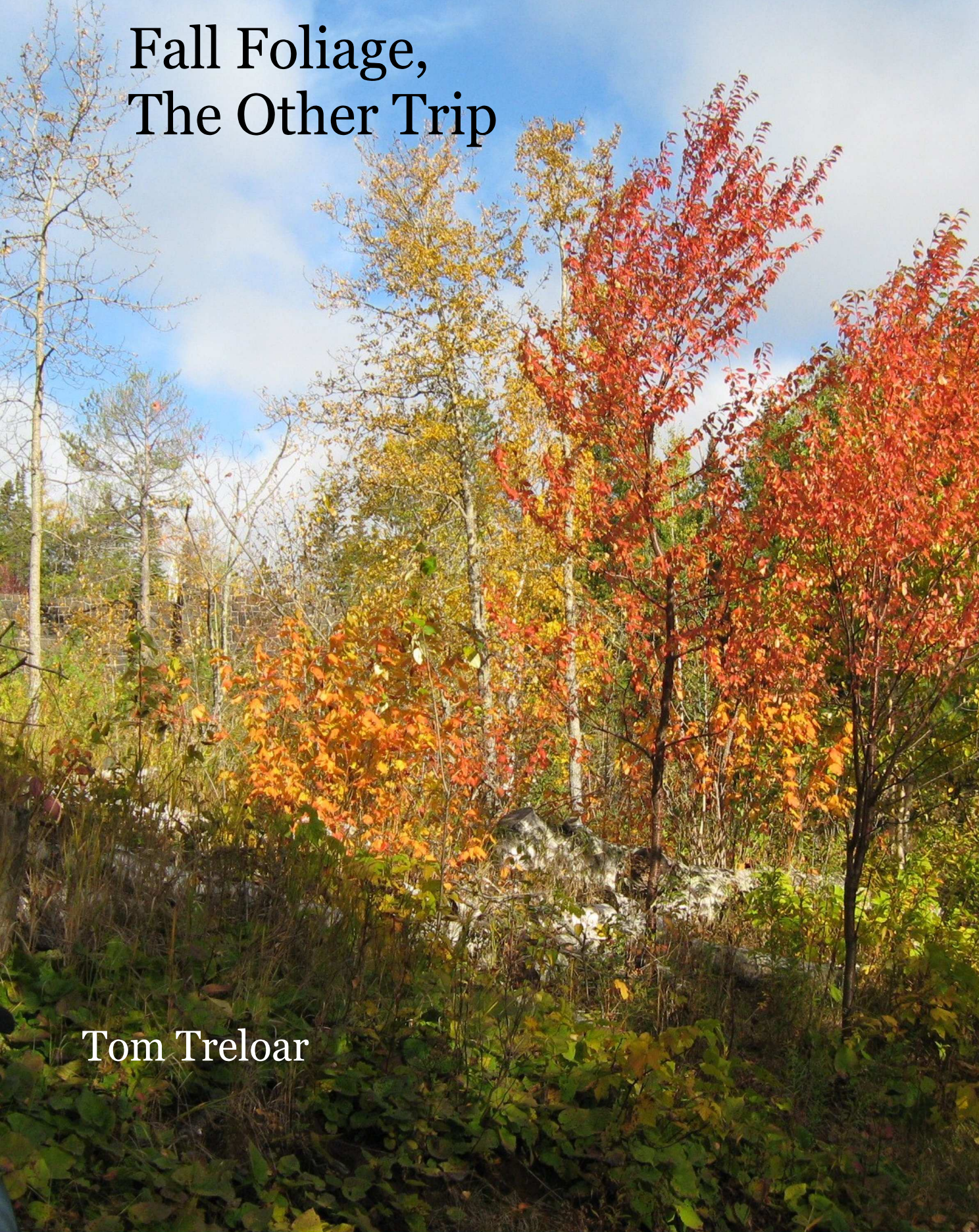


Fall Foliage, The Other Trip



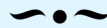
Tom Treloar



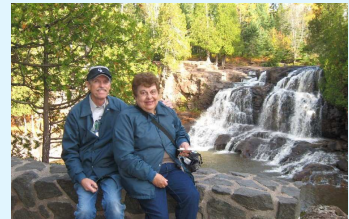


Fall Foliage, The Other Trip

By Tom Treloar, 2009



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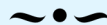


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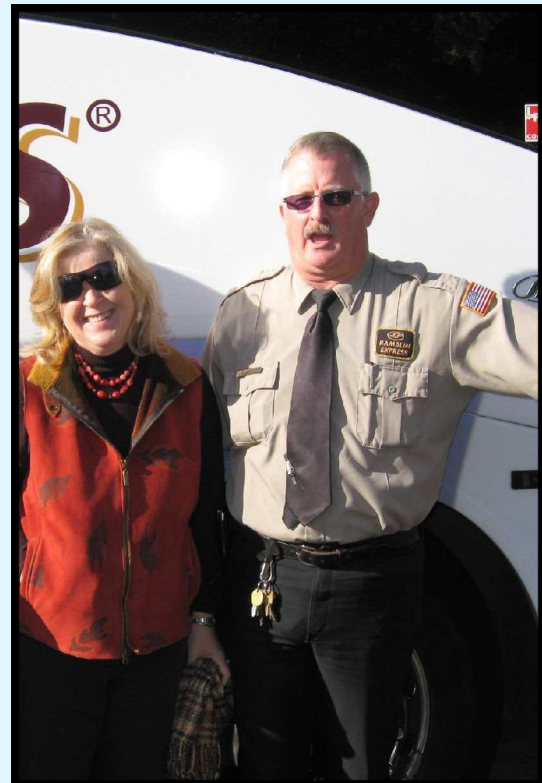
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INTRODUCTION

- The New England states has the reputation for beautiful fall foliage. Many trips are made to these states every year to view their beautiful changing trees. My wife, Dee, and I made one of these trips a few years back. However, there is another area of this mighty country that has just as much fall beauty as the New England states. This area is the upper Midwest of Minnesota, Michigan and Wisconsin. In my opinion this area is just as beautiful as New England. The history is different in this area. New England history consists of a lot of political history, colonization, Revolutionary era and other political events. The Midwest has more individual and growth of this nation history. I was unaware of much of the history I learned on this trip. I suppose that was one of the classes I had in school and I had no interest to listen and learn. Now I am over 65 and I learned about the rich history of the Midwest.
- This was an organized trip offered by Specialty Tours 3095 S. Parker Road, Suite 150 Aurora Colorado 80014, (<http://www.specialtytours.com/>) . Fourteen days of travel through seven states on a luxurious bus was the plan for this trip. Many interesting sites were visited throughout the tour with very little idle time. Specialty Tours has thirty-two years of organizing and offering interesting tours to all parts of the country. They use Ramblin Express 875 W 64th Ave. Bldg C Denver Colorado 80221 for their transportation needs. (<http://www.ramblinexpress.com/>)
- We ate some meals in strange and unique restaurants. We viewed many sites of beautiful fall foliage. There were many items of interest. The group was small, (only 21) which allowed the tour director to give personalized service. All of the travelers were congenial and considerate of their fellow traveler. Problems were kept to a minimum. Sometimes the weather was not to cooperative though.
- I took over 800 photos. Oh, the beauty of digital photography. In this book will be a small portion of the photos. It was difficult to decide which photos to insert into this book. The rest do not go to waste. I created a DVD that will utilize most of the 800 photos.

A little about Specialty Tours and Ramblin Express

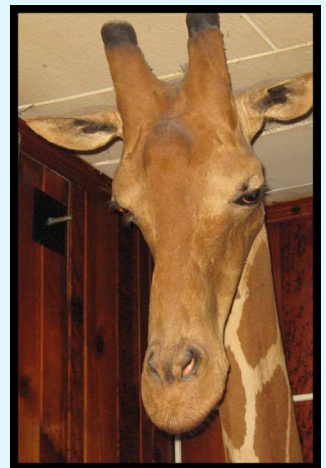
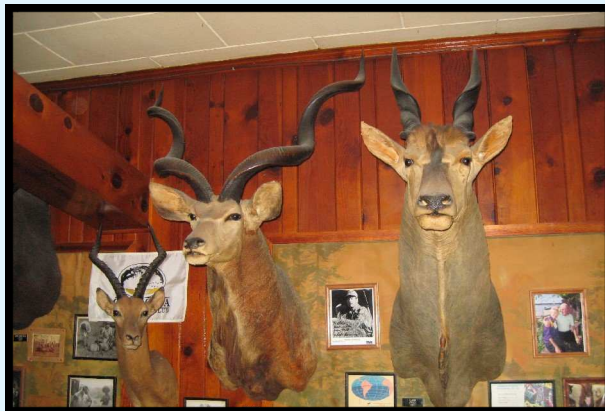
- Mary Myers was the tour director from Specialty Tours. We have been on other tours with her and she does a good job. She has accumulated a vast amount of information about the areas we visit. During driving hours she may share some information about the area or have a movie or some music. This helps pass the time when you are traveling between points of interest. Or if you are not interested you can catch up on a little snooze time. I had many times of snoozing.
- Alan Woodvine was the driver from Ramblin Express. He was good. The way he could navigate that big bus was amazing. He also, was a very friendly and congenial person. It makes life so much easier when you can trust the driver and participates in the tour.
- There are a few regulations on the bus. Seats are assigned and rotated. Some may say that is unnecessary. I say it is a good idea. I have been on tours when there was no control and it seems that there is that small percentage that takes advantage and hogs the front seats. Cell phone usage is discourage. However, emergency calls are ok. A restroom is available on the bus if you just can't wait for the next stop. There are some other minor regulations that need to be followed.



The scarecrow controlled the exit of the travelers from the bus

Day one, Sunday, October 4th

- The first day was mostly travel time. We met the shuttle at 6:45 in the morning. We were taken to the McDonalds at the old Stapleton location just off of Quebec Street. The travel bus met us there and the other travelers with Mary the tour director. Today we were scheduled to travel about 450 miles. When traveling they do like to take a break about every two or three hours. That means you have a morning break, a lunch break and an afternoon break. Lincoln Nebraska is our destination to stay at Monday evening. The day was typical travel time.
- We did eat at an unusual restaurant. This was Ole's Big Game Steakhouse & Lounge in Paxton Nebraska, (<http://www.olesbiggame.com/>) . Everyone has a website these days, even small places like Ole's. it was an interesting place with a lot of mounted animal heads on the walls and a large stuffed polar bear near the front door. I am sure the story behind all these animals is interesting. I had a buffalo burger and it was pretty tasty. If Dee and I were traveling alone we would have never found this unique place to eat.
- The weather was cool and rainy today. That is one thing bad about taking a trip in the spring and the fall months. You can never tell how the weather will be in those changing months. It was difficult to pack because you don't know which way to go. Do you pack for warm or cold weather?



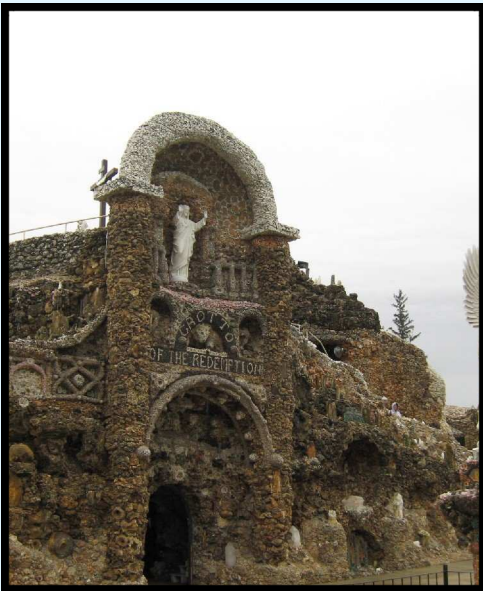
Day 2, Monday, October 5th

- Day two was another day of mostly travel time to the final destination of Minnesota, Michigan, and Wisconsin. For the morning break we stopped at the Harrison County Historical Museum in Missouri Valley Iowa. It was a nice interesting site depicting life in the 1800's.



The Grotto of the Redemption

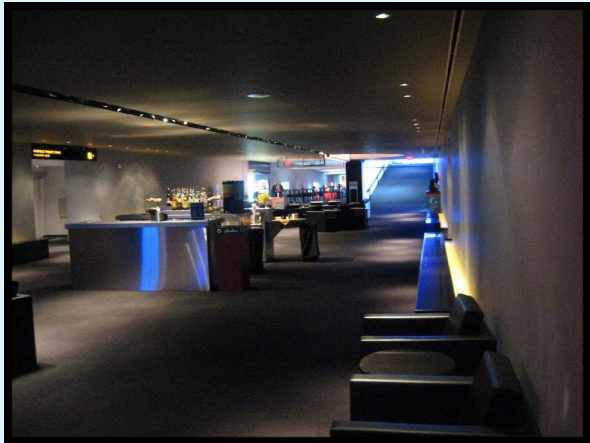
- In the afternoon we drove to The Grotto of the Redemption in West Bend Iowa. This is the largest grotto in the world. This raised a question I had. What is a grotto? So , I went to Wikipedia and got this definition. A grotto is any type of natural or artificial cave that is associated with modern, historic or prehistoric use by humans.
- The grotto was started by Father Paul Dobberstein in 1912 and he spent 42 years setting rocks and gems into concrete. The grotto covers about one city block. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.
- Adjacent to the grotto is St Peter and Paul Catholic Church. Both were an interesting visit in spite of the rainy cold weather.



Day 3, Tuesday, October 6th



The first stop was Blue Earth Minnesota. Yes that is the home of you guessed it, The Jolly Green Giant, Ho, Ho, Ho! Emma Krumbie's was the next scheduled stop for a horse drawn wagon tour. However, the weather did not cooperate and we just stayed inside and looked around in their store and tried samples of food items.

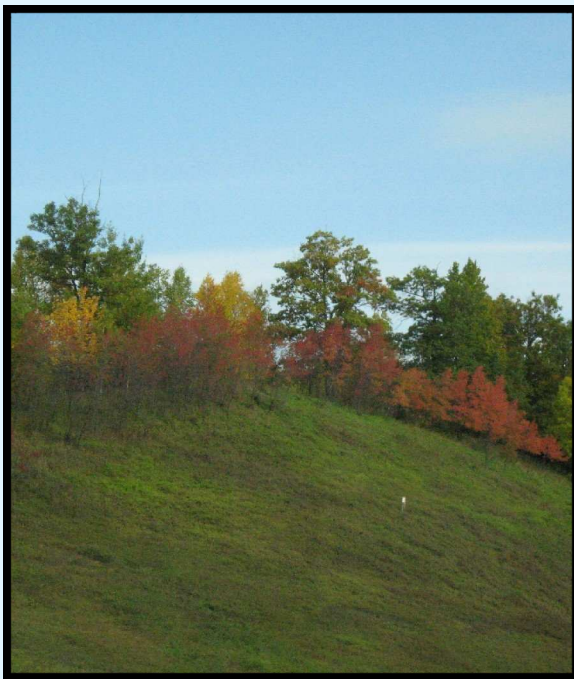


In the afternoon we arrived in St. Paul and we picked up Tracy and she gave us a guided tour of St. Paul and Minneapolis. The Cathedral of Saint Paul was one of the stops. This inside has looks very close to St. Peters in Rome.

Guthrie Theatre was an interesting stop. This is close to the Vikings home field. An observation deck had yellow windows which gave an interesting view.



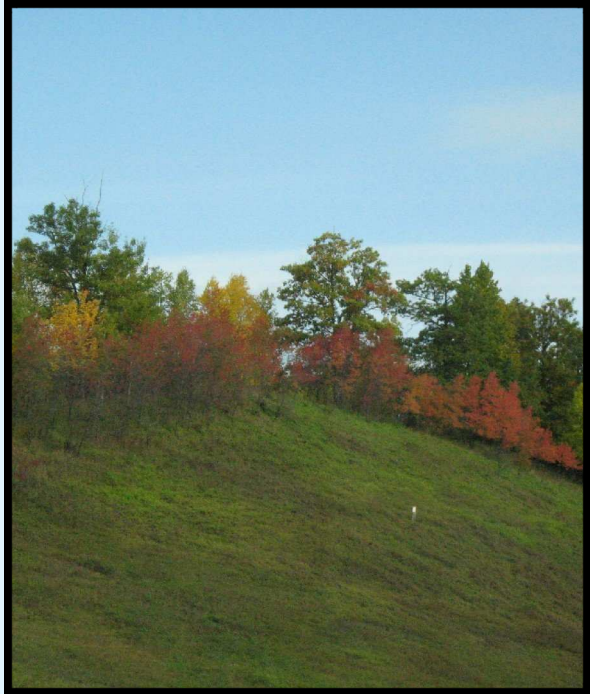
A visit to The Mall of America Tuesday night



Some of the fall colors on the road to Duluth Minnesota

Day 4, Wednesday, October 7th

- Today we drove for a couple of hours to Duluth Minnesota. Since Dee and I had the front seat of the bus I took a lot of photos while the bus was moving. I took a large quantity of fall foliage pictures hoping to capture that prize winning photo.
- The first event for the day was a luncheon on a cruise ship traveling around the port of Duluth. This was an interesting boat ride. The food was good and we saw a lot of the sites around the Duluth harbor. This is when I started to realize this area of the United States is rich with American history. This is a history of people, migrations and reasons for migrating to this area. Whereas, the New England history is strong on politics, founding of America and early history of this country.
- After the cruise we strolled around the port park waiting for the tour guide that was to give us the highlights of Duluth. Lake Superior is the backdrop of Duluth anywhere you go. The Aerial lift bridge is quite a sight to see. One of the thousand foot cargo ships passed by and you begin to realize how big these Great Lakes are.
- During the afternoon our tour guide took us to Enger Tower. This is a high point of Duluth and you can see for miles and a panoramic view of the Duluth area. The final stop was a rose garden near the shore of Lake Superior. It was the middle of October and there was still a lot of blooming roses.





Duluth's Aerial lift bridge



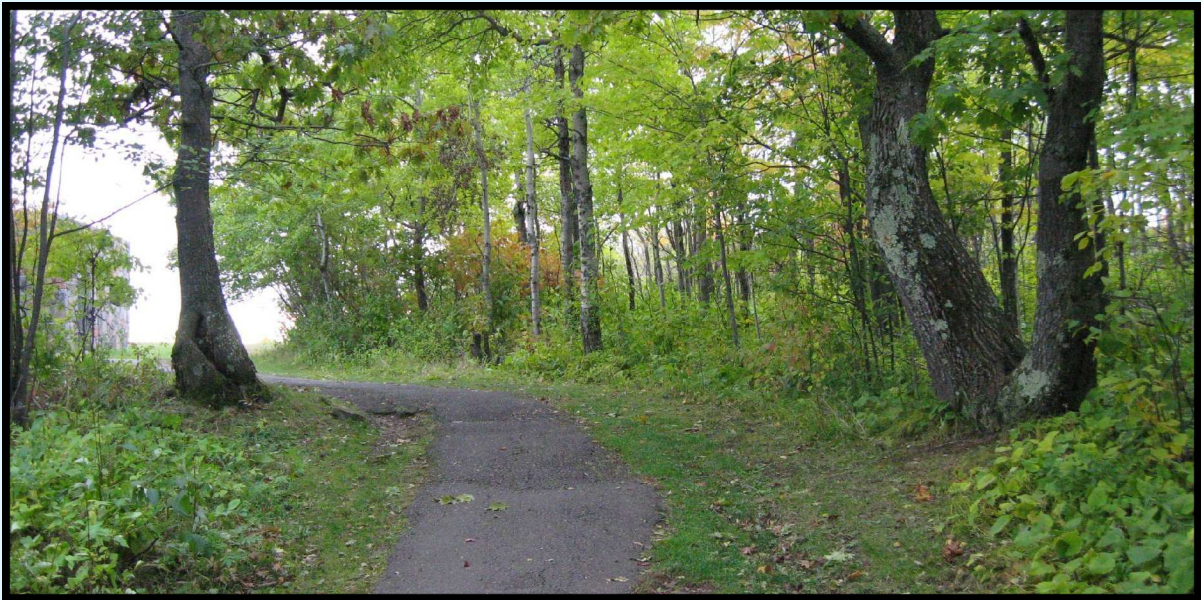
View of Duluth from Enger Tower



A beautiful scene near Enger Tower



Roses in the middle of October





Today we enjoy the majestic scenery of the north shore. We visit Split Rock Lighthouse, Gooseberry Falls, Two Harbors and the Famous Glensheen mansion.

- The Split Rock Lighthouse is a prime example of how dangerous these gigantic Great Lakes can be. Built with federal aid to benefit the ships that carried iron ore from Minnesota's iron ranges to the steel mills of the lower Great Lakes. The lamp was illuminated for the first time in 1910. This light flashed across twenty miles of Lake Superior for nearly sixty years. In addition to the light there is a loud bellowing horn that blasted through the snow and fog for over fifty years. The view from the lighthouse was a beautiful view.

- After the lighthouse we ventured to Gooseberry Falls State Park. Here the Gooseberry River tumbles over the thirty foot upper falls into a clear pool, glides to a two tiered middle and lower falls that plunges sixty feet to the bottom pool. Gooseberry River meanders through a valley to Lake Superior. In spite of the cool weather it was a beautiful sight.

- After lunch the Glensheen mansion was on the agenda. The mansion was built between 1908 and 1910. Chester A. Congdon, who made his fortune primarily through speculation in iron ore properties had this mansion built for his family. For nearly seventy years Glensheen was the family home for the Congdon name. Glensheen was donated to the University of Minnesota in 1968 and has been operated as university property since 1979.



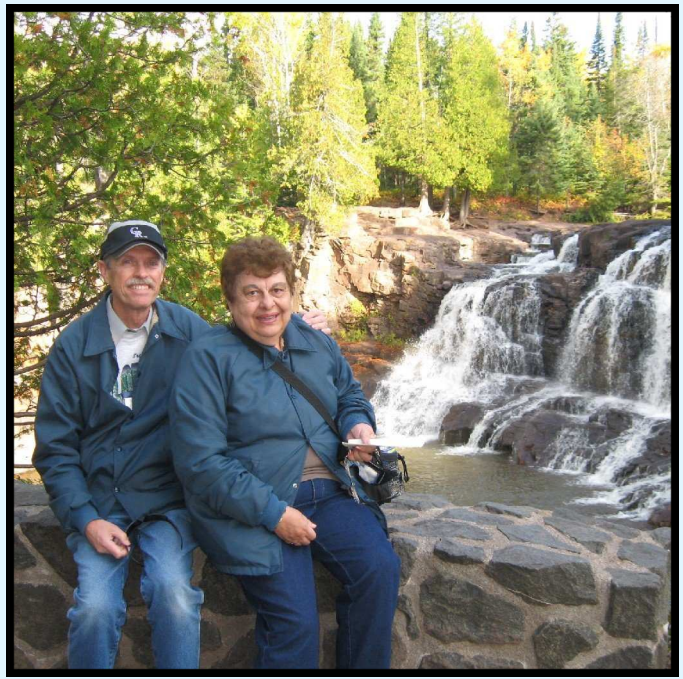
Foliage at Split Rock



Split Rock Lighthouse



Gooseberry Falls



Tom & Dee at Gooseberry Falls



Gleensheen Mansion



Grounds at Gleensheen

Here it is day six already. This is a long travel day with no sights to be visited. This did give me a chance to take some more photos of the beautiful fall foliage. Our travels take us across Northern Wisconsin and the extreme north of Michigan's upper Peninsula. At the end of the day we stay at Sault Ste Marie Michigan.

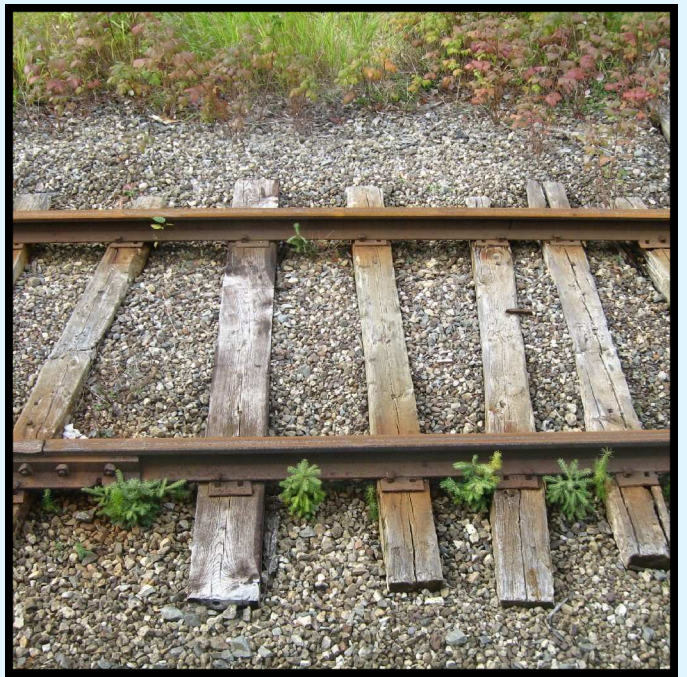






- Today we leave the country and travel a hundred miles into Canada. The Algoma Central Railway takes us through the Agawa Canyon to Agawa Canyon Park. At that time we visited Bridal Veil Falls. We travelled all that way on the train and then only had an hour to attempt to visit three falls and the visitor center. We got to see one fall and because it was cold we went back to the train. If the weather was warmer I don't see how you could see all the sites in the short time allotted.
- A side note, the train we rode on was the old Winter Park Ski Train purchased from Denver recently. We heard this was the first summer the train was in operation up here in Canada. Sometimes it is a small world.
- The weather was cold, cloudy, foggy, snowy and sun shiny. I must say we had every kind of weather today.







- Lake Huron is our destination today. We cross the Mackinaw Bridge and ride a ferry to Mackinac Island. Some places you see Mackinaw and other places it may be Mackinac. We were told it all depends on how that person wants to spell it. Mackinac island is quite an island. No motorized vehicles are allowed on the island except in the winter snow mobiles are used to travel to the mainland because everything is froze up. The island is shut down from November to March. Most of the buildings are winterized and all the water pipes are drained and not heated in the winter.
- The big attraction is The Grand Hotel. It was opened in 1887. This is quite a large building. In the summer it is the main attraction on the island. The place is too rich for our blood. I think the nightly room rate starts around three hundred dollars. Nice to see how the rich lives though. We had a lunch buffet in the hotel. It was good and you could easily pig out with all the good food.
- After lunch we took a horse drawn carriage tour and viewed the expensive homes and Fort Mackinac. The tour ended at main street. Apparently the island is known for fudge. Therefore, we had to get fudge to take home. We bought fudge at two locations. One was good and the other one was too sugary and I was not impressed.
- When we took the ferry back to the mainland the trip was pretty bumpy. This was another example of how brutal these Great lakes can get.



Shipping on Lake Huron



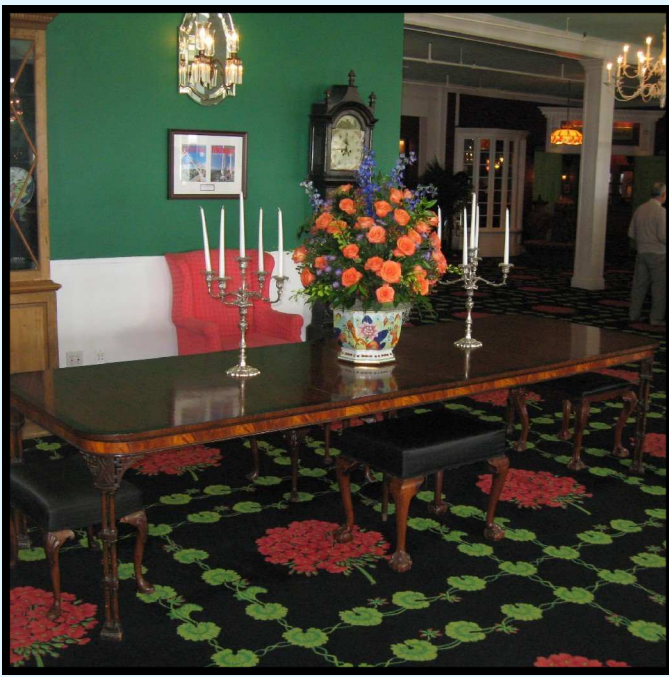
This is the only mode of transportation on the island



The Grand Hotel



The mornings view of the sun



This hotel was plush



From the cupola bar



Mackinac Island Bay

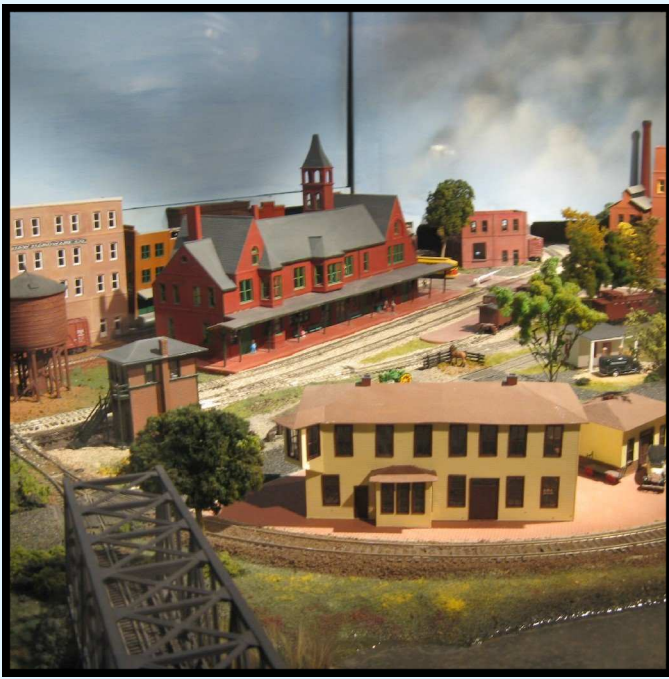


Chess anyone?

Day 9, Monday, October 12th

Today we travel along the shores of Lake Michigan. The oranges, gold's, and reds of the fall foliage was captivating. It was a little cool and cloudy though. After lunch the National Railroad Museum was the attraction for the afternoon. Real gigantic trains of the past and detailed dioramas greeted us in the afternoon. The details of these dioramas are just amazing on how lifelike they look. One can just speculate how many man hours were spent on the life like displays of scenes of the past.





Door County is the schedule for the day. We visited another lighthouse at Peninsula State Park and got to see how life was during the time of this lighthouse's operation. Sturgeon Bay was cold and windy. The shops in the area were interesting but, in my opinion a little pricy.

For lunch we stopped at the Old Post Office Restaurant in Ephraim Wisconsin. A good fish boil meal was provided. We got to see how they boil the fish and throw kerosene on the wood flame to raise the temperature to a high degree. The white fish was very good. With all the butter applied I am sure it was a high fat meal. Oh well, you can't be good all the time.

After lunch we stopped at Koepsels farm Market and spent some money on good Wisconsin cheese.

No tour is complete until you visit a winery. With that we stopped at the Door Peninsula Winery and toured their operation. Again they wanted you to buy some of their products. We bought a bottle of their chocolate wine. As of this book publishing we have not opened this bottle yet. I guess we are waiting for that special occasion, maybe Christmas.

To finish the day we drove by the Bay Shipbuilding Company. They build the ships for the Great Lakes. That gantry was gigantic.







First stop is Madison Wisconsin to tour the capitol. After that is the Mustard Museum. Thousands of different kinds of mustard is on display. This is one of the places you would never think of if you traveled on your own.

The remainder of the day we spent at Little Norway and experienced a bit of Norwegian culture and heritage. The famous Norway Pavilion built in Norway for Chicago's 1893 World's Fair is on display there now. It was an interesting visit.







Day 12, and we are starting to head home. The Field of Dreams movie site is the first item on the agenda. This was interesting, a ball park in the middle of an Iowan farm and corn field. We then got to view the movie on the bus. Need I say this was the first time I ever saw the Field of Dreams movie.

After the Field of Dreams came the Amana Colonies tour with lunch at The Brick Haus Restaurant. A family style meal. Pass the potatoes please. We viewed a woolen mill and also the largest solid walnut rocker in Iowa.





Day 13, Friday, October 16th

What can one say about Kansas? There is this old saying, what is the best thing that comes out of Kansas? Answer, Interstate 70.

The Eisenhower Memorial in Abilene is interesting to see though. For lunch we ate at Culvers. I heard there is a couple of locations in the Denver area. However, I did not ever eat there. It was nice but I would not go out of my way to go to one.

Dinner at the Brookville Hotel in Salina. This hotel is famous for their fried chicken served family style. This brought thoughts of the White Fence Farm in Lakewood.



Final day of the trip. This was mostly a travel day. We did stop at St Fidelis Church somewhere in Kansas. It was good to get home and start to unwind from this two weeks of cold, warm, cloudy, sunny, rainy and snowy vacation.

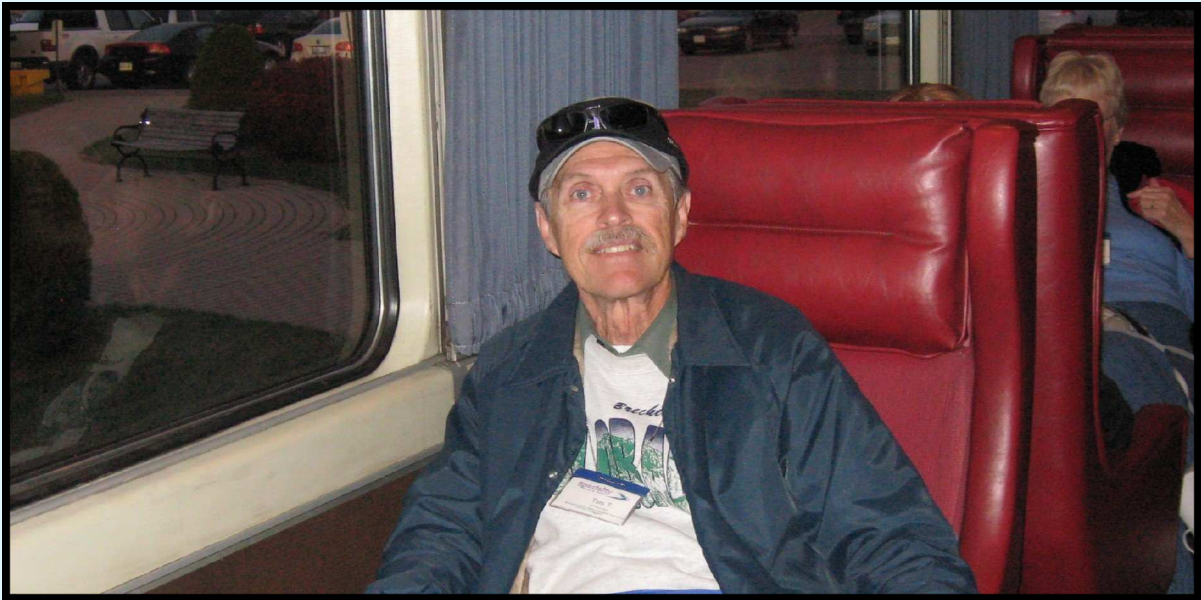
All in all Dee and I enjoyed the trip. I was a little apprehensive about the trip at first. I thought what is up in that area to see? Now I am glad we went. There is a lot of history of this country in that area. This history is more of the development of the country whereas New England history is more colonial history and Revolutionary War era.

I knew the Great Lakes were there but I did not realize they were that large. When they start talking about some spans over 160 miles across one begins to realize how large these fresh water bodies are. The size of the ships you see also reminds you that this is a big body of water.

The fall colors are just as beautiful and spectacular as New England and New York. I think New England and New York has the reputation for fall colors though.

It was a little disappointing that the weather was a little cooler than anticipated. That is one of the chances you take on a trip like this so late in the fall. It is difficult to know what to pack because you don't know if it will be warm or cold. We could have brought more warmer clothes than what we did.

Specialty Tours does a good job on their tours. We have been using them for many years and have not been disappointed once. Finally, I am sure we will use them again somewhere in the future.









There are many beautiful views on this trip