



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

Linda and John Flakes - Volume 2

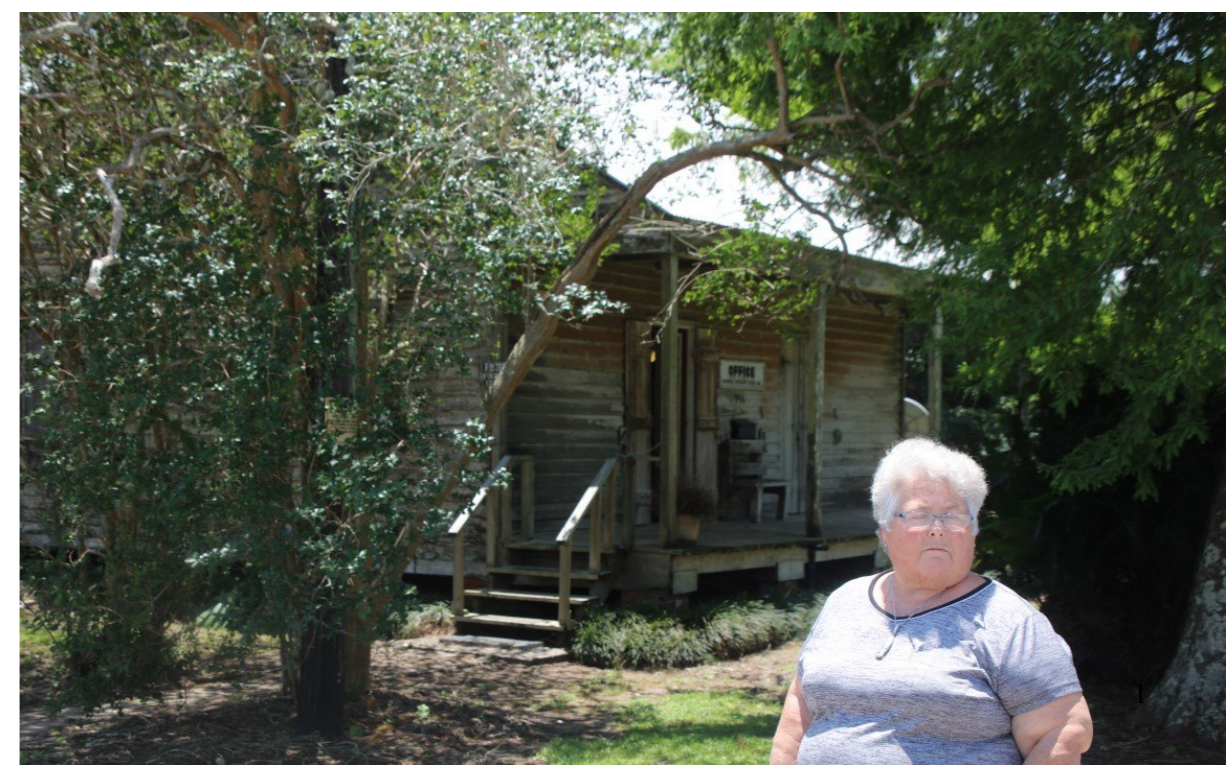
Louisiana

We have travelled through and to this interesting state

Traveling through it we have driven from Shreveport to New

Orleans and on eastward From Texas across to Mississippi both at the top and the bottom of the state Once we stopped and ate at the Boudin King's place near Lafayette When I was very young I went to the Sugar Bowl in New Orleans Mardi Gras is another of my favorite experiences with my mom and dad I remember it was so hot and humid that we sweated like we were in a rain storm one time I had a great religious experience at a Lay Evangelization weekend in New Orleans This was a trip that altered my life in so many ways

We have eaten the famous beignets and enjoyed coffee and hot chocolate at Cafe Du Monde We also have walked next to the Mississippi We have been to Mass at the St. Louis Cathedral on more than one occasion Perhaps our visit to the World's Fair there is one of the most memorable visits One of the things I most remember about the Fair was stopping at the Russian exhibit We talked for quite a while about what it would be like for an American to visit Russia We took a small cable car across the Great River and back I was so frightened realizing I had my entire family all in one car Of course we made it over and back but I could never forget the ride We were accosted by State Police one very early morning As we stopped to rest at a rest area near New Orleans We had pulled into a back part of the area and the police thought we were nefarious people It was not a very good experience although it turned out ok Walking on Bourbon Street, seeing and experiencing We visited the original slave homes at Laurel Valley. Linda held a huge snake at Zam's Swamp Tours. We stayed at Oak Alley and the Alley is beautiful We were dismayed to find that Slavery had become such a tourist industry!







Maine

We took an incredible vacation with our son in law and 4 of our 5 grandchildren to Maine and New England.

We ate lobster in Bar harbor, went whale watching, white watering and throughly enjoyed ourselves.







Maryland - Mt. St. Mary's and the wonderful grotto. We have visited and prayed there over many years.
St. Elizabeth Seton's home is another favorite place. Spent time at Aberdeen Proving Grounds



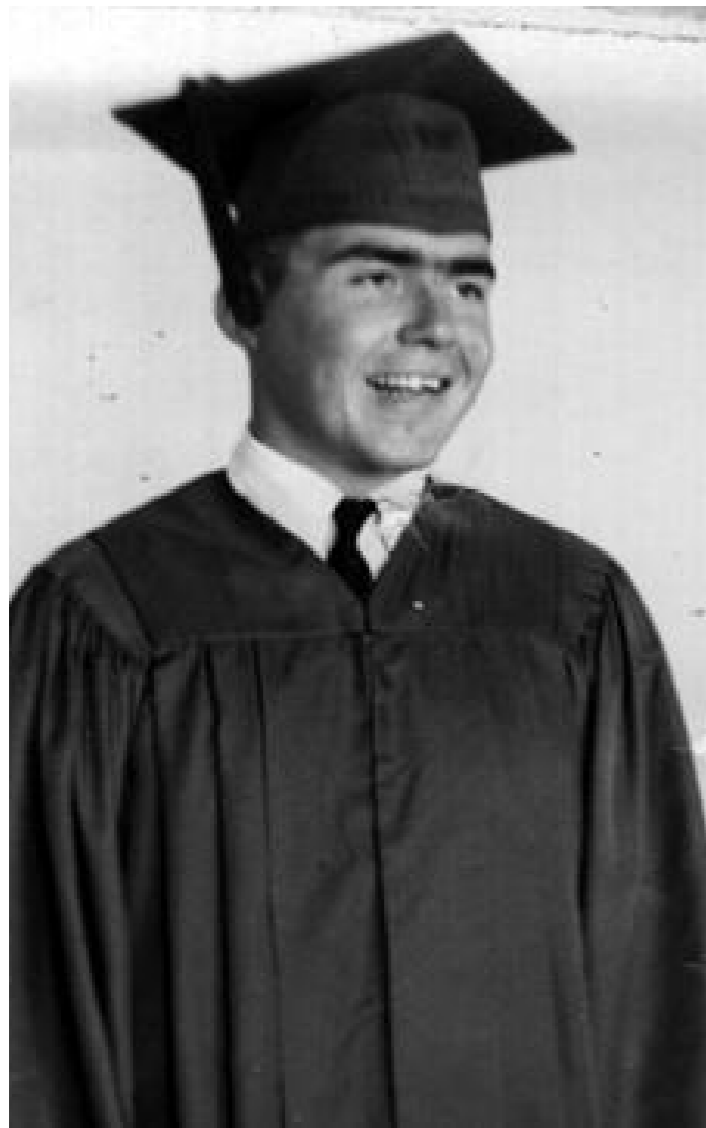
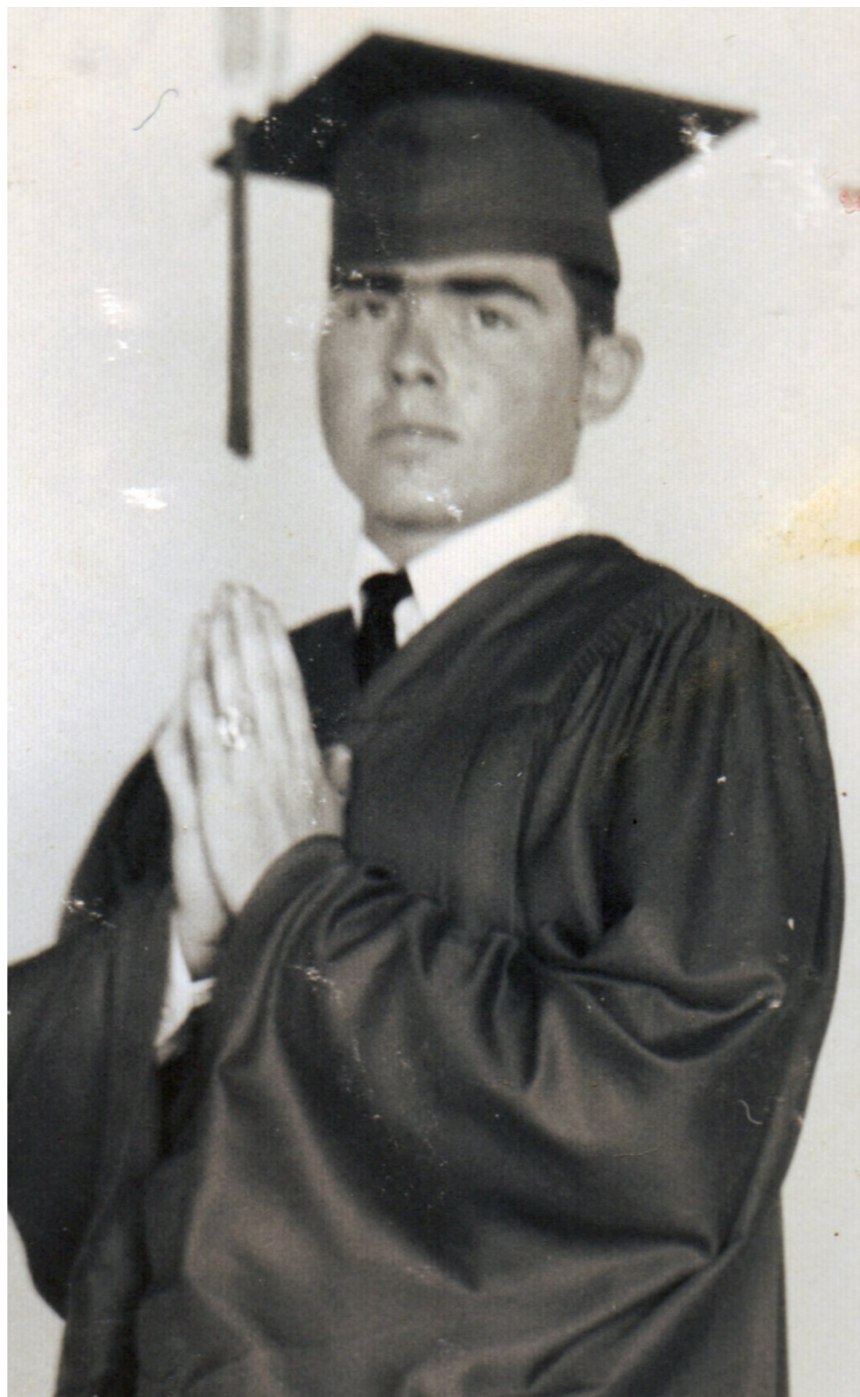
Massachusetts

We have driven I-80 across to Boston and I-95 north
Once we drove way out on Cape Cod for what seemed forever
The homes were expensive, pretty and the setting was nice,
We remember it as being full of people even though the Cape was narrow and sandy
When I lived in New Hampshire, I went with my
dad to a military skin doctor near Boston
I remember going to a shoe factory somewhere in Massachusetts also
In Boston itself I drove past and around Fenway Park
Someday I would love to go to a game there
I remember driving around the Commons and into China Town and
Trying to buy a fresh lobster near there
We drove to Gloucester once and saw the fishing monument
I visited Plymouth Rock and was sorely disappointed at how small it was
Falmouth, Fall River, New Bedford and the submarine base, and
Lowell are some of the places
Never did we spend much time there however
We have always wanted to be there on the 4th of July
The Boston Pops July 4th festival has always held a great attraction for us and
We would very much like to attend one
Again a typical New England State with many people, much traffic and
Some nice scenic places
Green, I don't remember it being as hilly as other States up there and
The traffic of Boston was a nightmare
I remember the cold of winter and ice skating but that was very long ago!

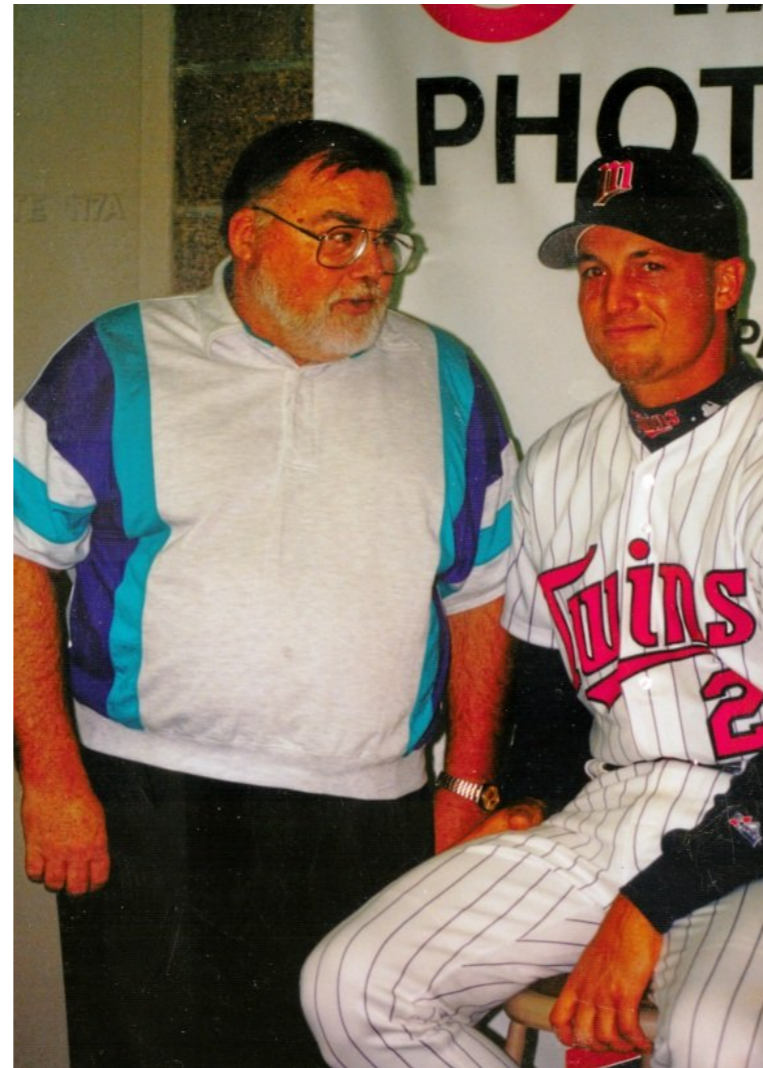








Michigan
Where I went to high school, an early home of ours, and now our daughter Nikki's home.
It is not one of our favorite places!



**Minnesota
A land of lakes,
rivers, festivals, and floods.
Lots of memories.**





Mississippi

I lived in Biloxi while my dad was stationed at Keesler Air Force Base From 1954 to early 1957. The most important turning point in my life happened while we lived there. Before we moved to a house just outside of Gate 7 on Pass Road . We lived close to a Palmetto field helped make a baseball field pulling a log over the ground to smooth the infield. I also received a Red Ryder BB gun as a gift from my parents. I went hunting and shot a beautiful Blue Jay

I was by myself and I heard a voice and felt a hand gently pushing me forward. As I watched the red stain of life leave the Blue Jay, the Voice said clearly, "See what you have done. Never ever kill anything I have made again!". This was a loving voice but I was terrified and horrified and ran crying back home. No one understood and to this day I have never deliberately killed anything ever again.

I know this was my Creator God who spoke with me that day and God has been ever present in my life.



I learned to play baseball in Mississippi and have always loved the game. My father was an announcer for the local Keesler Tarpons. It was here that it was also discovered I had terrible eyesight and I got my first pair of glasses. I remember we were at the Beach Drive In movies and I really could see for the first time

I went to Sacred Heart Academy in Biloxi and found I had a great voice and singing became a tool for me. Sister Mary Marion discovered I could sing and I turned from an introverted abused little boy. I once slapped Sister Mary Winifred in the face and She was loving enough to know where I learned to do that Music, Baseball, and the Church were the escapes I made for myself I became an extrovert who could sing and play baseball and my life slowly changed. Music and the Church also became my escape. along with baseball from. the harsh and dangerous environment I was in. I was sexually abused here by a priest and a baseball player my parents allowed me to be with. Everything I think about Mississippi is colored by these experiences







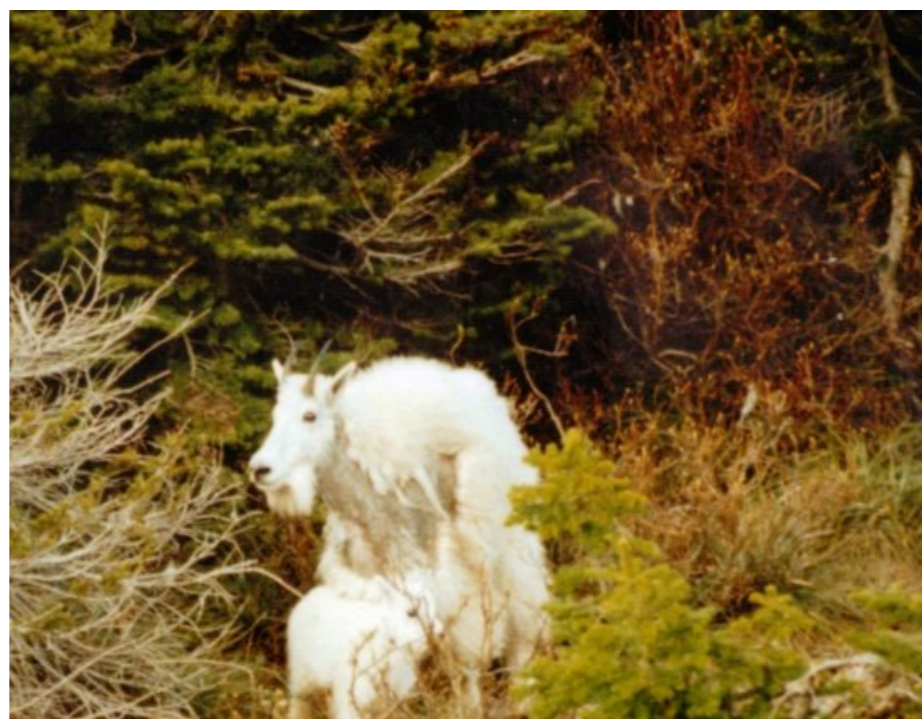
Missouri

Wow from Branson to St. Louis and other beautiful places we have spent many wonderful days visiting this state. The Fall is a wonderful season with many colorful sites. I had a horrible accident in this state a long time ago.





Montana - The Beautiful state filled with wonderful memories!

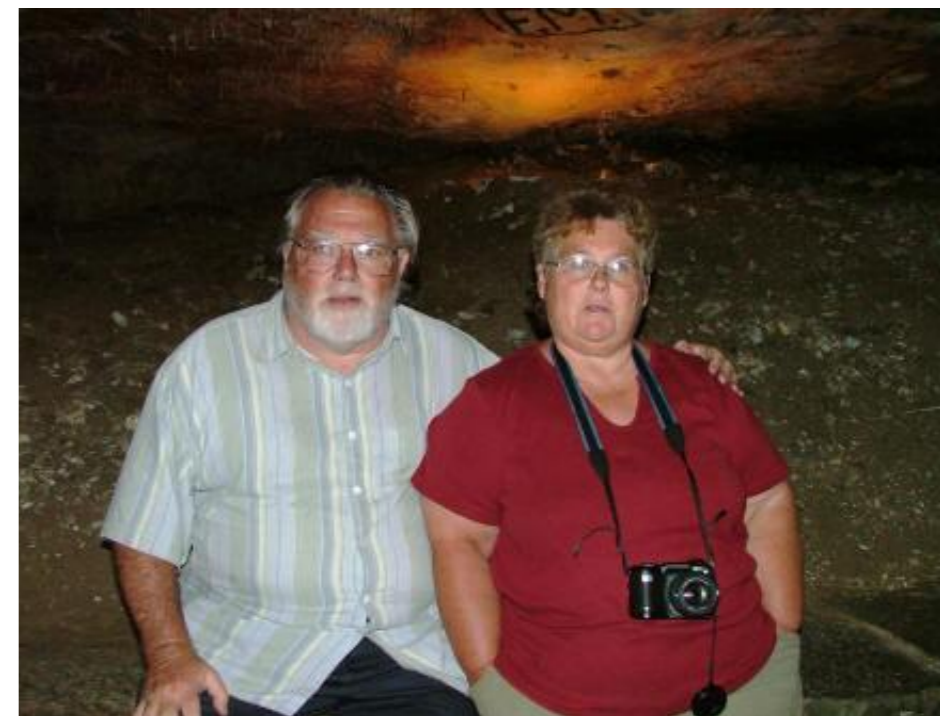
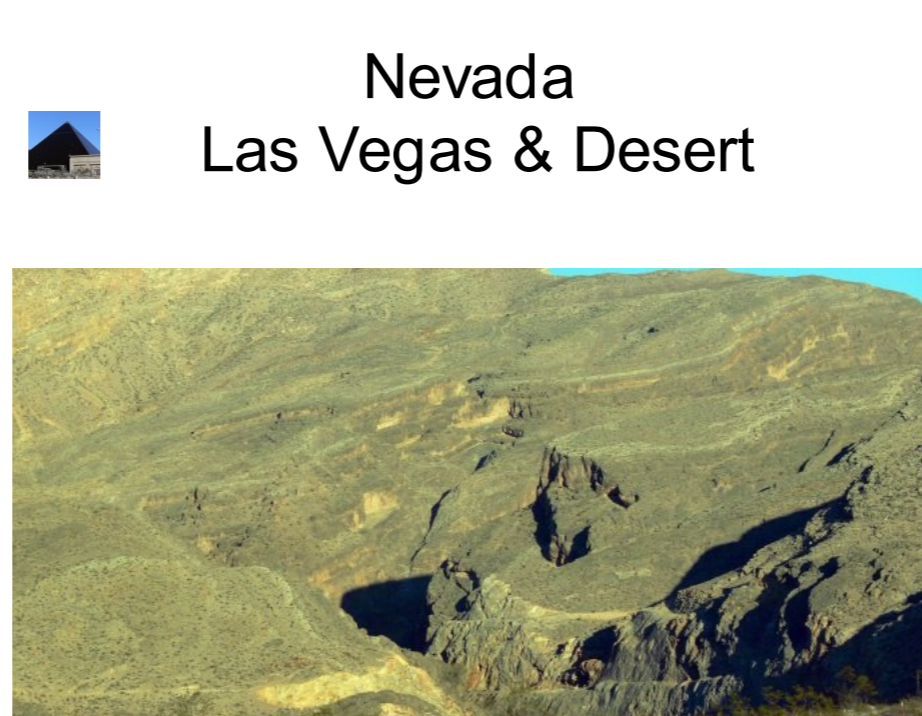





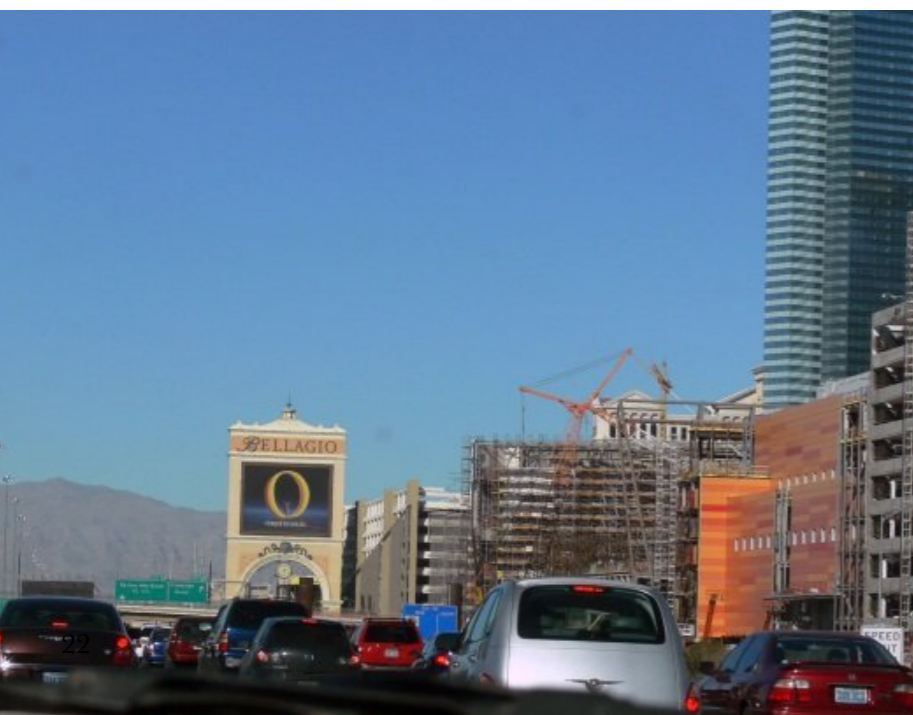




Nebraska
We visited the pre opening of a Mormon Temple with dear friends and then the large and interesting Omaha Zoo.



 Nevada
Las Vegas & Desert





New Hampshire

This is a small but pretty state. It is green and lush and mostly friendly. There are some small lakes and a tiny sea shore with a nice boardwalk. I lived in Manchester for a brief but full time with my Mom and Dad. Dad was stationed at Grenier Air Field which I understand now is the Manchester Air Port. I formed a baseball team and played baseball all summer, Danced and "made out" with lots of young girls I barely remember. Went to Club 96 with an older friend named "Beanie" and Drove to Concord and Portsmouth with him. Ran across the runway on the Air Base and turned over trash cans and Had a glorious growing up summer.

I had a nice part in "The Mikado" while at Manchester Central High School and Worked so hard to pass Latin

New Jersey

Well this is a State Linda and I have only been in a few times

We mostly drive out of this state after visiting New York City

It seems we always buy gas at the first rest stop and look back at the City Skyscrapers

We have however, driven to Atlantic City and walked on the boardwalk and

Actually visited Trump's Casino

I remember the Boardwalk as busy with a lot of people and the ocean of course

We did not win anything in the casino but did not gamble very much, maybe \$20

The drive into the casino was through an old town with run down appearing houses

The first time I remember New Jersey was going to Fort Dix to

Welcome Linda's family back from Europe

We had small children at the time and we went to eat before going back to Michigan

We also got a speeding ticket just outside of Fort Dix

We have driven I-80 into New York and I-78 out of New York

We have also driven I-295 south to Newark

We once drove to Philadelphia from Havre de Grace, Maryland

Through Delaware and New Jersey

Where we bought Linda a small black and white TV as I was entering OCS

It was night and the traffic was heavy and

The streets crowded but did not matter as we were very young

This is another of those drives with what seems to be endless

Tall apartment buildings, tenements if you will

You see them and wonder what all the people who live there do

But don't remember ever stopping to find out

I seem to remember at least in part on the way to Fort Dix, green farming country

The poverty near Atlantic City was strikingly obvious also

This isn't a state that would be high on our personal list to revisit but

It also isn't all that low either

If there is such a thing for us, and I wonder if there is, well é would be the impression

Hum drum, so so, nothing special or even not special

I know this isn't especially fair but it is how I remember New Jersey





New Mexico

What an interesting State New Mexico is with it's tall snow-capped mountains, blistering heat and desert, deep caverns, "aliens", & gushing rushing rivers. New Mexico is a neat beautiful state with friendly people

From Clayton to Cimarron on to Eagle Nest and Angel Fire, then over to Taos,

we have driven I-25 south to Las Cruces and we have driven the back way into Silver City through Hillsboro. White Sands is an amazing place. The Viet Nam Memorial is stunning and the valley breath-taking. We have visited Taos to Santa Fe, through so much history and the live markets with Native Americans selling incredible things. We had a memorable drive to El Paso from Alamogordo once when we were very young and

Linda was pulled over going well over 100 miles an hour. I was stationed at Fort Bliss and we were rushing back to make a deadline with our newborn daughter in the rear seat and no she did not get a ticket. Carlsbad Caverns is one of our very favorite places and again we have been there many times. The Alien Landings in Roswell remain one of our most talked about subjects & Linda lived in Roswell for over a year. Her dad was stationed there and he would take her up in a small airplane. I play Strat Baseball with a young friend whose family is in the jewellery business there. He was a summer cowboy.

In Chama we took a narrow gage steam powered train ride that was very much an old west experience As a young married couple with no money we would drive from Fort Bliss to Cloudcroft to get up in the snow covered mountains Ruidoso was a beautiful place we liked just to drive and see Once with our children we took a back gravel road Through the Mescalero Apache Reservation It was so narrow with steep drop offs and nowhere to turn around but we made it It remains one of our fond memories

Such a beautiful and diverse State is New Mexico





New York

I will leave the City for another day as even though it is a part of this State, NYC deserves and will get a day of its own. My first remembrance of New York is in Callicoon at St. Joseph's Seminary where I attended for a short while. I could not sing right for them, my voice was too loud, and I did not fit in and there were no girls, still I did go to the Seminary Next is Utica where my wife and I spent a difficult year as a Director's of Religious Education and Youth Ministry at Sacred Heart We worked for a racist priest and still managed to touch youths that had nowhere else to go We took kids to the Opera, to Jesus Christ Superstar, and the largest group ever to a Diocesan Youth Convention which we were soundly criticized for. It seems the Youth Convention sponsors were not prepared for so many youth The one good thing about this year were the incredibly nice Sister's that ran the school at the Parish We subbed for the school and were always treated with respect and kindness It is worth noting that when our contract was abruptly not renewed, the Sisters chose to leave in protest I also put in a full year as a substitute teacher and taught a lot of inner city kids and disabled classes for the Public Schools Once I was in a class where the teacher never spoke to the kids, boy did I change that, and, they responded in kind! Once I subbed for a young woman who had become an alcoholic while trying to teach in an impossible situation. I did what I could do to help her and maybe she is ok now Driving from Utica to Albany you must stop at the Jesuit Shrine near Canajoharie We also have visited the Kateri Tekakwitha Shrine near Fonda There was a beauty about the land of upper New York that is fairly unmatched We have driven every inch of this state and as a whole it offers much diversity



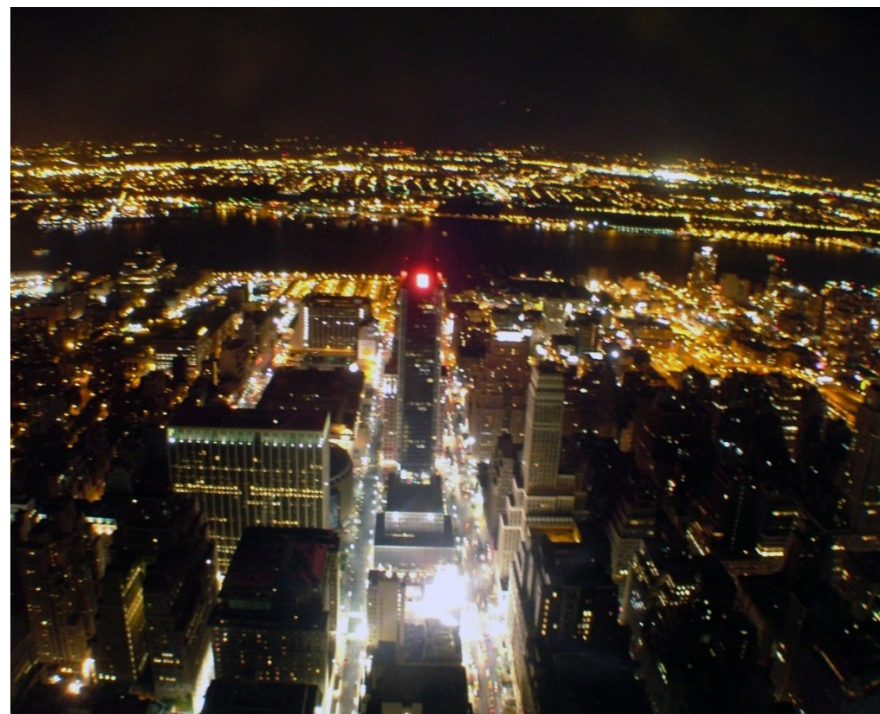






New York City

For us New York City is a magical place and so very busy all the time place Most of the time we have spent in the City was in Manhattan Our first time in the City was perhaps our most memorable We flew in to LaGuardia late at night and shared a ride with a J C Penny executive downtown It had just snowed and he was staying at the J C Penny Building and we were at the Squires Century Center near Times Square We were there for the Toy Show and checked in with a mega superstar at the same time We were so excited that we could not sleep and got up and went down to the street We walked, looked in windows and had a breakfast and then went back to our rooms The City was so alive and so were we, was indeed a special magical moment We purchased half price tickets in Times Square and we sat center isle, 4th row for Woman of the Year Debbie Reynolds was the star and a great Tony Award winning woman sang, "It's Wonderful" and it was We saw Merlin with Chita Rivera and Doug Henning and it closed soon after We saw David Dukes in Amadeus and it was beyond belief great Finally we saw Joseph with an un-named understudy and it was the highlight of Broadway for us We rode wooden escalator's that were quaint but very neat and unusual just like the subways The Christmas Department Store Window displays at night are especially compelling We have been through and to and hope we get to visit again this very neat City! Our minds and being are filled with so many memories of this neat place









North Carolina



Linda was born in Lumberton and her Dad's family is from close to there. Her Grandfather was a tobacco farmer and we have visited his farm. Once she saw the Klu Klux Klan march through her Grandfather's land. She grew up in a place where African American's were not considered "real" people. I think this has haunted her all her life. We have driven I-40 across the State and I-95 up and down the State. We bought a yellow Mustang convertible in Durham and have spent the night in Raleigh. We visited Jim Baker's failed dream in Charlotte and have seen wonderful wild flowers in the interstate medium. I think Jim Baker was a victim of himself, his wife, his humanity, and the greed around him. We liked Jim and Tammy White visiting a huge antique market in Charlotte we came across and bought a beautiful early 1800 Bible for \$30. On the way home we discovered two tickets to a 1916 Boston Red Sox Major League Baseball Game. Asheville is the home of the Biltmore House and Gardens and a wonderful hilly town. The Biltmore is terribly expensive now but wasn't always that way. We used to take our children there and we explored all parts of the vast estate. I particularly love the green house with all the orchids and the maize in the back of the house. We have visited both at Christmas and seen the spectacular way it is presented and at other times as well. Cherokee is one of our favorite visiting places after traversing the Great Smoky Mountain National Park. This is one of the most beautiful mountainous areas of our country and we have visited often. We have been there when the colors were ablaze and when the snow was on the ground.



We have seen the deer and we have gazed on the hazy mountains and climbed Mt. Pisgah. We have never been to the Smoky Mountains when there was not the famous blue haze over everything. We have driven the Blue Ridge Parkway all the way from Cherokee to the end of the Parkway and camped along the way. We once camped on Bear Mountain and yes a big black bear that made a lasting impression was our "guest". This bear "ate" or at least did a good job of trying to eat a new Honda Goldwing Motorcycle and a bag of peanuts on our table. There is a one way road down into Cherokee from there and yes we have taken it more than once. One other time we camped in a commercial camp spot in Cherokee and went tubing in a nice rushing stream.





North Dakota

St. John's is a Roman Catholic Basilica. It is easily the most prominent building in Northern North Dakota. It is where our lives would be centered for over five and a half years. It is the place where we enjoyed being competent, respected and needed. While driving west toward Fargo from Minnesota on our very first trip to North Dakota, we really wondered where we were going as it was in the middle of what seemed utter isolation. Then we reached Fargo, spent the night and headed toward Grafton our destination. The further north we went the more we wondered where we were headed and how would we be received. Just north of Grand Forks we picked up highway 81 and drove through Ardoch, and Minto into Grafton. We purchased and paid off the most wonderful home we ever have owned. We made many repairs to this home which had a new boiler provided by a wonderful family. Furniture and painting and general repairs were given to us by our pastor. We worked with a lady there that was as close to being a real nun as any we have ever met. Sister Donna Jean not only looked the part, she was exactly what she seemed, a holy woman. A lady filled with much pain but never allowed it to interfere with who she really was. We worked with a short man whom we loved and respected but in the end was what he seemed to be, a priest. Dale was a man devoted to supporting us in every way for the first part of our time together and did so until his needs changed. Terri was a bright young beautiful Youth Director that grew much and got married while she was in Grafton. We were to live in Grafton for over five years. I was the Parish Administrator and Linda the Director of Religious Education and we relished the positions. Linda sat on the hospital ethics committee for over four years and a local Mormon Doctor with eleven children became our fast friend. I was an active member of the Diocesan Finance Committee and the Bishop and I showed a lot of love and respect for each other. I had Parish Farmers put a profitable wheat field in unused adjoining Parish property and I even drove a combine. We were extremely active within the community and served in many ways including Summer Migrant Education and Fiesta's. There were so many good people there, Bev a wonderful Parish Secretary who almost did not have a job and we could not have done without. The family that insisted on giving Linda and me everything we needed in order for us to stay there and be reasonably successful. They came to our aid every time without fail and we loved and respected them and yet held many different views. We worked for five and a half years for St. John's and for about two and a half of those years we really were needed and appreciated This was easily the best and most successful team we were ever to serve with



Our presence added just the right human touch to allow for people to come together and a building to be built We were an important part of putting together and hosting a National Gathering for the Disabled and their care givers. There were of course those who hated us then and probably now. Still we made a significant contribution to the community, The place where we were employed and in our lives there . The Red River is a potatoes, sugar beet, and wheat area and dominated by hard working friendly people. These are people who scratch, claw and pull from the earth a living and they are as they should be a proud people. The country side is flat almost everywhere in North Dakota and when it floods; well the river spreads out forever. There is no part of this state we have not driven or experienced including attending the small fun State Fair in Minot. Air Force Bases dominate Minot and Grand Forks and the Canadian Border Traffic also is a factor. The winter is very long, extremely cold and always the wind blows and the sky is beyond understanding beautiful. Linda and I have sat on the side of the road and watch the Northern Lights for hours and there are moose, deer and other animals In the far western corner is Medora the most unique of western towns with an outdoor show that delights from start to finish. The Badlands are the only really hilly part of the State and they are filled with deer and antelope, wild horses and buffalo. Almost all of the industry is located on I-29 near Fargo, and Grand Forks although the capital is Bismarck in the center of the State. This is a place where when our daughter was stranded on the side of the road in freezing snowy weather, Well, she had 12 cars pulled over within five minutes to insure her safety and she was indeed safe This is a place where I once placed my hands on a truck that would not start in the middle of a bitterly cold snow storm I prayed for God to let the truck start and of course, the truck that would not start, did immediately start What is more interesting is that this seemed like and was accepted as a normal thing, something I had never done before We have driven to Park City when you could not see beyond your nose and blizzards raged around you Now understand you don't get twenty inches of snow at one time, although you can There just isn't a day that passes by that you don't get at least a half an inch or two and it piles up and stays and stays Summer is short and can be surprisingly hot and we have pictures we have taken of small tornados Flooding in the spring can be and has been and probably will be a disaster again but we hope not These are serious people who are funny, sweet, mean and direct and so hard working. and somewhat fearful They don't trust easy but once they do trust then they will do anything for you and most did for us Leaving this state was one of the hardest and yet easiest things I have ever done I miss our position there but as with most things in life, it was temporary I believe we touched lives, maybe even changed lives while we were there I know we did good things and even if we did some things that did not turn out as we hoped, we always gave all we had of ourselves to this community and state I-29, I-94, and Highway 2 are really the only means to cross North Dakota although there are ribbons of roads all across the State We travelled so many back roads with curves to break up the monotony of the drive and keep the driver awake Highway 81 is still a viable road and used to be the main north-south corridor You can see for miles in almost any direction of flat farming land filled with off white wooden farms and fields of grass, grain, potatoes and beets Up near the Canadian border is a wooded hilly area around Walhalla where there is a summer theatre and we have seen moose there Cavalier, Langdon, Rugby, Cando, and Williston and other names dot the landscape, none of which have enough people combined to form a large city The Missouri river is another major player and an important part of the southwestern landscape of North Dakota To sum up, we love North Dakota and have a hard time writing anything that doesn't reflect this love It was on the whole one of the most important times of our life and one of the best, this land of hard working people







**I wrote the following and it was published in the Grand Forks Daily Paper and
it still accurately reflects a great deal of my feeling about Grafton, North
Dakota**

Grafton

Grafton is a city of wonderful winter people

Winter people are special people

Open sprawling fields of potatoes, beets and growing things,

A sky that touches heaven to earth and a sun that glows forever,

Bright jewels fill the sky endlessly

Shining rays of light through the fields,

Level fields covered with dusty lanes of gravel

Winding gravel roads pushing aside fields of labor

People bent over plucking life from the earth.

Huge machines driven by weatherworn men listening to walkmans,

Trucks barrelling through the town spilling and going on,

Hot, humid, windy days immediately becoming cold and grey,

Cold, grey days quickly change into cold white hours,

Temperatures fall below freezing and wind blows always,

Wait until winter arrives and you wonder,

Then it happens, in a flash, winter does come,

Blinding wind, snow white and bright, twenty degrees below zero and more

It is cold yet something special begins to be

People smile and say, yes, winter is here, kinda nice you know,

It's long and hard and very cold and last forever

All the time smiling as they are talking to you

Winter people are a sturdy sort of hardy independent souls,

Surviving such elements requires some interdependence though,

Extending helping hands even to unique newcomers

People who like to talk, to listen and to do,

Everyone has a different opinion and shares it openly.

Grafton is a city full of wonderful winter people,

Generous, hardworking, glad you are here people,

Always checking to see if you like it here in Grafton,

Making sure to tell you it isn't perfect here you know,

But if you need help, we're here for you,

You think what a gift of God this place is,

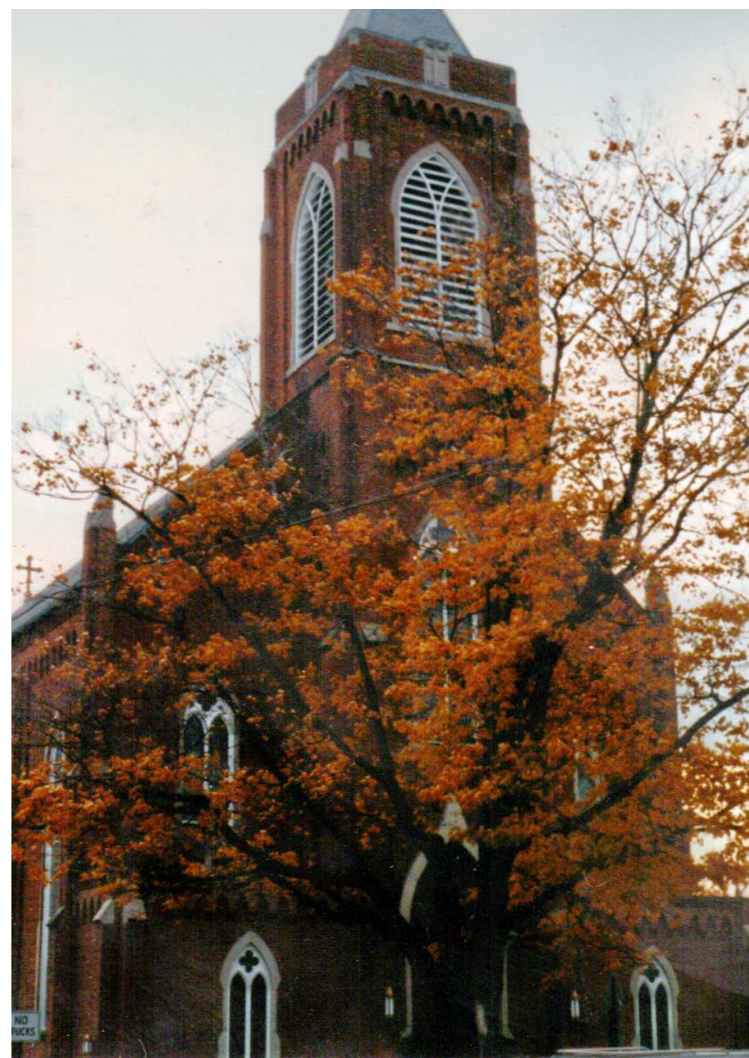
People, who love God, each other, their land and the city of Grafton.

Ohio

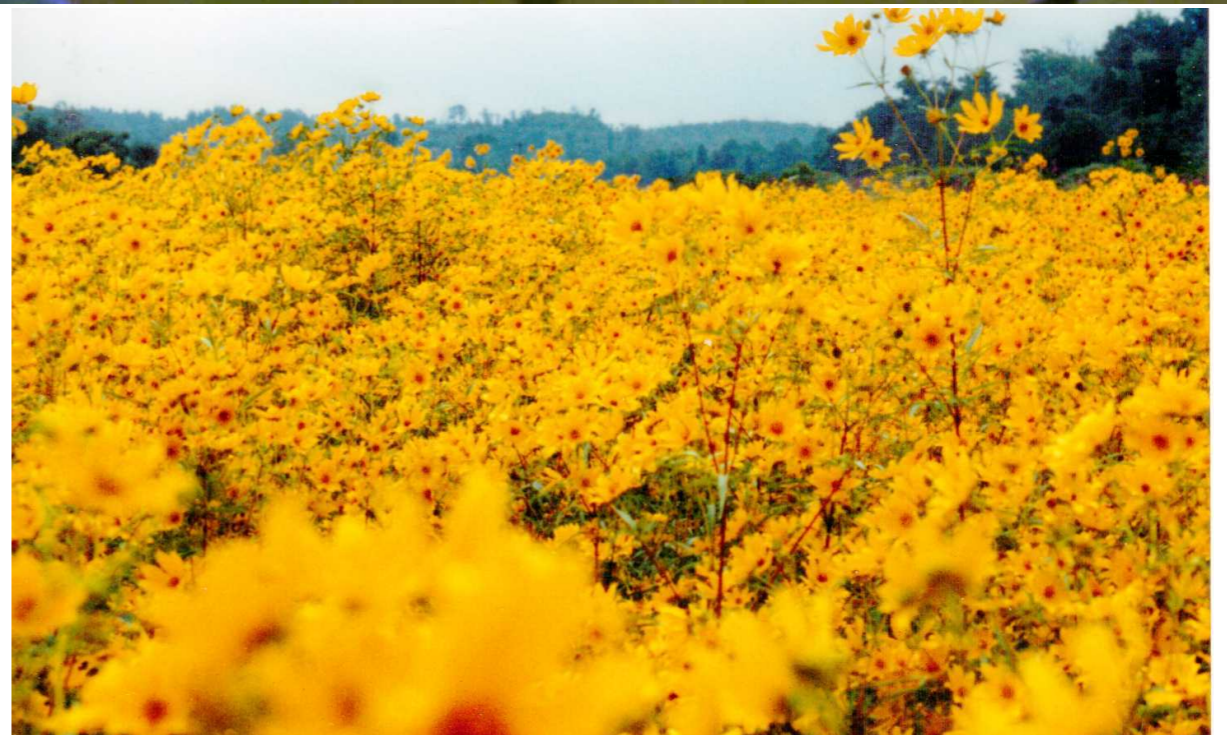
We spent two years working at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Defiance, Ohio This came after we had been homeless and spent a very difficult year in Florida The man we worked for had incredible mood swings One moment he would compare you to Christ and the next He would threaten to fire you for some very minor issue Often the most important part of our job was going behind this man And trying to put out his fires We worked with a burned out nun who had enjoyed a brief romantic interlude With a Priest while spending a short time in Italy Linda and I rescued, and helped the wife of a local highly regarded coach not to commit suicide when the pastor wasn't available We worked with a young music director who was having intimate relations with a hurting member of the Parish that we should have been taking care of Jamie and Linda transported a "Sanctuary" member to a safe house on his way to Canada Linda took the Youth to Washington DC for a National Right to Life March This was indeed a difficult two years but as with everything we survived it also, but with scars I was close to a wonderful 70 plus very active woman who had been the Parish Secretary for many years and did a wonderful job She was abused by the same Pastor that abused us and I was her main point of support and there was love and support shared with each other I had a street ministry in the downtown area and walked for two years with defiant young people I hope I made a difference, no, I know I made a difference and they did also in my life The very best thing about Defiance was the fireworks on the 4th of July They were glorious and filled the night with all colors of light and we stood and watched in the park near the river with many others The Principal of the school was like all the rest of us, abused by this angry Pastor and was our friend She raised shelties and we bought "Frisky" A wonderful friend who lived over fifteen years with us I sat in the "dunk tank" during the Parish Festival and was dunked often Defiance was also close to Detroit and that meant I sometimes could escape to a Tiger Game and that was a huge part of surviving The Pastor at the adjoining Parish offered us as much support as he could We took young people to the Opera in Toledo and went to conferences there also Linda went to Notre Dame for summer classes while in Defiance I began and completed a two year journey at St. Thomas in Minneapolis where I earned my Fellow in Church Business Administration

The most incredibly wonderful thing that happened to us in Defiance was after a short visit by our oldest daughter Our daughter called and I answered, she said in a panic stricken voice, "Dad I am pregnant." God put the perfect words in my mouth as I answered, "That's wonderful!" Our first grandson has always been a most joyful gift in our life along with all our other grandchildren We also went to Utica, New York and reconciled

without middle daughter and her husband We drove highway 24 often through and to Napoleon and had a spiritual director there and also bought great sweet corn there Interstate 75 dominates that part of Ohio and we have driven it often all the way in both directions We visited a dying Mary Knoll Priest near Cincinnati that had been my pastor While in college in Georgia We went to Dayton for the weekend once and it was a great relief e used to love to go to Van Wert and make our own hamburgers at a local "dive" We have driven I-80 across to Buffalo, New York and even further We have taken I-70 completely across the state through Columbus many times We have traversed the Amish Country and I got certified in Asbestos Removal in Mansfield There were at least two huge ice storms in Defiance while we were there Later in our life we would always go to the great flea markets near and between Dayton and Cincinnati Trader's Village, Caesar's Creek and their outdoor vendors that cook delicious things, Turtle Creek all are places we like We enjoyed going to the County Fair in Napoleon and of course the Harness Racing The country side is mostly farming and rural yet the cities we remember as being dirty and crowded The drive from Defiance to Fort Wayne is pretty and mostly peaceful The drive up and around the lake past Cleveland is wooded and one of the nicest drives The State is much more rolling over toward Wheeling and Steubenville From Toledo east anywhere is more woods and more hilly as it is also down below Dayton I went to a Cleveland Brown's football game there once as a gift from another Lay Minister We also remember going to the Harness Racing track just north of Toledo, Raceway Park I think We saw the most beautiful wildflowers and sunflowers near Hocking Hills And that was a very nice day We drove past Cedar Point near Sandusky but could not afford to stop and enjoy We were again homeless when we left St. Mary's but this time we got another job and went to an even worse hell hole of a Parish There are indeed many more memories but I think these will more than suffice The mean personality of the Pastor, the huge destructive ice storms and the people we tried so hard to love and take care of, the wonderful street ministry I had for the time I was there, earning my Fellow in Church Business Administration, the horrible sexual liaison of the music minister and a married parishioner, the wonderful fireworks of the city on the 4th of July, well, it was not an easy two years.







Oklahoma

I-35, I-40 and I-44 are the dominating highways in this the State our married life began in

From Shamrock in Texas to Van Buren in Arkansas, you travel across the entire width of

Oklahoma and we have done so both ways many times It is filled with wide open spaces and then in the east becomes a rolling hilly lake filled country The west through Weatherford and Clinton is all about open areas with cattle and big sky The East, going past Shawnee and St. Gregory's College on past the prison in McAlester, horse racing in Sallisaw and The Cherokee's in Tahlequah We have canoed the Illinois River and been burned and infected and almost died and still we go back We have been there in flood stage and in drought with cattle grazing as we floated The Northeast Corner beyond Tulsa, and up through Bartlesville is all about oil Heck maybe the whole state was all about oil at one time with an active oil well on the Capital grounds South from Kansas to Oklahoma City is probably the most farming area in the state The Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building memorial is a somber yet quite beautiful place. Oklahoma City is where we got married and began our life Actually it was Midwest City and Del City and Tinker Air Force Base A \$1500 loan from a crazy good banker turned into respected stores in two malls We lived in Del City for so many years as we started and owned our own business First in Midwest City, then a tiny strip mall in Del City and later in Shepherd Mall and Quail Springs Mall We sold huge stuffed animals, glorious chess sets, wonderful music boxes, German Steins and especially fabulous dolls Wonderful young people that we still remember with much love worked with and for us Our youngest daughter was born there and we were very active in the St. Philip Neri Parish Our daughters went to Mt. St. Mary's HS which sits on the highest point in the county and once overlooked a huge buffalo herd We founded the Oklahoma High School Chess Association and a beautiful large trophy still resides in the Midwest City HS trophy case Much later in life we would travel to Del City for Tae Kwan Do Tournaments Linda is a 1st degree Black Belt and performed on an exhibition team in Del City In the very same gym where she graduated from high school the year we were married Below are two of our earliest married pictures both of the first home we bought We had to sell this home when I went into the military and we could not afford the mortgage payments of around \$80 a month This was the volatile time of youth, raising children, chasing the dollar and being mean and many regrets It was also a time of joy and daring and doing what could not be done

There is obviously a lot more we could write both good and terrible about our life in Oklahoma It is a time we will always remember with love

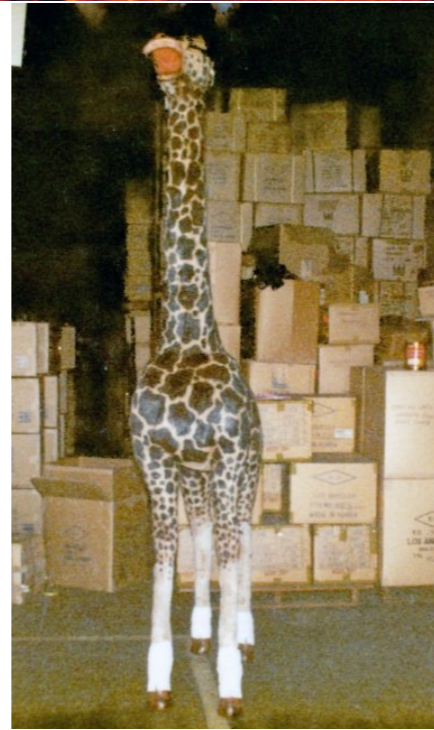




Tinker Bells, major YBA bowling team at Tinker AFB recently won third place trophies in Oklahoma City and Oklahoma State Championship tournaments. Left to right: Michele Golem, captain of her team and junior at Del City High School. Michele also holds high gear in her league - 212. Pat Golem, senior at Del City High School who plans to be a freshman at OU this fall. Linda McDonald, secretary of the YBA League at Tinker AFB and also a junior at a local high school. Linda also received special awards at the Tulsa ceremonies prior to the tourney for her work with prep bowlers, students in the first to sixth grade. Other members on team not shown are: Brenda Evans and Bobbie Guthrie, also juniors at local high schools. The team hopes to qualify again next year and vie for the YBA Championship that awards \$10,500 annually toward college scholarships to deserving bowling enthusiasts.



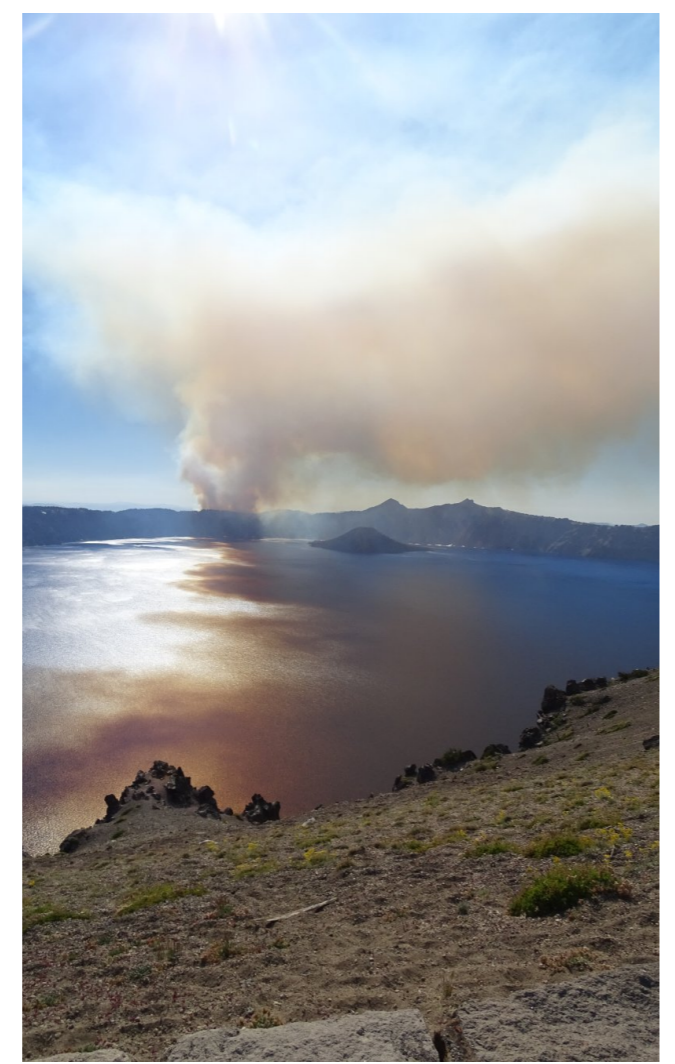








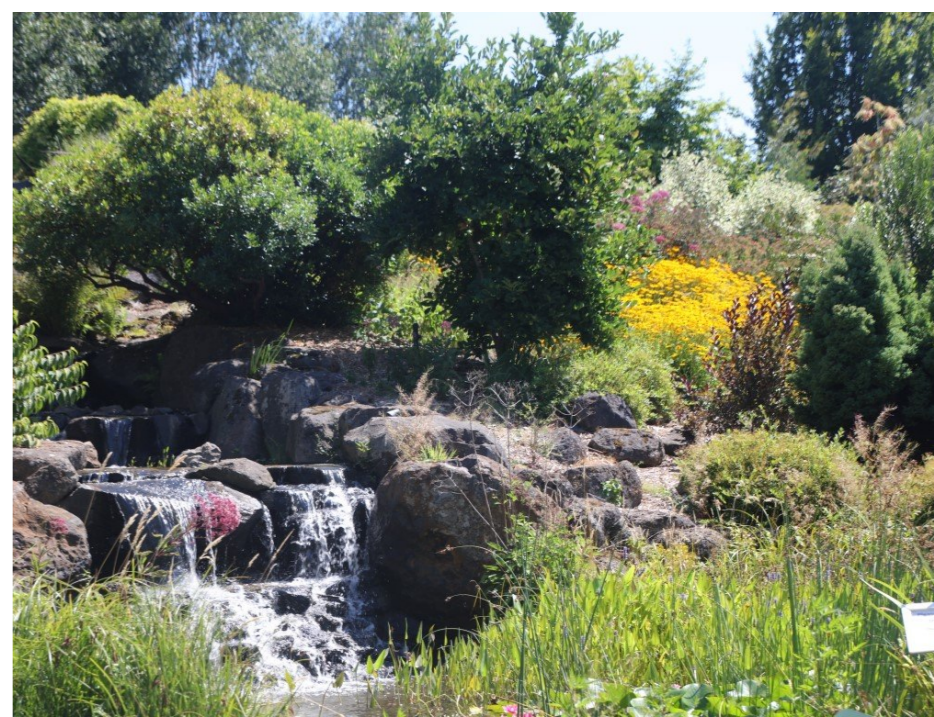
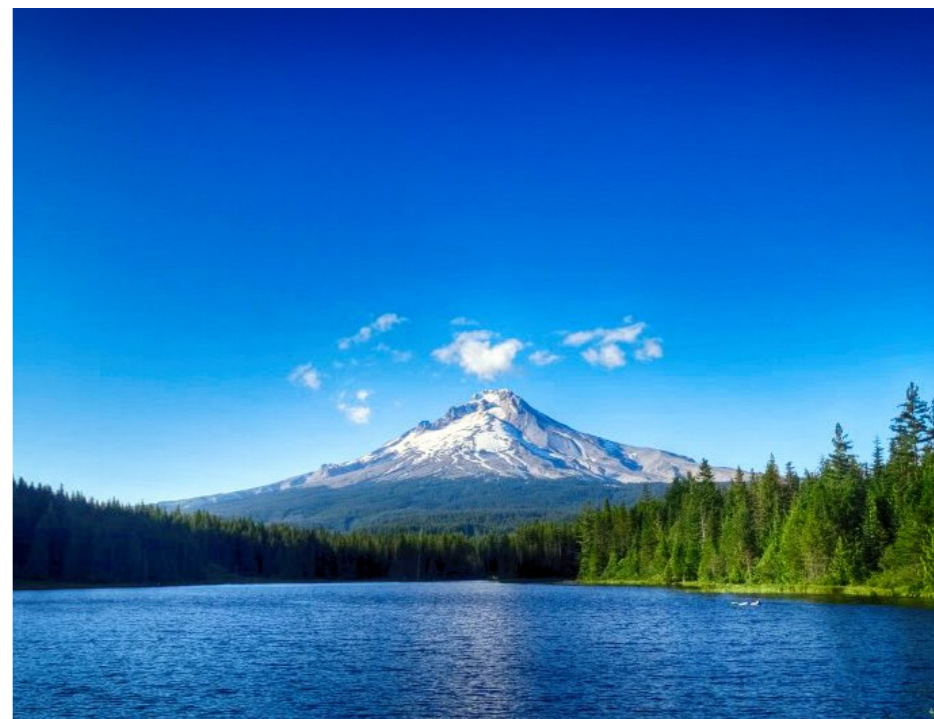
Oregon
What a beautiful state from Crater Lake
to Mount Hood, Trillium Lake & more.





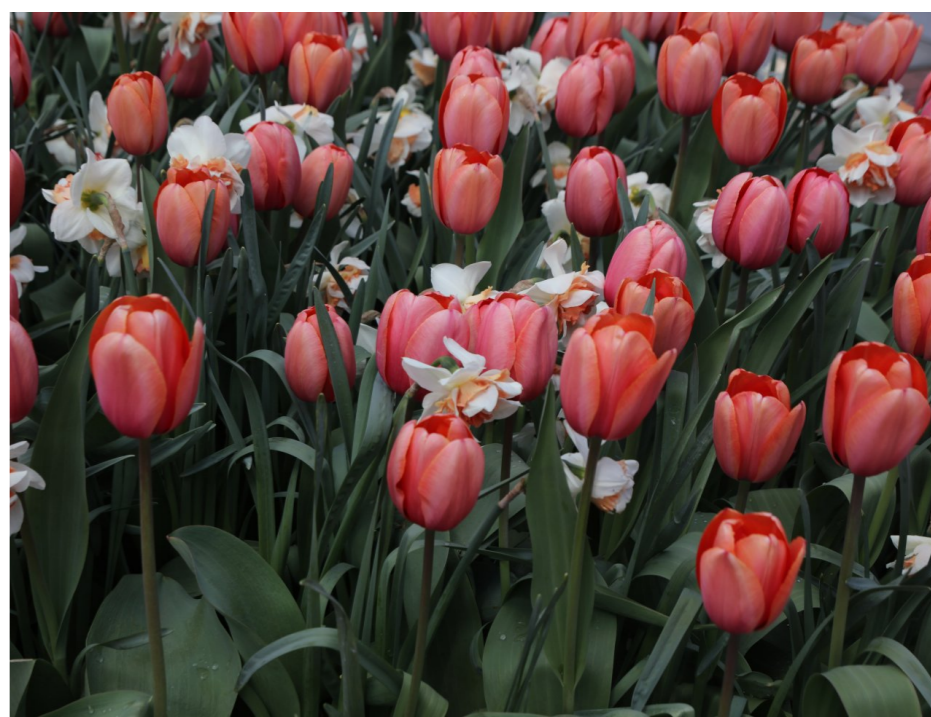








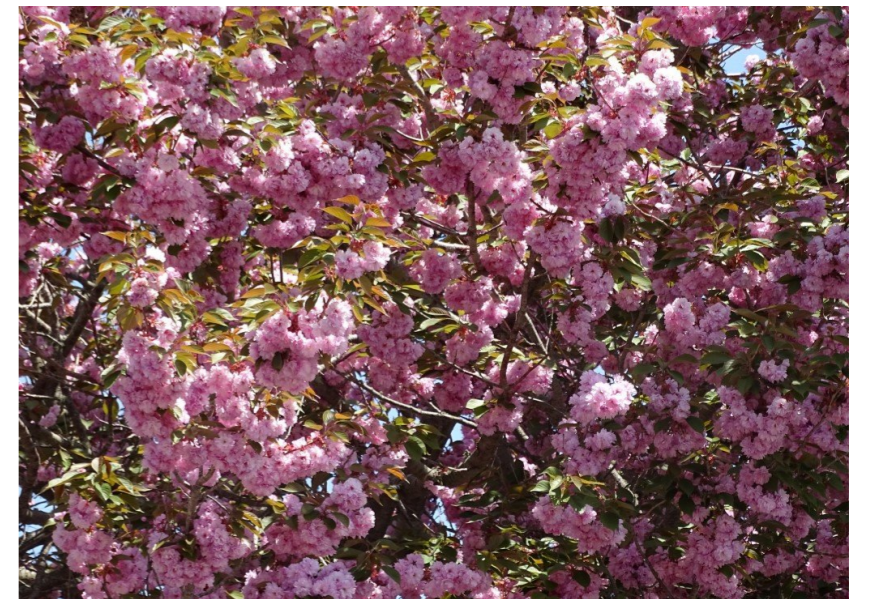
**Pennsylvania
Gettysburg, Hershey Park, Zach's
Villanova Graduation, Valley Forge, & Longwood Gardens!
History, History and more History!**









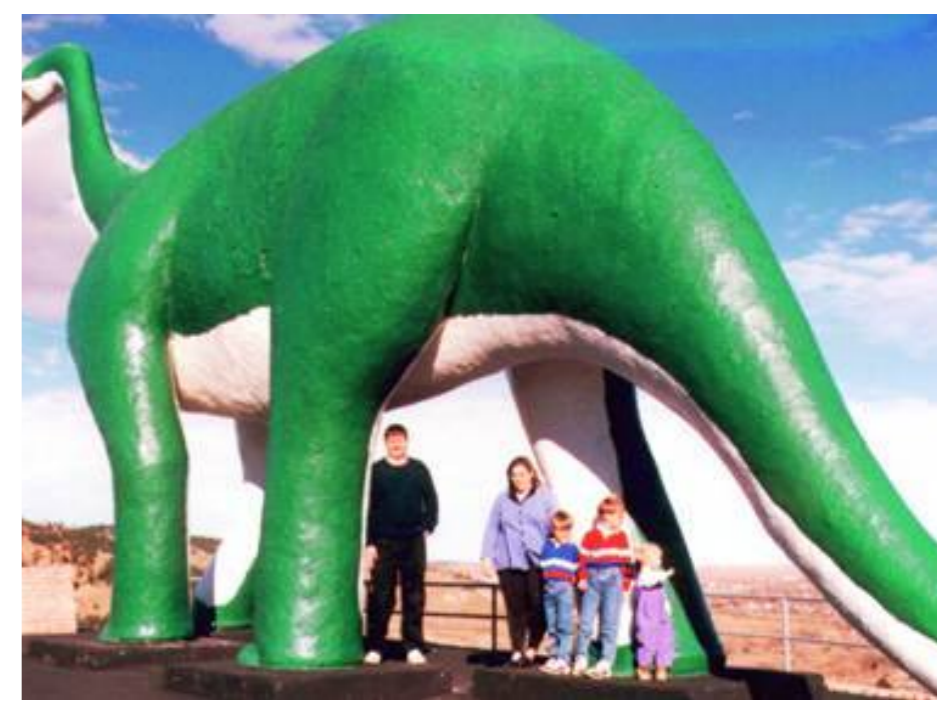


Rhode Island - A small pretty state.



My mother's High School Graduation in Columbia, South Carolina is the only picture we have left that we can find. We drove through South of the Border and down through Columbia many times with many pictures but over the years they have been lost.





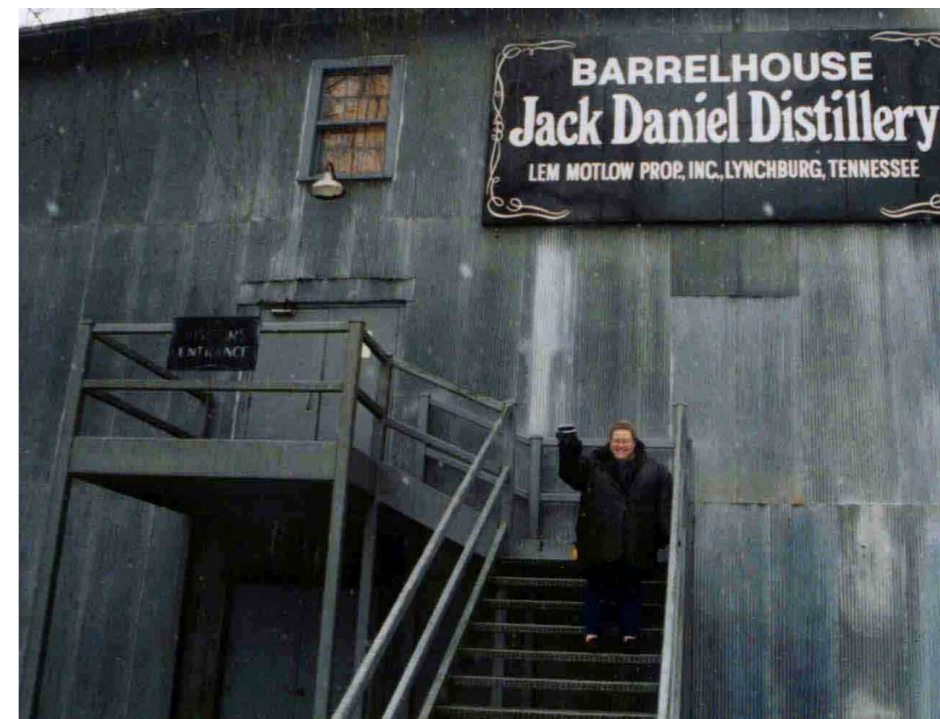


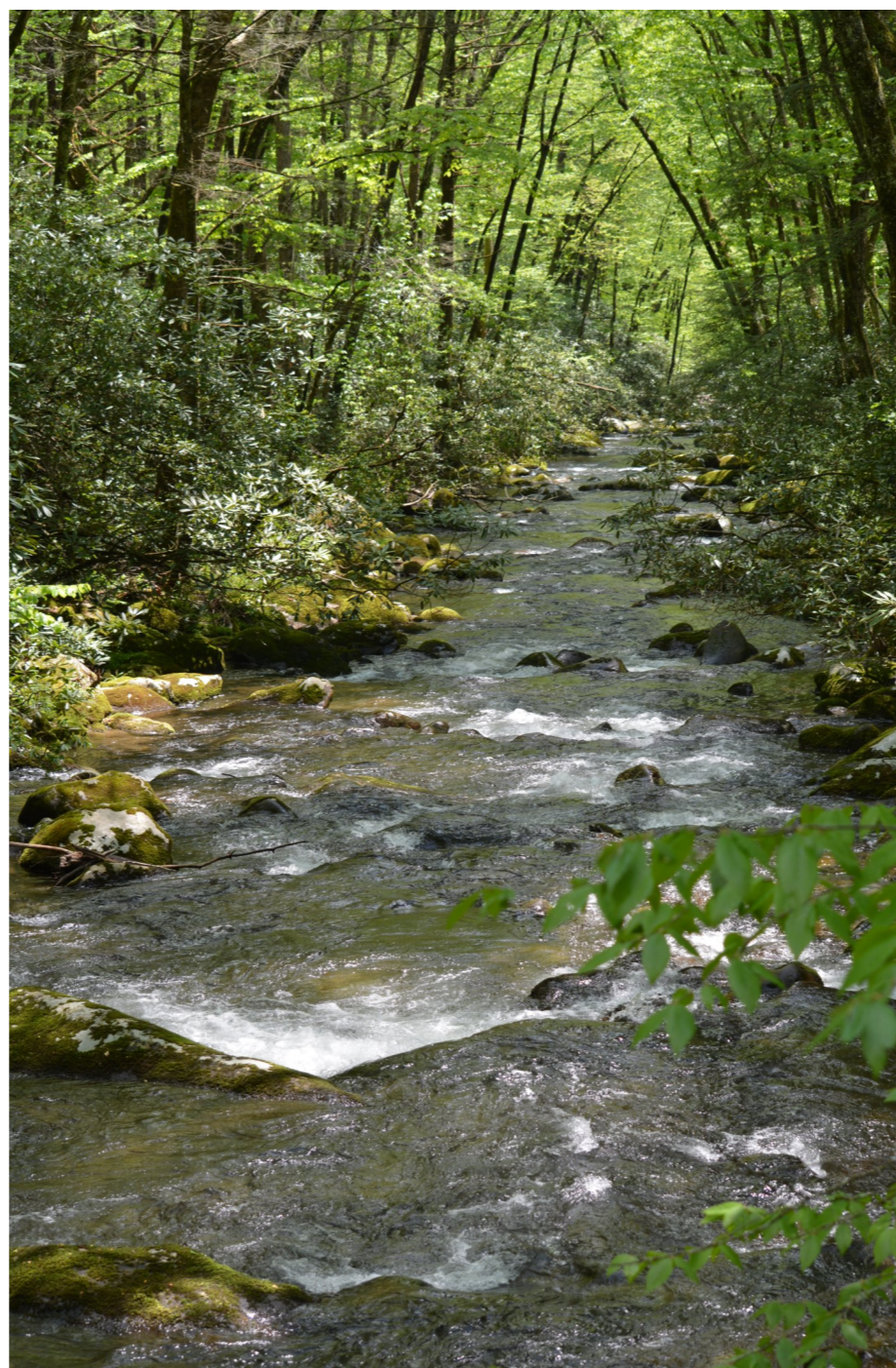
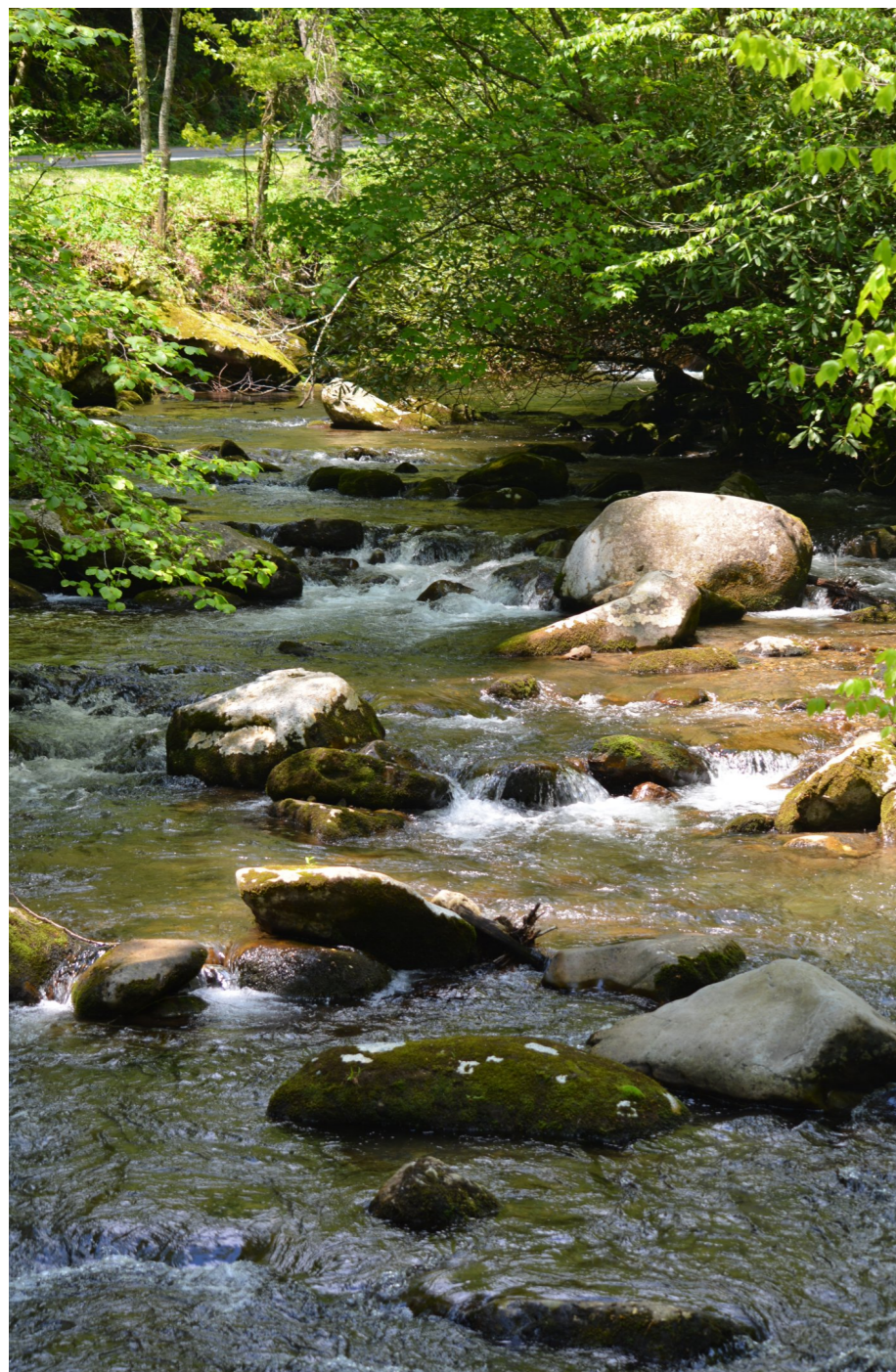




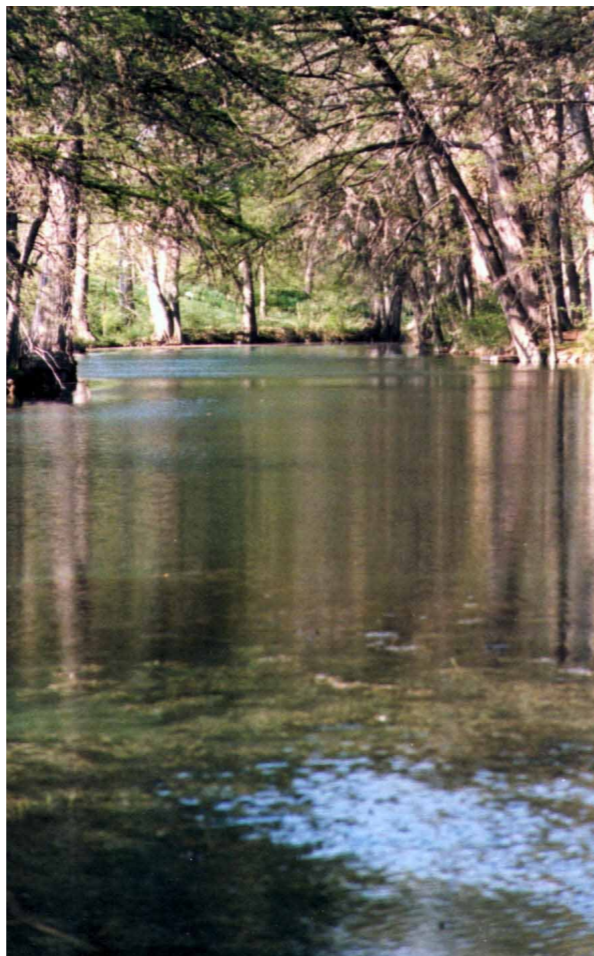


Tennessee - From Elvis to Jack Daniels and everything in between!





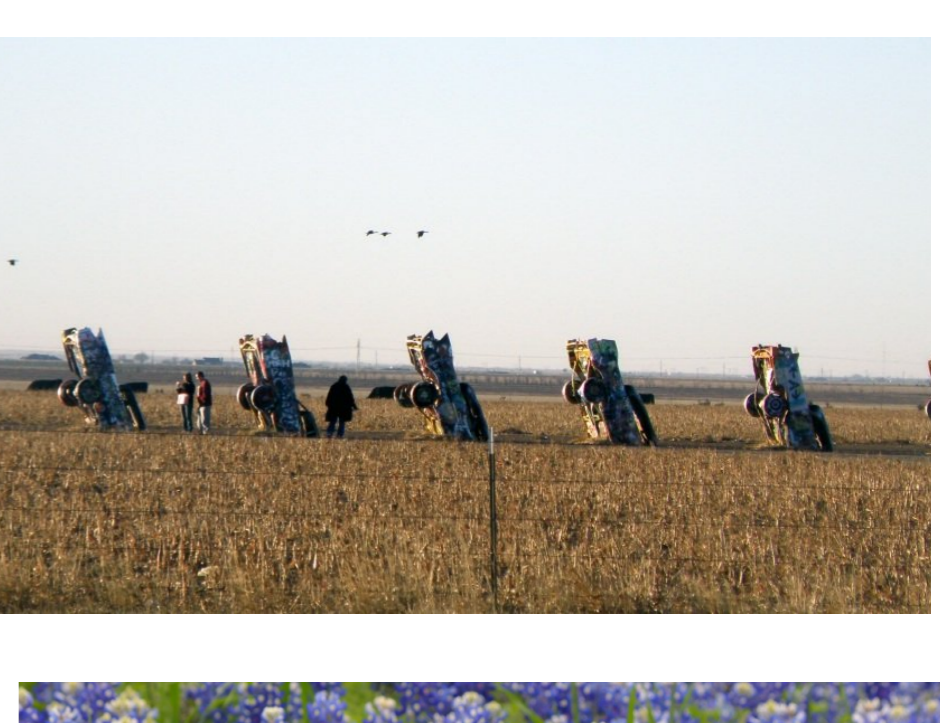


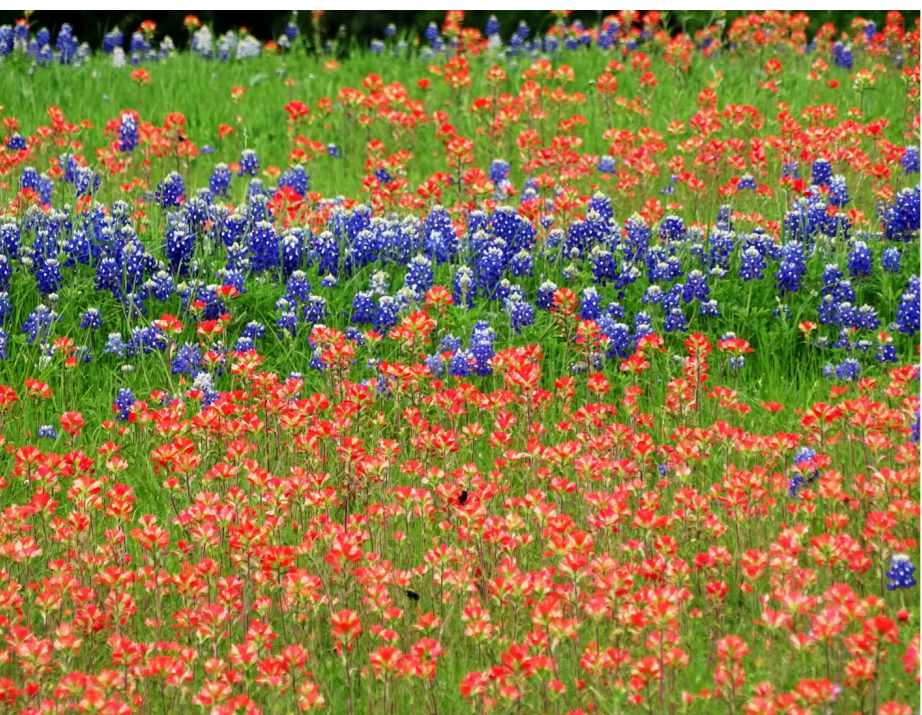


TEXAS
Our very early life at Fort Bliss, the birth of our 1st child,
Honeymoon in Arlington at Six Flags and so much more! A year of service in VESS.













Utah

Moab to Salt lake City & Bonneville Salt Flats ,Bryce, Arches - Utah is a beautiful state we enjoy visiting!







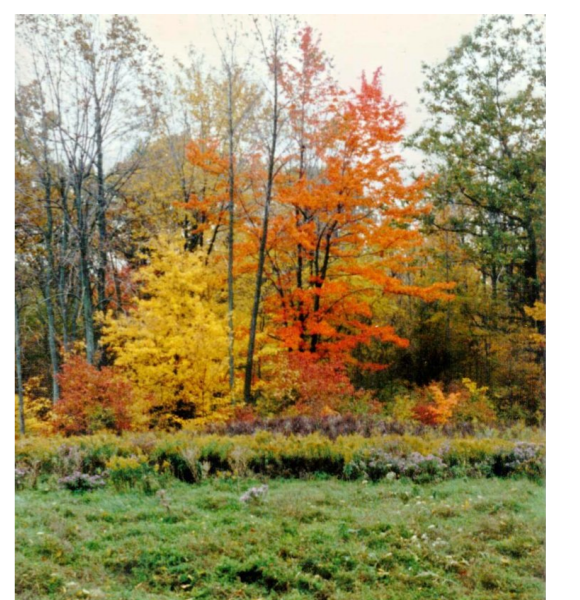












Vermont - Small State, Pretty State





**Virginia
Williamsburg,
Dark Hollow Falls (Unforgettable)
A History State with many memories for
us!**





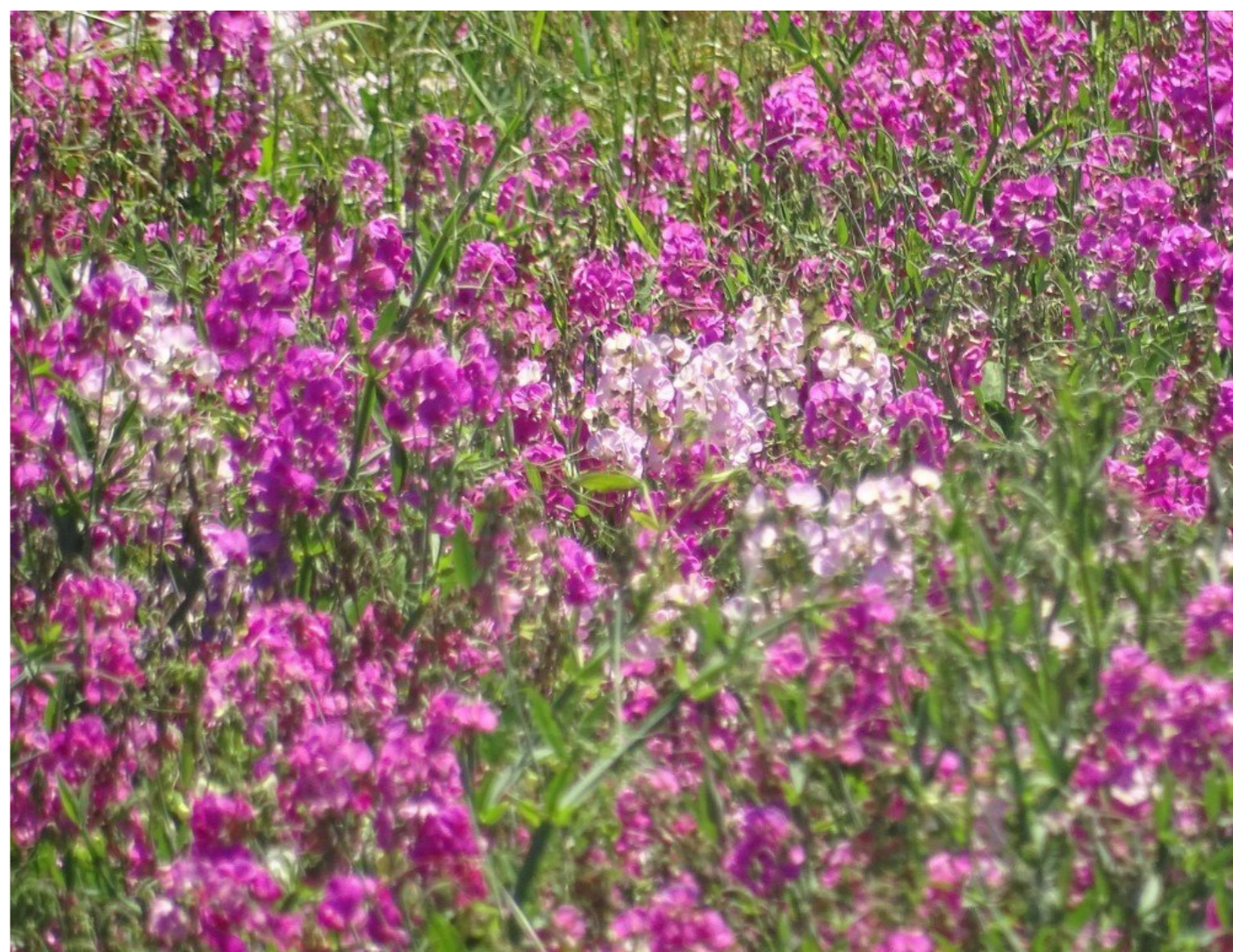


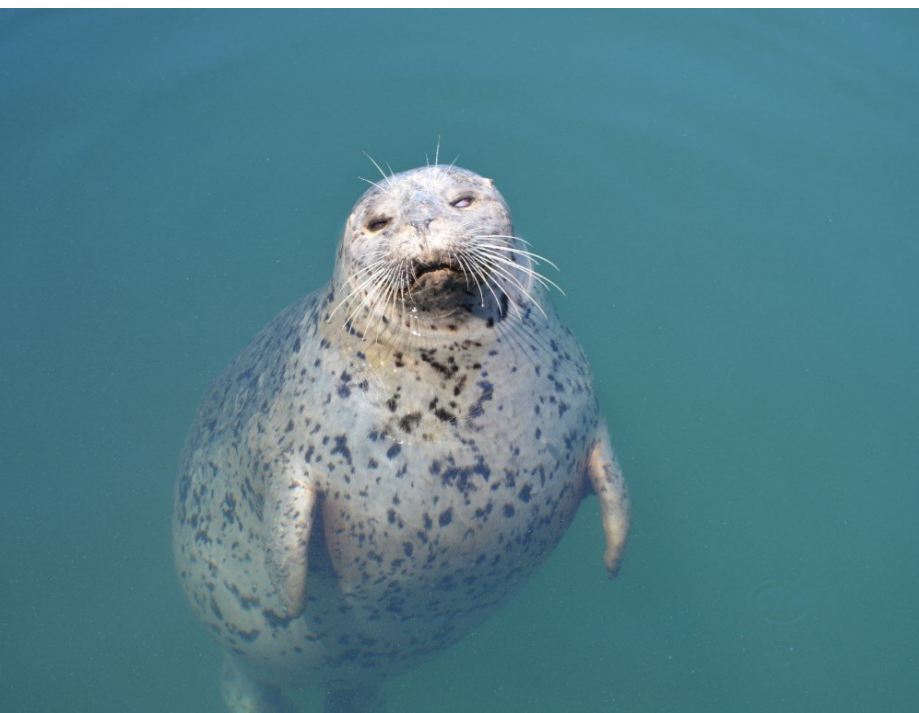


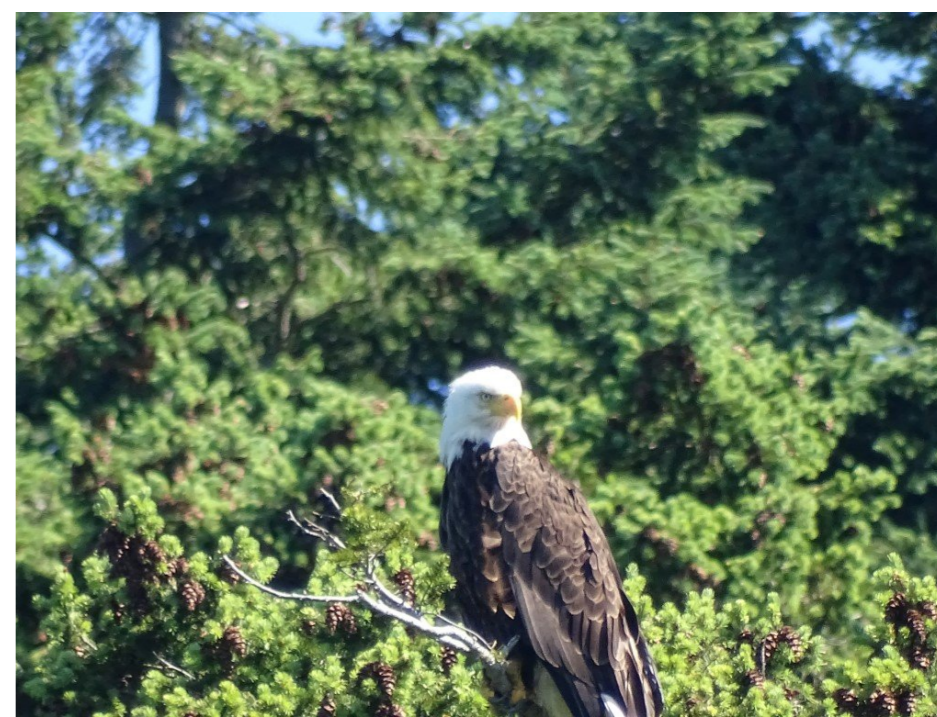
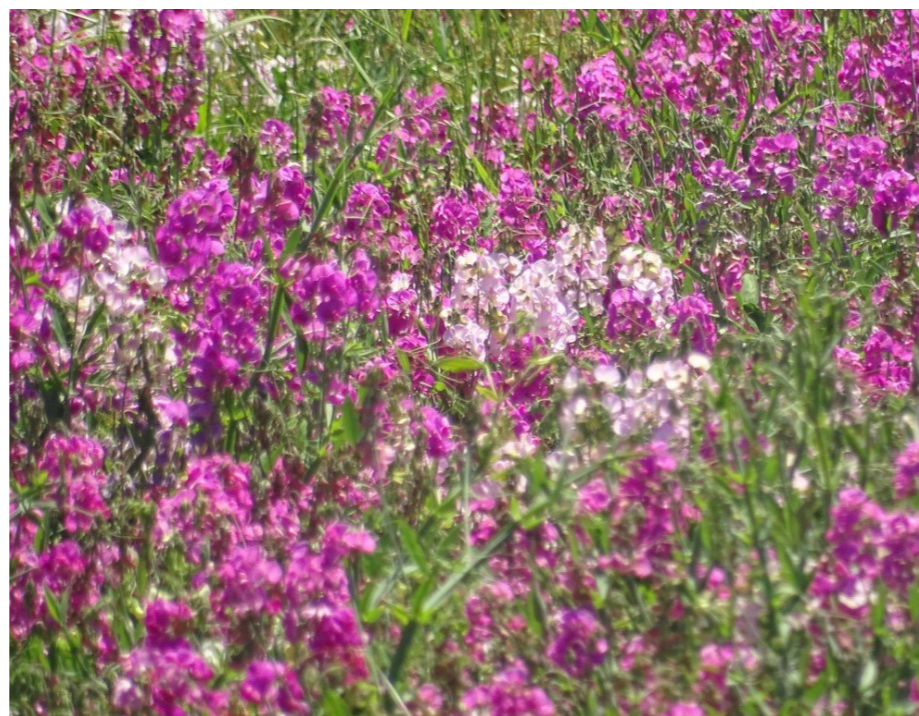


Washington
Whales, Volcanoes, Mountains, Harbors - Old & New Memories











**West Virginia
What a tough State to live in!**



**Humpback Bridge built in 1857
Near Covington, Va.
Oldest covered bridge in Virginia**