

Our Cross Country Expedition (Part III)

Day 7 (9/7/2012):

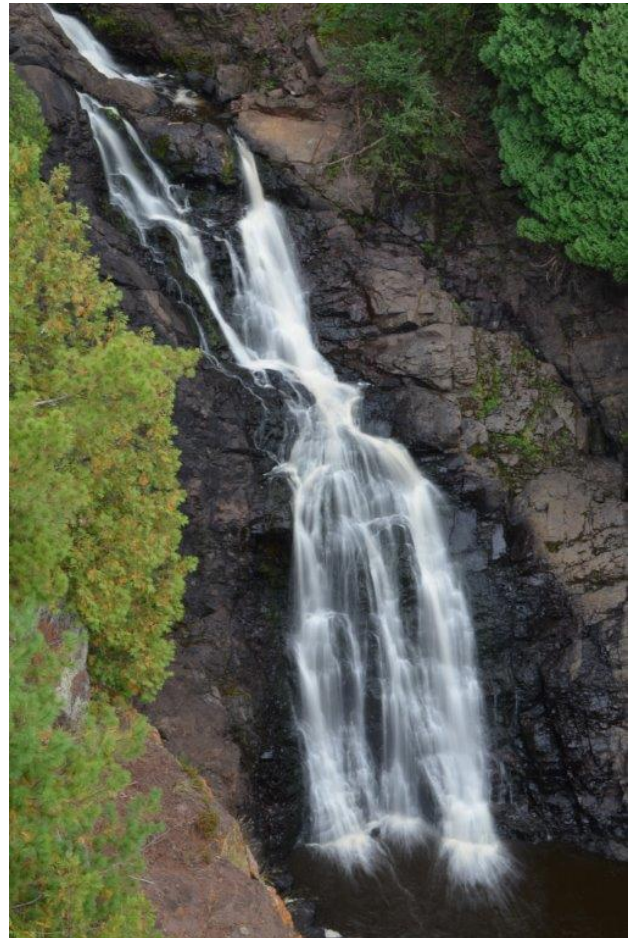
The plan for this day was a kayak visit to Apostle Islands National Lakeshore in Northern Wisconsin. Unfortunately, the Mother Nature had her plans. A heavy downpour held off all the kayaks ashore in the morning. We couldn't afford to wait for a favorable condition but to get on the road.



Looking for covers from the rain by visiting a covered bridge at Amnicon Falls State Park, Wisconsin.



Waterfalls at Amnicon Falls State Park.



Big Manitou Falls at Pattison State Park, Wisconsin

Felt compelled to visit a local cheese processing factory while passing through the Cheese State of Wisconsin, the leading cheese producing state in the country.



After visiting the cheese factory, we drove across into the State of Minnesota to overnight in Minneapolis. Total driving for the day: 300 Miles.

Day 8 (9/8/2012):

Minnesota greeted us with sunshine today which made our visit to the Capital of Minnesota a much more pleasant one. The Minnesota State Capitol Building, located in its capital, Saint Paul, was modeled after Saint Peter's Basilica in Vatican. The unsupported marble dome is, you guessed it, the second largest in the world, after Saint Peter's.



While constructing the outside of the Capitol Building to resemble Saint Peter's Basilica, the inside of the nearby Cathedral of Saint Paul is almost identical to the inside of Saint Peter's.





If modeling both in and outside of the Capitol Building and the Cathedral to resemble a great work of architecture to showcase Minnesota's glorious past were not enough, the nearby many enormous mansions on affluent Summit Avenue and downtown Minneapolis certainly will. Below is James J. Hill, a railway magnate, house on 240 Summit Avenue, Saint Paul.





Downtown Minneapolis.



Cross the border into South Dakota and arrived at Sioux Falls, the largest city in the state with the population of 160,000.

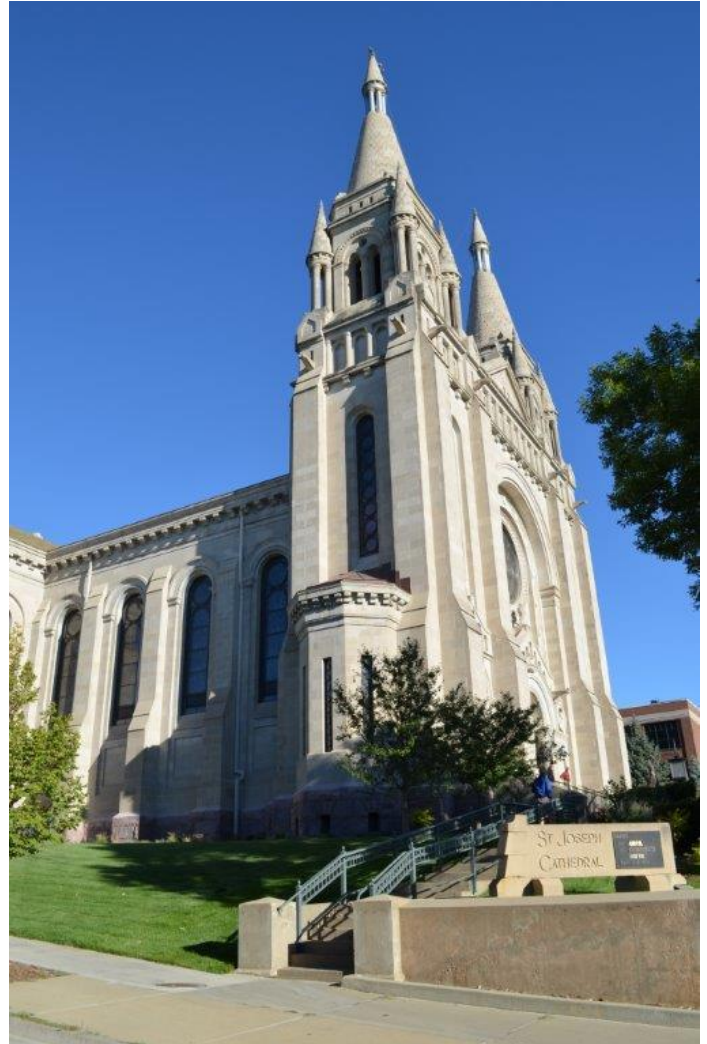
An evening shot of Sioux Falls.



Stayed in Sioux Falls, South Dakota after a moderate driving of just 285 miles.

Day 9 (9/9/2012):

Went to visit Catholic Diocese of Sioux Falls on this Sunday Morning only because of the convenient timing, not to worship God as most church goers do.



Then, went from the “Good and Godly” to the “Badlands”.





A much anticipated visit to the Presidents at Mountain Rushmore National Memorial which was completed in 1941.



Stayed in the town of Keystone, South Dakota, gateway town to Mountain Rushmore, drove 395 miles.

Day 10 (9/10/2012):



Most people visiting Mountain Rushmore end up also tour the nearby Crazy Horse Memorial, still in construction after 64 years. Mountain Rushmore was completed by father-son sculptors Gutzon and Lincoln Borglum with the assistance of another well-known sculptor at the time, named Korczak Ziolkowski. Each president was originally to be depicted from head to waist. But after the older

Borglum's death in early 1941, the younger Borglum fired Korczak Ziolkowski due to a disagreement. The construction itself was forced to end in October 1941 with lack of funding. That's the reason we only see the presidents' heads today.

Korczak Ziolkowski, then was commissioned by the local American Indians to carve Crazy Horse Memorial which would depict the Oglala Lakota warrior, Crazy Horse, riding a horse and pointing into the distance. The work started in 1948 with private funds. Ziolkowski reportedly was offered ten million dollars for the project from the federal government on two occasions, but he turned the offers down for fearing that his plans for the broader educational and cultural goals of the memorial would be overturned by federal government's involvement by accepting the grant.

After Korczak Ziolkowski's death in 1982, his widow Ruth, took charge of the sculpture with the help of seven of her children. Ruth herself died in 2014. Monique Ziolkowski, Ruth's daughter, became CEO of the foundation and three of her siblings continue to work on the project, as well as three of Monique's nephews. The foundation receives funding through private donations, admission ticket sales and the sale of rocks from the project. We purchased some of the rocks in support of the Ziolkowski Family's noble cause. Below is a model of the finished Crazy Horse Memorial.



When complete, the head of Crazy Horse will be 87 feet high; by comparison, the heads of the four Presidents at Mount Rushmore are each at 60 feet high.



We, then, concluded the day by visiting Jewel Cave National Monument and crossed the border to Wyoming and overnighted in Cheyenne, the capital after driving for another 300 miles.



Day 11 (9/11/2012):

Since we had visited Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks several times in the past, we decided to just visit the State Capital of Wyoming, then go south to tour the beautiful State of Colorado. Below is the Capitol Building of Wyoming.



Though the State of Colorado is beautiful but they may need to pay more attention to its welcome sign and the capitol building.

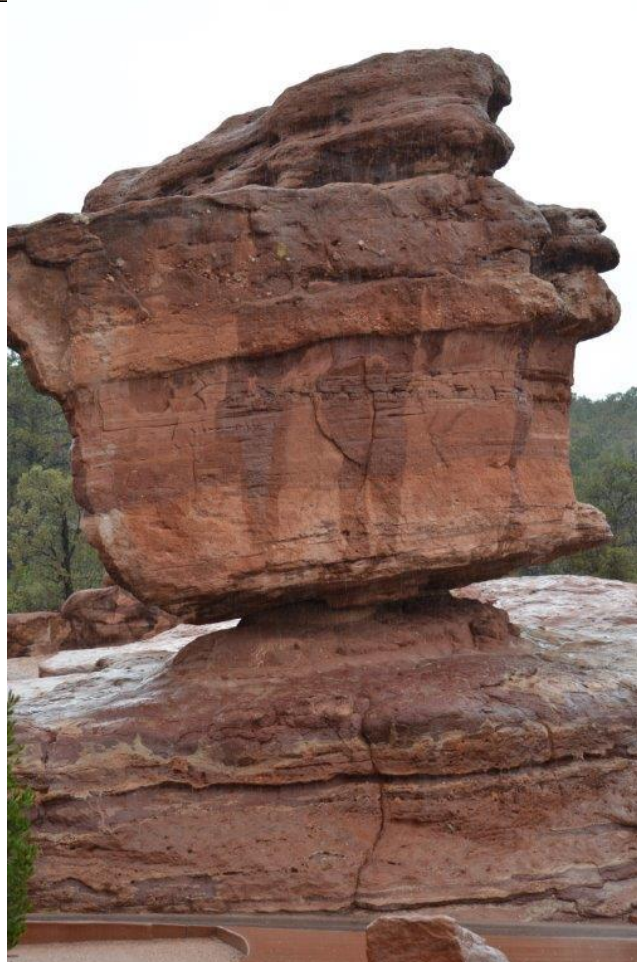


Settled in Colorado Springs after visiting Rocky Mountain National Park and 310 miles of driving.



Day 12 (9/12/2012):

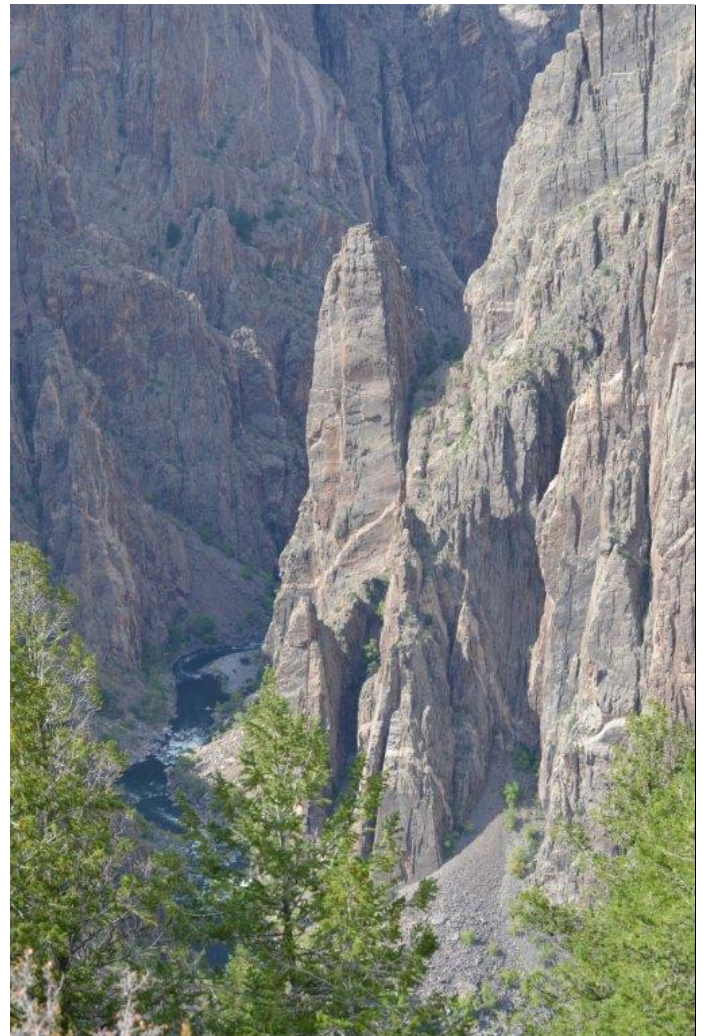
Garden of Gods is a privately held park that showcases a collection of red rock formations. Again, due to a heavy rain storm, the red rocks were shown more like dark brown colors. A huge disappointment.

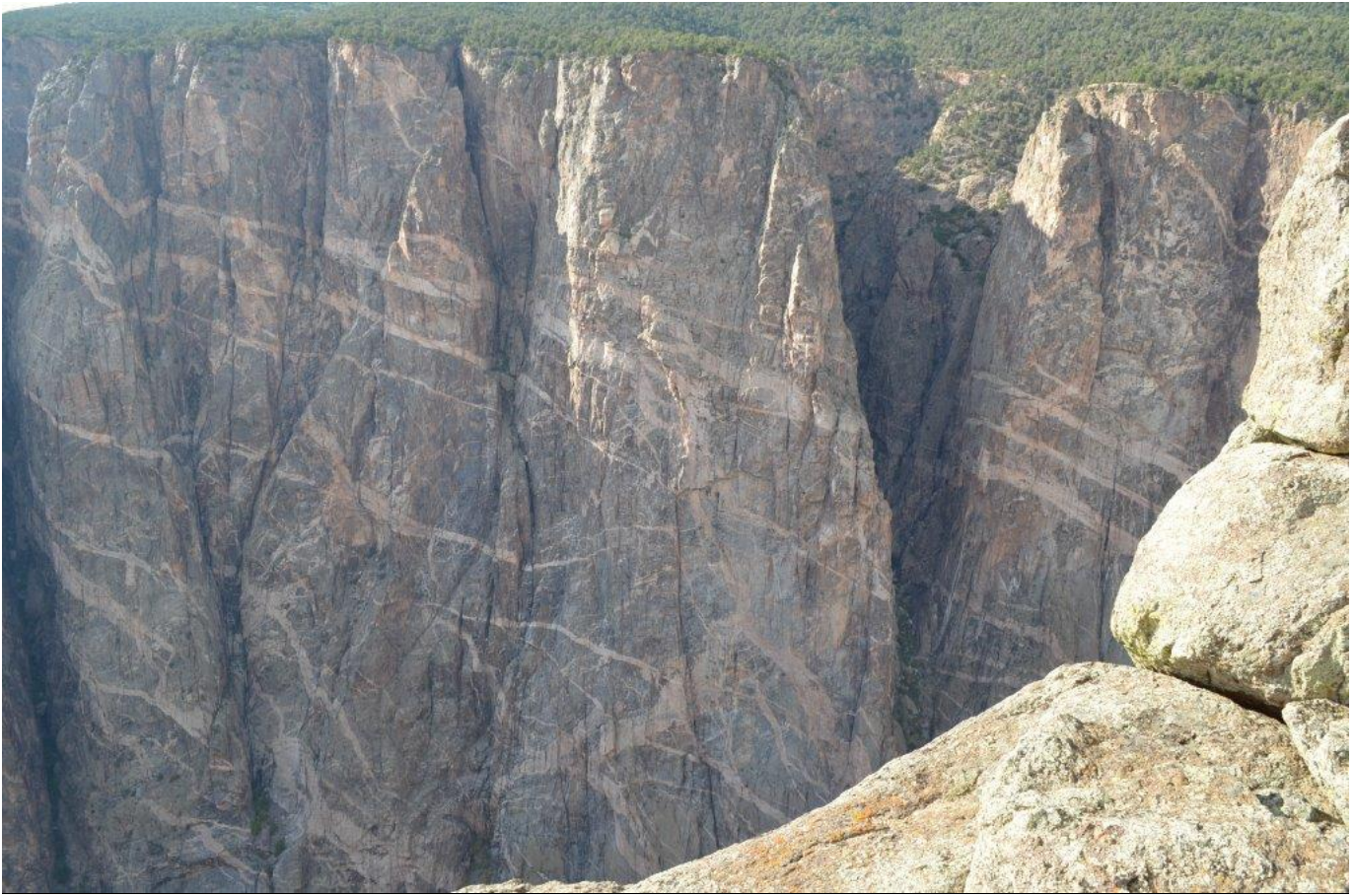


The Royal Gorge Bridge near Canon City, Colorado is the highest bridge in the United States and the second highest suspension bridge in the world. The bridge crosses the gorge 955 feet above the Arkansas River.



Our next stop was to tour the lesser known Black Canyon of the Gunnison National Park which contains the deepest and most dramatic section of the Black Canyon. The canyon's name owes itself to the fact that parts of the gorge only receive 33 minutes of sunlight a day.





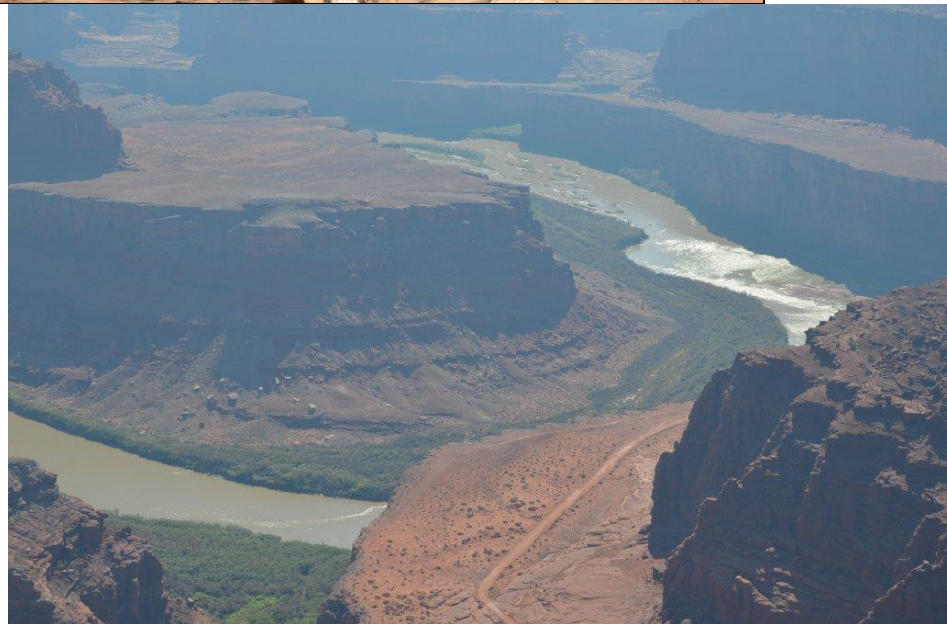
Stayed in Grand Junction, Colorado after the drive of 345 miles and view the sunset at James M. Robb - Colorado River State Park.



Day 13 (9/13/2012):

Started the day by crossing into the State of Utah and visiting Arches National Park and Dead Horse Point State Park near the town of Moab.





Drove 320 miles and overnighted in the small town of Richfield, Utah to rest for the big day tomorrow.

Day 14 (9/14/2012):

Got up real early to be able to join an early cavern tour at the Great Basin National Park Nevada.



Great Basin National Park contains 5,000-year-old bristlecone pines, a rock glacier, and the biggest attraction of the limestone Lehman Caves.





From Great Basin National Park, we, then, drove an unbelievable 680 miles to conclude our cross country expedition to come back home.



America the Beautiful!

Our 14 day cross country driving trip provided us with memories that we will cherish for the rest of our lives. It opened our eyes further to learn a little better of this country of road trips and great open skies, where more than several million miles of highways lead past red-rock deserts, below towering mountain peaks, and across fertile wheat fields that roll off toward the horizon. The scenic country lanes of New England, the once glorious industrial Midwest and the sun-bleached hillsides of the Great Plains are a few fine starting points for the great American road trip. When it comes to travel, America has always floored us with its staggering range of possibilities. Not many other countries have so much natural beauty – mountains, beaches, rainforest, deserts, canyons, glaciers – coupled with fascinating cities to explore and all the things that make travel so rewarding.

In addition, this country is so blessed with vast oceans on both sides, the Gulf of Mexico to its south, the Five Great Lakes to its north and the mighty Mississippi River flows in the middle, by purchasing Alaska and adding Hawaii, the country is number one in the world in terms of the natural beauty and resources. No wonder some people believe that God is an American!

While trying to determine God's nationality is another subject far beyond our reach, one thing we are sure of is that we are so fortunate to be able to call such a beautiful and blessed land home. Just as Irving Berlin reminded us in his beloved song "God Bless America":

*God bless America,
Land that I love,
Stand beside her and guide her
Thru the night with a light from above;*

*From the mountains, to the prairies,
To the oceans white with foam,
God bless America,
My home, sweet home.
God bless America,
My home, sweet home.*

The End.

The following are the statistics of our trip:

- 1 Canadian Province
 - Ontario
- 2 Canadian National Parks
 - Bruce Peninsula National Park
 - Fathom Five National Marine Park
- 3 Privately owned parks
 - The Flume Gorge, New Hampshire
 - Crazy Horse Memorial, South Dakota
 - Garden of Gods, Colorado Springs, Colorado
- 4 Prestigious Institutions
 - Harvard University, Boston, Massachusetts
 - Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Boston, Massachusetts
 - Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire
 - Cornell University, Ithaca, New York
- 5 State Capitals
 - Boston, Massachusetts
 - Albany, New York
 - Saint Paul, Minnesota
 - Cheyenne, Wyoming
 - Denver, Colorado
- 6 Churches
 - Church of Christ, Scientist, Boston, Massachusetts
 - Trinity Episcopal Church, Boston, Massachusetts
 - Old South Church, Boston, Massachusetts
 - Cathedral of Saint Paul, Saint Paul, Minnesota
 - Catholic Diocese of Sioux Falls, Sioux Falls, South Dakota
 - US Air Force Academy Cadet Chapel, Colorado Springs, Colorado
- 7 Major Rivers
 - Merrimack River
 - Connecticut River
 - Hudson River
 - Niagara River
 - St. Croix River
 - Mississippi River
 - Missouri River
- 8 Waterfalls
 - Ithaca Falls, New York
 - Buttermilk Falls, New York
 - Glenn Creek Falls, New York
 - Niagara Falls, New York/Ontario
 - Munising Falls, Michigan
 - Amnicon Falls, Wisconsin
 - Big Manitou Falls, Wisconsin
 - Sioux Falls, South Dakota
- 9 National Parks, Lakeshore, Memorial and Monuments
 - Pictured Rocks National Lakeshore, Michigan

- Apostle Islands National Lakeshore, Bayfield, Wisconsin
- Badlands National Park, South Dakota
- Mt. Rushmore National Memorial, South Dakota
- Jewel Cave National Monument, South Dakota
- Rocky Mountain National Park, Colorado
- Black Canyon National Park, Colorado
- Arches National Park, Utah
- Great Basin National Park, Nevada

10 State Parks

- Franconia Notch State Park, New Hampshire
- Green Mountain and Finger Lakes, New York
- Buttermilk Falls State Park, New York
- Robert H. Treman State Park, New York
- Watkins Glen State Park, Watkins Glen, New York
- Amnicon Falls State Park, Wisconsin
- Pattison State Park, Wisconsin
- Sioux Falls State Park, South Dakota
- James M. Robb - Colorado River State Park, Colorado
- Dead Horse Point State Park, Utah

13 US States

- Massachusetts
- New Hampshire
- Vermont
- New York
- Michigan
- Wisconsin
- Minnesota
- South Dakota
- Wyoming
- Colorado
- Utah
- Nevada
- California

14 Days on the road

The total distance traveled 4,804 miles (7,731 km)