

Westward Ho!!

Smith Family Newsletter
September 2010 - Page 1

We are on our way west to our Fall HR400 Rally! We enjoyed sitting in the more moderate temperature of northern Indiana for the remainder of the Summer. All our minor repairs were accomplished by our friends at Elkhart Service and Collision and we had plenty of time to enjoy the company of the Goldman and Terrazas families. A few members of our chapter came through the area as well. It is actually mid September now and we need to be in Gering, NE by September 17th. Unfortunately, Henry & Ann's coach is not done yet, so we plan on meeting them later.

Our stops included West Liberty, IA, Henderson, NE, and North Platte, NE. These were basically overnight stops. We bumped into chapter members, Jerry & Terri Hopman, at North Platte, NE; and we traveled together into Gering. They too were touring in the area.

We deliberately got an early start to North Platte, so we would have time to look around. My plan was to visit the William F. Cody's (Buffalo Bill) ranch, since we were going to be in the neighborhood anyway. Although I am not fond of his roll in annihilating the buffalo, he certainly was a notable character in his day. He was also a family man and this was his home back in 1886. Needless to say we had a very interesting tour, which was rich in early history. We also visited the Golden Spike Tower and Visitor Center. In the tower we had a panoramic view of the Union Pacific's Bailey Yard, the world's largest rail yard. Unfortunately, it was rather slow in the rail yard due to shift change, but fascinating just the same. There were interpreters present to explain what was happening in the yard as we watched. Did you know that rail containers from Asia can cross the Continental US on rails headed for Europe without being subject to customs as long as they are not opened or unloaded? Most are double-deckers.

(What in the world are those tiny little spinney stickers on the ground that slice right into the bottom of your sneakers, and come into the coach on your shoes. I had to pull them out of our shoes with tweezers! One campground was full of them! I was worried Whiskers would pick one up on his feet.)

Time for a little imagination!! The next two pictures are not motor coaches, they are pioneer wagons rolling west!! The first picture is of the Hopman family followed by the Smith family, heading West. "Giddyup!!! We can pass them...I know we can! Look! I think I see Chimney Rock.....that means we are almost to the Robidoux Trading Post (Robidoux RV Park in Gering) We should catch up with all our friends there, because the Oregon Trail has to bring everyone through the Valley of the North Platt River. We did arrive safe on 9/17/10.

Now, wasn't that fun! If you think I am getting a little carried away, just wait....this is just the beginning.



The HR 400 Pioneers!

Smith Family Newsletter
September 2010 - Page 2

Well, we made it! Here I am saying "Hello!" to everyone, and from here we can see a portion of Scott's Bluff. What a view! There are a series of bluffs that make up Scott's Bluff, which were very familiar to the Pioneers. The Bluffs are a remnant of the ancestral high plains. The Indians named them, Me-a-pa-te, ("hill that is hard to go around"). The Oregon Trail, as well as other trails, cut just South of it along the Platte River. We are in the South West corner of Nebraska.

The campground is a county campground, named after a notable fur trader who operated a trading post in the area named Robidoux. We were all impressed with it, plus the views were beautiful. The picture to the right is of the campground taken from the top of Scott's Bluff. Some great views from the top. Also on the right is a close up of Scott's Bluff National Monument.

The highlight of this rally was an off road wagon ride, giving us a real feel of what it was like for the pioneers to travel across this country. For most of us the few hours was enough. We were all exhausted by the end of the day and we RODE. Now I understand why most of the pioneers actually walked....what a bumpy ride! *The picture on page one with the wagon, with Chimney Rock in the distance was taken on that ride.* Also on the right is our group picture with Chimney Rock in the background.

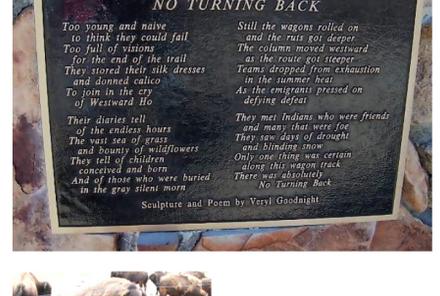
At the Chimney Rock Visitor's Center, we enjoyed verbal presentations by staff on pioneer life as these people moved West. For example, on a good day they traveled about 10- 15 miles a day. It was obvious that these Park Rangers really enjoyed their job....you could hear the passion in their voices.

Finally we also visited the North Platt Museum. Here, we were taken in the archives room where important records are kept pertaining to original maps and documents pertaining to the Westward movement. This museum is the primary keeper of these documents.



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Smith Family Newsletter
September 2010 - Page 3



I think we had about 15 rigs at the rally and the planners did a great job. The rally ended the 23rd of September, after which most went their separate ways. Jerri & Terri joined us for a little additional touring before we parted. We moved on to Cheyenne, WY where we stayed on The Terry Bison Ranch (Bob & I had been here before). Yes, it is a working ranch with real bison. From here we moved on to Colorado Springs, CO, where we were able to get Jerri & Terri into the *Military FamCamp* on the USAF Academy as our guests. Our final stop together was in Raton, NM. We spent 6 days together in all and had a great time.

In Cheyenne, we went on the Bison ranch tour, and also toured the City of Cheyenne. They had such a wonderful farm market with such delicious produce and fresh baked breads. Oh yes, we did buy stuff! I stocked up on fresh roasted green chili peppers! At Colorado Springs we were just in time to see the formation parade before lunch at the USAF Academy parade grounds. We also toured the beautiful cadet chapel. The Olympic Training Center was also taken in. We invited Jerry to drive to the top of Pike's Peak! Bob & I have done this on our own, but the two trips were very different. When we went, we hit sun, rain, sleet and snow driving to the top. This time it was sunny the whole way and absolutely beautiful. At our final overnight stop in Raton, we relaxed and concluded our touring relationship with both of us moving on.



Stay tuned for the October Newsletter when Bob & I will once again be in Albuquerque, NM with the Balloon Fiesta. In 2007, we met Danny Campbell who piloted the 'Flight House'. This year we volunteered as part of his crew on his balloons.

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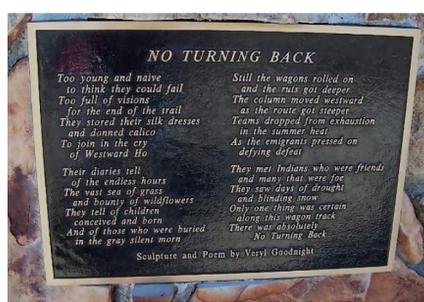
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