

2013 South Dakota

Rapid City August 20

We met our friends, Barry & Casey, at the hotel and enjoyed this beautiful sunset and city view on our first night. Barry took many of these photos, he is a real photographer.



August 21 Wall Drugs

There is a famous tourist trap on the way to the Badlands just north of the highway. This historic place was a stop for the pioneers as they crossed west.



The Badlands

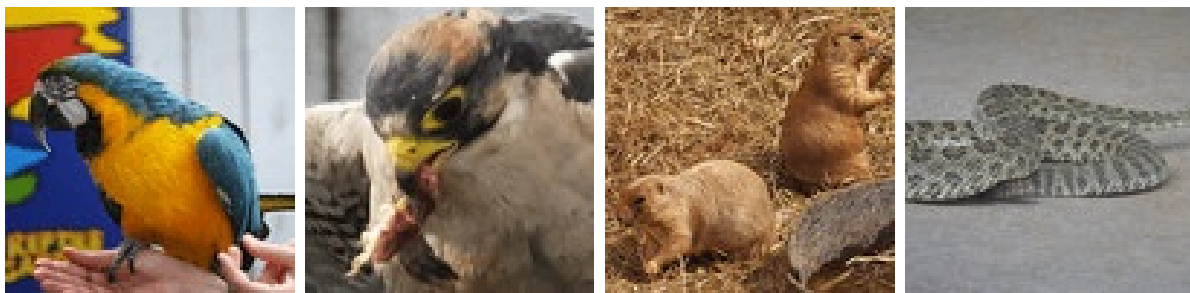
Referred to by this term for years, one can imagine how great a struggle it would be to cross this area in a Conestoga Wagon.



Here are Barry and Jim about 10 feet from the bison, a bison and calf and mountain goats, our first wildlife in the Wild West.



On our way west, we stopped at Reptile Gardens. Birds and flora plus reptiles.



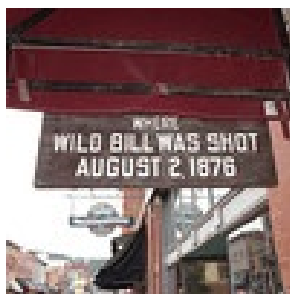
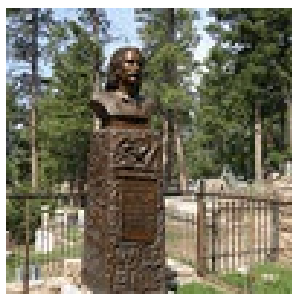


This is our friend Casey on a tortoise. As you can see, they are quite large.

Continuing west we went to Sturgis, home of the world famous Sturgis Motorcycle Week. Much like our Daytona.



Deadwood is the home of Wild Bill Hickock who was shot here and whose re-enactment occurs daily.



At Lead we visited an abandoned gold mine.



August 23

On our way to Mt. Rushmore, we stopped at this park for a zip-line ride.



On the way, The Black Forest National Park



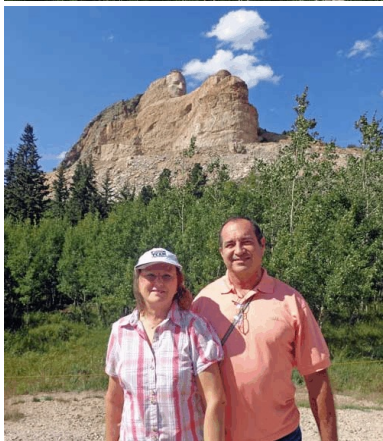
Photos do not do it justice, Mt. Rushmore:



Crazy Horse monument is also nearby. This is a statute, even larger than Rushmore of the Indian who never settled with the settlers. It is being done privately with funds from admissions.



On the left is how it looks today, on the right the model showing the final work. When they completed the head sculpture, attendance and funds increased so that they expect to complete the work in 20 years or less. The rock is blasted away to form the horse.



Spearfish Canyon has this nice waterfall.



The next day we rode this 1880 replica railroad from Hill City to Keystone.



August 25 We visited the Wind Cave, known for its unique “post office box” formations. The cave is called, “Wind” cave because there is always an internal pressure as shown by the ranger in the photo.





August 26 On the way to the “world’s only” Corn Palace in Mitchell, we crossed most of central South Dakota. You may be able to distinguish that the exterior is completely covered with colored corn cobs.

The corn is not dyed, rather it is grown by hybrid in colors. The exterior is changed each year, generally in a new scheme.





Inside, the cultural palace, often the home to musical, celebrity performances, basketball games, rodeos and other events one sees murals made of corn. The one depicts the settlers on the left with their hats, houses, cows and Bible

meeting the Indian with his teepee, bison and wildlife. The white hand meets the dark hand in the middle.

South Dakota is the principal residence of the Sioux tribes some of which are Dakota and Lakota tribes.



While in Mitchell we also visited a prehistoric Indian archeological expedition. Most cultural centers depict the Indians as they were at the time of the settlers. This archeological site shows them as they lived in 1,000 A.D.

Note the vertebra extensions on this bison skeleton that give it its humped back. It is believed that this helps to support its head.

This shows how their houses might have been.





The inside would have had beds made of sticks covered with hides and a cooking area inside to avoid the snow and rain.

This dig shows how they uncover the areas to estimate what conditions were like at the time.



Our next stop is Sioux Falls at southeast corner of South Dakota. Nothing like Niagara, this is nevertheless a large water fall for this area and in August, the water is a fraction of what passes through in the late spring.



Now brace yourselves, ladies and gentlemen for the highlight of Fargo, North Dakota. We saw the movie, "Fargo" in preparation for our trip and at the visitor center, here is the real thing, the wood chipper used in the movie.

While in Fargo, we played bridge every day, that was the point of the trip to attend the Fargo Regional Bridge Tournament. I had hoped that we would have been better than the average player but we were not. They kicked our butts. Nevertheless, they were most hospitable and Judy even went home with some new Words with Friends friends.



Near our hotel, there was an aircraft museum. We saw planes of old and new vintage.



Much of this area of North Dakota is populated by people of Norwegian ancestry. This stave church is a replica of those in use when Lief Eriksson discovered Vinland, now known as the United States around 1000 A.D.



Made completely of wood and originally without use of nails, this beautiful church shows how the people of that time, including Lief (who was converted to Christianity) worshiped. On the right, our docent explains the use of the “leper window” for use by those who were ill to receive the communion. We had a great time visiting the Dakotas.