

de Stolfe

Journal ●●●●●●●●

May Vacation



✿ ✧ Part 5 ✧ ✿

May Trip 5 2022 | 11.7

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On The Cover



This is the Harrisburg Covered Bridge in a town called Harrisburg, a little east of Sevierville, Tennessee. To meet modern traffic standards, this bridge was reconstructed with steel supports. Read more about our visit to this unexpected gem of a find later in this issue.



Happy Mallard in Dollywood

We live in the 21st century! Anywhere you see a web link like this, click it to go automatically to the webpage that it references! (Try it now!)

www.destolfe.com



Comments by RG

Another Installment and Upcoming Stuff

Here is issue five of seven of our May trip! We did so much that it's taking quite a while to get these issues finished while still doing other necessary things!

This issue covers our next main destination, Pigeon Forge. The main reason we went there was specifically to go to Dollywood. We did have some issues of rain that we had to work around, but we did go there and saw a few other unplanned places that you find in this issue.

The summer in Lubbock has been rather warm, usually over 100° for most of the summer until later in August when it finally leveled down to something more moderate. But other than that, it has been steady.

Here at the end of September and early October, I have another trip where Dad and I will be going to the southern and western parts of Colorado particularly to look at the fall leaves and visit some historical areas. One main highlight of the trip besides the fall leaves involves a train! More on that when that issue comes out later in the fall!

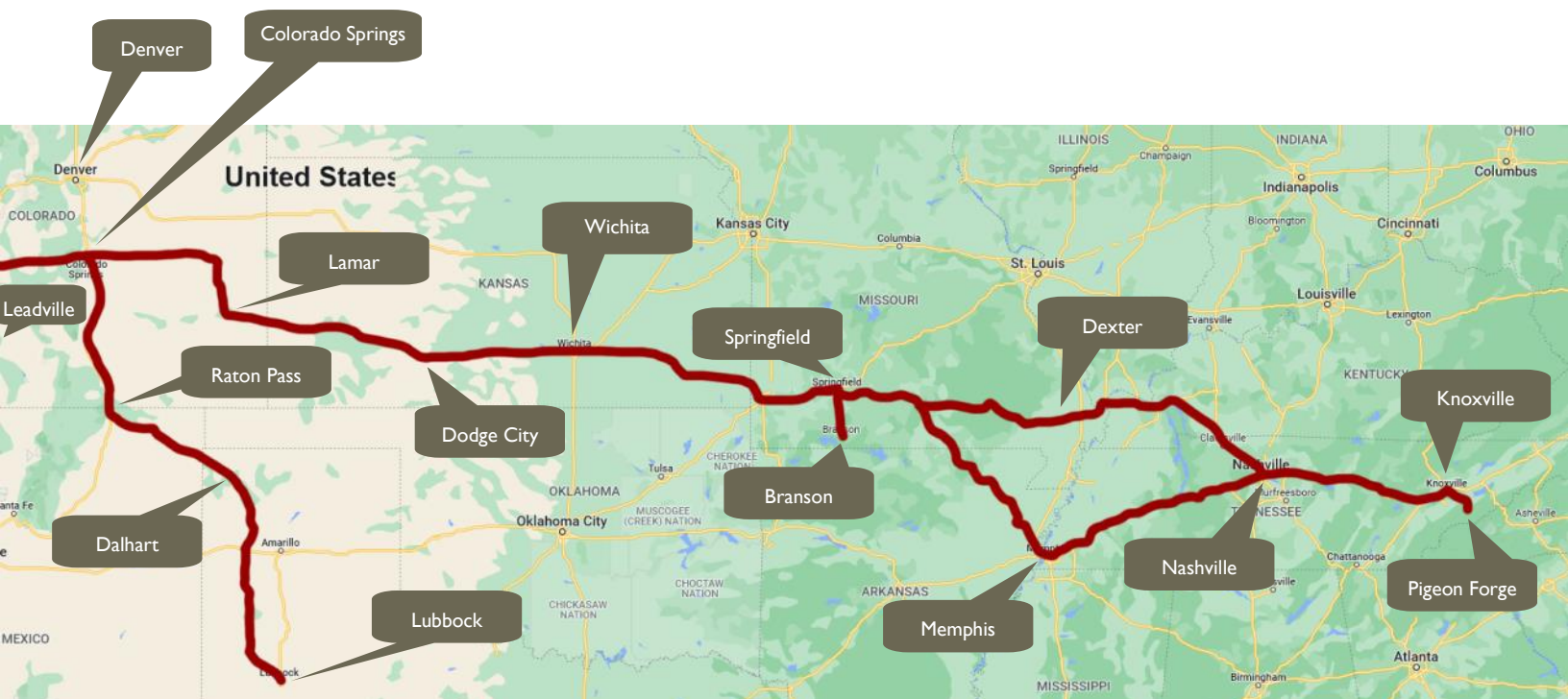
In November, I have a couple of other things I'll be doing, both of which I also did last year!

Fall is basically here, although still a few more days away, and so go get your pumpkins and your PSLs* and get ready for cooler weather no matter where you are!



Producer, RG de Stolfe

Enjoy!



Word For Life

No Chapters Bible Books Series: Obadiah

As a bonus in the last issue, I included the first of a short series about Bible books that have no chapters, only verses. Some will mistakenly refer to them as a one chapter book, even to reference them as “1:x” for the verse, which is incorrect. For this issue, here is the second book in the Bible that has no chapters.

Obadiah is the only book like this in the Old Testament, as most of the OT books have MANY chapters. Located in the minor prophets group near the end of the OT between Amos and Jonah, Obadiah is the name of a man who lived about the start of when the Assyrians took over Israel and exiled them to their land far east of Jerusalem, now known as western Iran. Some date the book to be after the Babylonians took over the Assyrians. The Babylonians took over Judah and exiled them to a similar area. In any case, it is the exile period that is about 600 to 800 years before the time of Jesus. The name Obadiah means Servant Of The Lord. The book bearing his name is a recording of a vision he had about Edom and Israel. While there are no chapters, there are three titled sections:

-The Coming Judgment on Edom

-Edom Mistreated His Brother

-Israel's Final Triumph

So who or what is Edom? To explain this, let's go back to the beginning.

Abram and Sarai were a couple who became favored by God. God said to them that He would make a covenant promise with them to make them into a great nation (Genesis 12:2, Genesis 15:4-5). A good while later, Abraham and Sarah had a son. His name was Isaac. And to clear it up now, there was another son by Abram prior to Isaac. His name was Ishmael born by Sarai's Egyptian servant girl. But make no mistake that God made the covenant promise to Abram and Sarai, NOT to Abram and the servant girl! Also to note, After Sarah died, Abraham had quite a few other children with another wife and with concubines. Moving on, Isaac would go on to marry someone named Rebekah. Isaac and Rebekah would have two sons. The first born son was named Esau, while the second born son was named Jacob. Once

Esau and Jacob became grown men, there came a time where Esau became stupid, and Jacob became manipulative. Here's the important passage in Genesis 25:29-34:

29 Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he was weary.

30 And Esau said to Jacob, “Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary.” Therefore his name was called Edom. [Edom means red]

31 But Jacob said, “Sell me your birthright as of this day.”

32 And Esau said, “Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?”

33 Then Jacob said, “Swear to me as of this day.” So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob.

34 And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of [red] lentils; then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

What a stupid thing to do! Esau was the firstborn with the rights that come with it, and Jacob found a way to steal it away from him! (*No one said that all of the stories in the Bible were wholesome!*) The important point to understand here is that Jacob inherited (read “stole”) the covenant promises by God and would become the peoples known as the Hebrews, the Israelites, the Jews, while the other son Esau would become the peoples called the Edomites. Okay, so now that I have taken three quarters of this page for a back story, let's get back to Obadiah.

Obadiah got a vision from the Lord GOD about Edom. The Edomites became lofty in their own eyes (read: prideful), and God told the Israelites to get ready for battle for God was in essence going to cut down the Edomites. Then in the vision, God said, 10 “For violence against your brother Jacob, shame shall cover you, and you shall be cut off forever...” While both Esau and Jacob were not guiltless, God never likes violence against others. God also said further down: 15 “As you have done, it shall be done to you; your reprisal shall return upon your own head.” Long story short, Edom was defeated and slaughtered, while the Israelites gained the lands God promised to give them from the defeat. Israel won.

Random Things



Dad has a resident bunny that keeps well fed on the weeds around Dad's house! While it might not be the same one, I have shown a bunny like this one before in the journal in the past. (Dad's photos)

Back on April 23, I drove up to Wellington to attend the Evening with Kent Rollins at his coffee shop, as you know from my past issue. I took a few photos from my side, as I included in that article. Recently, I came across this photo on their website showing the group when I was there! They had several weekends of this event, not just the one I attended. I was a nice evening.

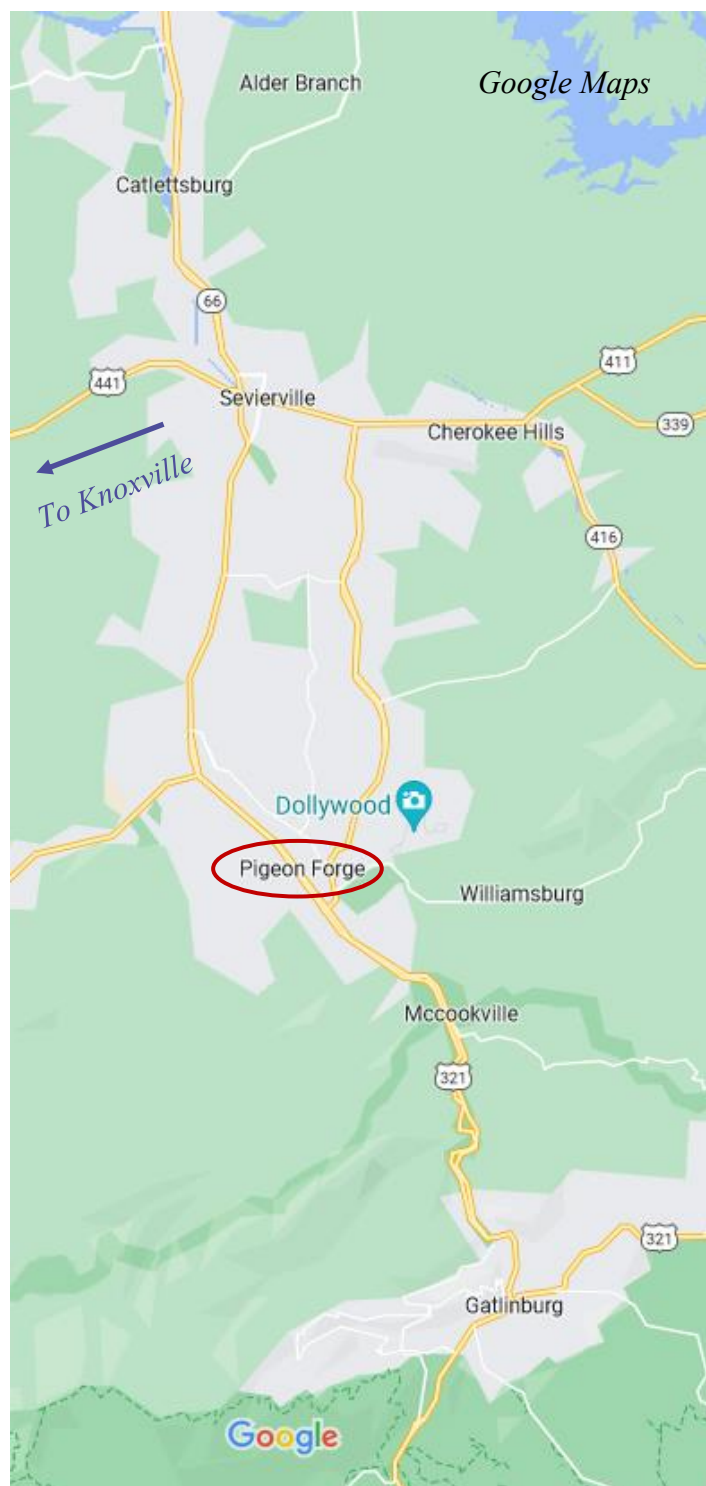


May Vacation—Part 5

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.

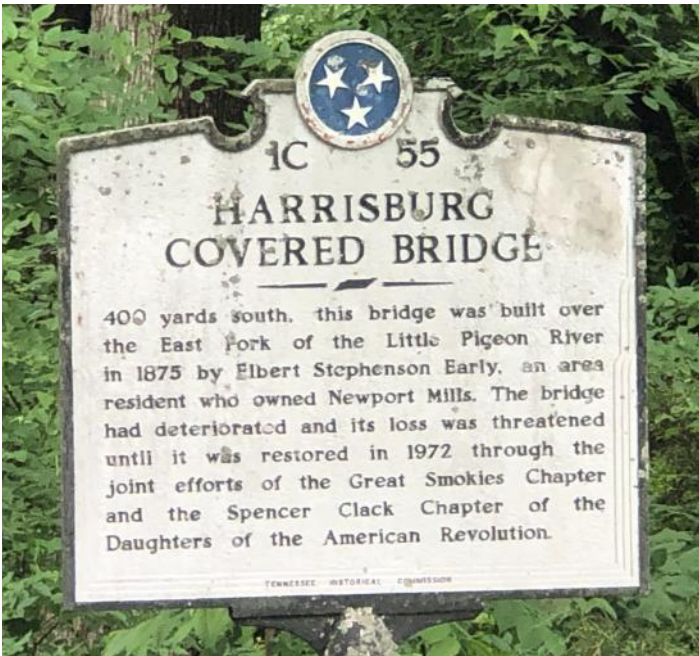
We got cleaned up and left the hotel. The first thing I wanted to do was to go find the covered bridge from that a sign I saw yesterday when we made that wrong turn in Sevierville. From what I remembered, I retraced those steps of the wrong road we took to find the covered bridge sign. Except for a quick 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

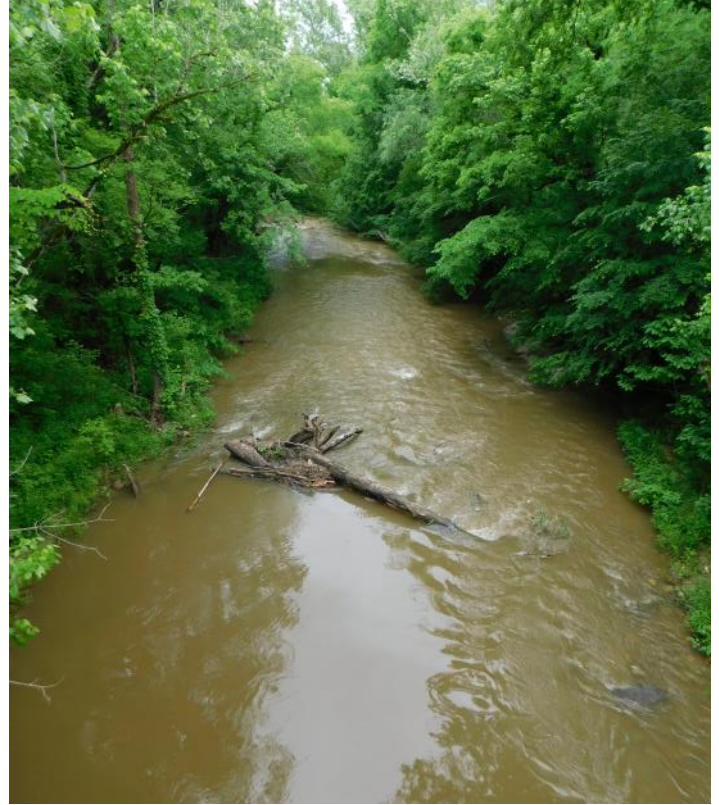
I am not certain how much of the bridge contains original wood after the second restoration in 2005, but the restoration was done to closely reflect the original bridge. One necessary modification was with the steel undercarriage to meet modern standards and to avoid the bridge being completely removed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

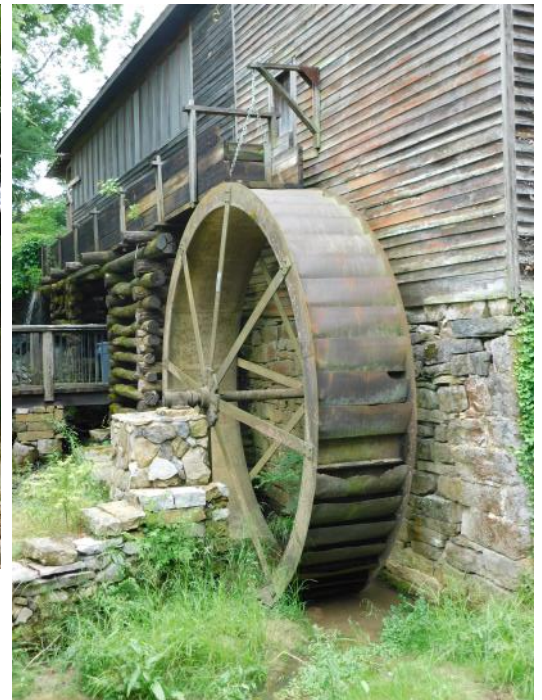


*Blowing Cave Mill,
Established in 1880.*

May Vacation—Part 5



The other side of the mill.



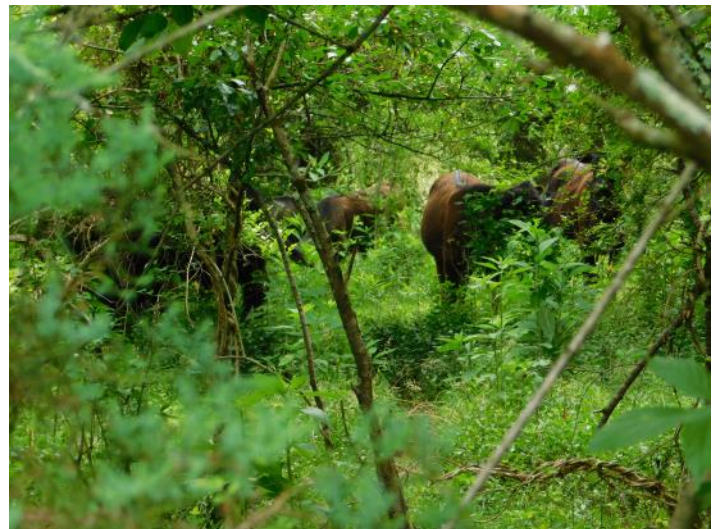
The water wheel.

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*



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

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



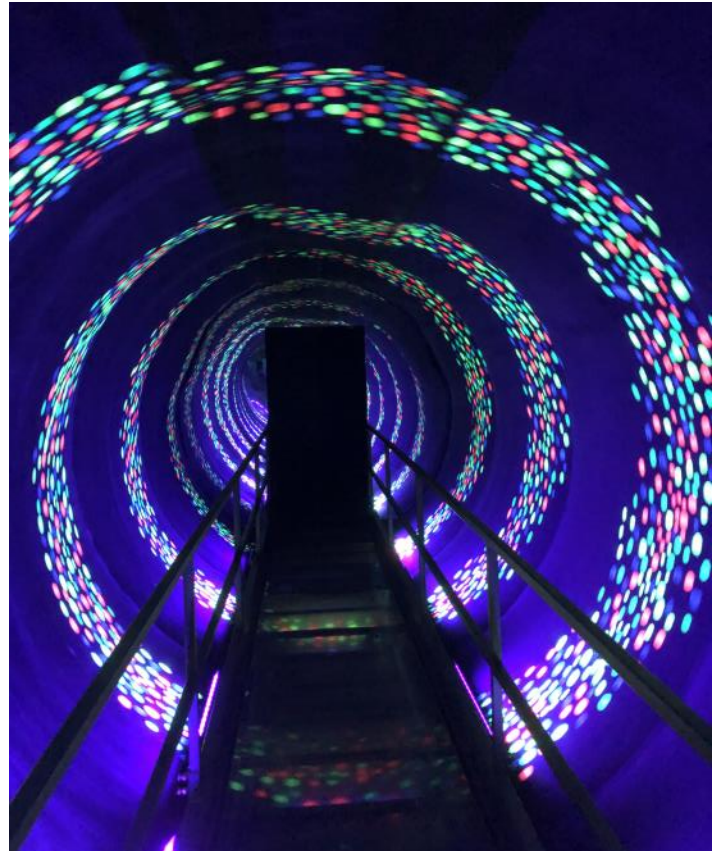
Upside down foyer at WonderWorks.

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.

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!)

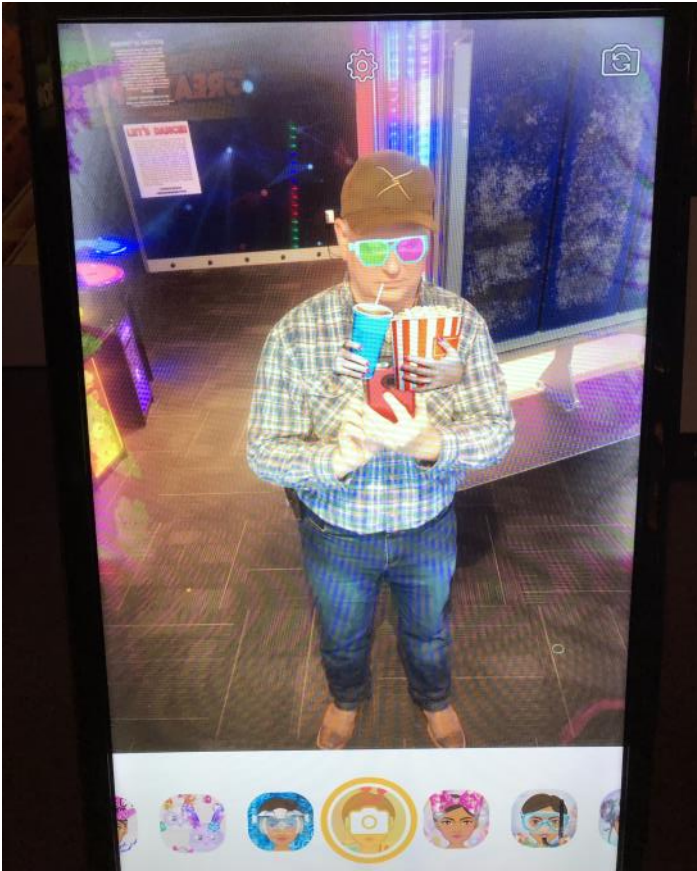


These spin in a full circle... both directions!

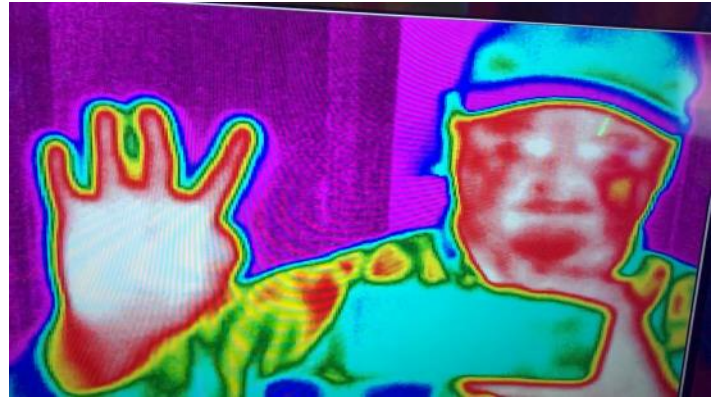


NASA suit.

May Vacation—Part 5



“Instagram” type of filter photo booth



Temperature thermal screen



Remembers these?



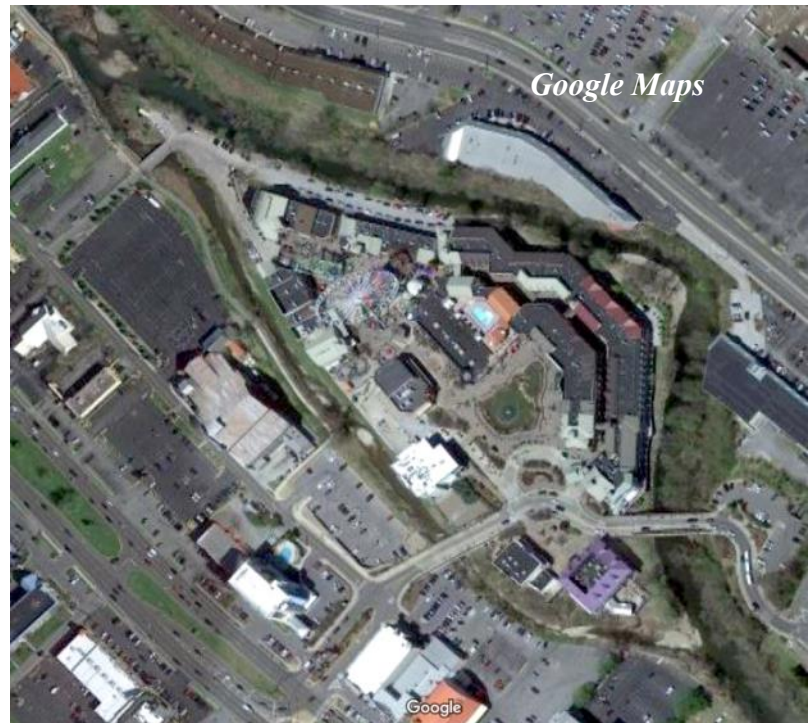
Silhouette screen



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.



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

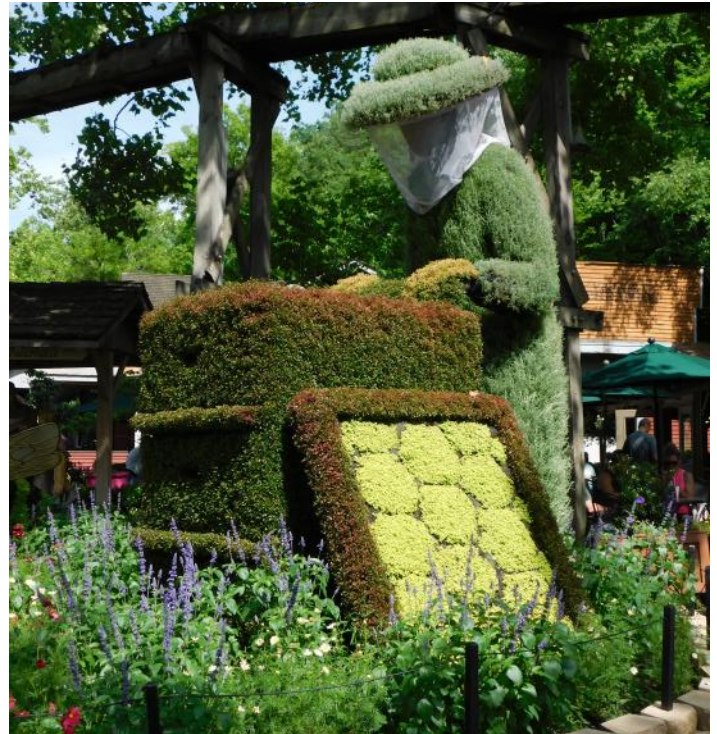


“Fun Amphibians”

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



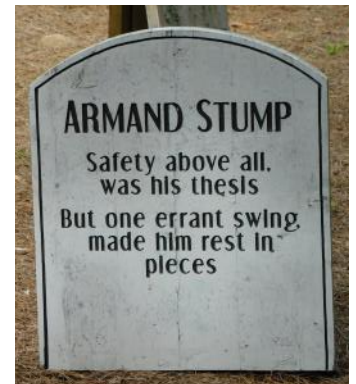
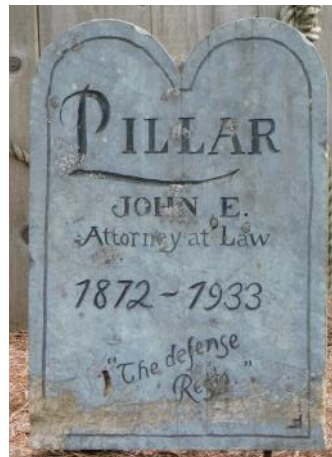
Horseshoe heart

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?

Final Thought

de Stolfe Journal.....

FOR SALE.

CAR OF COWS.

FOR SALE—A car of fresh cows and springers. Condon's stables. Howard.

HORSE, SADDLE AND BRIDLE.

FOR SALE—Horse, saddle and bridle. Enquire Walton's grocery, Spruce and Second streets.

HORSE, SADDLE AND BRIDLE.

FOR SALE—Pony, saddle and bridle. Call at 502 West Third.

HOUSEHOLD FURNITURE.

FOR SALE—Five rooms of household furniture, good as new; cheap; inquire 121 East Second street, from 1 to 3 p. m.

WAGONS, BUGGIES, CARTS.

FOR SALE—Wagons of all descriptions. Delivery, milk, express and order wagons; road carts, etc. Carriage and sign painting. J. H. Kelly, 201 West Third.

FURNITURE FOR SALE.

Ten room boarding house. Apply 221 East Fifth street.

DAIRY FOR SALE.

FOR SALE—Cheap for cash. Enquire this office.

Why give your property to insurance companies by paying excessive rates for insurance. We can save you money by insuring with us. Residence and business property in all part of the city for sale. **BOHEN & GILDEA.**

Real Estate Loan and Insurance.

FOR SALE OR TRADE.

A good ranch near Grand Junction, will take Leadville property. Stickley & Shaw.

MISCELLANEOUS.

BUGGIES AND CARTS.

Buggies and Road Carts. Painting and Repairing. Brown & Reed. 139 West Chestnut street.

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

Publisher/Owner/Editor
Robert-George de Stolfe

Graphics/Layout*






Robert-George de Stolfe

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Spring installation of *Umbrella Sky* at Dollywood.

