

2019 Trip Southwest, September 2019

Blog Text

Sandra started 'sundowning' in Santa Fe, which required Bill to significantly replan the rest of the trip.

Thursday, September 5, 2019

2019 Trip Southwest - Day 1: Warrensburg to Dodge City

Damn - 3 pages of notes, and the laptop deleted them. I'll edit this to start over later. Let's say 386 miles, 8 1/2 hours on the road, at the HIE in Dodge City. Tomorrow it's Las Vegas, NM, and a visit with Sandra's Uncle Murray.

Starting over - Left Warrensburg about 9 AM via BB, SW-200 and, MO-58 to Holden

MO-131: th old schoolhouse has a new partial coat of paint

MO-2: Infinity Farm, just west of MO131. Wonder what they farm.

Interesting road names, but we know what Old Drum Road means. Blinker Light Rd has a....

Harrisonville has the Twice as Nice Thrift Store and the Burnt District Monument.

Was there a college on Brush College Road? If so, what did it teach?

Just west of Freeman, the Morristown site had a CW battle in Sep. 1861.

Good Times Classics (cars) are found at Westline.

KS-68: KDOT decided to do some maintenance in front of Cedar Cove Feline Sanctuary (for BIG cats) - without posting it on their website.

Saw our first oil wells west of K-33, with a silo tree nearby.

A big silo tree resides about a mile east of the Ottawa WM distribution warehouse.

I-35: A good road, little traffic. Yay!

Emporia's Commercial Street Cafe is good and reasonably priced. Took a bit longer to eat, since the lady at the next table was a New Mexico native, Had to talk a bit.

US-50, all 220+ miles of it: Into the Flint Hills but no time to stop at Cottonwood Falls or the Prairie Preserve.

Clover Creek Ranch B&B looks prosperous - white fences and red roofs.

A mixed freight train must have derailed a bit east of Newton, based on the residue we saw, including scattered containers.

Gas in Newton was \$2.19 so we topped off - best price since leaving the Burg.

What is Pete's Puddle? If you guessed pay fishing lake, you're right.

We saw at least three of those big windmill blades, all heading east.

What is that Union Jack doing painted on the side of a barn near Stafford?

Meeksville has The Jerk Rope. Your guess is as good as mine (or better).

A lot of center pivot fields in the Lewis area, including All Star Alfalfa - that's a high-value crop.

Spearville bills itself as the "Home of Windmills and Royal Lancers," the former for the huge wind

farm surrounding the town. The latter? Most likely a team, but one could imagine people intent on tilting with the windmills.

As you come into Dodge City, you'll be greeted by a sign with a lot of steel cowboys on top. The Bud distributor here has a mural with an old time engine and an "in without knocking" scene. Wyatt Earp has a couple of statues, but a number of establishment names are more "Gunsmoke" related.

Tomorrow: US-56 to Springer, NM, I-25 to Las Vegas. Estimated miles 357

Friday, September 6, 2019

2019 Southwest - Day 2, Friday 9/6

Highlights of the day: Green! and Family

We left Dodge City at 7:30 AM, headed for New Mexico on US-56, roughly following the Cimarron Cutoff of the Santa Fe Trail. This was mostly Llano Estacado country, without many natural landmarks. It's oil country, and center pivot irrigation, as well. Near Moscow KS, a number of large stacks of alfalfa big bales were collapsing - lots of wasted production. Elkhart, our last KS town, featured a family of oil pumps in 5 different sizes, all in desert pink.

Our first real landmark was seen from Oklahoma, Rabbit Ears Mountain, a promise of varied terrain. Clayton NM is the home of this landmark, and also a nearby dino trackway, the latter celebrated by the local Chamber with three old, green taildragger statues.

From here on, US-56 was mostly empty and parts lined by snow fences; the 60 mph speed limit is a joke. Gladstone has a single store, a tractor crossing sign, and a sign about the Goodnight-Loving trail crossing. Further on we saw a couple of pipe saguaros (not native to NM). Taylor Springs is where the dry route found a fairly level crossing of the Canadian River.

56 ends at Springer, NM, home of Elida's Cafe and some really great posole (green). After lunch we headed south on I-25 at about 70 mph, under the speed limit. Got to Las Vegas about 1:30 MDT, checked in at the HIE, and called Sandra's Uncle Murray. We had a nice visit with his son and extended family, exchanged email & FB info, had dinner at Pino's (big servings, posole disappointing). Pictures at the blog

On the day: 365.4 miles, 752.2 for the trip. Santa Fe tomorrow!

Saturday, September 7, 2019

2019 Trip SW - Day 3, Las Vegas to Santa Fe

Pulled out of Las Vegas about 8 AM for the 60 scenic miles to Santa Fe. Buttes, mesas, mountains, a canyon & a CW battlefield - we didn't stop at any, sine we wanted to spend some quiet early time at the Plaza. We came in on Old Pecos Road to Paseo Peralta and wondered why so many people were walking toward the Plaza. Oops - why didn't we know this was Fiesta Santa Fe weekend, a major regional event. Regular streets & parking lots were closed off. We found a \$10 parking place that had

the advantage of shade and the disadvantage of a long walk.

Now, about that walk: As we followed the crowd, we passed a statue. Sandra exclaimed "Old Drum!"
Judge for yourself at the blog

That was an appropriate sculpture, as today was the annual Pet Parade. We caught the tail end of it. Found our way to the Plaza area. Talk about a crowd! Vendors of all sorts all around the place; no relaxation there.

We wandered around killing some time until The Shed opened at 11 for our traditional lunch - turns out they opened early for the big events.

After lunch we visited the IAIA museum and saw some very interesting exhibits, some relating to a theme of reconciliation.

We sprung for the Culture Pass, but visited only one museum, the NM Art Museum. Great exhibit on Glen Canyon dam and Lake Powell.

Checked in at the Best Western Plus hotel, relaxed a bit, then went for dinner at Tortilla Flats- Sandra had Frito Pie and Bill voted for a bowl of green chile. Bought some local craft beer and just getting cameras ready for tomorrow.

76.3 miles for the day, 828.6 for the trip. Tomorrow we're off to Alamosa via Taos, Questa & San Luis. Monday will be a ride on the C&T.

Sunday, September 8, 2019

2019 trip southwest, Day 4. Santa Fe to Alamosa

We were up really early, which allowed Bill to again replan the last part of the trip. We won't return to Santa Fe & will skip Albuquerque. So we'll be home Wednesday.

Left Santa Fe at 7:15, and took the bypass to miss all the congestion expected for the big Sunday parade. On our way out on Airport Rd, we saw a gold spire - a Buddhist Temple. Once we hit the main road, every concrete abutment & such had the stylized figure of an animal - frogs, deer, quail, lizards, crows, turkeys, roadrunner eating a rattler, etc.

Among other interesting sights: La Pistoleras Cultural Inst, Taos - took a moment to realize this is feminine. An old tanker truck with "RISE UP" painted on its sides, The Crazy Beaver Bar & Grill in Costillos.

We cut off of NM-68 at Pilar and drove down along the river. It was muddy from rains the night before, which made the rapids look like foamy chocolate milk.

We crossed the bridge and climbed the switchbacks to the west rim - boy that river looks small!

We then followed the rim road to US-64 and crossed back into Taos itself. A little walk around the Plaza, visits to I Love Taos t-shirt shop and op cit books, and it was time for lunch at El Taoseno. This is primarily a locals restaurant, with a sprinkling of knowledgeable or lucky tourists. Their 'green' is both tasty and hot.

We left Taos about 12:30 and headed for Alamosa via NM-522 & CO-159. 208 miles on the day, 10366 for the trip. Tomorrow it's the Cumbres & Toltec Scenic Railroad, then a 200-mile run to La Junta for the night.

Monday, September 9, 2019

2019 Trip Southwest - A trip on the C&T

Up about 5, messed around until breakfast, and headed for Antonito about 8. Picked up our tickets, bought a t-shirt and took a whole bunch of pictures - which I'll add tomorrow. It's late, more stories when we get around to it.

After the bus ride back from Cumbres Pass, we left Antonito at 4 PM and got to La Junta at 7, 179 miles via US-285, CO-142, CO-159, US-160, CO-10 and US-50. Tomorrow we're off to McPherson, KS.

Tuesday, September 10, 2019

Day 6, La Junta to McPherson

339.7 miles on the day, 1589.9 for the trip. Tomorrow to home, about 240 miles. Nothing doing, just driving on roads with traffic. Looking forward to getting home. I'll catch up the C&T pictures eventually.

Follow up: I did not write anything or record final mileage for the last day of the trip.