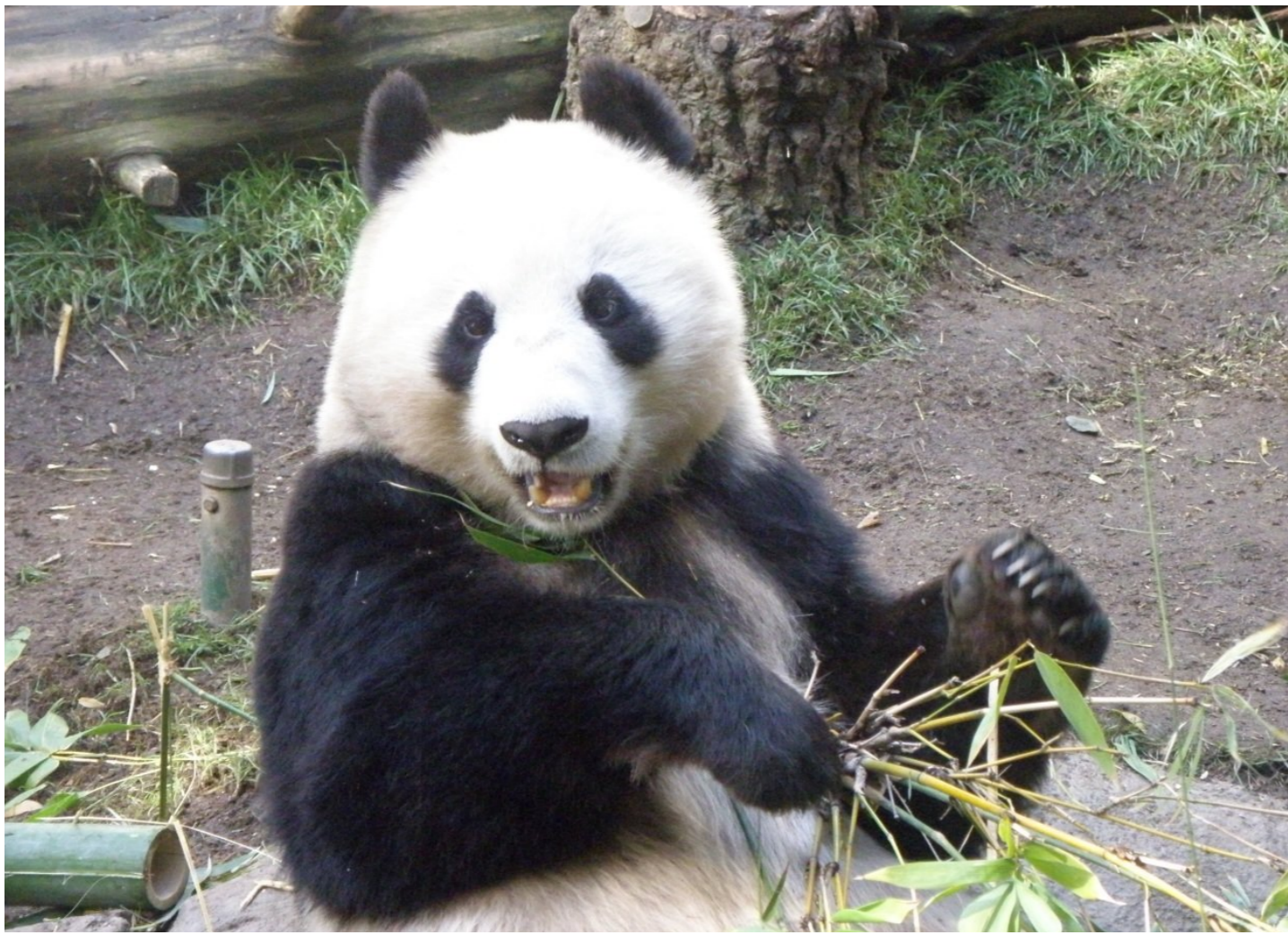




The Fifty States, Puerto Rico, & Canada from Our Point of View!

Linda & John Flakes Volume 1

**The Fifty States, Puerto Rico & Canada
From our Point of View!
Linda and John Flakes**



Prelude

Memories are among our most cherished possessions

What we remember and how we remember events, places and trips may in the end be all we have left.

Linda and I have been fortunate enough to visit all fifty states of our great country

We also have travelled fairly extensively in and through Canada and so we have included Canada in this work of memories

We have taken tons of pictures. We have lived in quite a few states and sometimes the memories of these places and events are painful.

We have tried to remember fairly and honestly and even joyfully, but we have been honest and we have included some very pain filled states and events.

Pain is a part of our memories but does not dominate what we remember.

New Mexico and Tennessee are among states where our good strong memories surprised and pleased us.

Writing this has been and I think will continue to be a joy for me and my wife!

It brings back memories that soon may be lost due to age among other considerations.

It helps us remember where we have been and what we have seen and done! Some of it is just amazing while some of it is very ordinary.

One of the serious issues for me has been remembering all the wonderful pictures even to the last detail, and then, not being able to find sometimes even a single picture.

Even though I have come to accept that there are States where my memories of pictures are very vivid,

I simply cannot locate them and so my narrative must somehow do the job. Perhaps as this progresses some of the pictures will be found and I will add them later!

It strikes me that when someone reads a description of their state and we have said things about how we were treated and our impressions of the people there, well,

The important thing is for you to consider that this is what we remember and more important, it is what we remember about how we were treated.

We would never say that everyone was like that and I hope we find at least one good thing to say about every state. I am sure we will!

Linda and John Flakes





Alabama

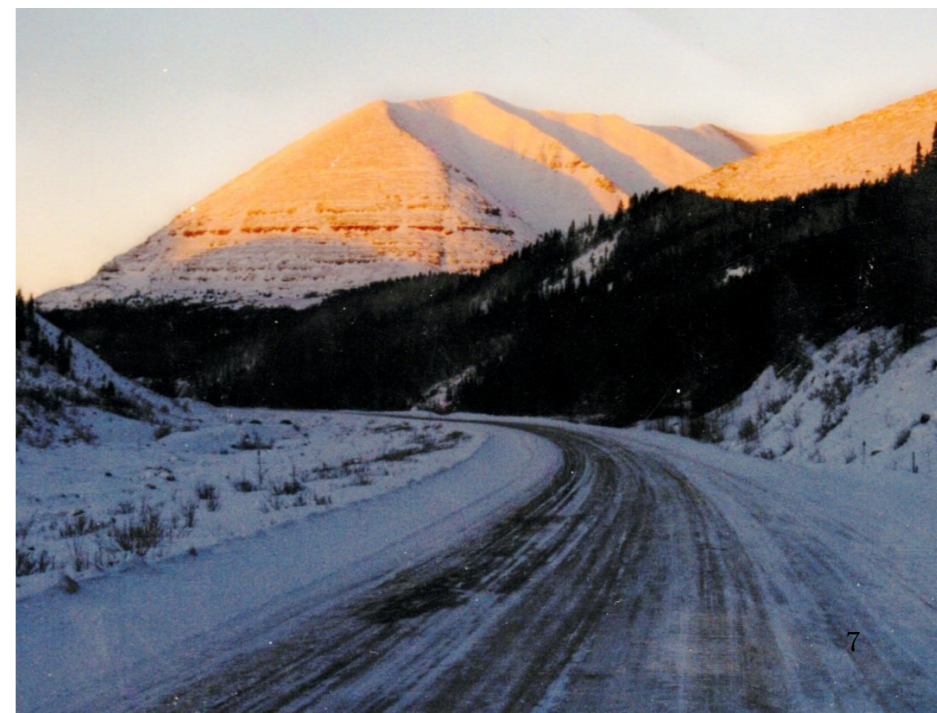
We have driven through Alabama many times but have lost many pictures. Bellingrath Gardens near Mobile and a State Park Visit when we were young marrieds along with my First Holy Communion in Dothan are shown here. Dothan was a difficult time in my very early life. Recently we revisited the same Natural Bridge area.



Alaska A Beautiful but Devastating Place!







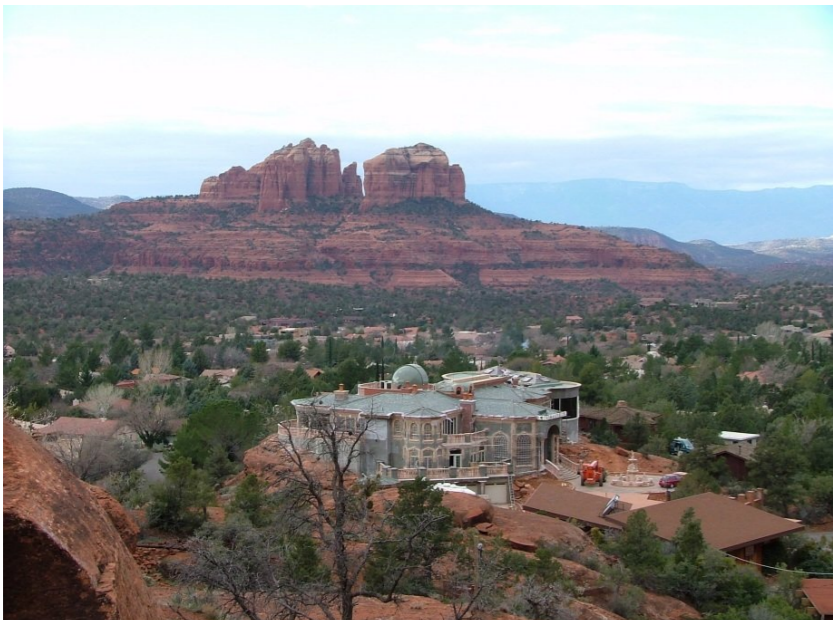


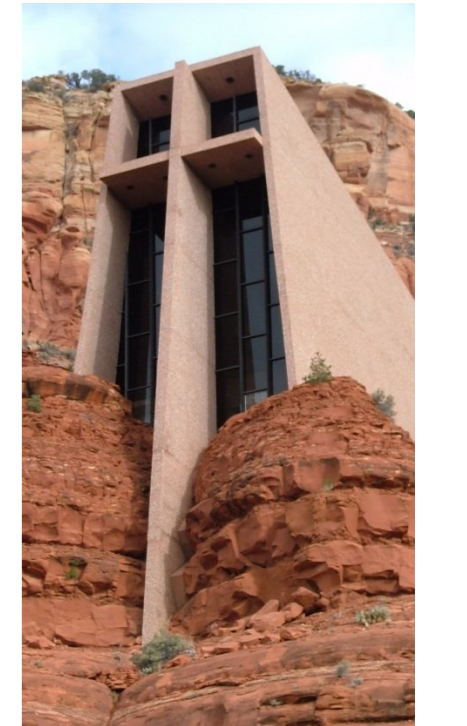
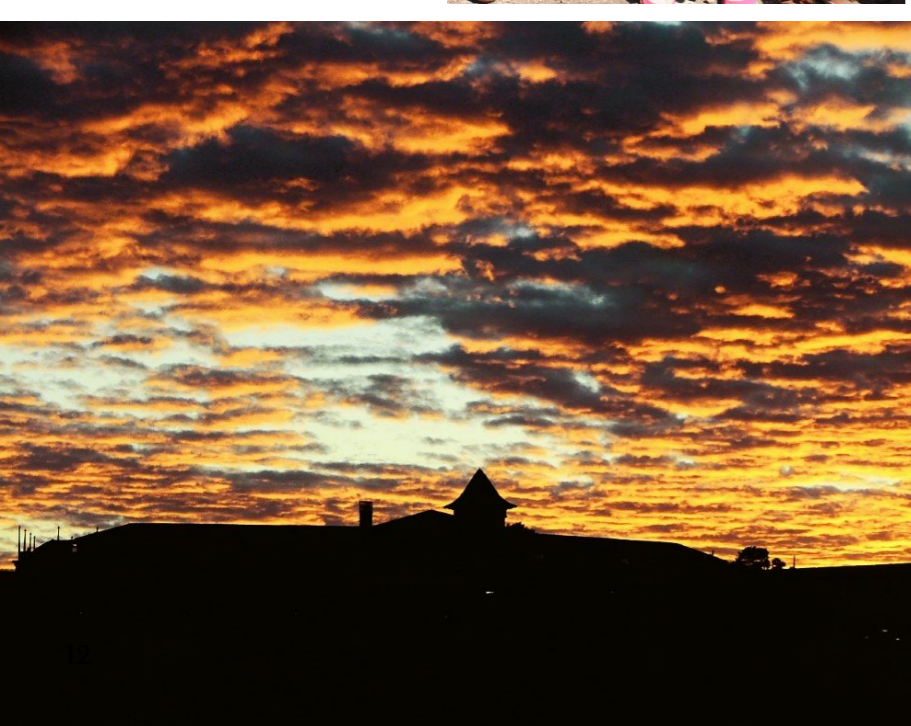
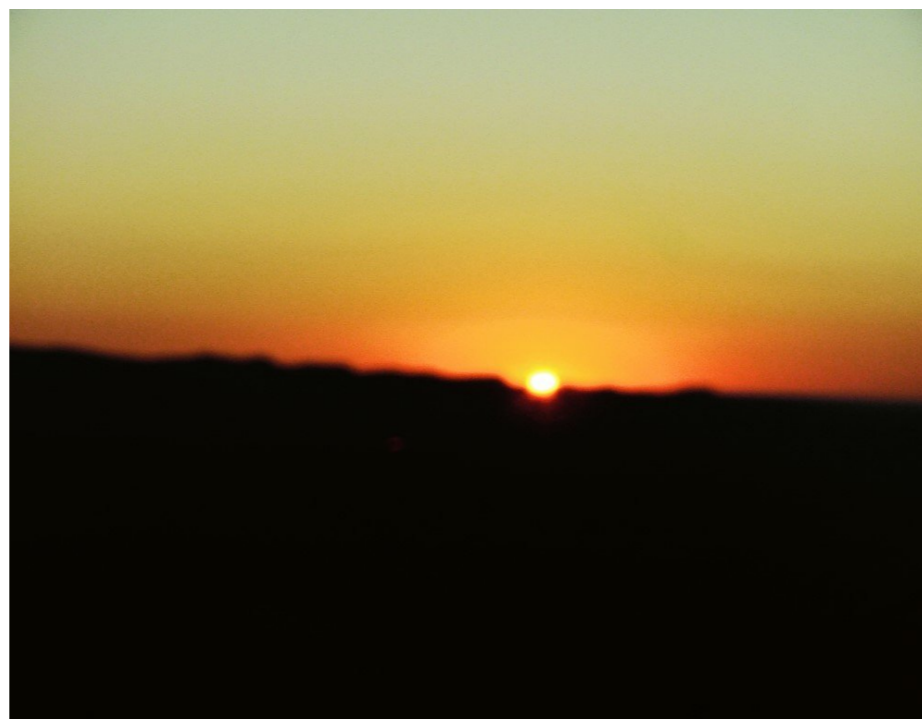
Arizona

**From the Grand Canyon,
down through Sedona, up
and down this beautiful
state including the Painted
Desert and the cactus
-Arizona is a most beautiful
place.**













Arkansas
Huge mosquitoes, hot muggy and yet the most wonderful museum in Bentonville, Crystal Bridges. Eureka Springs and the powerful Christ Statue. The Civil War Battlefield





From a single image, complex tales unfold.

California

One of our most visited and favorite states! We have traveled up the entire coast and throughout the interior. We have visited Joshua Tree, The Salton Sea, San Diego and all it's joys, the Huntington Library, Rose Bowl Parade, LA, SF, Santa Cruz, The Redwoods near Eureka and of course Yosemite and Sequoia National Parks. Whale Watching, Panda's and The Coastal Highway with all it's beauty are all things we love including the diverse hoards of people.

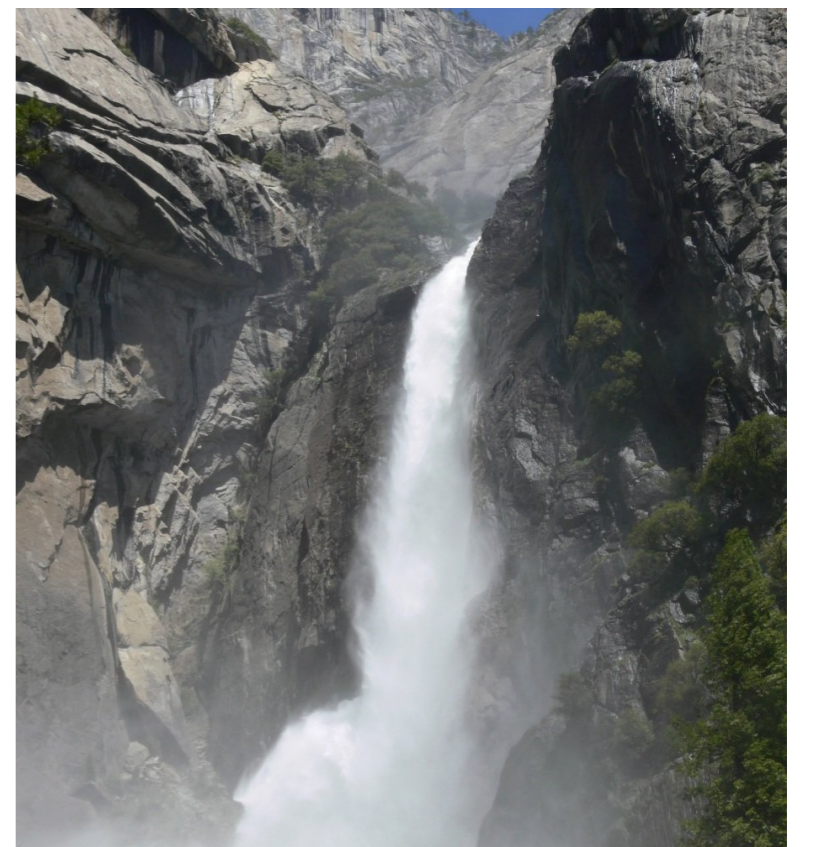


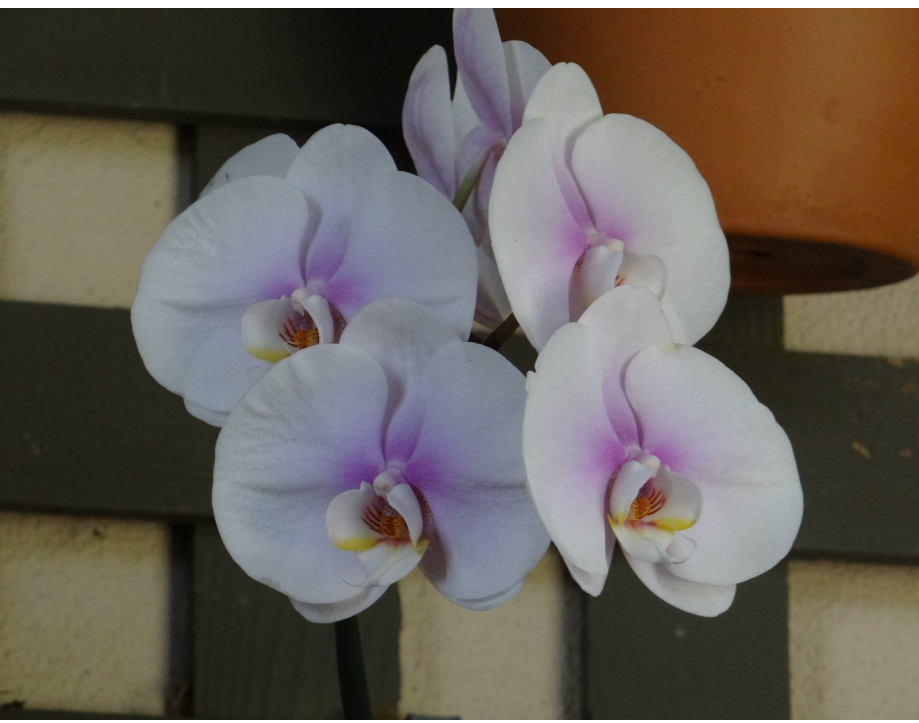




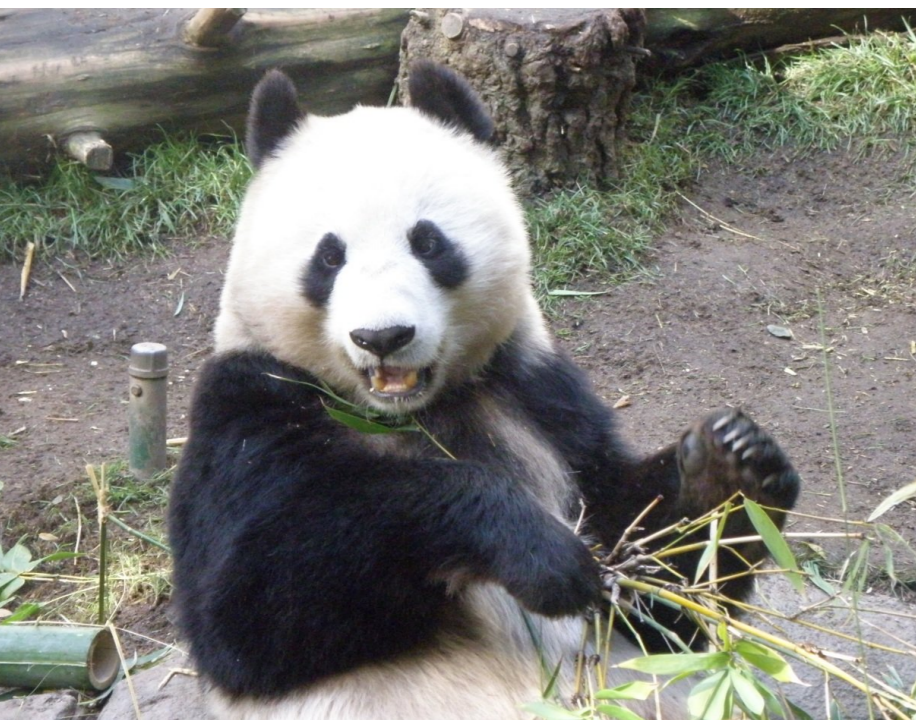


















Colorado

Another of our most favorite states where we feel at home in is Colorado. From Kansas

you enter Colorado climbing a high desert plain also known as 1-70

Limon is the real first taste of Colorado from our point of view We were stranded once for three days in Limon because of 1-70 being closed due to snowy icy weather

It is just past Limon you first see the Rockies staring back at you There is a short cut from Limón to Colorado Springs we have taken on occasion.

Past Limon the antelope begin to appear at first sparsely then multitudes. They are a beautiful grazing animal that runs and jumps constantly

From Kansas you can also enter Colorado from Lamar going to Pueblo, Pagosa Springs and on westward. Let's go to Denver first though on this trip.

Denver, home of the Rockies, a wonderful botanical garden, the best theatre center in the world. They offer us old people half price seats to almost everything

We spent a neat weekend with dear friends and visited 6 Flags over Denver. We have been to many Rockies games and always had great seats

Mount Evans and its 14000 foot road, mountain goats and big horn sheep are nearby Denver truly is the entrance to the Western United States

The Botanical Garden has exquisite flowers and the most wonderful Japanese Garden and the "tree house" How can you go to Denver and

not visit the "Whole Foods" with their selection of fine deserts Speaking of food, you must eat at Le Central and

if you can afford it, Strings both the finest of places to have a meal There is a Mexican Restaurant where divers dive into a pool as you eat and watch

The experience is great, the food so so as is the price You can shop all day and all night if you wish, drive to the Air Force Academy or visit the Garden of the Gods

A very long time ago I bought a string of pearls for Mother's Day for Linda in Colorado Springs at a downtown jewellery store

I suspect it will take me another few days to write about Colorado There is the drive past Grand Junction, the incredible Poudre River and moose drive,

and Rocky Mountain National Park I will take you to some of them tomorrow



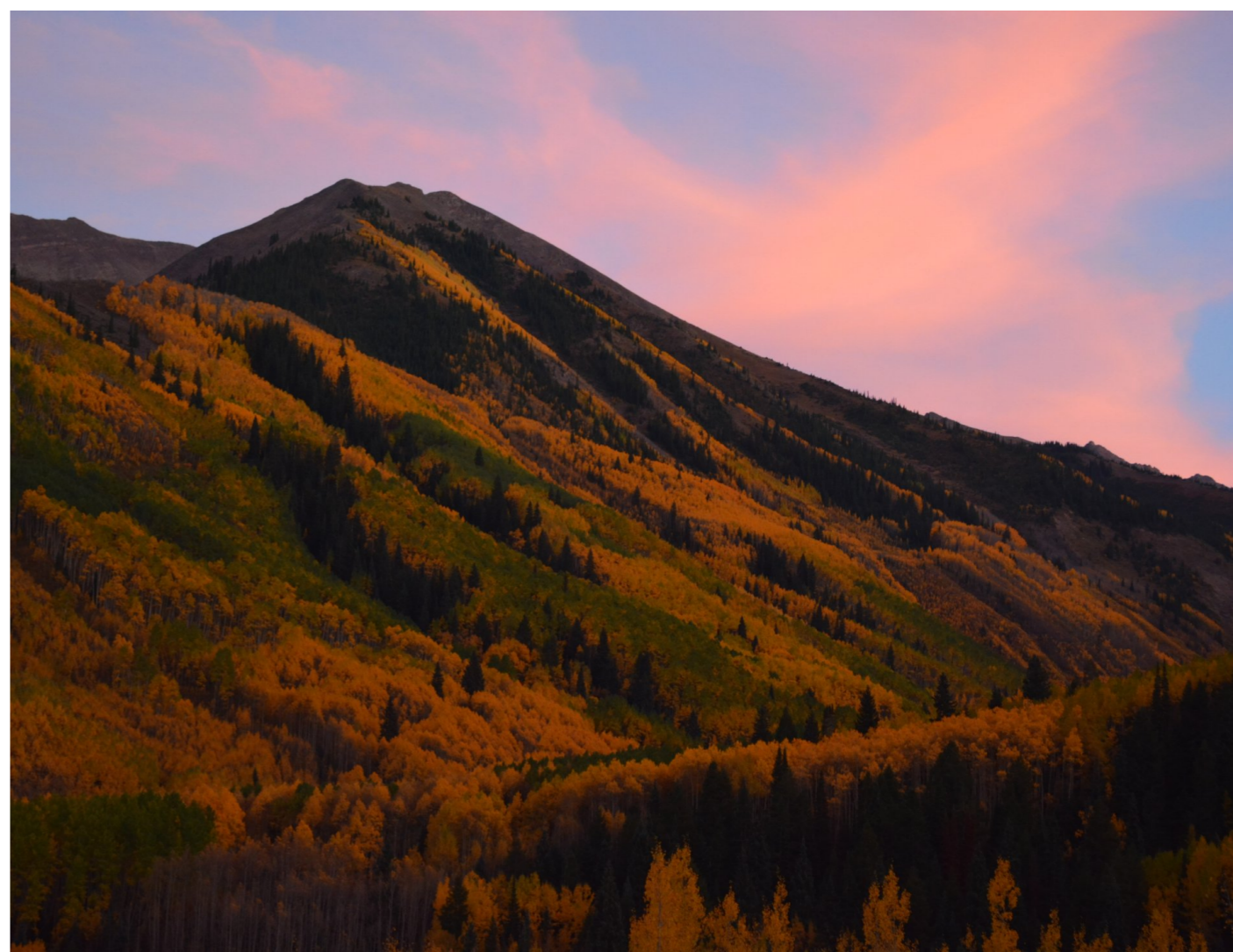




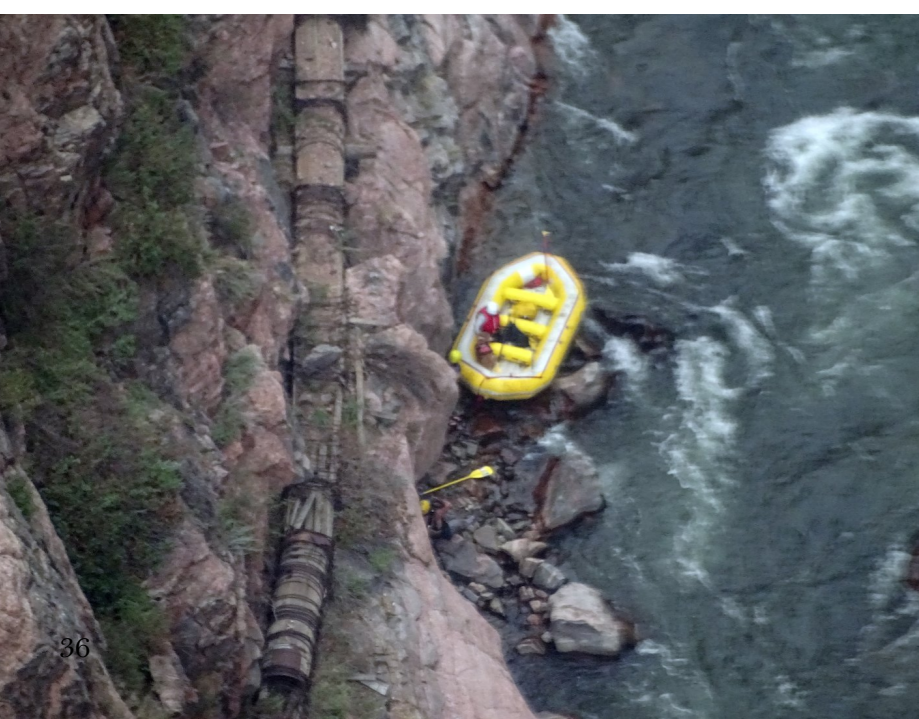
The Maroon Bells is the most photographed place in Colorado and we loved it! We visited one glorious evening and saw a magnificent sunset over golden mountains, the next morning a whole new view, and during the day. We drove over Independence Pass both coming and going. We drove through Royal Gorge on the way home but the " Bells" were what we wanted to see and they were worth the wait.











Driving into Colorado through La Junta is driving from desert into desert. Taking the Walsenburg exit and traveling to Pagosa Springs, Colorado

Is a very pretty and changing drive as you leave the plains and climb into the mountains. Up and down Summit Peak is fun as you pass RV camps where hoards come to party. From Pagosa Springs, Chimney Rock is a stone's throw so to speak. Pagosa Springs is kind of a place to stay rest and explore from.

Durango allows you to go two different ways Mesa Verde NP which is one of the most spiritual places we have ever been. You climb a long winding road to the Visitor Center and then even further you drive around a rim where you can plainly see communities built into the side of the mountain. We were not healthy enough to actually take most of the tours but we saw and felt so very much. North out of Durango you drive up to Silverton which is a small touristy town not unlike other similar towns we have seen many times

The drive there and also to Montrose was mountainous with incredible views and thrilling drop offs. There was a particular flowing almost orange colored stream near an old mining area. It was both beautiful and haunting and we took pictures. Somewhere on the road past Montrose we cut across on a narrow gravel road

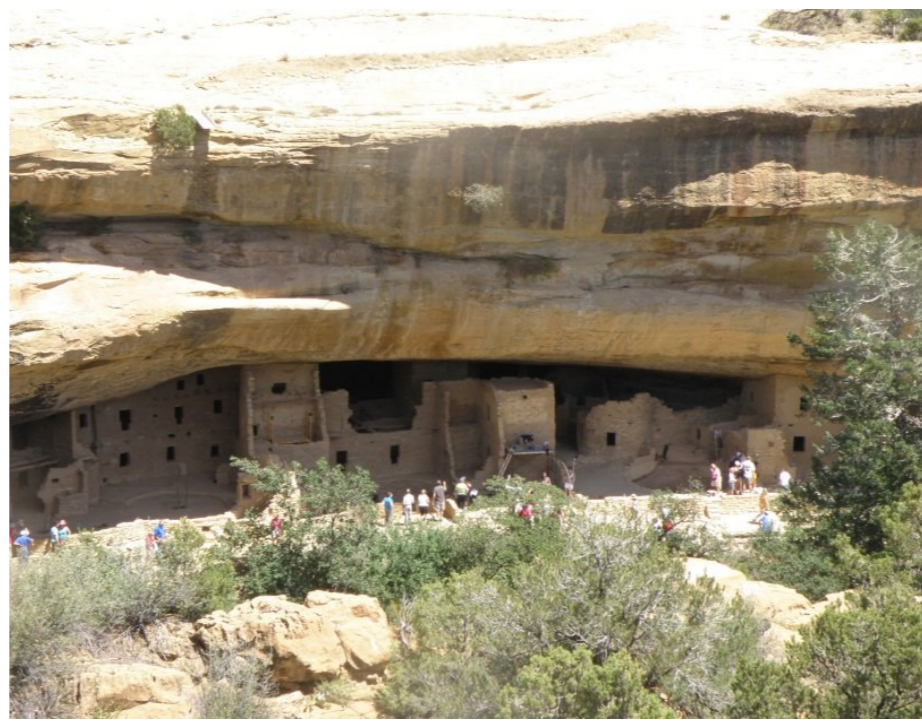
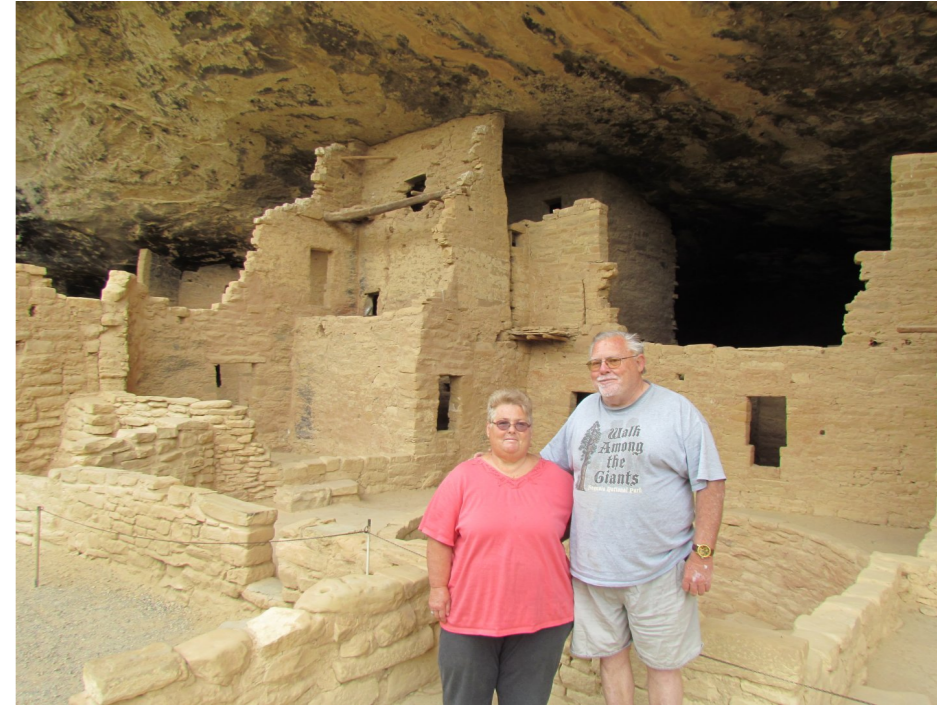
This connected us with a highway 149 in Lake City and we continued through scenic country We drove through Creede and went to a local somewhat famous theatre there

We drove to Chama NM from Pagosa Springs and took a bus to Antonito Colorado. From there we boarded a wonderful narrow gauge train and rode back to Chama

For one brief hot long day we really felt as though we were back in the old west. From Pagosa Springs we headed back to Denver but not the way we had come

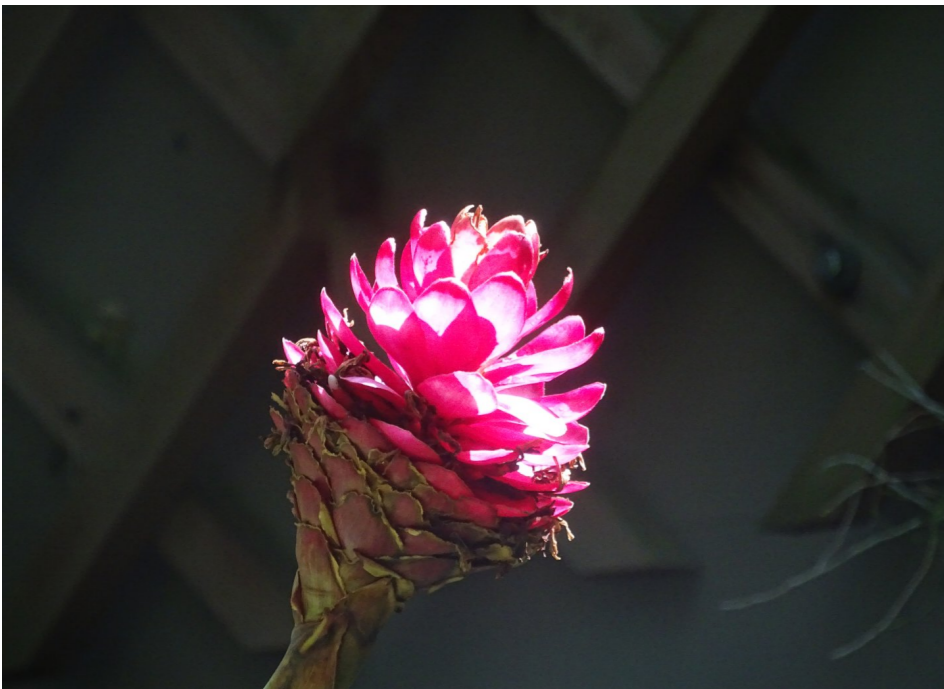
We drove through Fairplay and toward Mt. Evans over a very high mountain pass. Colorado has so many different features from desert, to the tallest of mountains and more





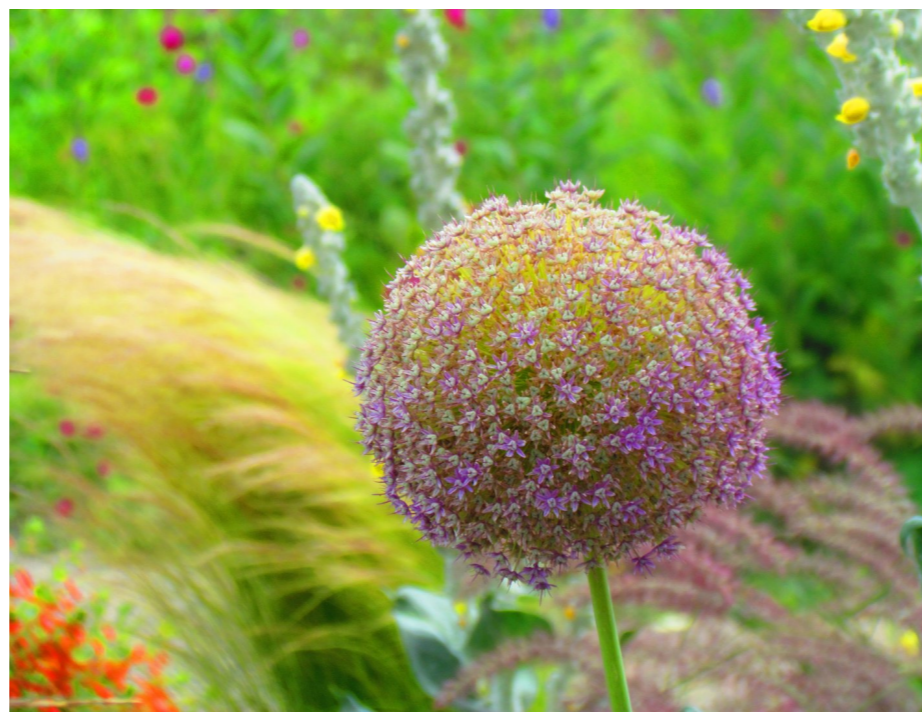


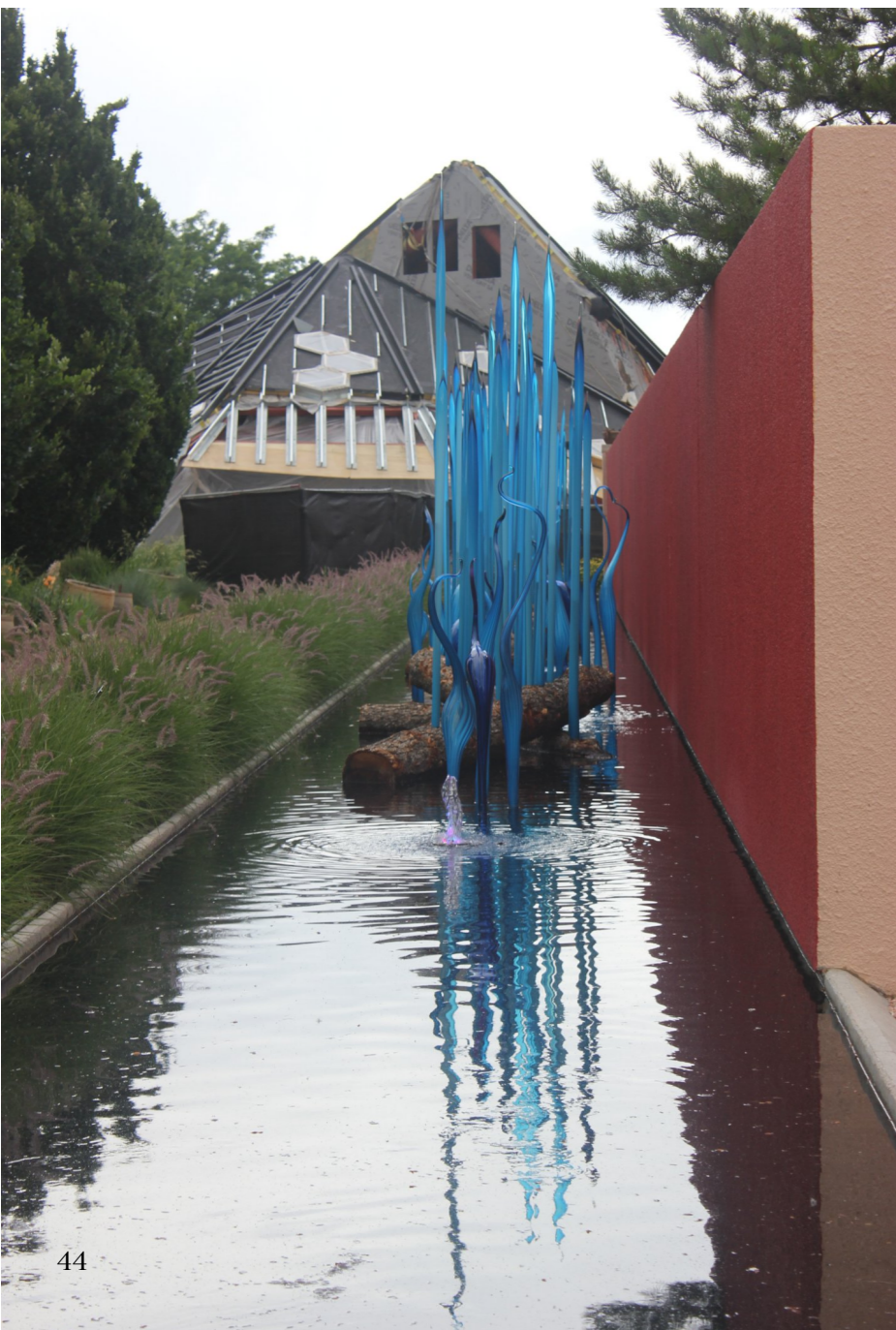
Denver's Beautiful Botanical Gardens get several pages!











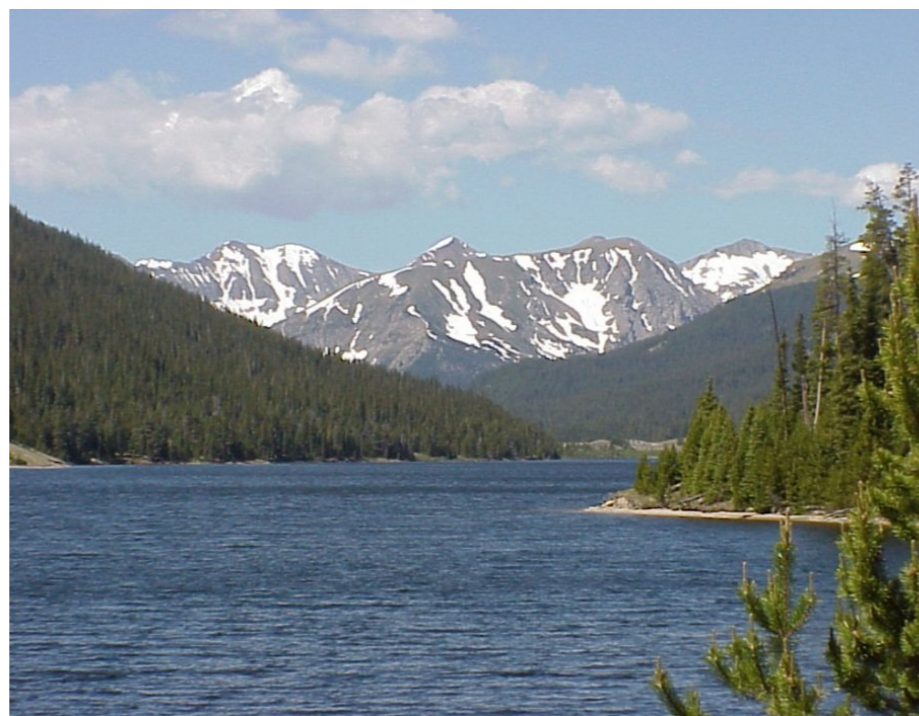


We often visit Rocky Mountain National Park and all the elk. Estes Park is a very busy tourist town that is the natural entrance to the Park. There are days when Elk and more Elk are all you see at the bottom of the Park. Other times we have seen the big Horn Sheep with hoards of other people there. These Sheep are more like goats than what you will often find on the road to Walden. The one way road to the top of the Park is an absolute must do and is a very slow but nice drive. You can also see more Rocky Mountain Sheep along Highway 14 barely visible on the side of the mountain.. In June of 2011, we went to the campground located at the entrance to the one way

road which was still closed because of the winter's heavy snowfall and we were rewarded with our first sighting of Big Horn Rams in Rocky Mountain NP. They were close, healthy and beautiful. We took many pictures. The drive on Trail Ridge Road to Grand Lake takes you past a moose viewing part of the Park. At the very top of the Park you can look down and see about a mile away where we have camped Our most favorite place on this road is a 12 mile gravel road to a camping spot just under the National Park . It is well over a hundred miles to this place circling highway 125 back to Walden down 14. Highway 14 from Walden takes you past a moose viewing valley where there seems to always be wildlife. Up the mountain and down past the Dam through Cameron Pass you drive by the Moose Center. This is another must stop and visit place and we have often seen and taken pictures of a moose. Once we saw a calf suckling its mother. One frosty morning a group of elk came right up to the car and tent, sniffed us and kept walking The Laramie River road is just right there and you go up and over and around the lake and end up at a great moose area. We have driven another rough gravel dirt road across to Red Feather Lakes. Big Horn Sheep like you think they should look are very much present on 14 going south to the Canyon.

The Poudre River runs along this route all the way with Sheep, Rocky Mountain Sheep, Elk, Deer, Moose and tons of rafters and fishermen

There are magical water side campgrounds all over the place No recollection of Colorado would be complete without telling about the time we took our children to Dinosaur National Monument We camped there in the campground and during the night Linda and I made huge "dinosaur tracks" which we told our girls when they awoke were made by real dinosaurs We told them we were very lucky because the dinosaur's just missed stopping on us It is a very real neat place. It occurs to me that Mesa Verde and the Dinosaur Place are very close to if not actually in Utah but they always seemed part of our Colorado journey.









Connecticut

These pictures reflect our visit to Mystic and the surrounding area and Lake of Isles where Portia, our granddaughter worked.





Delaware - The Airplane Museum at Dover Air Force Base is pictured here.

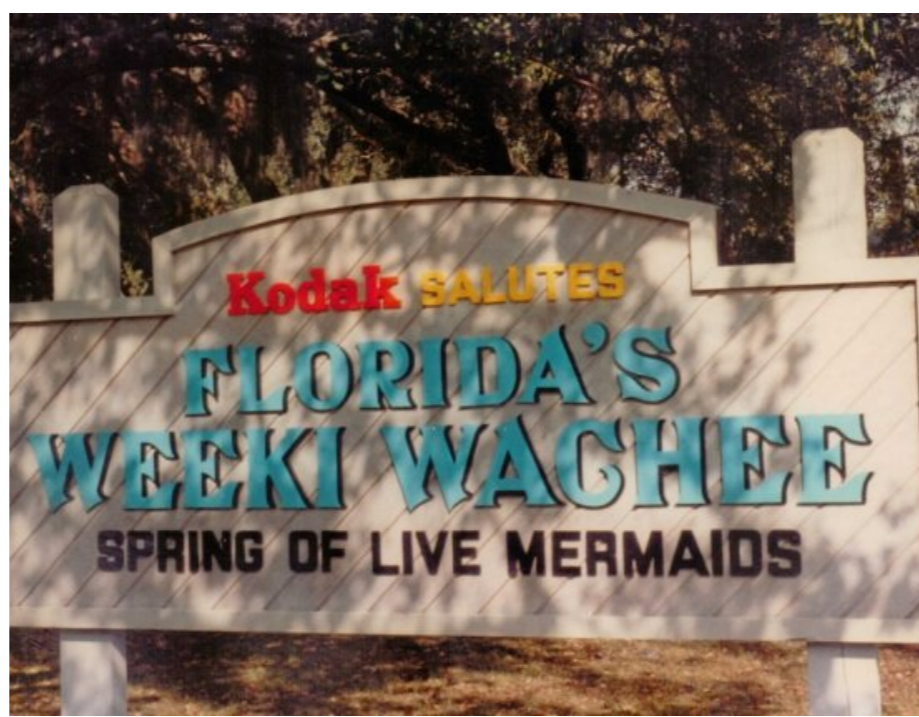
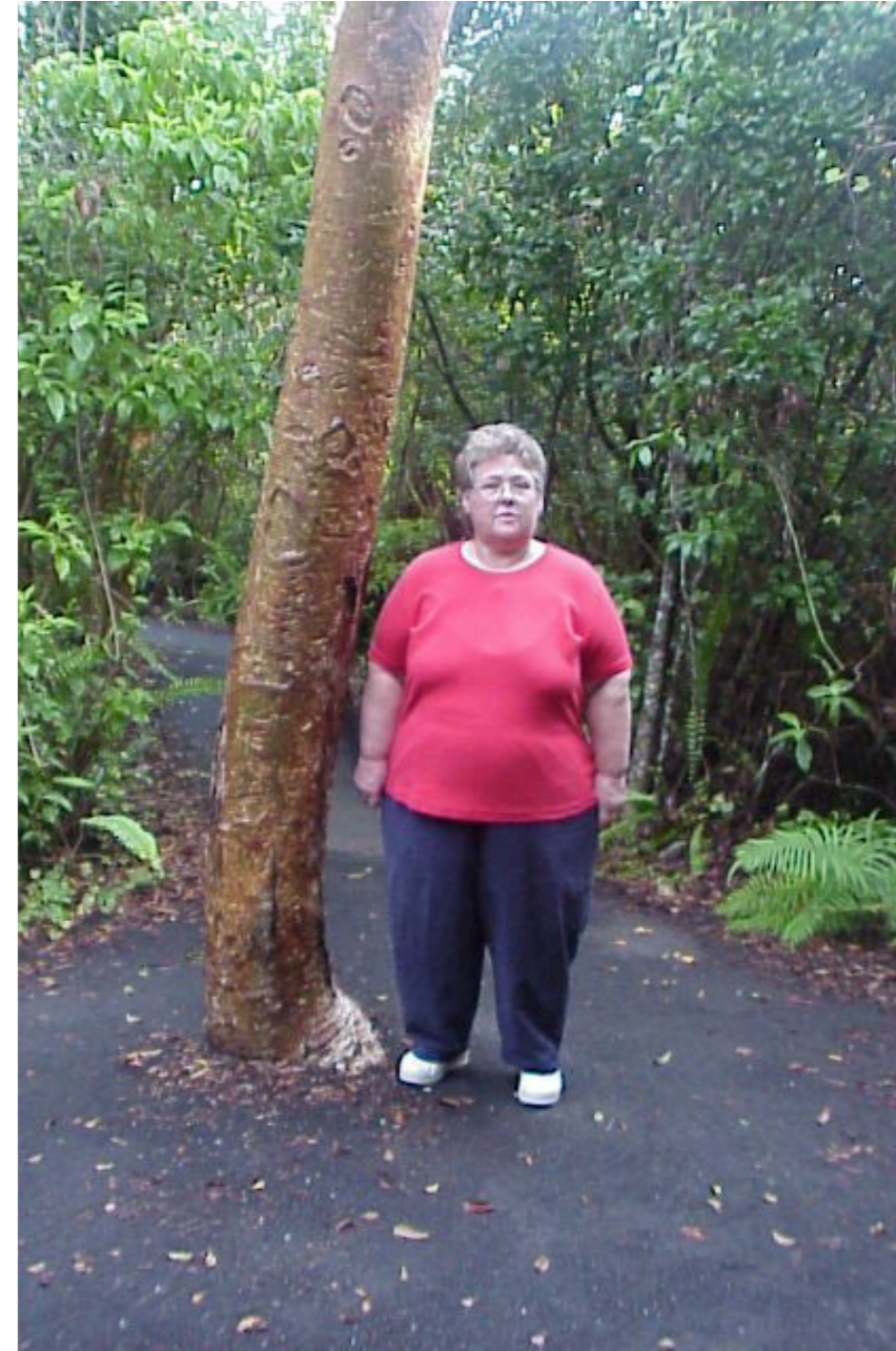
Florida

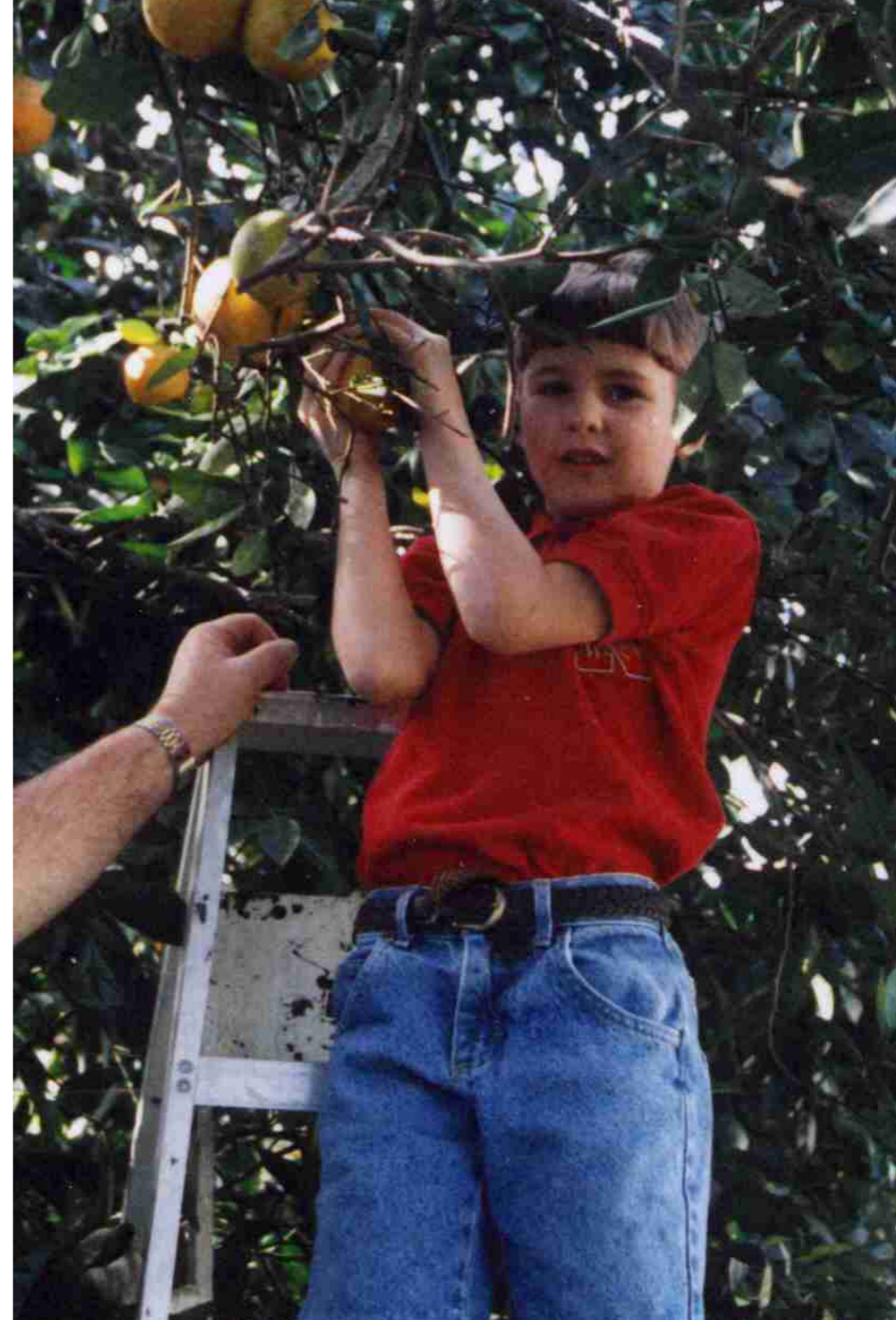
This is a state of many memories and a lot of laughter and much much pain . My mother and my father owned a nice home in Satellite Beach where my sister and her family still live . This is a place where Linda and I took our children almost every Christmas for many years. Florida used to be a State filled with thousands of birds, doesn't seem to be as many left now. We would go swimming at the beach; we would play Jai Lai and often win. We have been to almost every part of this large state including the Everglades . We have driven as far as you can drive in Everglades National Park . On the way we saw egrets, eagles, deer, and herons. and mosquitoes on us and everything. We have been to the now defunct Cypress Gardens and loved it. We went many times to Weeki Wachee and watched the mermaids. We have even been to the "House of Babes" with my sister Maggie one New Year's Eve. Maggie was a big part of each year's visit and we miss her dearly. Disney World, wow, we have had a suite at the Contemporary Hotel. Seen and done everything including seeing Michael Jackson's Thriller when it was first there. Universal Studio's and ET always a neat place to visit. Sea World of Orlando is yet another nice place. Silver Springs when it was all about the fish and the glass bottom boats. The fish are all gone now but they were something to behold. The wonderful Sea World on the Eastern shores of Florida. This was our first venture to a place where sea animals did marvellous tricks. They might be gone also. We lived on Merit Island for a whole year, a difficult one. The incredible flea markets below Ocala, near Orlando and of course the Space Coast one. The Kennedy Space Center near Coco Beach. We have seen alligators everywhere and they are indeed the state animal. We also were grazed by a deer one early morning in my mom's car. The horse farms of Ocala are always impressive. There used to be miles and miles of orange groves. The best oranges used to grow in Mom and Dad's back yard We have driven on Daytona Beach and we have seen the State Capitol. The drive on I-10 from Pensacola to Jacksonville through forest after forest. We have experienced snow in Pensacola and were not happy about it. We also had a wonderful meal with a piano player playing dinner music one Christmas there. he drive across Alligator Alley and up to Tampa and then up and around to the squeaky white sands . The squeaky white sands of Panama City where I visited when I was very young with my mom and dad. Up near Lake City on I-75 is a museum of the old south and it is beautiful. Driving into Florida from Georgia the orange juice at the first rest area was always neat. I remember driving in a rainstorm so heavy you could not see your windshield. The tower in Leesburg, Lake Okeechobee, an amusement park in Hollywood, So much overt poverty near Opa-Locke and down that way. Homestead AFB where mom and dad were stationed for a while. The huge and ever present Navy presence in Jacksonville. Most of all it felt like my home because my mom and dad were there. It was a place where I went even though I knew there would inevitably be pain

It was a place I took my family because I wanted them to know my mother and father . I also knew there would be loudness and yes much much laughter

We haven't been back now for a number of years. Perhaps we will have a chance to visit it again just for the memories!













Georgia
My Birth state, where I went to collage and a place of much pain for me!
Many lost pictures and many not so kind memories.
These pictures include one of my mother and me, me in a tub at my grandparents, Visiting my sister Betty Joe and Warner Robbins AFB. Looked for our pictures of Stone Mountain and Baxley where my sister spent her final days.

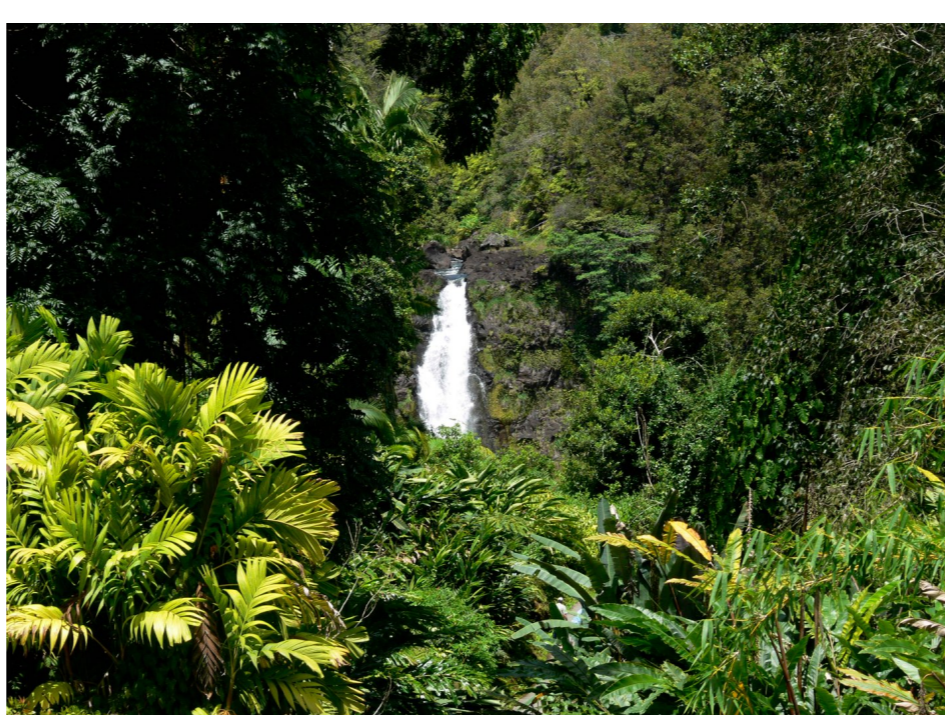


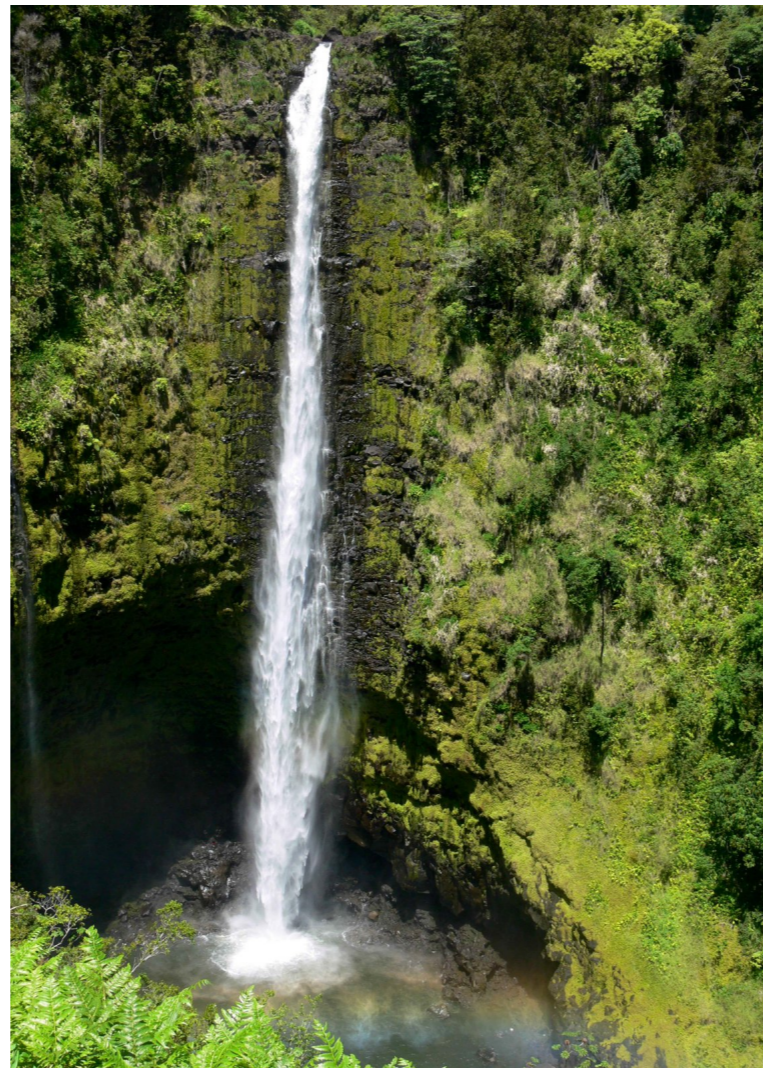


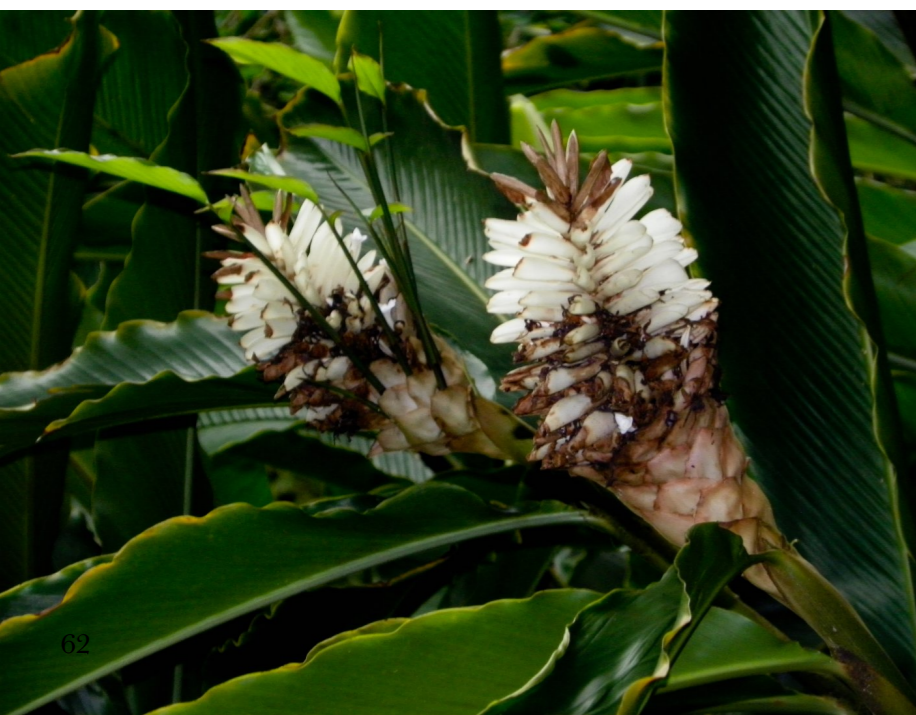
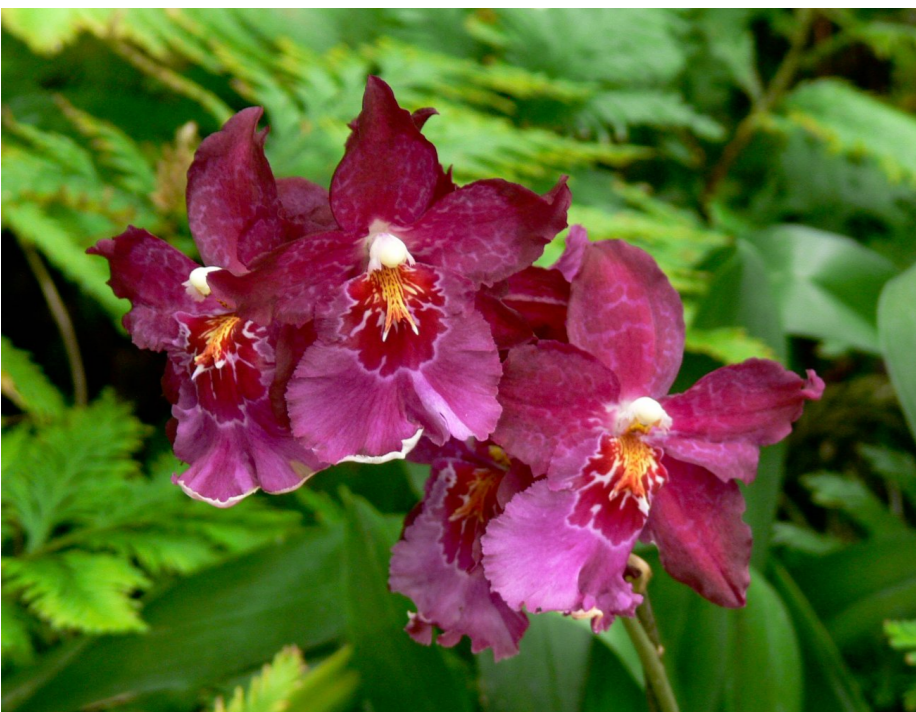
Hawaii

This was the 50th State we visited and it was well worth the wait. Our 45th anniversary trip was perfect and our revisit on our 50th was just as wonderful. We love the big Island with all it's glory. From desert like settings to beautiful botanical gardens, waterfalls, mountains, beaches including the black beach; Volcano NP, turtles, valleys and even wild horses - it is the garden of beauty and we loved being there with each other. The sunsets were particularly special to us but then so was everything.





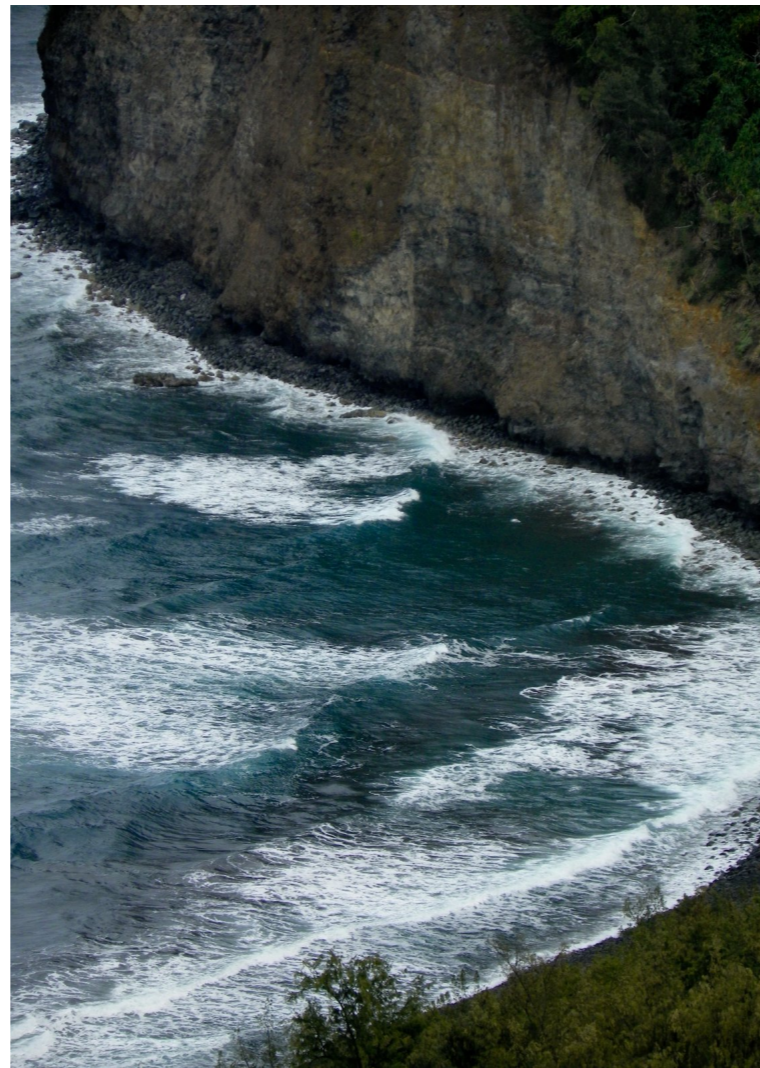
















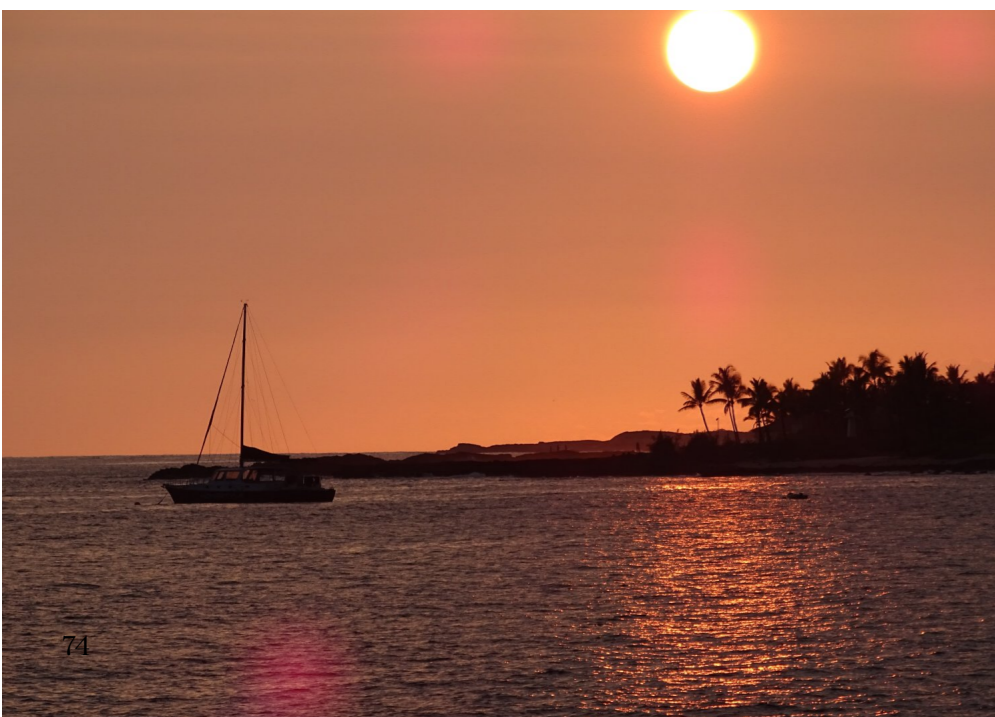






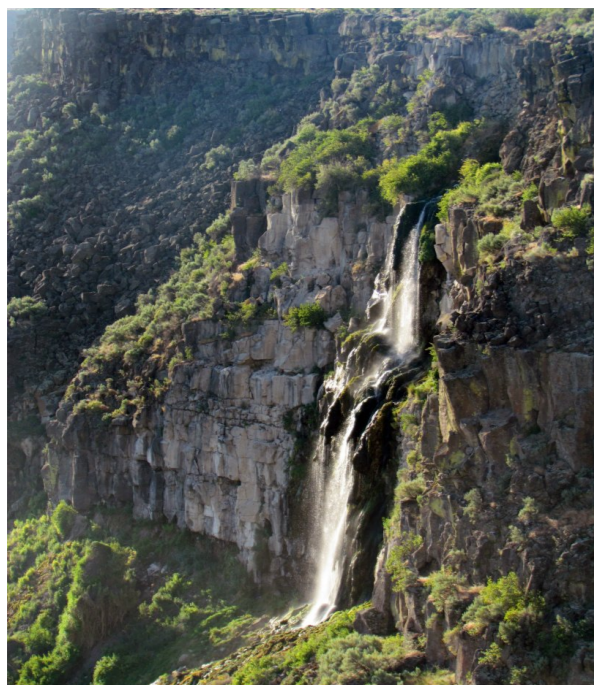








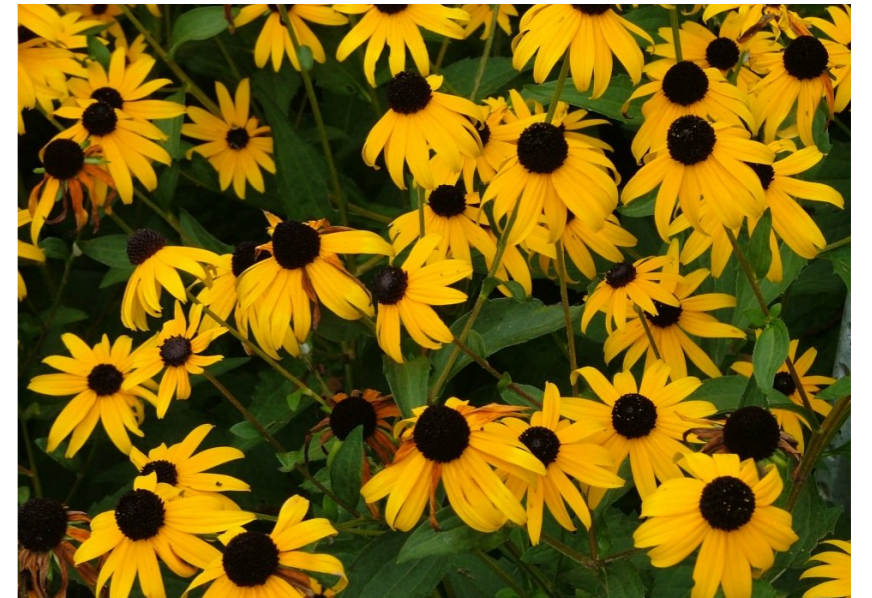




Idaho

A frozen picture of Couer d'Alene taken from the train as my family traveled to Japan in late January, 1957 was my first image of Idaho. Idaho Falls is a 2012 trip through Idaho.



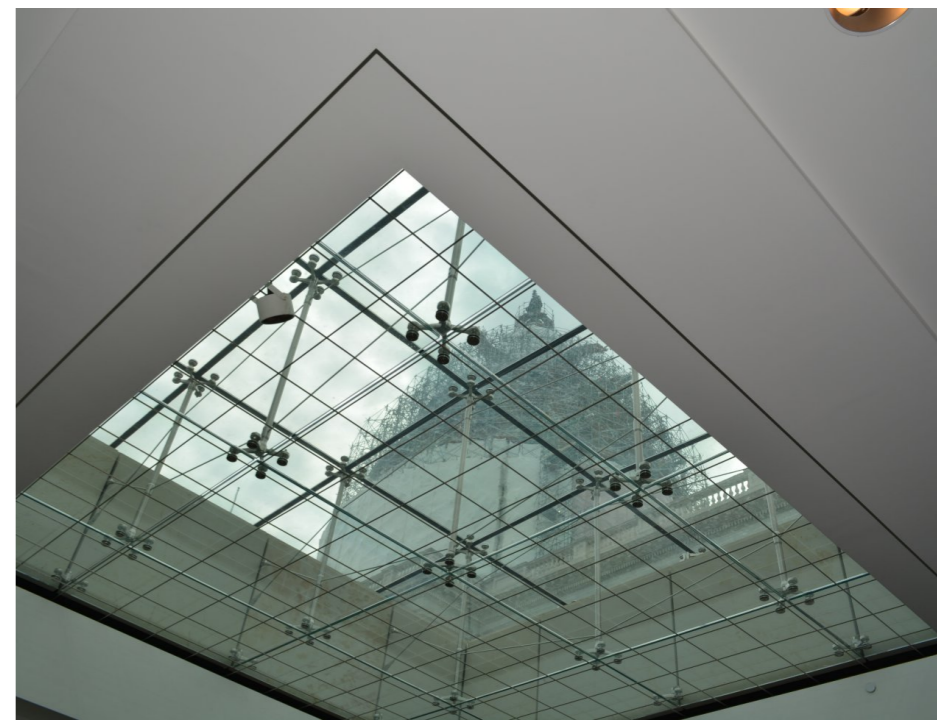


Illinois - Strangely enough we have been to Wrigley and both the old and the new Chicago White Sox Parks and have only these pictures to show! Chicago has tons of traffic.



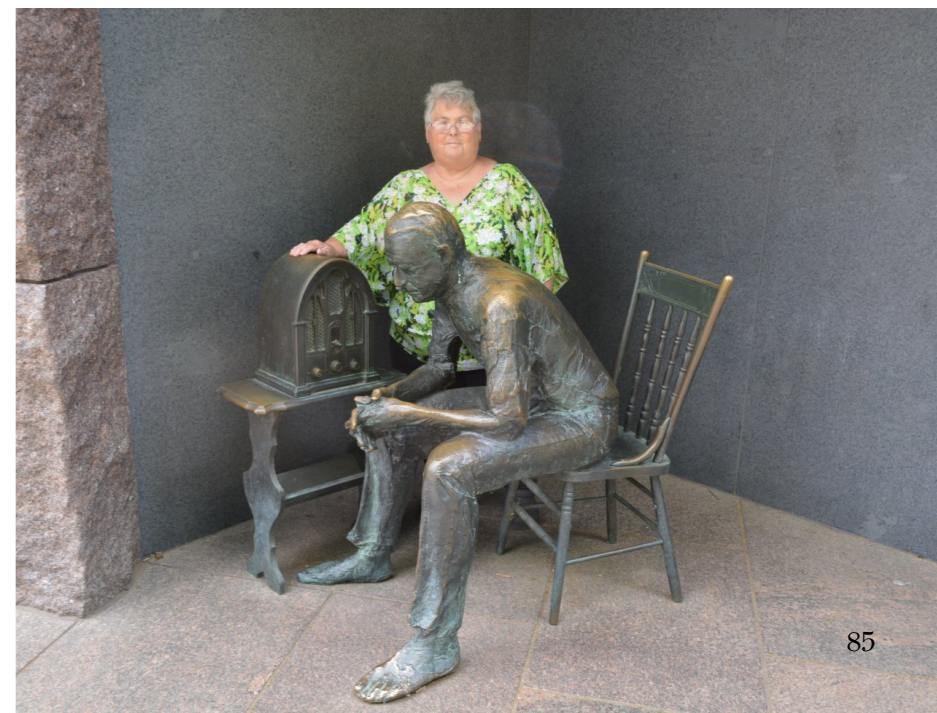
Washington DC and Arlington National Cemetery - This is one of our favorite places to visit and we have under many different circumstances including funerals and holidays. Our Nation's Capitol is incredible and mostly free to visit. In any season you always have a sense of history and belonging.



















**Indiana
Notre Dame
and a
funeral
for my friend
Phil in fort
Wayne**





AP PHOTO

Five girls from Midwest City, Okla., were on hand before the Pope came up Thursday awaiting the arrival of Pope John Paul II at Living History Farms.

Iowa

Pope John Paul's visit to Des Moines

Our three daughters are the 1st and 3rd ones from the left and the one in the stroller.

The "Field of Dreams"

Another spiritual place - at least for me.





Kansas - Our Home

Linda and I have lived here since 1997 and it has become our real home. Four of our five grandchildren live here and we love the Nature Center, our Botanical Gardens, our zoo, and our neighbor Al and his grandson whom we have become close to. Linda earned her Black Belt here in Tae Kwan Do at age 55. God must want us here as we probably would never have come here intentionally as the weather and attitudes are very difficult for us still we have come to grips with Kansas as our home.







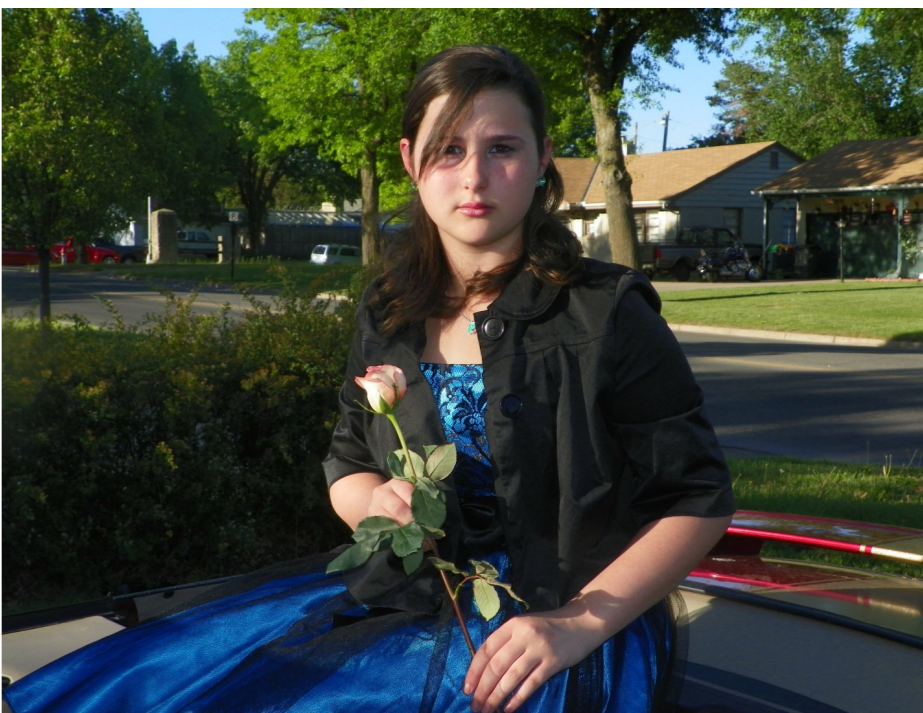
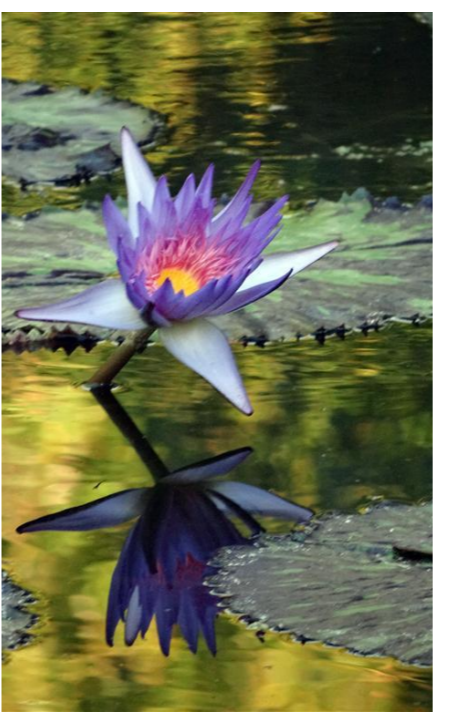
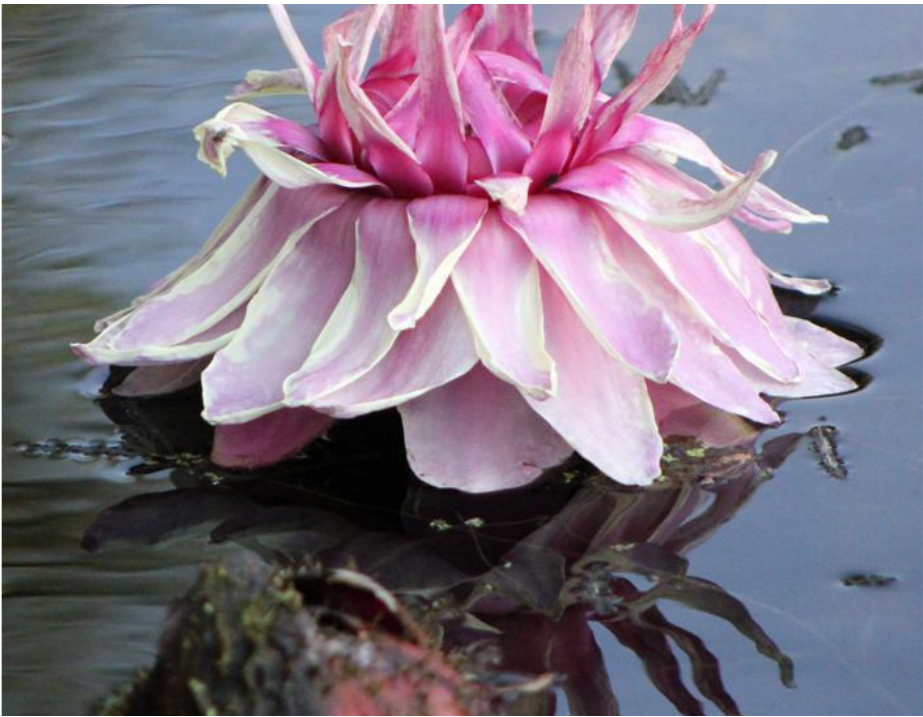


There are many beautiful birds in Wichita including Eagles. Green Heron's and a Blue Jay in our front yard











Kentucky

Through the have driven all over the State of Kentucky but we have also misplaced many pictures. Horses are what we think of always when Kentucky comes to mind so we have included these three pictures.

Recently we stopped at the Jefferson Davis State Historical site and was reminded of a different world and the Civil War. We took pictures of the Amish near this historic site.

A couple of very old pictures at Cumberland Falls.

