

On the map at the end of the last letter, you can see a lot of land in SD is reservation. NM has more I believe.

I am patching in a few words about the map accompanying this letter. Beverly took a road map to work and was able to copy it in color so it looks just like the original. On it, although it might be faint, is her yellow pen mark that traces our 2400/2500 mile trip.

In the map, you'll see a squiggle of the Missouri in the reservation land. That must be the "big bend". The reservations are about 50 miles south of Pierre, SD – the capital. (See map)

Why I am spending so much time describing this time of the trip? Well on the far side of the dam, Beverly was wondering what could be done to get the Indians an improved life on their reservations. I did my usual Google searches that night and found little to help answer such a question. The reservations are ripe with drug and alcohol abuse. We saw some signs of agriculture and ranching, but could not determine if the land was being worked by the reservation or by more affluent white tenants who might lease the land. As I wrote earlier, the casino was about the smallest one I have seen on a reservation. It looked pretty dingy.

This was on a Thursday afternoon as we drove north along the Missouri up to Pierre for the night. What was really remarkable – really remarkable! – was the terrain. We drove along the road and were able to look off to the river to our east. To the west was a tree-less range of smooth knolls. It was rangeland. On the other side of the river was the real flat cultivated land. Here on the west side at least to our left, there was absolutely nothing on those hills. No houses, no roads, no hayfields, and nothing to show that anything was going on except possibly at a few points between us and the shore of the river. It was beautiful land. The road was good and paved, but it did not show on the map. I believe it was numbered IRxx, where xx was a number.

At Pierre, I found a motel and walked to a place several blocks away where we ate. Not great, but adequate. We walked back too. Lots of Lewis and Clark tourism has been promoted since 2004 or so in memory of their travels. We caught sight of another trail that we explored the next morning before leaving Pierre.

Directly south of Pierre on the river was a large island (La Flamboise Island) which was left natural with only a few unpaved walking paths. They had built a causeway over to it. In the morning we walked to the path that went around the south shore of the island to the Missouri. We walked along the shore and finally followed a path that took us across the island and back to our car. It was cool, but it was a lot of walking for someone who has been sitting at computers for months. The only wildlife was a colorful yellow and black snake about two foot long and about as fat as a quarter is round. It crossed our path and didn't escape from our sight for some time.

Back in the car, we drove the remaining miles to Rapid City. Nothing special except for the cattle and the open range. We followed a road north of I90 until we reached Wall, SD. Then we joined I90 and sped into Rapid. SD has 75 as a speed limit. I still drive just under 65 and get the good benefits of better gas mileage. I do best around 60 or 62 mph. (Our best gas mileage was 52 mpg on one leg.)

We got to the Musch's (Dana, Steve and kids – Sammy and Sydney) around 2:30 PM or so and waited for the folks to trickle in from work and school. It was an active weekend. Beginning on the Friday evening – May 7—Sydney had to attend the dress rehearsal for the ballet on Saturday. (Our reason that started the trip.) Sammy had a baseball practice game – Rapid City Pony League. We watched the end of one

game and then Sammy's. Sammy struck out, walked and hit a double in that game. His team was winning when the game was called since it was getting late – after 9, I recall.

The next day I cannot recall what we did in the morning. However, around the 1 PM start-time we go to our seats at the ballet. Now over the years I have been to a few of these ballet recitals, but this was really good. It lasted for about two hours, I recall. I can't guess how many students performed. Their ages ranged from probably preschool to high school seniors. Sydney is a junior this year. There was at least one professional who was a man who was late 40s I suppose. All in all it was a very colorful and well produced performance. Sydney danced in two of the numbers. She dances and helps teach the younger children.

After the ballet and the picture taking, we were off to another Pony League game where Sammy's team won again. Again handily. Sam hit another double.

Sammy's forte is golf. He says that that season is mostly in the fall of the school year. Considering the weather conditions and occasional snow experienced there, I can see why.

Saturday night was uneventful. In the morning we went with Steve and the family to his church. It was a "big box" evangelical experience. The service included the "welcoming" of about 6 babies into the congregation. That was followed by a long sermon based on scripture from Kings (1 Kings or 2 Kings, I am not certain.) Songs followed and that was that.

One interesting thing was attendance. The church was packed. Each family signed and tore off a slip from the bulletin and dropped it in a basket to indicate that they were in attendance for that service.

After lunch we took a bike ride of about 10 miles. We biked down to the trail along Rapid Creek (site of a deadly flood years ago.) When I say "down", I mean DOWN. Lots of the houses like Steve's are up in hills and ridges. I suppose it is at least a 100 foot drop. So on the way back, Beverly knew that she didn't have it in her to ride back up the hills. We had not biked more than 2.5 miles this year. Flat and downhill was okay. Climbing was not. Me? I was happy to stay with Beverly. I did not have any desire to test myself under those conditions. Beverly chose the better part of valor. Steve went and got the pickup and we got a ride back.

The evening of Sunday contained a traditional night of card playing. The kids were there and agreed to the card playing as part of their Mother's Day gift to Dana. We didn't go much beyond 10 PM since the next day was a work/school day for everyone.

On the 9th, we got up early to watch Sydney and Sammy leave for school. We packed up and left for the next leg of our trip before Dana and Steve went off to work.

On the way out of Rapid, Beverly wanted to see Dinosaur Park which is a city park up on a



high ridge over the city. It was created back in the 1930s and its displays have not been updated. It still continues to be a destination for people going to Rapid City. Here is Beverly with one of the exhibits. She wanted to take it with us, but I would not let her. Not even a smaller one.

[I am using some of Bev's written notes and see that I forgot to mention a couple items. On May 6 in Hendricks, MN, the small town had a history which began in 1873 with the arrival of Norwegians in 11 covered wagons and 30 head of cattle. Their life kept them on their farms with only one or two trips each year to some place in SD. I don't believe the destination town exists any more.

Somewhat earlier on the trip we drove through a town in MN that had a lake. It is migration time. Above us was a flock of 20 or so pelicans gracefully soaring. They were white with black wingtips. Pretty to watch.]

As you can see, we left Rapid and drove south which got us into the Black Hills. We planned to do the trip to Denver in two days. We planned to see a couple things. (During Lent, we spent one evening listening to a Native American woman who was a Lutheran minister. She mentioned one of the sacred places for the Indians of SD. Bev and I located it on the map by using Google Earth. It contained areas of that open tree-less land – one round and another shaped like a lizard.) So we headed down to Hill City and then northwest. (Bev drew a yellow line out from Hill City.)

The Black Hills don't get very high. The tallest mountain in SD is there – Harney Peak. It is a little over 7000 feet. It is still a different climate and beautiful scenery.

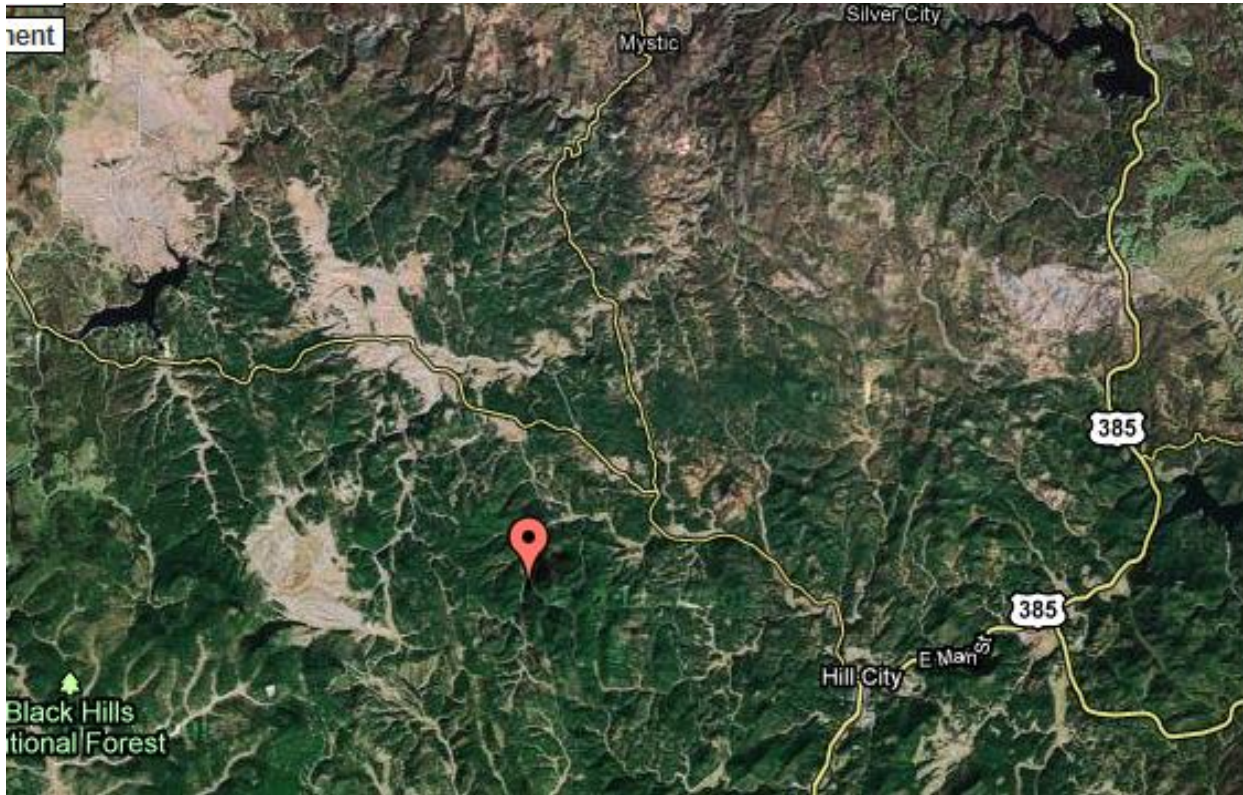
On the travel to Hill City, our path crossed a herd of 9 deer. Only 7 made it into this shot. They would



not pose. Like some other shots, I don't even get out of the car. I shot through the windshield or miss the shot completely. In this picture, I cut out and enlarged the section to show just the deer. If you saw all the background the deer would be too small. But the background captured trees, ridges, and our curvy road.

The Google Earth shot below gives a satellite view of the place we were seeking northwest of Hill City. The west-heading road shown was called the Deerfield Road. When it got to the back of the "lizard"

another dirt road went across that lizard area, through the forest again, and across the middle of the bigger round region. It was a broad and well graded dirt road. No ruts, no mud. The ride was very nice. Hardly anyone lived out there. No houses were visible over the miles we travelled. However, I wonder why the few roads that departed from our dirt road were all marked by street signs. (Looked sort of like someone had designs for a development. Yuk!)



The picture at the right shows the open range land. So the lizard and other blotches were just regions that were treeless. The little white squiggle in the distance was our road. We were up about 6000 feet. So if I chose other photos, you would see that snow was still up there. (In fact since we have come back, that region has experienced more



significant snow. Winter's/spring's last hoorah.) Here is a pretty shot. I like to see old abandoned houses and wonder about their former life. There is some snow for you.

Our trip across those “spots” ended back on Deerfield Road which turned north after going around a reservoir you might be able to see on the satellite image – right below the round spot. Very seldom do we retrace our steps on trips, but we did go back to Hill City for lunch and travelled on from there.

I am glad it was early in the season, because Custer, SD and other points south of Hill City would get real busy when June arrives.

We headed into Wyoming and started south at Mule Creek Junction. The weather seemed partly cloudy as we reached Lusk. I say “seemed”. It surprised both of us that the clouds in the southwest were getting to be menacing. Temperature was in the mid-50s in Lusk. Bev, the ace co-pilot, had chosen a route WY270 to cut off a few miles. At least 270 was paved. ☺ Nah, it was a very well paved road! Paved and empty. The only vehicle I could remember was the semi which turned on to 270 and took off like a homesick angel. The driver might have known something that we did not – at that moment. (I can’t remember any trip we’ve taken where the roads were so empty. Miles and miles with no one else in sight.)

Beverly was now driving and we were as out in the open as you can get. I was just lazing around

shooting pictures of the approaching storm. I chose the only picture that had some farm or something to add perspective. From the map we had a 40 mile ride to Guernsey, WY.



Well, the storm hit. As I recall, it started with hail. Luckily for us the size did not get very large. But it did last. Ultimately the road was covered with ice and the roadside showed white with the buildup. She slowed to 25 mph or so.

Our Prius has quite a display of information and I took a shot of it. Mainly we use it



to track fuel consumption. But the outside temperature shows in the upper right corner. Can you make it out? The outdoor temp had dropped to 34 degrees. (Fuel consumption was 48.9 mpg.) Below is another shot through the windshield in an attempt to show the ice on the road. I did show the hail build-up on the hood of the car -- note the bottom of the windshield.

See who got the tough driving conditions. ☺☺☺



The storm just changed into all rain by the time we got to Guernsey. That destination was to be another feature of the day. In Guernsey, the old Oregon Trail had passed along the north bank of the North Platte River. I don't believe the river was crossed there. I saw one comment that said that they travelled along the river to provide for thirsty cattle and horses. Makes sense. The wagon wheels left ruts that can still be seen. I saw them years ago near the Wind River Range in WY. So I thought I'd see what they looked like at Guernsey. Well, after finding the parking area, the rain **had not** subsided. The ruts were somewhere done a path that contained educational materials. It was just too much. We'll put off that viewing until another time and probably another place.

We took off looking for a motel. First stop, Wheatfield on the Laramie River. On the way into town we saw that there was a power plant on the river. The first motel looked kind of crowded, but we went into the desk. The man informed us that everything in town was full up. He said something about the power plant having three units (turbines, subplants, ??). Each year they close down one for repairs. Normally that brings 200 workers to the town. This year's project brought in 800.

I don't believe we stopped again until Cheyenne where we stayed the night.

Now we are up to May 10. We drove from Cheyenne to the outskirts of Denver. Bonnie, Bev's friend and retired nurse, lives in Lafayette, CO. Just to mention, Lafayette was originally a mining town – coal. Lafayette is now done mining. Those old mines were underground and not the strip variety. Bonnie says you can buy insurance in case your house falls into one of the old shafts.

It is a nice clean little suburb. Very few new houses, but never the less the little ones like Bonnie's were expensive due in part to Lafayette's closeness to Boulder, CO. Bonnie is actually moving from her present location to a Boulder triplex which she and her daughter are buying.

Anyway as we arrived, the house was locked. Bonnie was out walking her dogs. She has two of her own – Chili and Sally. One of Bonnie's activities each day is to walk several blocks and pick up a third dog. She then returns home for several hours. Her friend who works wants her dog to get exercise and canine companionship. Later in the day, Bonnie reverses the process and takes that third dog home. A lotta walking. Bonnie was out getting that dog when we arrived at her house.

We only had to wait a short while and the sun (not seen much on this trip) was nice as we sat in her backyard reading. I can't remember how long we talked and nibbled, but soon it was time for the return walk. All the dogs were leashed up and off we went. After dropping off dog #3, we went on to a sizeable lake which is in a park in Lafayette. Waneka Reservoir (I know we visited that park on our previous trip to Denver.) The water was slightly low, but there was still lots of water in the snowpack in the Rockies. The level will come up in a month or so.

I took a couple pictures of the Rockies as seen from Waneka Reservoir. We were 32 miles as the crow flies from the Rockies.

Notice that the sun was gone and the clouds dominated. The weather was not warm anymore. The speed of the walk kept me warm enough.

Bonnie commented on the way back to her house about how dry the climate was. She said something about that clouds appear, but it never rains.

Back at Bonnie's, we spent the evening with Bonnie completing and serving the "Mother of All Chicken Dinners". She had put it in to cook just before we left on our walk. It was delicious. I believe she had about 8 chicken breasts cooking on top of rice and vegetables. Needless to say, yours truly was the only one who had two pieces of the chicken.



Just before going to bed we watched some rerun Seinfeld shows on one of the Denver channels. (We don't watch anything like that here, but I guess I watched a lot of Mash and Cheers reruns over the years. These newer ones don't interest me as much. Maybe humor changes.)

Incidentally, while watching TV, it started raining. ☺ So much for dry Lafayette. It was just a steady rain that set the stage for most of the rest of our trip. We kept looking for sun!!!



Somewhere in the evening or afternoon, I phoned Joan Zilis (Cousin Joan) who lives Littleton. Again, Lafayette is north of Denver and Littleton is south of Denver. I made arrangements to visit Joan on Wednesday around Noon.

We slept well in Bonnie's bedroom. Nothing like putting someone out of their accommodations. However, Bonnie planned that and we found it very comfortable for our two nights in Lafayette.

In the AM on Wednesday, May 11, it was still raining and rained all the way through Denver and to Littleton. I remember having to park the car at Joan's and running (which I don't do well anymore) to get to the building without getting soaked. Yes, I had dropped Beverly at the door though she usually refuses such treatment.

It took a few minutes to connect with Joan who was watching for us. We might have been an hour late since we tried to find a convenient way south that would not involve

freeways. (A mistake in this case)

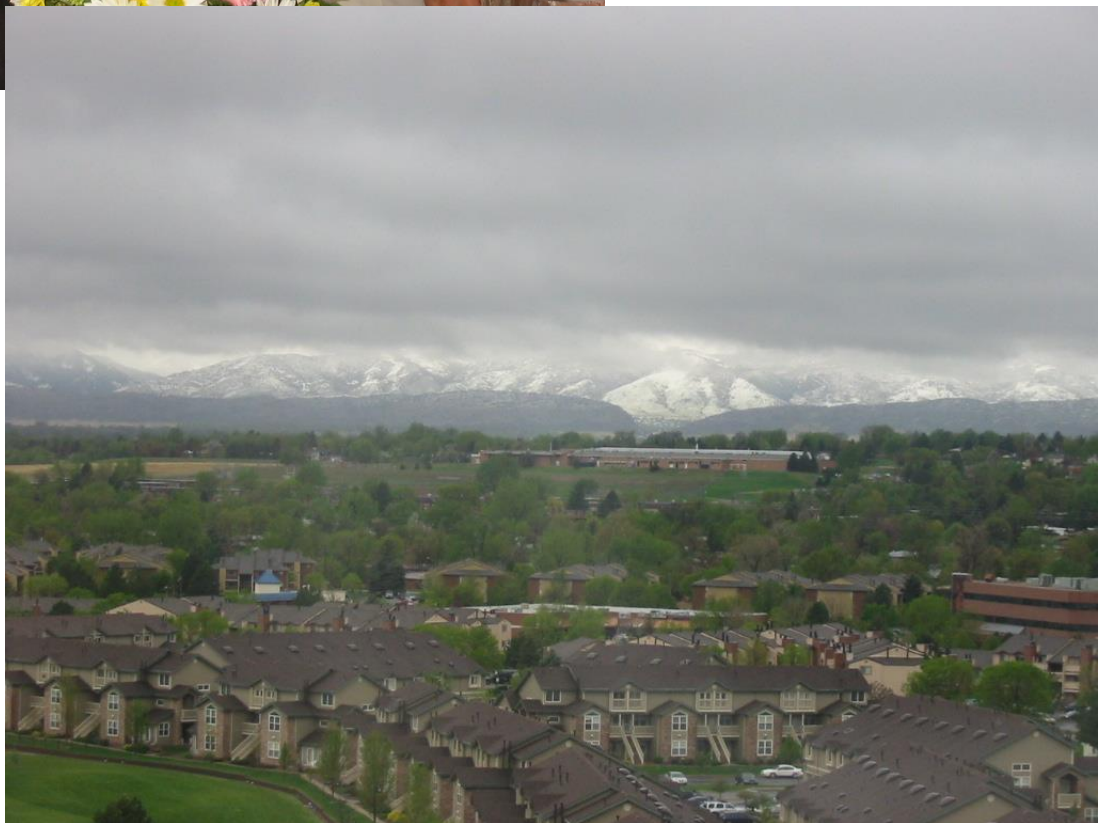
Joan lives in a 13 floor apartment building that is new and just for elder folks. Joan's apartment is actually on the top floor designated PH on the elevator. (No one wants to live on a 13th floor.)



The apartment had a pretty good sized kitchen, a living room, two bedrooms and two baths. And what a view!! It could not be much better. On this rainy and cloudy day, we were hardly able to see the mountains below the clouds on the western horizon. Things improved so that before we left I was able to take the picture you see below.

Joan's high-rise was part of the housing complex you see in the picture. But it was the only high-

rise. The lower left corner shows green and is part of the golf course incorporated in the complex. If I showed more of that grass, one golf hole had its green farther down to the left – in full view for Joan. I don't believe she is a golfer. Hope the golfers were good enough to control their distance. I'll bet a lot of those condos get pelted regularly. I don't see what protection they have, if any.



We had a nice light lunch that Joan prepared. We talked a lot about her family – 3 sons (doctor, artist, landscape architect) and daughter in Wisconsin who is a nurse. Two of the sons are nearby in Denver suburbs. It looks like they are taking good care of her. Incidentally, her house in Glen Ellyn sold right away and I believe she must have got what she asked for it.

Joan is a very cheerful lady. Funny how families are. It is too bad we never saw her when we were younger. She has nothing but good to say about Mom. I suppose Joan was the first niece that Mom had and Joan said she was very good to her whenever she visited Crown Point. Joan implies that Aunt Billie was pretty reclusive --- because of poor hearing, I believe. I remember seeing Billie once when I made a surprise visit to the Elgin farm. I was still studying in the University. I left home and drove by there on the way to Minneapolis. It was a nice short visit and I am very glad I stopped. Saw Uncle Herb, Aunt Billie, and Mibbs.

Well this visit in Littleton was short too. Only about 3 hours or so. I just remember that I have to put some Hack and maybe Bielefeld items together to send to Joan. One of her sons is particularly interested in family history.

We took the freeway back north and didn't find it too bad. We were on the road around 4 PM. The only issue was the final turnoff. We turned off too soon and had to travel north for a way until we reached the road we used on our arrival on Tuesday.

We got to Bonnie's, picked her up, and drove to Boulder which was about 10 miles west. I don't think I have ever been to Boulder in the daylight. Well, it wasn't dark yet, but the clouds just made it look dark. Somewhere during our meal, it started raining again.

But what a place that Bonnie chose! Even Joan raved about it too when I told her about it weeks later. It went by the name of The Boulder Dushanbe Teahouse. (Dushanbe, Tarjikistan is a city 270 miles north of Kabul. And 125 miles from Samarkand.) The teahouse served more than tea. It was fairly large and fairly busy. The food was good. I was introduced to Tarjikistan Plov (traditional rice dish with carrots, onions, chickpeas and spices with grilled beef, tomato-cucumber salad, dried fruit, flatbread) It was great! The whole dinner for the three of us was not that expensive.



Here is a paragraph that explains how the Teahouse got to Boulder.

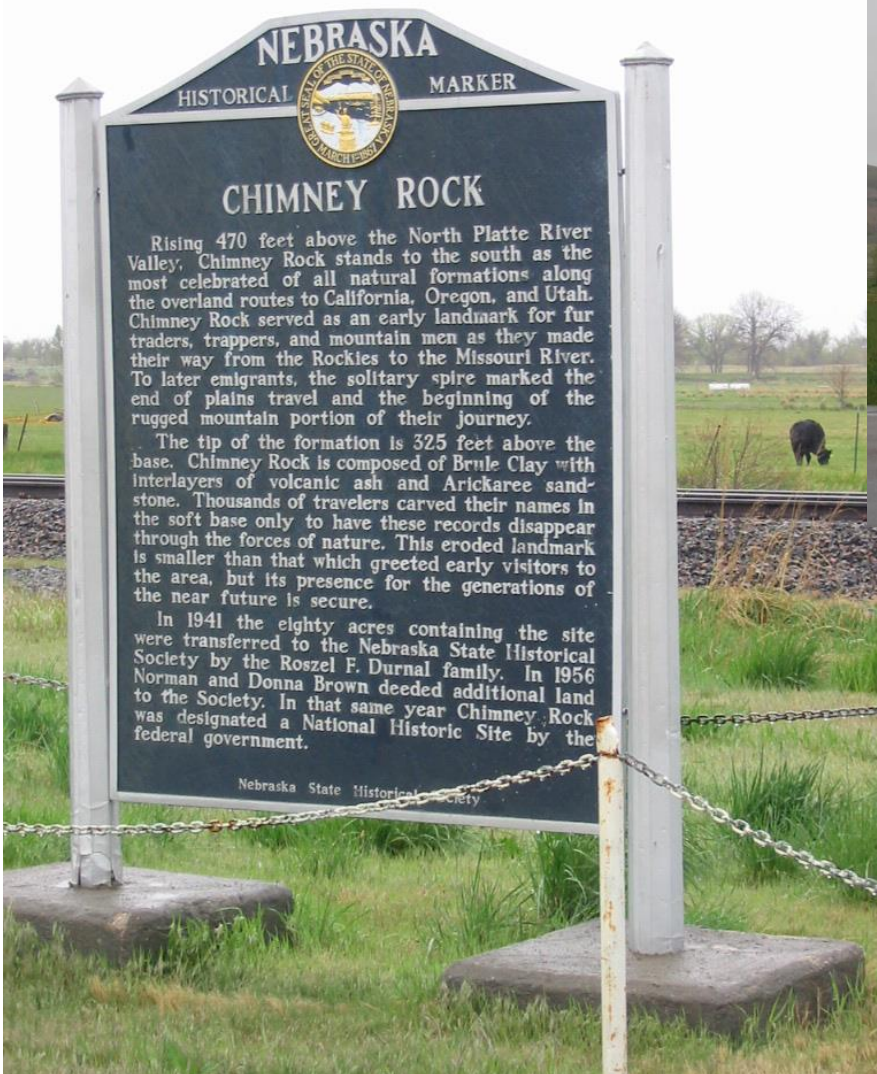
In 1987, during his first visit to Boulder, Mayor Maksud Ikramov announced that Dushanbe planned to present our city with a Teahouse to celebrate the establishment of sister city ties. From 1987 -1990, more than 40 artisans in several cities of Tajikistan created the decorative elements our Teahouse, including its hand-carved and hand-painted ceiling, tables, stools, columns, and exterior ceramic panels. Often these skills are handed down from generation to generation within families. Lado Shanidze served as chief architect.

Roy, I don't suppose that Lado Shanidze was an architect for any Chicago buildings. I will check. I

tried real hard. However, I guess Lado may have built lots of teahouses in his homeland, but only one outside of Tarjikistan. Maybe it is a possibility for the Gold Coast!!!

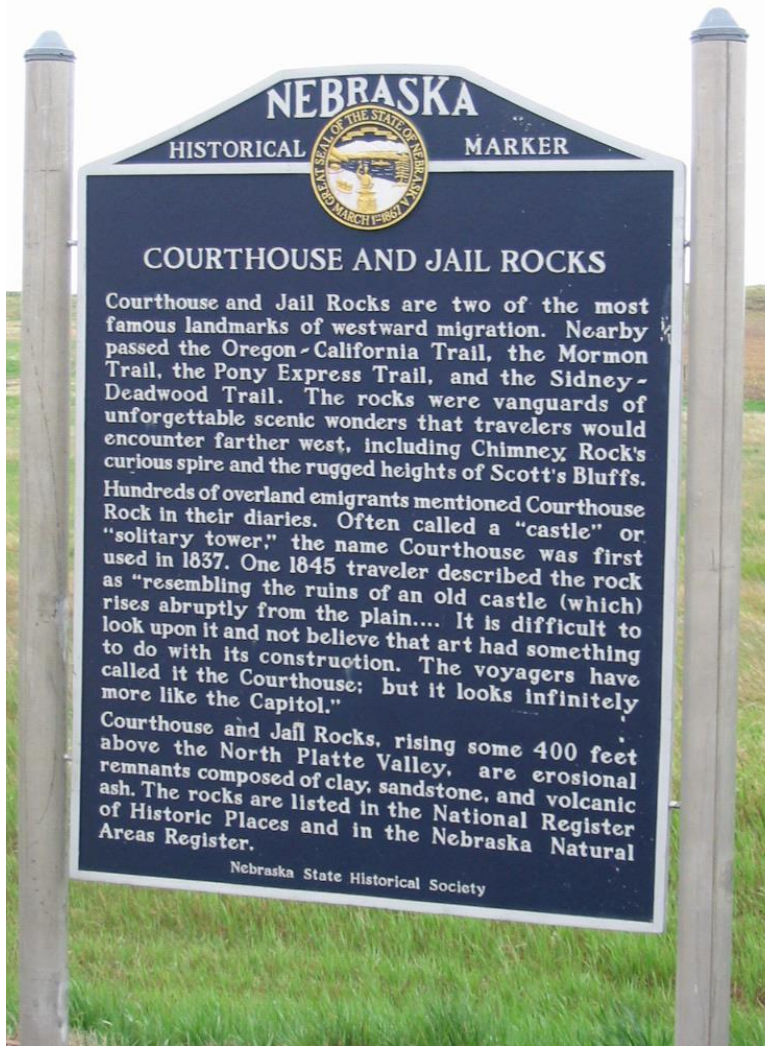
Back in Lafayette, we watched a couple more Seinfeld sessions and went to bed. In the morning, we left Bonnie early. Her realty lady was supposed to come over and begin to suggest how to move things around in order to “show the house” for sale. (By this point as I write on May 29, Bonnie believes she has a buyer already.)

Let’s see. It was May 12. Consider the endpoints of travels on the next three days. May 12 Alliance, NE, May 13 Kearney, NE, and May 14 Sioux City, IA. That means we spent about three full days going across Nebraska.



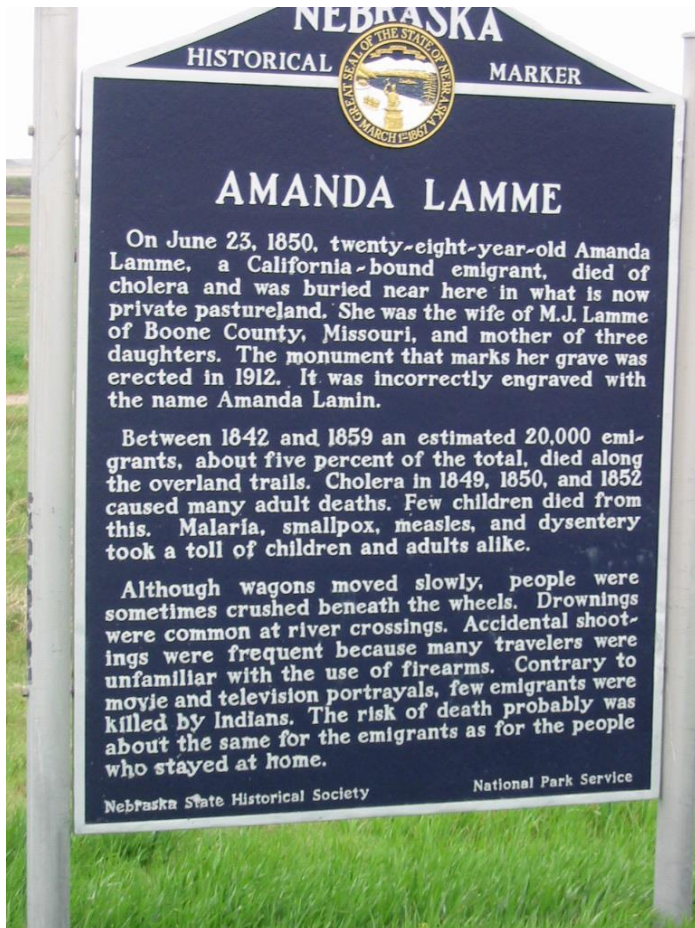
On the 12th, it took us a while to get out of Lafayette and on the way. As I recall we got to Fort Morgan, CO for lunch. Bev didn’t take many notes that day and we each remember that there really wasn’t too much to see. However, I am getting the sense that people in WY, SD, and NE have done a lot to ensure that their history is preserved. Just on the way to Alliance, NE we encountered three interesting highway markers. Two of them were accompanied with

rock structures that were being memorialized. Chimney Rock was near Bridgeport, NE. I hope your magnifying glass still works. If not, let me know.



Shortly thereafter, we encountered another rock formation. The smaller inserts show the rocks in each case. Maybe the trails were not always traveled religiously. Wagons trains just moved along in the general area of a trail and scouts/leaders prayed to see these markers. (Ah of a Golden Arches...) It was probably easier navigating here however than was sea travel.

Ever heard of "Jail House Rock". That must have been different. 😊



One more marker before Alliance. Boone County mentioned here is a county in the middle of Missouri that contains Columbia, MO. and the University of Missouri. The last paragraph bursts a lot of nostalgic bubbles.