kansas! We continued on and had some minor rain before getting to Wichita, Dad slept most of the way. We stopped at a Casey's General Store in a little town outside of Wichita. We have stopped at a Casey's multiple times with our trips over the last three years. We didn't have too far to go to get to the north end of the city and the hotel. By the time we got to the hotel, there was some good rain. Right next door to the hotel was a Braum's. At home, I will often go to Braum's for a dollar frozen yogurt cone. I wanted to go get one, but I didn't feel like dealing with the rain. So, I skipped it and soon went to bed.



*Arris' Pizza*



*Casey's General Store is a gas station and convenience store found in the Heartland. Apparently, they updated their logo within the last couple of years (new one on the right).*

I included this in Part 2 of the May Trip. We drove past Joplin instead of going through it, but I thought this note about Joplin was worth repeating. Route 66 went right through the middle of town. According to *A Guide Book To Highway 66*, the author Jack Rittenhouse stated,

*“The Joplin district is one of the greatest producers of zinc ore in the world, and also leads in the production of lead ores. Several large quarries produce 99% pure limestone, from the limestone which underlies all southwest Missouri.”*

While this book is from 1946, this is probably not the case anymore! I have included parts of this book before in previous journals over the last few years.

*A Guide Book To Highway 66 by Jack D. Rittenhouse*

# May Vacation—Part 7

## Travelling The Plains of Southern Kansas – Wednesday, June 1, 2022

This hotel room was large and comfortable, and we got cleaned up as usual. A couple of days earlier, I had sent an email to a person who has a starting Christmas tree farm south of Salina. Let's call his name *Chad* (not his real name). I checked my email but did not get a reply back from *Chad* about planning to come visit today. As it turned out, I sent the email to the wrong *Chad*! I have several people in my email named *Chad* (again not actual name), and I had no clue that I sent it to the wrong one until the "wrong" *Chad* emailed back making it clear of my mistake! I then sent a Facebook message to the "right" *Chad* explaining what happened and apologizing for the misunderstanding. He replied quickly, but said that he would not be home from work until 5:30 PM. The forecast for the extended

area was moderate rain all day. So if I still went, we would be rained out, which was no bueno. So basically I decided best to skip going with things considered and just continue on. I will just have to plan another trip sometime later to go to his Christmas tree farm. Before we left Wichita, we stopped at Sam's for gas. We headed north on I-35 to Newton, then headed west on US 50. Wichita to Dodge City is only about three hours, so we leisurely drove there. The rain continued for a good while after we left Wichita. Once we got to Hutchinson, we drove around the town trying to find some restaurants. Once we got to the side of town where the chain restaurants were, we went with Chick-fil-A and had a good lunch.

Originally on the way out, I wanted to stop in Hudson, Kansas to go to a flour mill there. But, they were closed because it was the weekend. So while we were not able to stop there before, I made a point to stop there on the way back because it was a weekday and because we had to cancel going to the Christmas tree farm. So, we had time. The name of the business is Stafford County Flour Mills and they sell a brand of the flour called Hudson Cream Flour. I had bought some of this flour years ago in Lubbock and found it to be nice soft flour to bake with. We diverted off US 50 to the north and made a couple of turns before getting to the mill. (On the way and at one turn, I stopped briefly at an abandoned church to get some photos.) Apparently, the mill did not do tours the time we were there (even though weeks earlier, they said they did!) because of something about needing to "improve visitor safety infrastructure" or something like that. I guess I can understand that since a mill can be dangerous for those not familiar with its structure. We went to the office and bought some flour, which I had intended to do anyway. I bought several packages of flour and a cookbook, while Dad bought a metal water bottle. Before we left, we took some photos of the plant from a distance.



*Hudson Cream mills several varieties of flour including bleached, unbleached, self rising, whole wheat, bread flour, and white corn meal mix. I bought some unbleached and whole wheat flours.*

# May Vacation—Part 7



*From their office, you can buy their flour and these items on this baking rack. The flour was very affordable for the 5# bag.*

**Learn More**

- [Hudson Flour—www.hudsoncream.com](http://www.hudsoncream.com)



# May Vacation—Part 7



*Google Maps identifies this building as the New Hope United Methodist Church, but it appears more like they lost hope. :-)*



*If this marker still had the plaque, perhaps I could give some more information!*



# May Vacation—Part 7

On the way back to US 50, we stopped by a field near the church I saw earlier to look at what was growing in the field and to see the flowering weeds at the edge. After checking with my plant identification app, the field was growing alfalfa. I have seen the dry stuff baled as hay, but I had never seen it green and growing in a field. There were also some wildflowers (or weeds) growing in the shoulders of the road next to the field.



*This was a nice field of flowering alfalfa.*



*This plant is technically a weed. It is called Showy Milkweed, *Asclepias speciosa*. It is rather pretty for an undesirable weed growing by the field! (Milkweed is a great plant for butterflies.)*

From there, we backtracked on US 50 just a few miles to a rest stop we saw earlier. They had some nice informational panels in front not unlike we have seen at various other rest stops. Dad wanted to know type of trees he's seen that were sort of cone shaped we've seen along the side of the road. It turned out that they were probably eastern red cedar trees.



*Informational signs at the rest stop.*

# May Vacation—Part 7

Then we kept going on US 50 west. By this point, the rain had pretty much stopped, but it was still cloudy. Roughly 20 to 30 miles east of Dodge City, we came to a place where I saw some old square silo looking structures that I could tell were quite old. They were right by the railroad tracks and looked like a bin used to load train cars with grain. I went right passed them but then turned around to go back to get photos of them. They were located about halfway between the little towns of Kinsley and Offerle on the south side of the tracks and of the road. I saw a train coming down the tracks a little earlier and realized that they were going to go right past the silos.



# May Vacation—Part 7

A train that was just a pair of locomotives by themselves went by followed a short time later by another really long train. We stayed there long enough to get some photos and video of the train going down the tracks by the silos. Then we left and continued west, the same direction as the train, and sped up to get ahead of the train to get some more photos and video elsewhere. We stopped ahead of the train by an area where there were a lot of wind turbines—I mean all over the place on both sides of the road that probably went on for several miles—as a good backdrop for the train. We stopped at a spot just briefly ahead of the train, and we were able to get some photos and video of the train going by with the turbines in the background.



*Which way is this “train” going? ;-)*



*The second train was much longer.*

*We caught back up to the train further down the road by a field of wind turbines.*



# May Vacation—Part 7

About 30 minutes later, we finally arrived in Dodge City, but I had sort of missed the turnoff we needed and ended up on another road to the town, instead of going along the main road we've taken several times before. On the way to the hotel, we passed by some stores Dad saw and wanted to go back and visit after we checked in. Once we got to the hotel, the same one we stayed in before, we brought our stuff into the room. Then, we left and went to go to the stores Dad saw earlier. We stopped at a Sutherlands (same

store that is in Lubbock) and looked around for a little while before leaving and also stopping at a Walgreens. We wanted to get something to eat, but not too heavy. There frankly weren't very many options, but we did settle with Jimmy John's because they had their slim sandwiches for Dad. However, I got a regular sandwich. After that, we went over to Freddy's for some frozen custard before heading back to the hotel for the night.

## Back To Colorado Springs – Thursday, June 2, 2022

Today was the last day of traveling before we would get back to Dad's house in Colorado Springs. As usual, we got cleaned up and left the hotel. We needed to get gas before we left, but found that it was rather pricey, so we looked around and stopped at two other stations. We didn't want to pay those prices, so we found another one that was a good price and got gas there. We got on to US 50 and headed west. The travel was straight forward for couple hours until I came to a historical marker I remember passing on the way out and decided to stop. It was a historical marker about the Santa Fe Trail and the wagon ruts in the ground. However, this is a different marker and site from the one near Dodge City. I spent a few minutes there looking at things and getting a few photos. We continued on for about five minutes until we stopped at the next town, at Casey's, for a break. Further down the road, we came to an area of road construction where traffic came to a halt. It was down to a single lane with traffic alternating back and forth as manually directed. Once we got past that, we came to the Mountain Time Zone a little while later. While it seems strange and for no known reason, the time zone border is a good ways east of the state border. Before we left Kansas, we came to a large grass fire that sent lots of smoke into the air and made it rather toxic as the wind was blowing the smoke over the road. The fire was not near the road, but it was probably within half a mile to the south. I turned off the air conditioning until we were well past the smoke. After we crossed into Colorado, we continued on to Lamar, which was about another 30 minutes.



# May Vacation—Part 7



*Somewhere among the grass are wagon ruts from the Santa Fe Trail.*

.....

*A large grass fire just before we got to the state border sent lots of smoke into the air and over the road.*



# May Vacation—Part 7

Once we got to Lamar, around 2:00 PM, we wanted to get some lunch. We thought we would go somewhere different from the place where we ate before in Lamar. Dad wanted to go to the Pizza Hut buffet only to find out that they have not had the buffet in many years. Dad remembered seeing a Quiznos on the way in, so we stopped there.

After we ate, we went a block over to an old train depot that was a visitor's center that had some outdoor and some indoor exhibits. Outside, they had a large wind turbine blade, along with a locomotive, windmill, and water tank. There were several historical markers and interpretive signs. We looked around and took a bunch of photos. While looking at everything, we came across and talked for a little while with a guy from England who was on a vacation to the United States. We talked about many things that were different between the United States and England. Then, we went inside the depot and talked with the lady there for a while, and Dad bought a few little things from their little gift shop.

After we left there, we stopped again a few blocks away at a True Value Hardware store so Dad could find some parts for a project. I looked around and didn't find something I wanted, but did find a few some other things. True Value still looks like the old hardware stores of fiftyish years ago.



*The Lamar Depot with a visitor center & Chamber of Commerce.*



*Short Fuse on a Slack Rope by Justin Young Jr.*



*Near the Lamar Depot were these Tesla charging stations.*

# May Vacation—Part 7



*Windmill (sans fan) with water tank.*



*Locomotive.*



*Wind turbine blade by GE.*



*"Madonna of the Trail" sculpture*

# May Vacation—Part 7

From Lamar, Dad did not want to go back to Pueblo (for reasons relating to the accident last year) and so we went back the way we left taking back roads through Colorado overall west to the Springs. We did continue on US 50 for a few miles past Lamar until we got to US 287 and went north. This road took us through Eads and Kit Carson. There were a couple of areas with road construction that once again had some single lane back and forth traffic. Then, we got to Colorado 94. This narrow and sparsely used two lane road goes straight west all the way into Colorado Springs through the middle of nothingness! That is, unless you count the cows, windmills, and an occasional abandoned structure as something. There was nothing except fields of grass and occasional little dirt roads that branched off from the county road. We saw very few cars on the road and passed through a very few minor towns particularly as we got closer to the Springs. But, no doubt that the plains of Colorado were very beautiful despite being very solitary, except for the cows. We were trying to

find a gas station and a rest stop, but there were none to find! I did pass a Love's in Kit Carson but didn't think to stop. So once we got on 94, we had no options until the Springs, about another hour and a half. We stopped at a little arroyo, or gulch, to take care of business in the bushes by a tree. This road is very narrow really had no shoulders, just bare minimum road width for a county road. The road was also rather rough all way until we got to El Paso County when the road got much better. Other than one more quick stop for Dad, we drove that little road straight to the Springs. Once we got to the US 24 in the Springs, we stopped at Circle K. We then went over to Powers and over to Costco. On the way, I stopped at the Chick-fil-A for some tea and mac & cheese. We got gas at Costco. From there, we went back to Dad's house and unloaded the car of the week's worth of stuff into the garage to sort through later. I did put a number of things in my car that were obvious that I was taking home.

*Out on the plains of Colorado, there is much nothingness as far as the eye can see! Ha, ha...*



# May Vacation—Part 7

## Boogieing Back To Texas – Saturday, June 4, 2022

With having gotten back to Colorado Springs on Thursday, this concluded the main trip to Missouri and Tennessee. However, I still had a few more days before I would be back home as the final end of my trip. I left home on May 3 and have been gone for basically one month, 30 days or so. I spent Friday to rest and left Saturday to go back home. During that full day in the Springs, I did a few errands and stopped at a few places where I wanted to go. I went over to Costco to fill up my car, I had lunch at Culver's, since there aren't any near me, I went over to Lowe's to get a few select plants, and I went over to King Soopers to get a few groceries I wanted that I cannot find at my grocery stores at home.

So on Saturday, June 4, I headed back to Texas! Instead of driving the whole 500 miles straight, I decided to stay the night again in Dalhart to break up the travel over two days because I could. Once I got cleaned up and got everything packed up, I left Dad's house by the early afternoon, but I did a few things before leaving Colorado Springs. First, I went over to Costco to make sure my tire pressure was good. (I have nitrogen in the tires, and Costco has nitrogen air pumps.) Down the road from there was Culver's where I had lunch, and yes for the second day in a row! After lunch, I could not leave Colorado Springs without going over to the cemetery to see Mom's grave. I decided to wait until after the trip to go to the grave instead of when I first arrived. From the cemetery, I made my way over to I-25 just north of Fountain but well south of Colorado Springs. I basically drove straight to Raton except for one short stop to get photos of the Spanish Peaks sign and those mountains.



*While Mom was cremated, the box of her ashes were buried at the Pikes Peak National Cemetery southwest of Colorado Springs.*

*This area along I-25 in southern Colorado is referred to as Spanish Peaks, those mountains in the photo.*



# May Vacation—Part 7

Once near Raton after going through the pass, I thought I would take the first exit that goes through the actual old town. The old town is many blocks long and a few blocks wide near the base of the mountains and has many old buildings that probably go back to the 1800s. I did not stop anywhere in the old town, but made my way to the one road near the interstate where I've stopped many times before and stopped at a gas station for a break and water. I was okay on gas. After, I left on US 89 that cuts a triangle across northeastern New Mexico to Clayton.

I made various stops along this road through New Mexico. The first stop was to get photos of the entrance and of the hangar of the TO Ranch. Another stop was at a historical marker in Capulin just across from the Capulin Country Store.



*Entrance to the T.O. Ranch.  
The TO is owned by Silver Spur Ranches, which also owns the Bell Ranch further south in New Mexico.*



*Hangar on the T.O. Ranch.*



*Content cattle chewin cud.*



*New Mexico historical market in Capulin across from the Capulin Country Store.*



# May Vacation—Part 7

A little further down, I got two angles of the windmill and barn that I've photographed so many times before. Further down a good ways, I got various photos of the Bar Bar Seven Ranch along with the entrance of the Day Ranch, which I had to double back to go get. I also stopped at the rest stop where I stayed the night exactly ten years ago on June 4, 2012! (Well, late overnight from June 3 to the morning of June 4 and arriving to Colorado Springs later that day.) From there, I basically drove straight to Dalhart, arriving to the motel a little after 9:00 PM. The sun had set, but there was still a little light left before it got dark. I checked into the motel then soon left to go to McDonald's for gas and for some dinner, which I had to bring back to the room. Not long later, I called it night.



*I decided to get photos of this windmill and barn from two different angles.*



*This is the Capulin volcano. It is a national monument.*



*Not far from the windmill and barn were these grazing horses, of three different colors!*



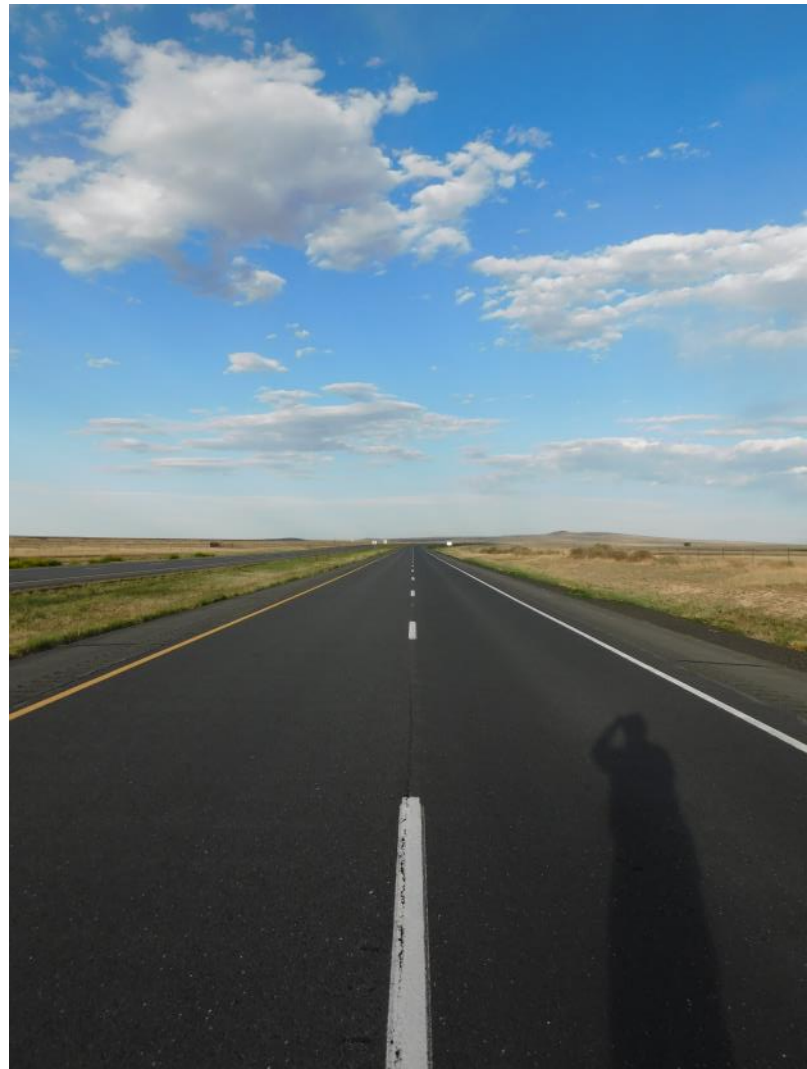
*This view is on the other side of the street from the windmill.*



# May Vacation—Part 7



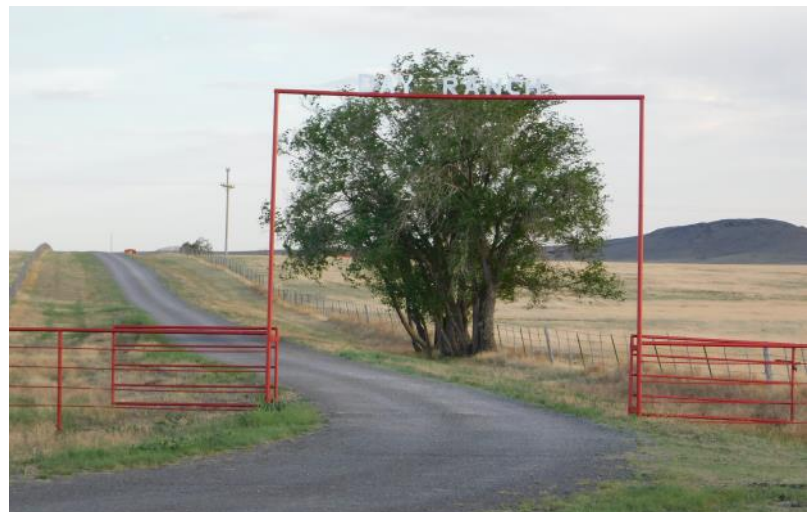
*The Bar Bar Seven brand of the Volner Cattle Company and the Day Ranch*



*Not much traffic on the highway.*



*A barn of the Bar Bar Seven brand. The first time I recall seeing this building in the late 2000s, the building was in rather poor shape and was not at all the red and white building it is now. It's probably used for storage now, but was obviously a working barn at one time.*



*Entrance of the Day Ranch in New Mexico.*

# May Vacation—Part 7

On the way back home, I drove by a rest stop in New Mexico, the only one on this road, called Sierra Grande Rest Area near Des Moines. This was the rest stop that exactly ten years ago to the day I had stayed the night when I moved from Lubbock to Colorado Springs for an undetermined length of time. (Understand that it was never meant to be permanent move!) That July, I brought back some last things I couldn't fit before. Well, ten years later, I parked my car by the same tree where I slept that June for a few hours until morning. By the morning, there was a spectacular sunrise! I continued on to Raton, where I had a good breakfast at Denny's.



*Early morning on Monday, June 4, 2012.*



*Sunrise on Monday, June 4, 2012.*



*Mid afternoon on Sunday, July 22, 2012.*



*Early evening, Saturday, June 4, 2022.*



*Early evening, Saturday, June 4, 2022.*

# May Vacation—Part 7

## Easy Rural Roads Drive Back To Lubbock – Sunday, June 5, 2022

This day I got back to Lubbock, but I still had a few hours on this last leg before I would get home. Dalhart to Lubbock only takes a little over three hours. But of course with stops, it takes a little longer. I left the motel around 11:00 AM after sleeping in and getting cleaned up. After taking a few minutes to decide how I wanted to go home, I drove over to a doughnut place. After finding out that it was closed (not open that day, probably because it was Sunday), I then drove over to a nearby truck stop, a Toot'n Totum, and got a bottle of cold espresso latte and a hot brisket and potato burrito for breakfast. The burrito was really good actually. Part of this way was US 87 and US 385, but I would take US 385 south all the way to Littlefield before I would get on US 84 the short ways back to Lubbock. While the route was straight forward, I did make a few stops along the way. The first stop was about 30 minutes down the road for a historical marker. It must have been one missed driving up because I don't remember having seen it before.

*Texas historical marker telling about the Fort Smith-Santa Fe Trail*

*Behind the historical marker was a large area of wind turbines. Also, cattle obviously roam here.*



# May Vacation—Part 7

Only a few minutes further from there was the town of Vega. Now Vega is a town right on I-40 which was an old Route 66 town. I spent about 30 minutes looking around at the historical markers by the Oldham County courthouse, at an old somewhat restored Magnolia gas station, and at a few things outside near a museum. I've seen this town many times before when I've travelled this way, but I have never stopped to look at them. Once I left there, it was about another 30+ minutes before I came to another historical marker. This one I did stop at on the way up, but there was road construction before keeping me from getting a clean photo of the sign. After that, I just kept going and I did not stop anywhere else until I got home. I got home a little before 4:00 PM and so it did take a bit longer than three hours. But I had no rush to get home by any specific time, and the sun was still out. Once I got home, I was like yay! I'm home! Everything felt familiar, of course, as it should have, but I did feel like was gone for a long time. (Well, 30 days!)



*The town of Vega, one side of the courthouse square.*



*Various markers by the courthouse.*



*Gazebo by the county courthouse.*



*Oldham County courthouse.*

# May Vacation—Part 7



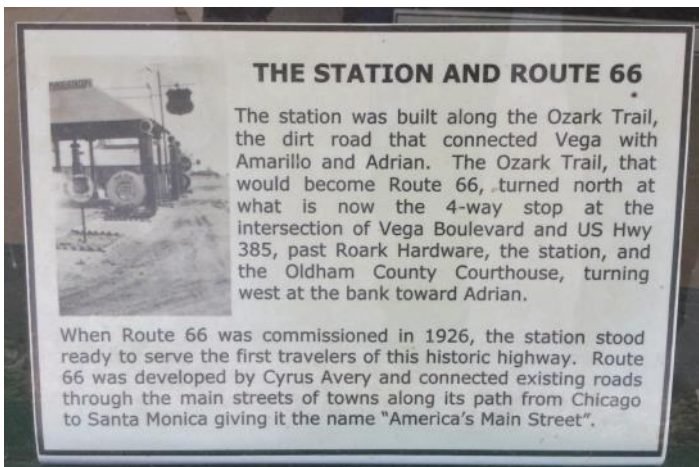
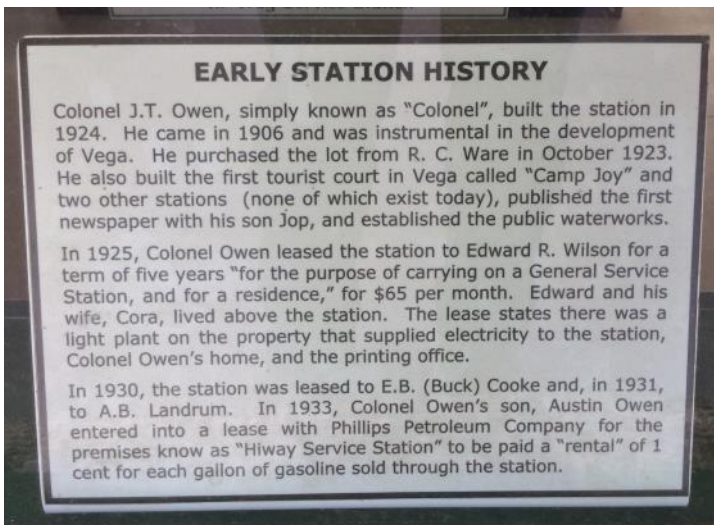
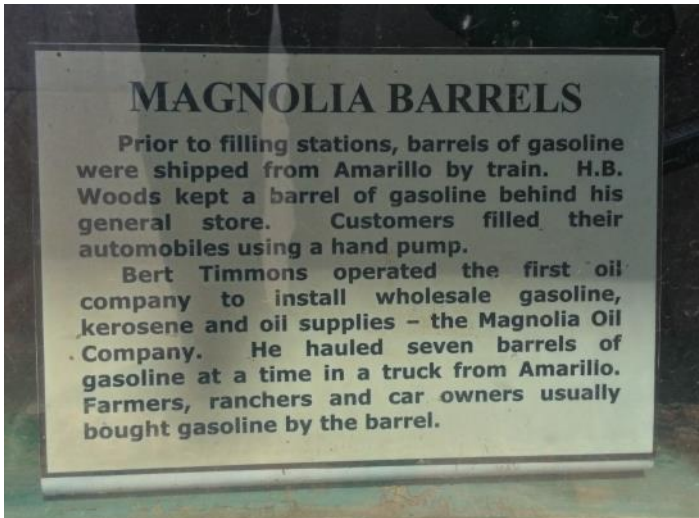
*Quanah Parker Trail arrow marking a historic spot relevant to the Comanche Indians. (There are many of these arrows.)*



*An old Magnolia gas station from 1924 that looks partly restored. Looks as if the cement and rock siding was done in the 1960s or 1970s as the structure would have been wood originally. However, the second floors is unusual but a unique feature of this particular station in being a residence.*

# May Vacation—Part 7

(Read the text in the photos.)



# May Vacation—Part 7



*World's largest branding iron.*



*Milburn Price Culture Museum*



*Moo!*

*Oldham County Courthouse is a Route 66 Roadside Attraction.*

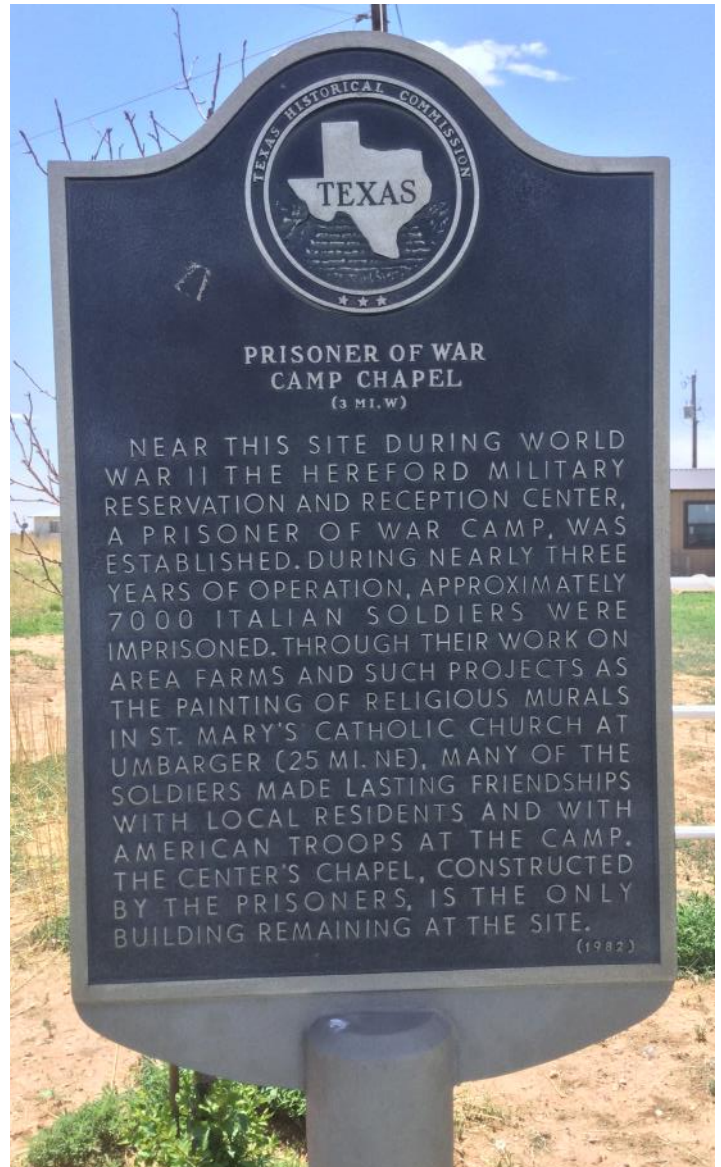


# May Vacation—Part 7

## Back Home and Final Thoughts

Once I got settled in the house for a brief time, I then tackled unpacking the car. The temp was well over 100°, and so I went back and forth many times bringing in everything from the front of the car, the back of the car, and the trunk. It took me about an hour by the time I finally got everything unloaded and in the house. Then I rested in the house for a little while to cool off as well as to just kind of mentally rest. After that, I had a few errands I wanted to do, including getting some dinner since I had not eaten since breakfast in Dalhart. I went to Rudy's BBQ. I got the turkey sandwich with a side of coleslaw, which I ended up not liking and switched it for the buttered boiled potatoes instead, which tasted really good with butter, salt, and pepper. I spent the rest of the evening sorting through everything, putting many things away, and setting up some of the things I bought.

This concludes the trip from the time I left home until the time I returned back home a month later, May 3 to June 5, 34 days. In reflection of the trip, any number of places where we went could have been a vacation destination of its own! But instead, we kind of strung them together and visited a bunch of different places! It was a wonderful trip seeing places I have either never been to or places I have not been to in a long time. I had never been to Nashville (not including the airport) nor to Dollywood nor anywhere in Tennessee for that matter, except for Memphis. I was glad to visit again Dodge City, Springfield, and Branson with Silver Dollar City.



*Historical marker along US 385 south of Hereford.*



# May Vacation—Part 7

## Will The Circle Be Unbroken?

In the last issue, I told about how we went to the Grand Ole Opry for a second time and also how we took a back stage tour of the Opry. Ever since the Opry moved to their current location and created a circle of wood out of the Ryman Auditorium, it has become a major theme for the Opry even to use the song Can the Circle Be Unbroken? So, I looked up some information on Wikipedia about the song, and here is the origin of it.

“Will the Circle Be Unbroken?” is a popular Christian hymn written in 1907 by Ada Ruth Habershon with music by Charles Hutchinson Gabriel. The song is often recorded unattributed and, because of its age, has lapsed into the public domain. Most of the chorus appears in the later songs “Can the Circle Be Unbroken” and “Daddy Sang Bass”. Here are the lyrics.

### 55 Will the Circle Be Unbroken?

ADA R. HABERSHON.

CHAS. H. GABRIEL.

1. There are loved ones in the glo - ry Whose dear forms you oft - en miss,  
2. In the joy - ous days of child - hood, Oft they told of wondrous love  
3. You re - mem - ber songs of heav - en, Which you sang with childish voice,  
4. You can pic - ture hap - py gath' rings Round the fire - side long a - go,  
5. One by one their seats were emptied, One by one they went a - way,

When you close your earth - ly sto - ry Will you join them in their bliss?  
Point - ed to the dy - ing Sav - iour, Now they dwell with Him a - bove.  
Do you love the hymns they taught you, Or are songs of earth your choice?  
And you think of tear - ful part - ings, When they left you here be - low.  
Now the fam - i - ly is part - ed, Will it be complete one day?

CHORUS.  
Will the cir - cle be un - brok - en By and by, by and by?

Is a bet - ter home a - wait - ing In the sky, in the sky?

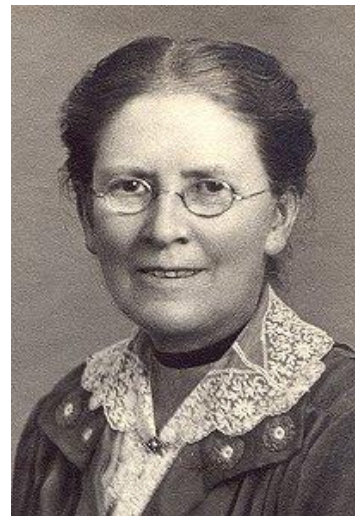
Copyright, 1907, by  
Charles H. Alexander,  
International Copyright Secured.

There are loved ones in the glory  
Whose dear forms you often miss.  
When you close your earthly story,  
Will you join them in their bliss?  
Will the circle be unbroken  
By and by, by and by?  
Is a better home awaiting  
In the sky, in the sky?

In the joyous days of childhood  
Oft they told of wondrous love  
Pointed to the dying Saviour;  
Now they dwell with Him above.

You remember songs of heaven  
Which you sang with childish voice.  
Do you love the hymns they taught you,  
Or are songs of earth your choice?

You can picture happy gath' rings  
Round the fireside long ago,  
And you think of tearful partings  
When they left you here below.  
One by one their seats were emptied.  
One by one they went away.  
Now the family is parted.  
Will it be complete one day?



Ada Ruth Habershon  
1861-1918

# May Vacation—Part 7

## May Vacation Gas Summary

I thought it would be interesting to track the gas usage of the May trip to see what the gas totals would be. Here is the chart showing my vehicle and Dad's vehicle, each with the rate of gas, the volume of the gas, and total cost. You can see that over a

month, the cost of gas went up, but also that as we went east, the cost of gas varied in the different locations. Also, here are the milage totals:

**Dad's car: 3791 miles**

**My car: 1301 miles Total: 5092 miles**

### Dad's Vehicle

date	station	city	state	rate	total	Gallons	
5.13.22	Casey's General Store	Dodge City	Kansas	\$3.95	\$44.40	11.214	
5.14.22	Quicktrip	Wichita	Kansas	\$3.95	\$25.65	6.478	
5.15.22	Pete's	Fredonia	Kansas	\$3.99	\$22.85	5.513	
5.15.22	?	Branson	Missouri	\$3.99	\$36.43	9.110	
5.19.22	Casey's General Store	Springfield	Missouri	\$3.99	\$26.35	6.590	
5.19.22	Circle K	Memphis	Tennessee	\$4.19	\$43.28	10.308	
5.20.22	Mapco Express	Nashville	Tennessee	\$4.39	\$27.88	6.337	
5.21.22	Valley Market Exxon	Nashville	Tennessee	\$4.53	\$21.99	4.844	
5.22.22	Jimmy's Market	Seymour	Tennessee	\$4.17	\$28.98	6.934	
5.24.22	Murphy Express	Sevierville	Tennessee	\$4.02	\$30.48	7.565	
5.26.22	Love's	Baxter	Tennessee	\$4.19	\$27.79	6.618	
5.29.22	7-11	Hermitage	Tennessee	\$4.23	\$13.83	3.874	
5.30.22	Flying J	Charleston	Missouri	\$4.15	\$29.93	7.196	
5.31.22	Pete's	Cherokee	Kansas	\$4.17	\$26.88	6.414	
5.31.22	Signal Food Store	Mountain View	Missouri	\$4.19	\$27.31	4.199	
6.2.22	Circle K	Dodge City	Kansas	\$4.18	\$36.44	8.698	
6.2.22	Costco	Colorado Springs	Colorado	\$4.12	\$45.86	11.187	
					17	\$516.33	123.079

### RG's Vehicle

date	station	city	state	rate	total	Gallons	
5.2.22	Costco	Lubbock	Texas	\$3.61	\$2.35	0.649	
5.2.22	Costco	Lubbock	Texas	\$3.61	\$15.86	4.382	
5.4.22	Allsup's	Dalhart	Texas	\$3.79	\$32.89	8.658	
5.6.22	Costco	Colorado Springs	Colorado	\$3.79	\$41.31	10.873	
5.10.22	Loaf'n Jug	Buena Vista	Colorado	\$4.34	\$35.02	8.052	
6.3.22	Costco	Colorado Springs	Colorado	\$4.12	\$18.62	4.509	
6.4.22	Frontier Fuels	Dalhart	Texas	\$4.29	\$44.94	10.454	
6.6.22	Costco	Lubbock	Texas	\$4.19	\$37.81	9.004	
					8	\$228.80	56.581

**All Totals 25**

**\$745.13**

**179.660**

# May Vacation—Part 7

## May Vacation Stats

### States Travelled

9 states: Texas, New Mexico, Colorado, Kansas, Missouri, Arkansas, Tennessee, Kentucky, and Illinois.

### Total Miles Travelled

5092 miles

### Stops For Gas

25

### Total Gas Bought

≈ 180 gallons

### Total Spent For Gas

≈ \$745

Maybe you have noticed or may you didn't, but on the covers of these seven issues, I have shown various icons that varied with each issue. These icons are part of the font Zapf Dingbats.

✧ ✧ Part 1 ✧ ✧

★ ✨ Part 2 ✨ ★

✿ ★ Part 3 ★ ✿

✨ ✿ Part 4 ✿ ✨

✿ ✨ Part 5 ✨ ✿

✨ ★ Part 6 ★ ✨

✧ ✨ Part 7 ✨ ✧

# May Vacation– EXTRAS

*Several places where we visited, the sites did photo hijacks! This means that took photos of the visitors and tried to sell photo packages back to us! There were five of these locations. (The tintage was intentional.)*



*Several background options were available from the Titanic Museum. I went with these two of them.*

.....

*[Missing photo]  
Photo taken on May 17, 2022  
before the Texas Tenors concert  
in Branson, Missouri.*

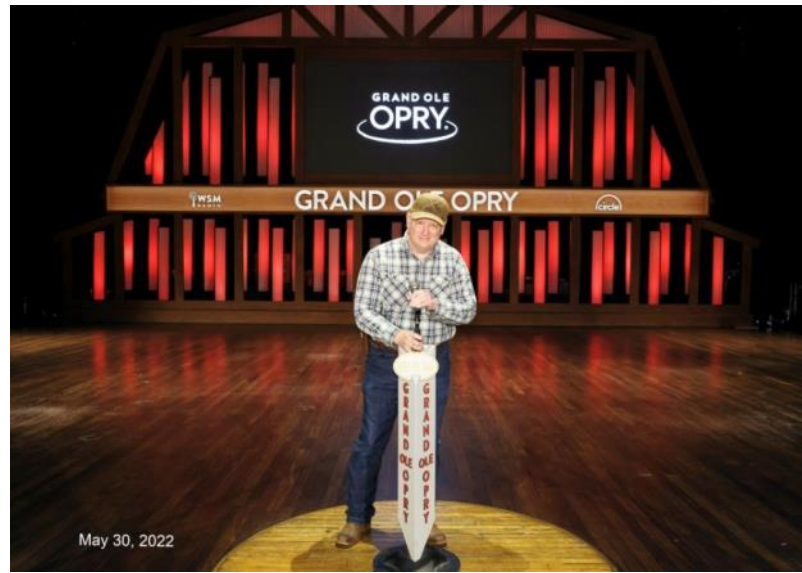


*This was a mock tintage studio subleased at Silver Dollar City.  
I went with the gangster scene instead of the old west scene.  
I went with the slighted faded coloring.  
Obviously, I have no idea how to hold a Tommy Gun!  
Gotta love the zoot suit! (it was a cutaway getup.)*

# May Vacation– EXTRAS



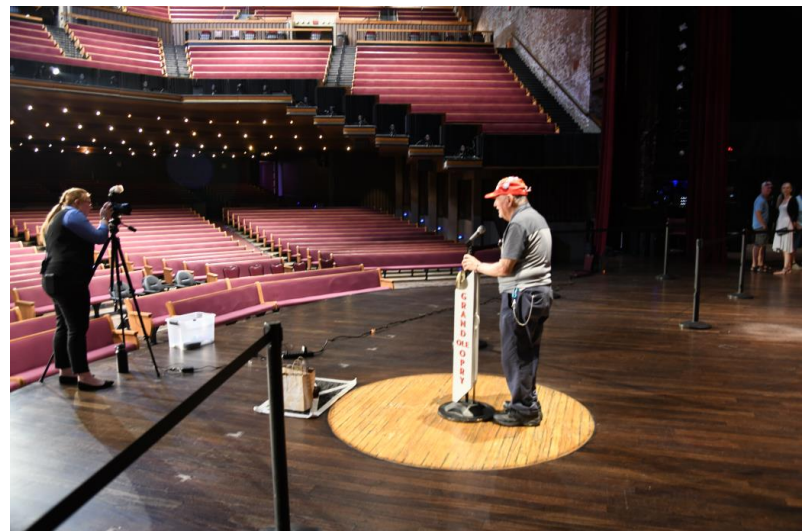
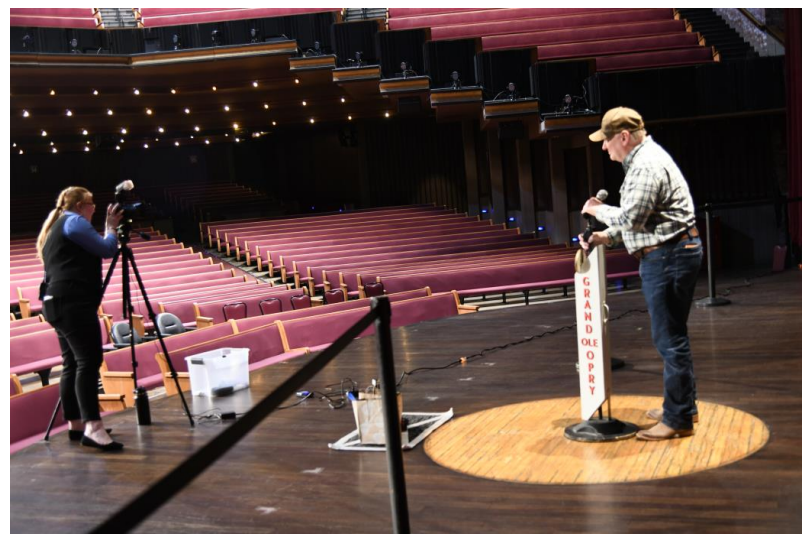
*Photo taken on The Island, green screen background.*



*Grand Ole Opry backstage tour.*



*This was the only free photo we got!  
But we did pay a tour fee to tour the auditorium.  
(Although, we did spend plenty enough in the gift shop!)*



# May Vacation– EXTRAS



*The Branson Ferris Wheel, a ride that has been places! Branson is the third location since originally being built circa 1990.*



# May Vacation– EXTRAS



*From the Ferris Wheel, you can see the Titanic Museum several spots down. It looks like half of the cruise ship!*



*Classic cars in Jukebox Junction of Dollywood in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee.*



*More from Dollywood in Pigeon Forge, Tennessee.*



# Final Thought

## Tennessee Magnolias



# de Stolfe Journal

The de Stolfe Journal is a publication made by Robert-George de Stolfe. The first issue was published in March 1986 as the de Stolfe Journal and published irregularly until 1998 (17 issues total). The *Candid* variety of the Journal started in July 2012, with a production of over 60 regular and special issues, with now the *Candid* dropped from the name. Archives of all issues—including the original ones (1980s-1990s)—are available on the website: [www.destolfe.com](http://www.destolfe.com)

**Publisher/Owner/Editor**  
Robert-George de Stolfe

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Robert-George de Stolfe

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