

July 19 : Scott's Bluff to the **Agate Fossil Beds National Monument** just outside Scott's Bluff and on to **Wind Cave National Park, South Dakota** – 146.5miles (2.5 hours give or take)

Significance of the Place (Wikipedia)

a) **Agate Fossil Beds National Monument** is a U.S. National Monument near Harrison, Nebraska. The main features of the monument are a valley of the Niobrara River and the fossils found on Carnegie Hill and University Hill. The area largely consists of grass-covered plains. Plants on the site include prairie sandreed, blue grama, little bluestem and needle and thread grass, and the wildflowers lupin, spiderwort, western wallflower and sunflowers. The site is best known for the large number of well-preserved Miocene fossils, many of which were found at dig sites on Carnegie and University Hills. Fossils from the site, which date from about 20 million years ago, are among some of the best specimens of Miocene mammals.

b) **Wind Cave National Park**: The Cave is in the southwestern corner of South Dakota north of Hot Springs. It's known for the vast, underground Wind Cave, with chambers like the Post Office and the Elks Room. Many of the cave's walls are rich in honeycomb-shaped calcite formations known as boxwork. The park's prairie and pine forests are home to bison, elk and pronghorn antelopes. Trails include Rankin Ridge, with views of the Black Hills. Approximately 95 percent of the world's discovered boxwork formations are found in Wind Cave. Wind Cave is also known for its frostwork. The cave is also considered a three-dimensional maze cave, recognized as the densest (greatest passage volume per cubic mile) cave system in the world. The cave is currently the sixth-longest in the world with 140.47 miles (226.06 km) of explored cave passageways. Above ground, the park includes the largest remaining natural mixed-grass prairie in the United States

Drive there: Grass and farmland slowly turns to hilly country.

What we did: Found the park full of tourists like us. Went to the Visitors Center and found that the elevator in the caves was not working so Shree could not go. The next tour by the Park Service was scheduled a few hours later. We decided to pass and drove to our next destination.

Impressions: Visitors Center had some good information. Tchotchkes!

July 19th: Wind Cave National Park, SD to Crazy Horse Memorial (23.00 miles (1/2 hour give or take))

Significance of Place: The Crazy Horse Memorial is a mountain monument under construction on privately held land in the Black Hills, in Custer County, South Dakota, United States. It will depict the Oglala Lakota warrior, Crazy Horse, riding a horse and pointing into the distance. The memorial was commissioned by Henry Standing Bear, a Lakota elder, to be sculpted by Korczak Ziolkowski. It is operated by the Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation, a nonprofit organization.

Drive there: Short drive through winding hilly country.

Brief History: Crazy Horse was a Native American war leader of the Oglala Lakota. He took up arms against the U.S. Federal government to fight against encroachments on the territories and way of life of the Lakota people. His most famous actions against the U.S. military included the Fetterman Fight (21 December 1866) and the Battle of the Little Bighorn (25–26 June 1876). He ranks among the most notable and iconic of Native American tribal members. The memorial was commissioned by [Henry Standing Bear](#), a Lakota elder, to be sculpted by [Korczak Ziolkowski](#). It is operated by the Crazy Horse Memorial Foundation, a [nonprofit organization](#). The memorial is a non-profit undertaking, and receives no federal or state funding. The Memorial Foundation charges fees for its visitor centers and earns revenue from its gift shops. Ziolkowski reportedly was offered US\$10 million for the project from the federal government on two occasions, but he turned the offers down. He felt the project was more than just a mountain carving, and he feared that his plans for the broader educational and cultural goals of the memorial would be overturned by federal involvement. After Ziolkowski died in 1982 at age 74, his widow Ruth Ziolkowski, took charge of the sculpture, overseeing work on the project as CEO from the 1980s to the 2010s. Ruth Ziolkowski decided to focus on the completion of Crazy Horse's face first, instead of the horse as her husband had originally planned. She believed that Crazy Horse's face, once completed, would increase the sculpture's draw as a tourist attraction, which would provide additional funding. She also oversaw the staff, which included seven of her children. Sixteen years later, in 1998, the face of Crazy Horse was completed and dedicated; Crazy Horse's eyes are 17 feet (5 m) wide. Ruth Ziolkowski and seven of the Ziolkowskis' 10 children carried on work at the memorial. Ruth's daughter, Monique Ziolkowski, herself a sculptor, modified some of her father's plans to ensure that the weight of the outstretched arm was supported sufficiently. The foundation commissioned reports from two engineering firms in 2009 to help guide completion of the project. Work commenced on the horse after two years of careful planning and measurements. Ruth Ziolkowski died 21 May 2014, aged 87. Monique Ziolkowski, Ruth's daughter, became CEO and three of her siblings continue to work on the project, as well as three of Monique's nephews.

What we did: Toured the vast visitor's center. Tchotchkes! No trips to the mountain are allowed. Lots of shops selling stuff (probably to fund the work)

Impressions: Thoughts about Native American history and what has happened to Native Americans.

July 19th: Crazy Horse Monument to Mount Rushmore & check into Hilton Garden Inn, Rapid City, South Dakota(25 miles – 45 minutes)

Significance of Place: Mount Rushmore National Memorial is a sculpture carved into the granite face of Mount Rushmore, a batholith in the Black Hills in Keystone, South Dakota, United States. Sculptor Gutzon Borglum created the sculpture's design and oversaw the project's execution from 1927 to 1941 with the help of his son, Lincoln Borglum. Mount Rushmore features 60-foot (18 m) sculptures of the heads of four United States presidents: George Washington (1732–1799), Thomas Jefferson (1743–1826), Theodore Roosevelt (1858–1919), and Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865). The memorial park covers 1,278.45 acres (2.00 sq mi) and is 5,725 feet (1,745 m) above sea level.

Drive there: Through hilly country.

Brief History: Originally known to the Lakota Sioux as "The Six Grandfathers" (Tunkasila Sakpe) or "Cougar Mountain" (Igmú Tanka Paha), the mountain was renamed after Charles E. Rushmore, a prominent New York lawyer, during an expedition in 1885. At first, the project of carving Rushmore was undertaken to increase tourism in the Black Hills region of South Dakota. After long negotiations involving a Congressional delegation and President Calvin Coolidge, the project received Congressional approval. The carving started in 1927 and ended in 1941 with no fatalities. As Six Grandfathers, the mountain was part of the route that Lakota leader Black Elk took in a spiritual journey that culminated at Black Elk Peak. Following a series of military campaigns from 1876 to 1878, the United States asserted control over the area, a claim that is still disputed on the basis of the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie (see section "Controversy" below). Among American settlers, the peak was known variously as Cougar Mountain, Sugarloaf Mountain, Slaughterhouse Mountain, and Keystone Cliffs. It was named Mount Rushmore during a prospecting expedition by Charles Rushmore, David Swanzey (husband of Carrie Ingalls), and Bill Challis. Korczak Ziolkowski who sculpted Crazy Horse worked on this project also.

What we did: A long walk from parking up a slope to the Visitors Center. We took in a movie there about Mt. Rushmore. The whole center is well designed with a large area for viewing the sculptures. No one is allowed to go up to the mountain. Stayed for about an hour and a half.

Impressions: Impressive sculptures of seminal figures in American History.

July 19th: Hotel in Rapid City Minuteman Missile National Historic Site, Badlands National Monument, Town of Wall and return (120 miles, 2 hours give or take)

Significance of Places: a) **Minuteman Missile National Historic Site** was established in 1999 to illustrate the history and significance of the Cold War, the arms race, and intercontinental ballistic missile (ICBM) development. This National Historic Site preserves the last remaining Minuteman II ICBM system in the United States. b) **Badlands National Monument:** Range of hills and sharply eroded buttes and pinnacles, along with the largest undisturbed mixed grass prairie in the United States. The National Park Service manages the park, with the South Unit being co-managed with the Oglala Lakota tribe. c) **Town of Wall** often called simply **Wall Drug:** It is a shopping mall consisting of a drug store, gift shop, restaurants and various other stores

Drive there: Uninteresting until the exit off I90. Then the landscape changes to hilly country.

Brief History a) **The sprawling missile complex**, one of six located in the central United States, was built as a deterrent to a nuclear first strike by the Soviet Union. By placing missiles underground in widely separated locations, it was hoped that regardless of the size of a Soviet missile attack, enough US missiles would survive to ensure devastation on the aggressor nation. The Minutemen in this complex remained on alert for nearly 30 years, until the wing was deactivated following the signing of the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty (START) by President George Bush and Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev in 1991. Guided tours are conducted underground here, but are limited to six people at a time due to the very small underground launch control center ("capsule") and are a half-hour long. Self-guided tours are not possible here; the gate for the fence around D-01 is always locked, just like it was when it was an active launch control facility.

b) **Badlands National Monument:** (Lakota: Makǰóšiča) is an American national park located in southwestern South Dakota. The park protects 242,756 acres of sharply eroded buttes and pinnacles, along with the largest undisturbed mixed grass prairie in the United States. The National Park Service manages the park, with the South Unit being co-managed with the Oglala Lakota tribe. The Badlands Wilderness protects 64,144 acres (100.225 sq mi;) of the park as a designated wilderness area, and is one site where the black-footed ferret, one of the most endangered mammals in the world, was reintroduced to the wild. Authorized as Badlands National Monument on March 4, 1929, it was not established until January 25, 1939. Movies such as Dances with Wolves were partially filmed in Badlands National Park.

c) **Wall Drug:** It is a shopping mall consisting of a drug store, gift shop, restaurants and various other stores. Unlike a traditional shopping mall, all the stores at Wall Drug operate under a single entity instead of being individually run stores

What we Did: a) As we did not arrange a tour in advance just visited the Visitor Center. b) Drove for an hour through the Badlands. c) Town of Wall called Dined at the hotel (Hilton Garden Inn). Good food.

Impressions: a) A Lot of information at the Visitor Center – reminded of the Cold War and the thought that hundreds of silos dotted the Plains. b) Badlands are stark and beautiful. The colors of the buttes - similar to the ones in Death Valley, CA. c) Wandered round Wall Drug – bought Tchotchkes and took pictures of the branch of First Interstate Bank – our old employer.