

July 21st : Hotel in Rapid City to Sturgis (60miles, 1 hour give or take)

Significance of Place: Sturgis is a city in western South Dakota. The Sturgis Motorcycle Museum & Hall of Fame nods to the city's long-running Sturgis Motorcycle Rally and houses vintage motorbikes, plus memorabilia and photographs. Fort Meade, a 19th-century military outpost, and the Old Fort Meade Museum, documenting its history, are just east of town. To the south, Black Hills National Forest has rugged mountains, canyons and trail.

Drive there: Exit off I 90.

Brief History: Sturgis was founded in 1878. It was originally named Scooptown, because many of the residents "scooped up" their pay from nearby Fort Meade. Its name was later changed to Sturgis in honor of the Civil War Union General Samuel D. Sturgis. In 1889, Sturgis was designated as the county seat of the newly formed Meade County. As part of the vast Ellsworth Air Force Base complex, the land north of Sturgis was dotted with 50 Minuteman missile silos.

What we Did: Visited the Motor Cycle Museum. We bought T Shirts and walked along the main street.

Impressions: Saw some motor cycles and imagined the rally. No real activity .

July 21st : Sturgis to Deadwood (13.6 miles, 30 mins give or take)

Significance of Place: It is named after the dead trees found in its gulch. The population was 1,270 according to the 2010 census. The entire city is a National Historic Landmark District, for its well-preserved Gold Rush-era architecture.

Drive there: Hilly Country. Deadwood is in a deep valley.

Brief History: The settlement of Deadwood began illegally in the 1870s on land which had been granted to American Indians in the 1868 Treaty of Fort Laramie. The treaty had guaranteed ownership of the Black Hills to the Lakota people and land disputes were endemic, having reached the United States Supreme Court on several occasions. However, in 1874, Colonel George Armstrong Custer led an expedition into the Black Hills and announced the discovery of gold on French Creek near present-day Custer, South Dakota. This announcement triggered the Black Hills Gold Rush and gave rise to the new and lawless town of Deadwood, which quickly reached a population of around 5,000. Deadwood became known for its lawlessness, during which time murder was common and punishment for murders not always fair and impartial. The town attained further notoriety for the murder of gunman Wild Bill Hickok on August 2, 1876. Mount Moriah Cemetery is the final resting place of Hickok and Calamity Jane, as well as slightly less notable figures such as Seth Bullock. Hickok's murderer, Jack McCall, was prosecuted twice, despite the U.S. Constitution's prohibition against double jeopardy, because of a ruling that Deadwood was an illegal town in Indian Territory and thus lacked the jurisdiction to prosecute or acquit McCall. This decision moved McCall's trial to a Dakota Territory court ("Indian Court"), where he was found guilty of murder and hanged.

What we Did: Took a tour bus ride around the town, stopping off at the Mount Moriah Cemetery and saw Wild Bill Hickok's grave.

Impressions: First time seeing a Gold Rush town but also a town one sees in Westerns. Shree did not get off the bus in the cemetery but the others paid their respects to Wild Bill Hickok.

July 21st : Deadwood to Lead & back to Hotel in Rapid City(4.5 miles + 46miles, 15 mins + 52 mins give or take)

Significance of Place: Lead is a city in Lawrence County, in western South Dakota, in the Black Hills near the Wyoming state line. The population was 3,124 at the 2010 census. The city was officially founded on July 10, 1876, after the discovery of gold.

Drive there: Hilly Country, Drove back through a hail storm.

Brief History: The city was named for the leads or lodes of the deposits of valuable ores. It is the site of the Homestake Mine, the largest, deepest (8,240 feet [2,510 m]) and most productive gold mine in the Western Hemisphere before closing in January 2002. By 1910, Lead had a population of 8,382, making it the second largest town in South Dakota. Lead was founded as a company town by the Homestake Mining Company, which ran the nearby Homestake Mine. Phoebe Hearst, wife of George Hearst, one of the principals, was instrumental in making Lead more livable. She established the Hearst Free Public Library in town, and in 1900 the Hearst Free Kindergarten. Phoebe Hearst and Thomas Grier, the Homestake Mine superintendent, worked together to create the Homestake Opera House and Recreation Center for the benefit of miner workers and their families. Phoebe Hearst donated regularly to Lead's churches, and provided college scholarships to the children of mine and mill workers. In the early 1930s, due to fear of cave-ins of the miles of tunnels under Lead's Homestake Mine, many of the town's buildings located in the bottom of a canyon were moved further uphill to safer locations. Lead and the Homestake Mine have been selected as the site of the Deep Underground Science and Engineering Laboratory, a proposed NSF facility for low-background experiments on neutrinos, dark matter, and other nuclear physics topics, as well as biology and mine engineering studies. In 1974, most of Lead was added to the National Register of Historic Places under the name of the "Lead Historic District". Over four hundred buildings and 580 acres (230 ha) were included in the historic district, which has boundaries roughly equivalent to the city limits.

What we Did: There were no tours of the Sanford Laboratory so we went to the Visitor's Center. We spent about an hour there. On returning, we had dinner at a really nice restaurant called the Dakota – pricey but the steaks were real good.

Impressions: Another small town. I thought about the research and a book on Physics that I read recently. There seemed to be no one around.