

PEORIA trip, Day 1 – Monday, May 11, 2026

This is a little 3-day trip to participate in the Armed Services Skeet Championship at Peoria Skeet & Trap, plus some research on my 2great-grandfather, Richard Doniphan Truman, in Lewis County, MO.

I pulled out at 0812 this morning on Y Hwy, then turning north on MO-23. North of Knob Noster I noticed new homes and plenty of wheat fields. The infamous Blackwater River area was dry, with recently-plowed mud banks along the roadside. The road is below ground level in places here. Will they do anything about it? I doubt so.

Concordia has murals in many buildings. They actually say something about the town – none of that pretty, generic stuff, like the Burg. It has nice houses, St. Paul Lutheran High School, and a big TA truck stop just north of I-70.

MO-23 continues northward past rolling hills and newly-sprouted corn. There's a stop sign at MO-20 near Alma; it is NOT a 4-way stop. I arrive at Waverly, junction of US-24 & US-65 and home of Missouri's own Confederate wizard of the saddle, Joseph Orville Shelby. He wasn't a big man, so his statue is appropriate to his stature.

Across the Missouri River bridge and on to Carrolton, or at least the bypass. US-24 parts ways with US-65 here and leads me through hills and bottoms on the Lewis & Clark Trail. DeWitt is home of Backwoods Crafts. Brunswick, at the Grand River, fills the bottoms with pecan trees. It hosts the Riverside Magnolia Inn, a B&B. A long-defunct Citgo station still displays regular at \$1.05 per gallon.

Keytesville celebrates MGen. Sterling Price, CSA, with a non-equestrian statue. By war's end his avoidupois precluded command from horseback.

Last year's corn fields, yet to be plowed for this year's beans, bloom with the gold of wild mustard. Salisbury has the Sterling Price Community Lake. It claims to be "A Great Place to Call Home." Some rights-of-way between here and Huntsville are planted with evenly-spaced trees. Pecans? Moberly, "The Magic City" is a good place for a comfort break – the Casey's is out of any drinkable fountain soda. It's 1035 hrs and 120 miles into today's trip.

Madison, east of Moberly on US-24, has the Broken Egg Cafe – closed. Mark Twain Lake looks full, but it has been higher. I pass Paris, then join US-36 at Monroe City, home of the Fabulous Feet Dance Company and Ground in Grace Cafe. It's now 1130. US-24 joins US-61 west of Hannibal. I pull off at Palmyra for a last Missouri top-off at \$4.17 per, almost a buck below what's on the other side of the river. Palmyra is home of the "Palmyra Massacre" – a Federal provost marshal ordered the execution of 10 POWs.

The Rebel Pig BBQ is across the street from the memorial.

The Quincy Gun Club buildings (on the Missouri side of the river) look newly painted; I wish they'd go back to holding registered skeet shoots. US-24 passes Quincy, loses a lane in the loess hills, and finally reaches IL-110. This is a modern 4-lane hiway. Every road sign has a little sign saying C-KC, with the C in Cubs red and the KC in Royals blue. This is a yet-to-be-realized dream road to serve as an alternate route. It takes me north to Carthage, then east to Macomb. US-136 becomes a 2-lane road, sort scenic. Macomb, along with many other places in Illinois, has been "Flocked" with plate reader cameras tracking our every move. Bushnell, also well-flocked, is fighting a trailer on fire, visible from the road. This is Spoon River country, near where Edgar Lee Masters wrote his famous anthology.

I reach Canton, find my way to US-24 again, then cut off to Pekin to bypass Peoria. On to today's destination Peoria Skeet & Trap. I find my shooting partners, write a check, watch the shootoffs, and head to my Best Western. Supper was at a nearby Taco Bell, which was actually pretty nice.

Tomorrow: Shoot 28 GA event at 1100, hang out for a bit, then head to Keokuk for the night.

For the day and the trip – 364.7 miles

Day 2, Tuesday, May 12th – Peoria to Keokuk

After a good breakfast with waffles at the Best Western Plus, E. Peoria, I headed back to Peoria Skeet & Trap to get ready to shoot. We hit the range on-time at 1100 with temps in the mid 70s with wind and relatively low humidity. My hydration plans were right on – I finished the 100 targets with no ill effects. Score was mediocre, but better than I had been shooting and not-at-all embarrassing. I hung around the club for a while, met another old USAF MO shooter, and pulled out for Keokuk at 1333. That's when the adventure began.

I planned to take US-150 through town, pick up I-74, switch to I-674, the exit onto IL-116. Would have worked had I written it down to reference. Missed my turn, took the "Cook's Tour" of the city including downtown Peoria, and finally found IL-116. Which had an extensive detour – my 20-mile estimated jaunt took 36 miles and 48 minutes.

I did pick up a few Sandra-worthy tidbits: Peoria High schools appear to play their football in a bubble-dome facility. Political graffiti – a Stop All Ways sign was altered by covering the 'Y' with an 'R.' After I finally got out of town on a very-straight IL-116, I was hit with a quartering southwesterly headwind associated with an incoming front. I was sure glad I was through shooting for the day. Time for some seen-along-the-road observations.

The Olde Country Lane is near Trivoli, home of Flifinger Farm Supply. Steward's Family Restaurant (and the associated motel) are long-closed. Farther west, I passed a boarded-up stone schoolhouse. Critter Castle pet boarding is housed in an old Queen Anne that's seen better days – gone to the dogs, you might say. Farmington, "A Small Town with Big Hearts," hosts Smithers Furniture in a nice downtown. Near Middle Grove, an old railroad right-of-way parallels the hiway. A number of farms are set up for tourist activities. London Mills is on the Spoon River; Sandra, poet that she was, would have made me stop to take a picture of the river crossing sign. A bit farther west a building has corrals (one occupied) and fence posts wearing saddles. Roseville, where I take leave of IL-116 for US-67, has one of the old Big Boy Hamburger boys welcome one to the town.

South of Rosedale the wind really affects the car – a wind farm nearby appears well-located. Does Curly Creek Construction construct curly creeks? Is Farmers Fork one of them? IL-336 bypasses Macomb – it may eventually become a 4-lane highway.

I'm now on US-136 for the rest of the day. I stop at Colchester, home of Full Scoop ice-cream, for a comfort break at Casey's. The next town, Tennessee, has a barber shop with pocket billiards. It also has a siding to the active RR line that passes through, but its elevator is sadly defunct. US-136/IL-110 passes through the nicely-wooded La Moine River bottom land. Carthage once hosted Carthage College; the parklike grounds are still well-maintained. A sign tells me Carl Sandburg College is north of the road. Carthage has a Fortress Bank, an historic jail, large saddle club grounds, and a Prairie Winds Motel. Evaston's large brick schoolhouse is long-abandoned. Hamilton has Wren House Coffee and Inner Peace Massage.

I finally cross the Mississippi into Iowa, right into downtown Keokuk. This is an old river town with lots of frustratingly timed stop lights, and gas prices 60 to 80 cents below Illinois'. I find the Quality

Inn, check in and unload, then have supper at the Hawkeye Lounge nearby. Here's a view of the motel from the restaurant – don't mind the Wal-Mart traffic

For the day: 147.4 miles, for the trip 512.1

Tomorrow: Researching my 2G grandfather, Richard Doniphan Truman, in Clark & Lewis Counties, MO, then home to the cats.

Peoria Trip, Day 3 – Keokuk to Warrensburg

I usually plan my trips in great detail; this one was no exception. However, I can be flexible; I completely replanned the day early Tuesday night – and redid the second half on the fly. Here's how things went:

I left Keokuk at 0702, heading to Missouri on US-61/136; and was welcomed to Missouri by a Flock camera at the Welcome sign. Alexandria, MO, serves as an object lesson of how tax policy affects businesses and a community. It once had a thriving business selling gas to drivers from Iowa & Illinois, thanks to Missouri's lower gas tax. As the 12.5 cents/gal tax increase gradually took effect, prices in Alexandria were forced higher than those in Keokuk. Missouri stations closed or survived without pumps by selling cigarettes, where Missouri taxes are still lower.

En route to Kahoka on US-136 I pass a sign "Trump Trucks. Turn Left." Draw your own conclusions. I turn off on Route A. It's twisty and hilly to Wyaconda, a small town that still has both railroad and an elevator. As A emerges onto prairie land, I enter Amish country. There's a farmer plowing behind a 7-Belgian hitch!

I'm on this road because I wanted a look at Fairmont, where my 2G grandfather lived in 1870. It's a sad little town. Here's the sign and a shot of part of the town.

Just a bit south of Fairmont is the Liberty Baptist Church. I do not know if R.D. Truman served this church, but I do now that his name is not listed among the pastors of Providence Baptist Church, located west of Williamstown. It certainly existed during his active years.

Williamstown was only a couple of miles down the road. R.D. Truman lived/owned property here based on the 1880 census. While he died in 1891, his widow still lived here in 1900. I know this is the property he owned, at least from the road to near the large house in the picture. This property is still a single property per the Lewis County Assessor's office.

I hurried down to Canton to meet Duane Harsell at the Lewis County Historical Society, arriving at 0841. He and another member there had done quite a bit of research trying to find specific records of R.D. Truman, without avail. I did look through what applicable records they had and did find his sister listed in a binder of Fretwell genealogies. We talked to some extent comparing how our local historical societies operated.

After a refreshment break, I left at 1041 heading west on MO-16 to Monticello, the county seat. At 102 people, it's likely the smallest one in the state. The folks at the courthouse were very helpful in my quest for information. I'm really wondering what this local business does: Patriot Potholing. I headed west on MO-16 to Lewistown. A business at the main corner in town has some whimsical folk art – three miniature horses with riders, all made from barrels or other metal parts – sorry, no pictures. J

hwy took me to MO-156. I stop in Newark (pronounced 'New Ark'), site of the post office frequented by my Trumans as well as a Civil War skirmish; in 2011 I visited a cemetery with a marker in remembrance Confederates killed here).

A saddle club has a nice facility at the junction of Missouri routes 15, 151 & 156. Further on, I pass through Novelty, wondering what might be novel about it. There's a sign for Sue City – if a Lakota woman lived there, might she be known as Sue City Sioux?

At La Plata, I turn south on US-85, a nice 4-lane divided hiway. After 15 miles, I head west on road AX west across the red-colored water of Long Branch Lake, then south on O to Bevier past a display that laid out like 3 crosses, except the crosses were green with crooked arms – faux saguaro cacti? I was looking for cheap gas (i.e., under \$4/gal) at Bevier. It was there, but inconvenient, so on south on C to College Mound.

From there, it's west on T across Thomas Hill Reservoir. This lake, created to provide water for a closed coal-fired electricity generation plant, is also discolored and high. South on MO-3, then a cut-off through a flat area past aptly-named Prairie Hill to MO-129 and Salisbury. A short 3-mile backtrack of Day 1 on US-24 takes me to MO-5. An elevated deer stand is permanently placed in the middle of a large plowed field awaiting its soybean seeds. There's a small marsh; next to it is a "Wetland Restoration" sign. 5 Hwy takes me into & through Glasgow, a historic river town where I've done three CW reenactments. I looked for the drug store where we stopped and shared a 2-straw cherry Coke on a long-past gallivant; I think it's now a cafe.

MO-87 looks to be a shorter route than MO-5 to Boonville since it avoids towns. It makes up for that by being one of the hilliest & curviest roads I've traveled in Missouri. Boonville promised a lower price on gas, but the Pilot stop had lower energy E-15 masquerading as regular. Thanks a lot, DJT! Since I'm already on MO-5 and don't want to backtrack to my usual route, I continue south past Ravenswood Plantation and the attractive Hannah Cole Memorial roadside park, head west on C to pick up MO-135, then HH hwy. As I near Sedalia, I pass a much-expanded specialty egg plant and a new industrial facility going up. The new US-65/HH hwy interchange is unusual for the area, but doesn't eliminate the stop light at the steel mill entrance.

After a quick meal at my Sedalia favorite, El Tapatio, I get home at 1636, unload, take care of cats Cisco & Timmy, and crash early.

For the day: 297.3 miles, for the trip: 809 miles.

Next trip? Louisiana.