

SOUTHERN HOLIDAY

During the Christmas holidays, when the Aerospace Corporation where we work was having its holiday closure, we flew to Louisville for our vacation in the South. All reservations and travel plans were made in advance, and a "Triptik" was provided by the Automobile Club. The Delta in-flight movie was *It Could Happen To You*. We gave two thumbs up for the film with Nicholas Cage about sharing lotto winnings with a stranger. On arrival at Standiford Field Airport, we picked up our Hertz rental car which happened to be a brand new Toyota Camry. We had been given an upgrade for a shortage of economy cars, but who was complaining? We spent the first night having a holiday dinner together at the Waffle House, on the north side of the Ohio River in Indiana. "Bert's" chili, a B.L.T., a pecan waffle and country music on the jukebox made for a unique holiday meal.

Later that Christmas Eve, after some picture taking in the downtown area of Louisville, we attended a service at the Episcopal, Christ Church Cathedral, a historic gothic church. The Christmas program included a string quartet, a brass quintet and chorus performing Magnificat, a piece by baroque composer Francesco Durante. Two church sonatas by Mozart were also performed. An impressive church interior, colorful traditional dress, and beautiful singing and music made this a truly classical Christmas program.



On Christmas morning, we drove again to the banks of the Ohio River where we ventured out in the cold weather. We also walked through a red brick residential area of Louisville and stopped into a Baptist church to admire a great stained glass window. Later, at the Cave Hill Cemetery, we noticed that many old headstones were decorated with the same ubiquitous red ribbons we had seen on so many of the brick residences. A flock of wild geese was sighted over the lake at Cave Hill as were a number of turkeys on the grass! After heading the wrong way on Bardstown road for some time, we finally got our bearings, found Highway 64 east and were on our way to Frankfort.



After lunch with the locals at the "Farmer's Restaurant" in Frankfort, our first stop was to see the State Capitol Building which is said to be one of the most beautiful in the country. Also on the grounds is Kentucky's Floral Clock. After some photos here, we went to the nearby Frankfort cemetery to see Daniel Boone's grave, and the overlook of the city and Kentucky River. The *Old Capitol* building of Frankfort and its main street and old street clock made an interesting photo stop. Since it was Christmas Day, finding an open restaurant for dinner in town would be difficult, so arrangements were made for special sandwiches made to order at a local service station! We were greeted by friendly people there and even treated to coffee and homemade fudge to go with our "dinner".

After spending the *night* at the *Days Inn*, we returned to *Old Frankfort* expecting to find museums, etc. open, but instead, settled for a walk past some historic homes and taking pictures around Liberty Hall. Lunch that day was at Frich's Restaurant; Kentucky's answer to Bob's. A Big Boy hamburger there left something to be desired. We talked about getting an authentic Big Boy upon returning home. Karen took over the wheel as we continued on to Lexington. As we were driving, Karen noticed frost and ice had formed on the trees and we knew that the temperatures were falling. We headed for downtown Lexington to find the Mary Todd Lincoln house closed and wondered, "Was this the right season to be making this trip?" Later at the Kentucky Horse Park, we roamed the fields, saw the race track, and photographed some beautiful horses. Karen liked *getting up close and personal* with the horses and it made for some nice pictures.



As we walked around the fields and white fences, we noticed that the grounds there were set up for an Xmas light show. We decided to return that night to see it. To pass some time, we visited Victorian Square, a shopping complex housed in an old historic building. We found a shop that specialized in merchandise made of crushed pecan shells, but passed on any gift buying there. Dinner was at Denny's before heading back to Kentucky Horse Park to see "Southern Lights", the south's largest display of Christmas lights. Upon arriving at the entrance to Kentucky Horse Park to see the "*Southern Lights*" display, we encountered a line of cars, which in this case was reassuring. It indicated that vacationers *were* in fact out in force, even at this time of year. This drive through display was amazing with its many imaginative creations of lights depicting horse racing and Christmas themes. We drove through the display three times, and at one point, I left the car to walk a short distance while taking pictures. Thermal wear and gloves made the walking in the cold night air fairly comfortable.

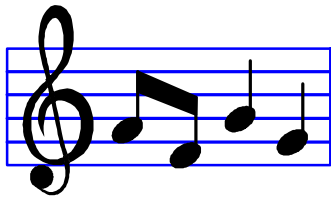


While gathering information in Lexington on sightseeing in the area, we discovered that to miss the Shaker village at *Pleasant Hill* would be a shame, since it seemed to offer much in the way of picture appeal and interest. A shift in plans was in order to take in this popular Kentucky attraction. First, an early breakfast at the tiny Waffle House restaurant, where by this time, we had learned how to order our hash browns (*scattered, smothered, covered, topped, diced and chunked*). Over a pecan waffle and a cheeseburger, we discussed the day's new travel plans. Instead of driving directly from Lexington to Corbin via Highway 75 south past Richmond, a side trip on Man O' War Blvd. then Harrodsburg Rd. into scenic countryside would take us to Pleasant Hill (Shakertown).

We arrived at the Shaker village before the morning fog had lifted and so took advantage of the great atmosphere to photograph some of the original 1805 buildings. *Pleasant Hill* is America's largest restored Shaker village and contains 33 buildings on 2,700 acres. After a while, it was time to enter and register at the stone Center Family Residence. It was explained by one of the docents that the Shakers, having their beginnings in 18th century New England, were a celibate religious sect. Men and women lived on opposite sides of communal dwellings, and depended on converts and adoptions to sustain their numbers. They got their name from the way "dancing" was incorporated into their worship customs (the shaking Quakers). We attended

a demonstration of just *how* spirited these dances and songs were. The Shakers officially disbanded and ended their venture in 1910.

In nearby Harrodsburg stands a 1774 English settlement in Old Fort Harrod State Park. Within the fort are pioneer cabins and Kentucky's first schoolhouse, with its dirt floor, a fireplace and tiny, hard wooden desks. Except for the watchful eye of a feisty, white tomcat, we wandered around the fort essentially unnoticed. As lunchtime approached, we found a Subway sandwich shop in Harrodsburg where we enjoyed 18 inches of meatball and cold cut treats. Possum stew at the fort never tasted this good, I'm sure!



The drive to Corbin was a lengthy one, and an opportunity was had to listen to some of the cassette tapes we brought along for the trip. It was an eclectic assortment to be sure, with selections by Olivia Newton John, Placido Domingo, Conway Twitty, Brahms and Beethoven. The good scenery began to fade as nightfall was coming on, but we were able to find our Corbin Day's Inn in time for guaranteed late arrival. After checking in and briefly exploring this city in the Cumberland Mountains on a nighttime downtown drive, we decided to dine in our hotel room, courtesy of Dominoes Pizza delivery. Either there were quite a few of those pizza delivery vehicles cruising the parking lot of the Day's Inn, or repeated runs by the same driver made for a busy night.

Breakfast the next morning before heading into the Daniel Boone National Forest was in a local coffee shop. The interior lighting of that restaurant was so bright that we wondered what their electricity bill must be like. I didn't know if we were in a coffee shop or a tanning salon. When a light bulb did blow out, they wasted no time replacing it. It only took one waitress to screw in the bulb. Soon we were on our way to Cumberland Falls; the real reason for overnighting in Corbin.

Cumberland Falls is 120 feet wide and drops 67 feet into the swift flowing, boulder strewn Cumberland River. One would think that it would be almost impossible to miss a spectacle as mighty as this, but we almost *did*. When I saw a sign in a parking lot marked *Cumberland Falls State Resort*, I said to Karen, "I'm sure this couldn't be where the waterfall is. It's probably just a lodge or something". As we walked a very short distance, we heard the sound and saw the spray of the falls. "Oh, I guess this is the right place", I said. The ground was very icy and slippery, and soon our hands began to feel numb. With gloves on, we managed to get our pictures before returning to the car and running the heater. We waited at this location for a time to get some different lighting on the falls. When the gift shop opened, we went in to browse and admire some original crafts such as pin cushion candle holders and honeycomb candles.

Leaving the falls and forest area and returning to Corbin, we arrived at Sanders Cafe and museum just in time for lunch. Sanders Cafe is the restaurant where Col. Sanders first served his fried chicken, and once included the Sanders Lodge, a motor hotel on the same property. The Colonel used a shrewd advertising tactic to attract business to the lodge. Inside the restaurant, strategically located next to the *ladies washroom* is a model guest suite with "modern" conveniences such as a pay telephone and other amenities. He knew that the *wives* usually make the decision of where to stay for the family. The Colonel's office and original kitchen are inside as

well as pressure cookers and "secret" spices, along with photos and memorabilia. We had lunch at the historic cafe (fried chicken, what else?) and really enjoyed making this stop. The leftover pizza from the previous night I finished in the Sanders parking lot, all the while believing it was heresy.



city's landmark.

Back on Highway 75, we drove south into Tennessee to arrive in Knoxville in the late afternoon. As I read the map while Karen drove, we navigated through this large city to find one historic home, the Armstrong-Lockett House and Memorial Gardens. Built in 1834, it's one of Knoxville's oldest continuously occupied houses. Photographs weren't allowed inside but we did get pictures of the fancy Italianate garden terraces that led from the mansion down to the Tennessee River. Knoxville was the site of the World's Fair back in 1982. Some of the structures remain, including a giant glass and steel dome, recognizable as the

Walking around this area, we were dumbstruck by the strange display at the Museum of Art. Mundane housework chores were glamorized in much larger than life, *bizarre steel sculptures*. Ironing, vacuuming and even toilet bowl cleaning were portrayed by "glamorous" women in an outdoor setting. Still reeling, we wandered into a factory, where we experienced a most wonderful sensation of smell: it was the Knoxville Chocolate Factory, makers of the South's best chocolate fudge. It was hard to resist, but we'd already had our quota of fudge back in Frankfort.

A good picture spot was found on a grassy hill overlooking three Victorian homes, painted pink, yellow, and blue, respectively. From our hotel, we called to Nashville to try to get reserved seats for the Grand Ole Opry. It was easily done with the help of a calling card and a visa charge. Before we had dinner at the wee little Waffle House, across from the Days Inn, we set the camera on a tripod for a picture of its fluorescent glow at twilight. Tomorrow it would be Nashville or bust, and we never guessed that we'd be attending the show at the Opry.

A full breakfast was provided in the hotel lobby this morning. Not just cinnamon rolls and doughnuts this time, but hot and cold cereals, toast, juice and coffee. We were going to visit the Hermitage today, the 625 acre estate of Andrew Jackson, and a fine breakfast was needed to get us off to a good start. When we arrived in the Nashville area at the Hermitage visitor center, I was reminded of Mt. Vernon, home of another famous American president. Missing though were the large crowds of people we had experienced there.

The Hermitage contains original furnishings and all of President Jackson's personal effects. We took pictures of some 1804 log cabins and a stone, *spring house* which are on the estate. We strolled the paths behind the 1821 mansion where Jackson and his wife are buried in a section of the garden. As we finished our walking tour, Karen returned the audio tour cassette player at the gift shop. Here we bought enough postcards to cover everyone on our postcard mailing list.



Before we continued on to downtown Nashville, a convenient lunch stop was made at the omnipresent Waffle House, its menu by this time indelibly etched in our minds. I was in the mood

for a cheeseburger and a bowl of Bert's chili, and Karen was looking forward to a pecan waffle. As we approached the downtown area, I realized that a picture of the *Nashville skyline* was necessary, if only to capture the essence of a household term made famous by the title of an old Bob Dylan album. This was facilitated by swinging into the yard of an industrial trucking company and quickly taking a couple of pictures with the telephoto lens. The Nashville skyline is dominated by the sleek, futuristic lines of the General Telephone Co. Building.

The next stop on our agenda was to see Fort Nashborough, a re-creation of the 1780 log fort that once withstood Indian attacks. It was my impression that its single function now is the sheltering of some of the city's homeless. It's located downtown, directly across the street from Nashville's Hard Rock Cafe, and not the most photogenic subject. Docked below on the banks of the Cumberland River, however, are brightly painted paddle wheel showboats such as the Music City Queen.

Leaving the river front area, we decided to visit the State Capitol Building and parked at a public parking facility. Before starting off, we took notice of where we were to avoid getting lost. We walked up Church Street and rounded the corner past a Subway Sandwich Shop. After photographing the Capitol Building and an impressive statue of General Andrew Jackson mounted on a rearing horse, we headed back to the parking lot. Knowing that we had parked near the corner of Church and Subway made finding the car a bit easier.

In the middle of Nashville's urban Centennial Park, one can find the Parthenon, a most incongruous sight. A full scale replica of the original classic building in Athens, it was built for Tennessee's 1897 Exposition. After viewing this amazing anomaly, we drove across town to see the *Belle Meade Plantation*, an 1853 Greek revival mansion which has on its grounds a carriage house, creamery and a smokehouse. There we saw a sight we thought very typical of Southern living: three rocking chairs on the verandah, and on the window behind them, a large Christmas wreath with red felt ribbon. At this time, we needed to find our hotel for the next two nights, and so once again, Karen drove while I read the map. We navigated the city's freeways to find the Days Inn on West Trinity Lane, just north of the Cumberland River.

Dinner that evening was at Shoney's Restaurant. We were enjoying the food and change of scenery, since the Waffle House had become a little too familiar. When one customer was displeased with the service there at Shoney's (the salad bar had run out of soup bowls), he complained, "I knew we should have gone to the Waffle House". We got a good laugh out of that. After dinner, we headed out to the Opryland Hotel to see the Christmas light display.



Our first night in Nashville would prove to be a feast for the eyes. We had heard about the opulence of the Opryland Hotel, but it needed to be seen to be believed. As we approached from a distance, it was hard to know exactly *what* we were seeing-the lights were so numerous that the entire area with all the trees and decorations seemed to go on without end! Bare, leafless trees were strung with so many *thousands of lights* that every detail of the trunks and branches was apparent as if *the trees themselves were electric!* Rows of large, full trees were covered with fine netting, solid with lighting that gave the trees the appearance of being cartoon-like. We took

many pictures as we walked around the giant poinsettias and the two story gingerbread house, brightly lit in a fantastic way.



Inside, the decor was just as ostentatious with its four acres of cascades, waterfalls and botanical gardens. We saw a show featuring a pianist playing a concert grand to synchronized dancing waters and colored lights, and watched a D.J. from WSM-AM Radio 650 broadcast from a studio within the hotel. After taking it all in, we were wanting to hear some live country and western music. We left the Opryland Hotel and went to a lounge called the "Broken Spoke" where we had some chablis with baskets of popcorn, and listened to a country band perform. The music was hot and loud. When it was time for the local talent to take the stage, I got out the camera and went up to take some pictures. We left and called it a night as soon as we realized it was nearly 2:00 a.m. Tomorrow, we would get an early start. We needed to pick up our tickets for the Grand Ole Opry!

That Friday morning, Dec. 30, we went to Grassmere Wildlife Park, which features animals indigenous to the state of Tennessee. We spent a fair amount of time there photographing bears, eagles, otters and bison. When we came to the brown bear enclosure at the wildlife compound, we spotted two bears sleeping in the grass behind some logs. A loud roaring sound (made by Randy) got the two bears up, alert, and ready for their close ups. While on the hiking trail, we noticed other photographers setting up to try for pictures of wolves and cougars. We talked to a ranger/docent who sadly told us that because of lack of funds, this wildlife park was to be closed and the animals most likely would be transported to the Nashville Zoo. After a walk through the aviary followed by a cup of coffee, we said goodbye to Grassmere and were on the way to Music Row. Again, one navigated while the other drove, and in no time, we found ourselves at the George Jones Gift Shop and Mini Museum. We spent some time looking at the displays of photos, guitars and guitar cases, stage costumes, gold records and other George Jones memorabilia. In the gift department, Karen bought a Tennessee belt buckle for her dad, and I wound up with the album, *Where Grass Won't Grow* and the music video, *George Jones, Live in Tennessee*.

Other country star shops and museums on Music Row include those of Hank Williams Jr., Conway Twitty and Barbara Mandrell. A store that specializes in country music, and a good place to look for hard to find albums is *Ernest Tubb's Record Shop*. Here I bought a David Houston cassette that could only have been found at such a location. Earlier, at a Warehouse Records and Tapes store in Music Valley, I asked a clerk if they had any David Houston tapes. The reply that he gave with a Southern drawl was, "What kind of music does he sing?"....and this was in Nashville! We played the David Houston tape in the car on the way to Opryland. I had told Karen about the quality of David Houston's singing and was glad she could finally hear what I'd been talking about.

We reached Opryland where we picked up our tickets for that night's performance of the Grand Ole Opry. We got a preview of what to expect at the show that night as we visited the Opryland Museum, part of the complex that includes the theater, theme park and other exhibits. The

museum features interactive computer monitors where one can test his knowledge of country music and make requests to hear songs of favorite singers. On exhibit are items like Marty Robbins' formula race car, Lefty Frizzel's "Nudie" cowboy boots, Porter Wagoner's stage costumes and Hank Snow's shaving kit! We saw everything from baby Martin guitars and old studio microphones to Patsy Cline's bedroom suite. Leather vests, rhinestone jumpsuits, embroidered western hats, and platinum records are showcased in a nostalgic, early days of country music atmosphere.

Everything one could hope to see concerning country entertainment is here at Opryland. Among my favorites were the George Jones, Emmylou Harris and Jim Reeves exhibits. I could have spent lots of time here just watching the films and listening to all the music. While viewing the George Jones videos, we struck up a conversation with a friendly pair that just couldn't believe that they were talking to a couple from "Hollywood", California! They asked, "What movie stars have you all seen?", and of course, "Are you all close to the Simpson trial?" I knew they would be thrilled if I offered to take their address and send them movie star maps and trial updates.

At Music Valley Wax Museum there are figures of Buck Owens, Dolly Parton, Little Jimmy Dickens, Willie Nelson and Loretta Lynn. Some of the wax figures actually resemble those country singers they portray. Outside, the autographs and handprints in cement are worth taking notice. Skeeter Davis' and Crystal Gayle's are among the ones most conspicuous. After lunch at Music Valley's newest restaurant- we were their first customers, we hurried back to the hotel to shower and get dressed for the Opry performance (off with the thermals and into a tie).

With some time to spare before the concert, we explored the Minnie Pearl Museum at Opryland and learned more about this great lady of country entertainment than we had known previously, which wasn't much. Once inside the Opry House, we stopped at the snack bar for a quick dinner of sandwiches, popcorn and drinks. We needed nourishment enough to get us through the *twenty seven acts* that were scheduled to perform that evening!



Each of the seven segments was a live radio broadcast with a different sponsor. Some of the sponsors for the shows were: Sheplers Western Wear, Dollar General Store, True Value Hardware Store, Georgia Boot, and Goody's Headache Powder. Among the noteworthy performers were: Porter Wagoner, Jeanne Pruitt, Stonewall Jackson, Grandpa Jones, Hank Locklin, Bill Monroe & the Bluegrass Boys, Jim Ed Brown, Justin Tubb, Hank Snow, Connie Smith, Little Jimmy Dickens, Jean Shepard, Skeeter Davis, The Whites, Johnny Russell, Jeannie Seely, and the Four Guys. Our seats were in the mezzanine, but we were allowed to walk up to the stage to take pictures. I was able to get some close up photos of **Grandpa Jones**, **Bill Monroe**, and **Hank Snow** among others. One picture I failed to get, however, was that of Skeeter Davis, who told the audience that she was celebrating her 62nd birthday. Her song, "The End of the World" came out in 1962, and her age today commemorated that year. From where we were sitting, she did not appear her age. In fact, she looked and sounded much younger. Later we wished I *had* taken a picture of her, just for a closer look at what seemed to be a pretty young lady.

Following the Grand Ole Opry Show, the Grand Ole Gospel Time with Hank Snow's son, Reverend Jimmy Snow, was to have its last broadcast after at least forty years on the radio. We stayed on to listen for a while, but when the preaching became a little too intense, we left the Opry House and went to nearby Shoneys Restaurant for coffee. We saw many of the same people who had been at the Opry show, including some of the performers.

Although she had been quite a distance away while on stage during the show, I recognized Skeeter Davis, sitting by us with a group of young women who obviously enjoyed her company. When I got a chance to speak to her, I told her that once I sang her song, "The End of the World", at a karaoke lounge, even though I had never heard it sung by a man. She told me when the song first came to her, she learned that it had been *written* by a man. Karen complimented her on her continued youthful appearance. Then Skeeter gave us each a handshake and said that it was the nicest compliment ever. One more time, we took in the Christmas lights at the Opryland Hotel, taking some pictures of ourselves in front of the enormous, decorated tree in the lobby.



There was a light rain the next morning with two more stops to make before leaving Nashville. After yet another Waffle House breakfast, we drove to *Evergreen Place*, where Mary Reeves, widow of Jim Reeves, has created the **Jim Reeves Museum**. We entered the residence grounds when an older woman welcomed and directed us to park along the fence at the rear of the house. There were no other cars on the premises, except for a custom built, early model Cadillac with a continental kit. As Karen held the umbrella, we managed to take pictures of the pretty Southern style mansion and the log cabin and rustic fences around the property.

Still holding that umbrella, we made our way to the entrance of the house to be given a private tour of the rooms and displays. I have been a fan of Jim Reeves for almost twenty years and was moved by this opportunity to see up close, the many personal effects of this late singer, who had possessed such a great voice. The woman giving the tour was also a big fan of his and enjoyed being able to tell of her remembrances of Jim. As we went from room to room looking at the pictures, awards, gold records, and wardrobes, I decided to demonstrate to our guide that I could sing a Jim Reeves song. I sang some of "You're The Only Good Thing" for her and Karen, while we stood near the Jim and Mary Reeves bedroom suite.

The record console where J. Reeves had worked as a disk jockey was within sight of where we were standing. We left that room for another part of the house where we had seen the guitar with the initials **J.R.**, and I snapped a photo. It's the guitar seen in an album picture of Jim Reeves singing during a live performance. There are many pictures throughout the house showing the travels of Jim and Mary Reeves. He was an international celebrity and recording star. How sad that he died at such an early age. In the hallway there is a small showcase containing all that was found at the scene of the plane crash that took his life: his wedding ring and a wallet holding three ten dollar bills.



While viewing this very poignant display, Karen got a little creeped out and I was ready to move on as well. While Karen was in the ladies room, I was talking with our tour guide who must have thought that we were deeply affected by all the keepsakes and memories of Jim throughout the home. She wanted to reassure me that there were other singers to carry on and asked if I had any favorites among the current artists. I mentioned Vince Gill; she agreed and added Garth Brooks as her current favorite. After she posed for a picture in front of a large trophy, Karen and I went outside to see Jim's old touring bus and his 1960 white Cadillac El Dorado, both of which are parked side by side under a carport.

Behind the **J. R. Museum** is a gift shop where rare *records*, tapes and other items are available. The same older lady who welcomed us on arriving worked the gift shop as well. She turned on some Jim Reeves music just for us, her only customers, while we wandered around the store. Our tour guide also came into the shop and I wondered which one of them drove that silver colored, custom Cadillac with the continental kit, parked outside the house? I bought a cassette tape called *Jim Reeves, Nashville '78* to add to my collection, and played the tape as we left Evergreen and drove back to the Opryland Hotel.

As we walked through the cascades area of the hotel, looking at the tropical plants and flowers, I realized that the film speed on my camera had been incorrectly set while taking pictures of the exterior of Evergreen Place. The rain had stopped, so we returned to the Jim Reeves Museum to retrace our steps through the grounds and take the pictures over again. While we were in the front yard of Evergreen, we saw a lady leaving the house. She got into the silver colored Cadillac and waved to Karen as she was slowly driving away. *It was Mary Reeves, and she had been inside the house while we were on our tour. She heard me singing the Jim Reeves song, You're the Only Good Thing (That's Happened to Me).*

Leaving Nashville and heading north on Highway 65, we crossed into Kentucky for a lunch stop in Franklin, at *Loretta Lynn's Kitchen*. It was home cooking served buffet style, so we tried the meat loaf, cornbread and peach cobbler. We even got a club sandwich and salad to go, not knowing where we would be later that day. (We wanted to avoid another holiday dinner at a convenience store.) After our late lunch, we looked around the mini museum at the Loretta Lynn artifacts and browsed through the cassette tapes at the gift shop. I found George Jones' *Bartender's Blues* and Tanya Tucker's Greatest Hits. While getting gasoline across the street, I found Crystal Gayle's *Hollywood, Tennessee* on sale inside the service station. Our country music souvenir collection was growing rapidly, and while driving from Bowling Green to Elizabethtown in a light but steady snow, we enjoyed listening to some good music.



We arrived in Elizabethtown and reset our watches, having re-entered the Eastern time zone, and started the New Year's Eve countdown. We spent the evening in our room at the Days Inn having a club sandwich and watching Madonna's Australian "Girlie Show" concert on HBO. Breakfast the next morning got us started on our "Abe Lincoln Day". In close proximity to Elizabethtown are three Lincoln attractions. The Abraham Lincoln Birthplace National Historic Site was a logical place to start, so in our plastic rain ponchos, we walked on the *Trail of Remembrance* and up the fifty six steps to the large granite and marble memorial. The fifty six steps are for each year of Lincoln's life. Inside the memorial building is the log cabin once thought to be the original Lincoln birthplace, but further research determined otherwise. Known as the *Sinking Spring Farm*, the property still has the oak tree that once marked the boundary of the Thomas Lincoln Farm. Abe lived here from 1809 until 1811. Further on at Hodgenville in the public square, is the bronze Lincoln statue, dedicated in 1909. For lack of time, we didn't see Lincoln's boyhood home that is also in Hodgenville.

On the spur of the moment, we decided to visit *Mammoth Cave* which is open year round. The outside temperature when we arrived was below freezing and there was a light snow falling. We purchased our tour tickets and soon were on the trail to the natural, or *Historic* entrance to the cave. Park rangers led our small group down into the darkness where we stood beyond the gaping entrance and felt the cold wind blowing. A small amount of light was provided by a sole Christmas tree, looking stark and lonely in the giant room known as the Rotunda. Once farther into the cave, the temperature rose noticeably, and though a relief from the extreme cold, our camera lenses fogged up immediately.

Sights inside the cave include a mining operation that once produced saltpeter, used in the making of gunpowder during the 1812 War. Eventually, we were led into a cavernous room to view historic *tallow writing* on the ceiling, created with the smoke from burning oil lamps. Nineteenth century visitors on slave led expeditions into the cave had left their mark. Finishing the tour, the rangers brought us back out through the natural entrance to the cave. Soon we were in the car heading out of Mammoth Cave National Park.

A long drive still ahead of us, we wondered what time we would arrive back in Louisville. On Highway 65 that day, there had been a bad accident and some serious backup was lingering. We got off the highway, had an early dinner at a Subway shop, and waited for the traffic to lighten before continuing. When we did arrive in Louisville, it had stopped snowing and seemed to clear. Maybe our last day in Kentucky would bring good weather for one more chance at sightseeing.

Louisville's Days Inn provided a nice breakfast for us that morning including cereal and toast. Outside, the sky was clear and the air very cold. We used the Hertz "Number One" plastic emblem in the glove compartment to scrape the ice from the windows. We spent the last day of our trip visiting *Locust Grove*, the home of George Rogers Clark, frontiersman, Revolutionary War general, and founder of Louisville. The home is a restored 1790 Georgian mansion complete with period furnishings and antiques. At the visitor center, we saw a 15 minute video about the

restoration, then ventured out into the cold to walk around the 18th century border garden and other outbuildings.

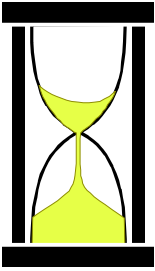
Although the sun was shining, the air was freezing cold and we kept the gloves on our hands while we took pictures. When Ace, our official tour guide arrived, we went inside the red brick mansion to learn about each of the rooms and how G. R. Clark lived out the last days of his life. Clark had burned his leg slipping into the fireplace, and subsequently, had his leg amputated. He had lost his hearing too. A portrait hanging on the bedroom wall reflected the melancholy he must have felt in his old age. He was the brother of explorer William Clark and had fought the Shawnee Indians. Later in 1778 while in the Virginia militia, he battled the British during the Revolution. Locust Grove was his Kentucky retirement home and is now filled with interesting antiques.

Ace, our tour guide, is a fourth generation tobacco farmer who did a great job pointing out all the little details to be found within the house such as smoking paraphernalia and "twists of tobacco". Outside, he talked about the round cut brick work that is common back east in New England, but noted that to see it featured on a house so far west into the frontier is very rare. This house had that fine detail on the exterior, despite the fact that frontier houses were usually built in haste; Indian attacks were a common occurrence.

Completely separate and apart from the main house is the kitchen and living quarters for the cook(s). A large fireplace for cooking was kept burning around the clock, all year long, because of the difficulty then in lighting a fire. We went inside the brick smokehouse where hams, covered with mold, had been hanging from the ceiling for several years. The aroma of smoked meat was strong. Before eating, smoked hams have to be soaked for several days, then simmered for six hours. On the subject of smoking meat, Ace told us that in his opinion, Virginia's method of smoking and curing meat beat them all.

While in the smokehouse, we three had been standing on the accumulation of hundreds of years of meat drippings; meat that may have served Presidents James Monroe, Zachary Taylor and Andrew Jackson. You can just imagine the history. If those drippings could only talk. Knowledgeable and patient, Ace waited while we took our pictures. He had provided for us a very good house tour.

Karen chatted with two of the docents at Locust Grove who stressed to her how honored they were to have us visiting the historic home at this time of year. They were impressed that we had come from California to spend the holidays in these parts, especially when Karen told them how extensively we had traveled and photographed in past years. If the architect who did the restoration work at Williamsburg was thrilled to take on the 1961 project at Locust Grove, then I was just as happy to photograph it. I found more subject material for pictures here than at better known historic homes we've visited.



Watching the time very closely now, we had to make sure we wouldn't be late for our return flight home. We hopped on I-65 north, crossed the Ohio River into Indiana and got off at the first offramp for a lunch stop. I had been curious to see the Falls of the Ohio from the Indiana side. Once getting that out of the way, we made time for a lunch stop at a McDonald's. We were winding down and had put away the cameras to enjoy some time to reflect, when I saw videos for sale with purchase of McDonald's food. I bought a copy of *Back To The Future*, its title symbolic of our leaving historic Kentucky and Tennessee and returning to a present day Los Angeles.

After lunch, we drove back to Standiford Field to return the new Toyota Camry, to which we had added 1,218 miles, and to Delta Air for the flight home. As we thought about all we did and the places we saw and photographed, certainly foremost on our minds was hoping our prints and slides would turn out well. I was also looking forward to coming home and watching *Back To The Future* again. I remember that as being a really neat movie.