In the footsteps of Robert Frost, Martin Luther King, Jr., Elvis, and Jefferson Davis, Henry Ford ... (Boston to Los Alamos and back, 1994)

Exactly 100 years ago, Robert Frost presented a book of poetry to a young woman in Boston. She summarily rejected both the poems and the 20-year-old Frost. Frost resolved to throw himself into the Great Dismal Swamp just south of Norfolk, Virginia. He traveled to Norfolk by train and steamer and was on the point of hurling himself into the swamp when he thought better of it. He hopped aboard a steamer full of drunken hunters cruising down the canal and ended up in Elizabeth City, North Carolina.

Randy Davis rejected my area exam paper and me. I drove to Norfolk, Virginia and then continued along the very same canal (now part of the Intracoastal Waterway) to Elizabeth City, North Carolina where I stayed the night. Frost's age was divisible by 10; so was mine (30). Enough similarities for a Kennedy assassination theory so far. What were the differences? Frost wanted to kill himself; I wanted to kill Randy Davis. Frost left on Election Day; I had no thoughts of politicians to drive me to despair.

Saturday, June 4, 1994

I packed until 2:30 am, taking half as much as last year—the year of *Travels with Samantha*—by leaving out everything I hadn't used. I developed a new philosophy for packing cameras: I bought the largest camera bag in the world, tossed in cameras until it was full and left out the rest of my photographic armamentarium. I woke up at 8 am anxious to do battle on the Jersey Turnpike and arrived in beautiful Mahwah, New Jersey to inspect Cousin Lynn's first child. The baby seemed to have the right number of arms and legs, but the apartment crowded with friends, the noise of the (unwatched) television, furniture, and brick-a-brack made me long for the high desert and open road.

I arrived in Washington, DC for a Senegalese dinner with Meredith, a public interest lawyer. The food was pretty good but the national drink of Senegal, sorel mixed with vanilla, made me understand why Coke is so popular in the Third World. Northwest DC always strikes me afresh with its beautiful architecture and endless yuppie playgrounds. Northwest DC has Georgetown, Adams-Morgan, Dupont Circle, "the New U Street", and nearly everyone who lives in Northwest makes enough money to enjoy it all. There is an association and job for everyone here. Meredith and I sat in wonder at the beautiful brick townhouse that serves as the headquarters for the Association of Special Libraries.

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Luxurious accommodations awaited me at my brother Harry and sister-in-law Julie's palatial suburban residence. Meredith and Harry are my two most faithful Internet correspondents in Washington, DC and I decided to concentrate my 36 hours on them. It felt a bit harsh to scratch my parents and sister from the touring program, but they weren't on Internet, hadn't been listening carefully in phone conversations, and hence had only a vague out-of-date notion of who I was.

Meredith and I went to see *Comedy of Errors* at an amphitheater in Rock Creek Park on Sunday. The production was superb, the theater plush, the sound system magnificent, and the tickets ... free! This didn't strike Meredith or her friends as odd. They don't find it unusual that most city parks are national parks and hence citizens in Des Moines are paying for their circuses. Afterwards we visited the Jefferson Memorial, Meredith's favorite spot in the city.

Standing under Jefferson's words about how government would improve as men's minds became more developed and advanced, Meredith said "I wonder what Jefferson would be if he were alive today? Maybe something like Al Gore." I almost choked from horror. A follower of Locke who held property sacred and wanted to free men from arbitrary authority presiding over a government that lets law enforcement agents nationwide take whatever they want in the name of the Drug War? Take Jefferson's mind, advance it a bit and get ... Al Gore?!?

We couldn't come with anything more likely though. A bohemian embittered and struggling in Greenwich Village? A government professor at Harvard? Getting denied tenure at a crummy small liberal arts school? A politician, God forbid? The division of labor in our society seems to preclude the possibility of a man like Jefferson. How could he do architecture without sticking to that and becoming a monodimensional specialist? Philosophy without becoming a wanna-be formalist? Political science without being a faintly ridiculous professor or sleazy politician? If you figure this out, please let me know.

Monday, June 6

Woke at 9:30, long after Harry and Julie had departed to anesthetize the sick, train young MDs advancing to the ranks of the $300,000/year specialists, and gather data for research. I left the Beltway and its heavy trucks (unfamiliar to one who lives in post-industrial Massachusetts) for Maryland Rt. 5 and the beginning of the Bible Belt: the Evangele Ministry's huge backlit sign "Free ticket to Heaven. Inquire within, Sunday 10 am." After I crossed the Potomac, Virginia greeted me with pastoral beauty all the way to Tappahannock, a town founded slightly earlier than Williamsburg (early 1600s).

I continued on scenic highway 17 all the way to Norfolk's latest attraction: Nauticus, "a celebration of the sea." Mostly it seemed like a celebration of getting people to shell out $10 to expose themselves to Navy and corporate PR. The

"Shipbuilding US" film, for example, was all about how American shipyards build the world's finest ships but can't compete in the merchant market because the Feds won't subsidize their poor little souls. The Aegis missile simulation was a group interaction event with voting. Various threats presented themselves and eight of us voted for one of four actions each time. At first, when the threats were vague, we did OK, sending a fighter to investigate an unknown far away plane or a helicopter to investigate and unknown sub. Specific threats, however, revealed that none of the others had absorbed any of the lessons about which weapon was good for what. They picked ship-to-ship missiles, for example, to knock down incoming missiles. My lone 12% kept showing up on the correct box with the rest of the votes distributed randomly. Our incompetence sank the ship and occasioned a lecture on how Aegis technology has ushered in a wonderful new world where this isn't possible—the Aegis cruiser that shot down an Iranian passenger jet by mistake wasn't mentioned.

Under heavy thunderstorms I traced Robert Frost's steps along the edge of the Great Dismal Swamp to Elizabeth City. The swamp looks pretty wild and it was easy to believe the local tales of people living back there, eating possum, keeping their children out of school, and speaking an archaic dialect of English. Elizabeth City looked decrepit from the highway, but Katherine's directions took me into a lovely enclave for the local gentry. Katherine is George's "grandmother" and remains surrounded by Samoyeds. Five years ago, she was just divorced and struggling to survive after twenty years as a homemaker and dog breeder while I was the company president. Now she's president of a 50-person manufacturing firm and lives on the water with a Ferrari 308 GTS in the garage (I decided that if I could drive a Ferrari with the top down on a sunny day once a week that it would be enough to keep me happy) while I'm a destitute graduate student. She took me out for dinner.

Tuesday, June 7, 1994

On the way to breakfast, Katherine and I stopped to take a picture of The Southern Pig barbecue joint. Tom, the near white-haired owner, walked out in a grease-spattered shirt and introduced himself. "We've been doing ribs here for 14 years." Katherine noted that "they are right in the middle of an all-black neighborhood but all the customers are white."

Stalk himself was missing from Stalk's, which disappointed Kathy, but the ham biscuit (ham dried and smoked for the better part of a year then fried and dumped in the middle of a heavy biscuit) and egg sandwich on wholewheat washed down with fresh-squeezed orange juice were excellent. By *Blue Highways* standards, this place was a loser, having zero calendars on the walls. However, with its expanses of stainless steel and linoleum, smokers (1 out of 12 people in NC have financial ties to tobacco; there are very few restrictions on smoking), and big round table in the back

full of guys chewing the fat, it had plenty of local color. Kathy went off to work with two of her Sammies (Juliet and Diva) and I shook off the ghost of Robert Frost and headed NE toward the Outer Banks.

My first stop was the Wright Brothers Memorial, commemorating their December 17, 1903 first powered flight (Orville went first). Everything I'd thought about the flight was wrong. I'd always thought it was *on the beach at Kitty Hawk*, but it turns out to have been *a few hundred yards inland at Kill Devil Hills*, which is four miles south of Kitty Hawk. They picked the spot because it was broad, flat, and soft. I'd always thought the Wright Brothers figured out how to fly. In fact, everyone knew how to fly and the Wright Brothers used the published results of others. What Wilbur and Orville figured out was a reasonable control system for an airplane. The Feds display a nice full-size replica and show how the controls on the Kitty Hawk Flyer are coordinated and afford control over roll, pitch, and yaw just like a modern airplane. Although MIT had no direct role in this flight, MIT nerds may have provided a lifestyle example to the brothers. They were bachelors who lived with their sister and father in Dayton, Ohio, and spent all their time working.

After a quick dip in the 60 degree water, I lunched at Pigman's Bar-B-Que. This may be the Bible Belt, but there are portions of Leviticus that seem to be widely ignored. I'd planned to linger on the Outer Banks, but the lack of culture, hazy skies, and stiff wind made me press on over hours of highway and ferries to the industrial blight of Morehead City on the mainland. If you've been to Cape Cod, I'd skip the Outer Banks altogether. The scenery is similar but if the weather is bad the Outer Banks have no bookstore/cafes in which to linger.

Wednesday, June 8, 1994

I toured around beautiful seaside Beaufort, NC (pronounced bow-FORT unlike beautiful seaside Beaufort, SC, which is bew-FURT) and then drove mile after weary mile on rainswept undivided roads to Charleston, SC.

Thursday through Saturday

George Washington visited Charleston in 1791 and excerpts from his diary show that he was most impressed by the hundreds of beautiful and well-dressed women. Things haven't changed much and it didn't surprise me to learn that South Carolina was home to both the most recent Miss America and Miss USA. If Boston reflects Puritan England, Charleston reflects the Restoration England of Charles II. Everything is perfectly set up for hedonism. Want a gourmet meal at 10 pm at half the price you'd pay in Boston? You got it. A sunset horsedrawn carriage ride around the waterfront and gracious mansions? Choose your driver. Hungry for some Belgian chocolates? No problem.

Charlestonians are proud of their history. "You're from Boston? Did you know that eight years before the Boston Tea Party, we took over a British fort and trained its guns on the ship bringing Stamp paper here? The ship never came back." [Britain ultimately repealed the Stamp Act, which made contracts illegal unless written on this special, and expensive, paper.] "The Bostonians disguised themselves as Indians, but we went as ourselves."

Charleston was also precociously violent in the Civil War. Cadets from the Citadel opened fire on a boat resupplying Fort Sumter in January, 1861 but real hostilities didn't break out until April, 1861 when lots of Confederate batteries simultaneously pummeled the fort, kicking off the War Between the States (or "War of Northern Aggression" or "Recent Unpleasantness" as locals are wont to call it). History is palpable walking the grounds of the island fort or even on James Island where I stayed. The all-black 54th Massachusetts fought there while retaking Fort Sumter.

My favorite encounter was with Gerald, a sheep and cattle farmer from the South Island of New Zealand, who is spending his 71st year touring the US by Amtrak. His wife had died a year before, which broke his heart, and he had Hodgkins Disease, but that didn't bother him: "I've lived my three score and ten." I was reminded of what Anton, that German doctor on the Heathrow-Stuttgart leg a year ago, said about why he was moving to New Zealand: "people there die happy."

I drove Gerald over to Patriot's Point, where one can tour the WWII aircraft carrier *Yorktown*. Gerald had been in the war and wouldn't talk about it except to say that it had been a horrific experience. One side of his face was burned, but I never found out if that was a consequence of combat. Gerald really liked the *Yorktown*, though, and it brought back some happy memories also. Memorials to "those who made the ultimate sacrifice" in various theaters and on various vessels were strewn through the enormous ship. The extensive kitchen, laundry, maintenance, and other support areas made me realize how difficult it was to get just one guy up in the air to fight that far from American shores.

I was disappointed to find that the *Savannah*, the only nuclear powered merchant vessel ever built had been given away. The expense of maintenance didn't justify its value as a tourist draw. This Atoms for Peace showcase was ill-starred from Day One. She started her life as a bulk carrier just as container ships became popular. In addition to the usual nuclear power woes, her crew frequently struck for higher pay.

My luckiest find was Marc Lucas's chocolate shop. The voluble Lucas was chatting with two local customers but conversation soon turned to my new Canon cameras (replacing the Nikons stolen in Filthadelphia at the end of last year's trip).

The 35-350 zoom with lens hood turns out to be a reliable conversation starter. Marc came over from Belgium 12 years ago and is thoroughly immersed in the Charleston milieu. "People in Boston are crazy. My brother works 80 hours a week at Harvard Medical School trying to get grants and do research. Everyone up there works hard for nothing. Nothing. Any one of them could come down here and make a million dollars so easily. Most people here have no concept of what it means to be educated, intelligent, or hard working." I appreciated Lucas's enthusiasm and insight, but not quite as much as the Neuhaus chocolate or strawberries dipped in Belgian chocolate he gave me.

Leslie supplemented Marc's insight. "I grew up 40 miles south of here along the coast." "On a farm?" I asked. "Get real! I told a girl down in Daytona Beach that we lived in a house with a dirt floor and rode a cow every day to a one-room schoolhouse. And she believed me. Some people are idiots. My dad works for an insurance agency and my mother was a receptionist at a mental health clinic. You wouldn't like it in my small town; all people do for recreation is go hunting, fishing, or shrimping. My grandmother used to hunt doves and bring them back. I'd have to pop their necks and pluck them. We have cousins who come up from Florida and they'd always bring alligator tail.

I went to college at Furman in Greenville. That's upcountry where people are really hicks. All the students there are rich kids from Atlanta or Bible thumpers. All they care about is who you know and who your family is. I hated it so I came down here to the College of Charleston and I never want to leave the Lowcountry."

The last sentence is key. People in Charleston consider themselves so superior to and better off than the hicks surrounding them that they are afraid to edge away from their little peninsula. You don't meet people yearning to test their mettle in New York City or Los Angeles. It is just too comfortable to ever leave.

At 22, Leslie had already had her fill of Southern men.

"I expect nothing from men and get less. I can't imagine myself married because I haven't found a man I'd want to spend that much time with."

What did men do to irritate and/or disappoint her?

"Lie. All of them lie. They tell you they love you, that you're the best, just so they can get into bed with you. Then you find out that they are talking about you behind your back or seeing another girl. That's just for starters. Men are control freaks. They love to show off to their friends how much control they have over you. They think that because I'm five foot nothin' that I'll be easy to control, but then I let them have it for five minutes in front of their friends."

Sunday, June 12

Transported by the magic of Interstate highways to Atlanta, I stopped at the Martin Luther King birthplace. This area of town was once inhabited by blacks of all

economic and educational levels and was a major center of black-owned business. The integration of the 60's enabled the middle- and upper-class families to move to the suburbs and now it is rundown. Well-dressed blacks and the occasional white milled about King's tomb, which is surrounded by a fountain. A couple grey-haired substantial Indian women in more substantial saris sat on the edge of the water for a picture. For me they completed the link from Thoreau (*On Civil Disobedience*.) to Gandhi to King.

The Jimmy Carter Presidential Library does something amazing, i.e., make you believe that Carter was an immensely effective president. By concentrating on Carter's achievements and ignoring failures, the exhibits make it sound as though he spent four years working hard on them and never wasted any time on failures. My favorite exhibit explicitly stressed the importance of First Ladies; they were all represented by dolls.

With Atlantans Becky and Rebecca, I walked down memory lane in the World of Coca Cola. Actually I was walking down my great-grandfather's and grandfather's memory lanes. Did you know that Coca Cola always had caffeine? Except for the corn syrup in place of sugar, Coke Classic is exactly the same as the 1886 formula, which contained a flavoring extract of the coca leaf but not cocaine. It still has the coca extract and Coca Cola is the world's largest legit consumer of coca leaves.

Becky and Rebecca's soft accents, slim bodies, and sophistication stood in stark contrast to the more common products of the South. In the North, good qualities are more uniformly distributed among the populace. You might find an attractive, graceful person of average intelligence and education. Or a plain looking person with a brilliant mind. In the South, it is all or nothing. You are a slim graceful well-spoken college-educated brunette or a corpulent lumbering hick-accented uneducated dyed-blonde. There is very little middle ground and it gives people on the good side of the divide ample daily confirmation of their superior gifts and attainment.

I spent the evening with Eric and Jody (*Travels with Samantha* Chapter XI) and their 6-year-old Ryan and 3-year-old Austin. I commented on their mansion-size house and they laughed "all our friends live in houses twice as big." I was beginning to think that Marc Lucas was right about people in Boston scratching out a meager existence. We dined at Greenwoods, a Jewish-owned Southern restaurant serving matzo ball soup and then the usual crawfish, crab cakes, and other not-precisely-kosher local specialties. At the end of the meal, during which serious conversation with difficult due to interruptions from the boys, Judy asked me if I wouldn't just love this kind of life. Eric rolled his eyes and I said that frankly I couldn't imagine getting any creative work accomplished with this amount of distraction.

Monday, June 13

The trail from birth in Atlanta to death in Memphis that took Martin Luther King, Jr. 39 years took me only one day. I even managed to pick up the trail of Elvis at his birthplace in Tupelo, Mississippi. Elvis was born in a shabby two-room house and stayed in Tupelo for 13 years until his parents moved to a housing project in Memphis.

Parts of the ride were pretty scenic, although northern Mississippi does not hit one over the head with its charms. My favorite part of the ride were the mileage signs. US 78 goes straight from Birmingham to Memphis and there isn't a town larger than Melrose in between. Will a sign tell you the mileage to Memphis? No, but should you be going to Holly Springs (population 7,300), you'll start seeing mileage signs about 20 miles away. For awhile it puzzled me: Why would no mileages greater than 30 be listed? Then it hit me: None of the locals owned cars that would reliably make it farther than 30 miles.

The other highlight of the drive was crossing the infamous Tennessee-Tombigbee canal. This child of a bunch of Southern Democratic Congressmen and Senators left the US taxpayer reeling from a multibillion dollar drain on the treasury. I was able to view a one-mile section at midday; no barges were in sight.

At 6 pm, I rolled into Judy, Jason, and Justin's pleasant mid-town neighborhood and entered their elegant 1910 stone house. They took me to Cafe Ole where we ate Mexican, watched the local counterculture, and caught up on the months since we'd met in Alaska (*Travels with Samantha* Chapter XII).

Tuesday, June 14

Jason, Justin and I made it out to Graceland for the 10 am tour of Elvis's surprisingly modest house. My opinion of Elvis rose as I saw that, if his taste wasn't always the most sophisticated, he didn't try to impress people with his wealth. He bought the old brick house when he was 22, retained its original name of Graceland, and lived there until he died. It is true that he was prone to certain eccentricities, such as shooting televisions, and that the last two years of his life were sadly plagued by addiction to prescription drugs. However, he is fondly remembered by all of Memphis for his charity and generosity. He regularly gave $50,000 to various organizations in town and didn't deduct it from his taxes because that would "take away from the spirit of the gift." If he really liked his barber or whomever, he would give him a Cadillac.

Compare this for a moment to Bill Gates. Did you ever hear of Gates giving a gift to another human being? The house Gates is building in Seattle could practically contain the Graceland house and all its surrounding horse pastures. If

Elvis had gotten married in Hawaii would he have chartered every helicopter on all five islands to prevent anyone from flying over his wedding and photographing it?

No visit to Memphis is complete without catching the Peabody Hotel's 5 pm Duck Walk. Throngs of people lined a red carpet as a group of ducks climbed out of the lobby's central fountain and walked into the elevator to ride up to their Duck Penthouse on the roof.

Wednesday, June 15

Having seen the end of Elvis's trail, I stopped at the Lorraine Motel where Martin Luther King, Jr. was shot in 1968. I was struck by how unlucky Memphis is to be associated with King's death. The mostly-black sanitation workers were striking and King came up from Atlanta to organize a march, which turned in a riot. He returned for another try at peaceful demonstration and drifter/bum James Earl Ray rolled into town and shot King on April 4th. Memphis really hadn't anything to do with either man, but they've done a beautiful job turning the motel into the National Civil Rights Museum. My favorite exhibit was a real bus where the weight of your body on the seat activates a recording telling you to move to the back. A solenoid whacks your seat if you don't move.

Jeff's parents Jimmy and Johnny ("it's a Southern thing," is how Jeff explains his mother's name) welcomed me graciously in Gulfport, Mississippi after nine hours of interstate driving. They seemed bewildered that Gulfport's brightest academic star had ended up in seemingly endless indentured servitude as an MIT graduate student. Not being on the scene, though, they decided that they'd just have to support Jeff as best they could. "What about girlfriends?" I asked, hoping to stir up some embarrassing high school stories. They'd pretty much decided they'd have to leave that to Jeff also, but allowed that they were very happy when Missy, a high school friend of Jeff's, moved to Boston to complete her medical education.

Jeff offered me an explicit way of interpreting the South: "Note the underlying unspoken premise of all interactions in the South: all true Southerners are stark-raving insane. Most (but not all) Yankees are sadly predictable and therefore boring. This won't do in a rural setting that can be hot and unpleasant without entertaining diversion."

Jeff's own experience of exile made more sense to me, however. The South is like Israel during the Exile in Babylon. The Babylonians crushed the nation militarily and then dragged the best-educated 2% of the population out by force; the North crushed the South militarily and then lured the best and the brightest out with education and economic opportunity. Jews stuck in Babylon wrote lovingly

about the good old days in Jerusalem. Faulkner in New York by choice wrote lovingly about life back in Mississippi.

Thursday, June 16

On the way to breakfast, we stopped off at a bank managed by Jeff's brother Terry. Terry looks like the ultimate solid citizen and member in good standing of the Chamber of Commerce. It was tough to believe that he and Jeff were related. "I hope Jeff graduates soon," noted Terry.

Jimmy and Johnny took me out for a beignet and eggs breakfast at the famous 18th-century Mary Mahoney's Creole restaurant in Biloxi. I drove by some magnificent casino boats—permanently moored Sheraton-size structures—in front of the 26-mile manmade beach. There was a jetski, windsurfer or sailboat rental outfit every quarter mile. Starting in North Carolina, I had noticed a general belief that fun is impossible without the aid of a fiberglass toy, preferably powered by a big loud engine.

It was in Biloxi that I picked up the trail of Jefferson Davis. His last home is here on a peaceful estate that has been converted into a shrine by the Daughters of the Confederacy. I drove from there into the Garden District of New Orleans where Davis died in 1889. After a 17 mile tour of the beautiful city by bike, I showered and changed into a coat and tie for dinner at Galatoire's, a 1905 brasserie in the French Quarter.

Dinner was a real scene. Each regular customer came in and asked for a waiter by name. A lot of the men had jowls bearing witness to expense account dinners gone by. Women were escorted. Period. The food was superb but I've gotten to the point in life where I'd rather meet a new person than try a new restaurant.

I was ready for Bourbon Street. I had my exotic Canon 50mm f/1.0—the fastest lens in the world—ready for low-light atmospheric photography. I imagined a passed-out drunk in the gutter, a black-stockinged hooker under the street lamp, and a jazz trio playing in a bar in the background. What I got was a tourist clad in a T-shirt reading "My mother went to Miami Beach and all I got was this lousy T-shirt." Apparently the working girls and bums don't come out until after midnight. I was too tired to wait around in the 90 degree heat and 90% humidity. I went back to the air-conditioned youth hostel and chatted with the usual assortment of Australians and Belgians.

Friday, June 17

Anxious to fill a few gaps in *Heather has Two Mommies*, I stopped by the zoo, named after famed Louisianan James Audubon. It held me for nearly the entire day with its naturalistic enclosures, soulful orangutans, multi-species African area

(rhinos, egrets, turtles, pelicans, ruminants), and Louisiana swamp. The place was mobbed with kids, many surprisingly portly.

I battled horrific traffic and torrential rain to get out of town, all the while contemplating the weird California-inspired practice of spelling Louisiana on the license plates LoUiSiAna (too bad LoRi-with-a-heart-over-the-i is in Europe and can't read this :)). The Interstate out of town provides a great view of the elaborate vaults in New Orleans's above-ground cemeteries then crosses the Atchafalaya Basin (swamp) on the longest Interstate bridge I can remember. The achievement of civil engineers awes me at times. For about 30 miles, they'd elevated four lanes of highway on concrete pillars punched into the swamp about 20 feet below. It had survived hurricanes and the general atmosphere of decay. Why can't software be engineered like that?

I stopped in Lafayette ("laugh-yet") for dinner at Paul Prudhomme's sister Enola's Cajun Cafe. Somehow I couldn't stop myself from dining on crawfish and fried alligator.

High-speed driving until 1 a.m. got me through Shreveport and into the Canton Best Western 60 miles east of Dallas.

Saturday, June 18

Downtown Canton beckoned just a mile or so past some scrubby cattle ranches. All the buildings looked as if they'd been built during wartime and had suffered quite a few years of decay besides. Corrugated steel and collapsing wood frame were the preferred styles. I couldn't believe my eyes as I came across the "justice center," an enormous magnificent brand-new palace complete with shade tree in front. Not only did it look like the only structure to have been built in the last 15 years, it was of an astonishing size for a town of 2949.

It hit me all of a sudden. The only decent buildings in most parts of the US are casinos, hospitals, courts, and schools. It is easy to forget this in big cities where industrial monuments tower over all else. Through the South, though, it was just these four even in towns as large as Memphis. Up and down the Mississippi, it has somehow been decided that "riverboat gambling" is OK and the casino empires have responded with glittering oases.

The poverty that is endemic in so much of the South is bad for most businesses, but great for the health care industry. They might complain about taking care of Medicaid patients, but the fact remains that Medicaid costs $4000/year, about twice as much as private insurance. Some of that $4000 is absorbed by paper shufflers, but there is still plenty left over for the hospitals and doctors. Modern bustling hospitals thrive even in small towns.

In Cambridge, the Drug War isn't good for much besides debate. Rich kids don't go to jail for possessing drugs, prisons aren't built in downtown areas, and

people with Harvard degrees don't become cops or small-time defense lawyers. In the rest of the country, though, the Drug War is an industry and a way of life. Police departments get to hire more personnel and buy shiny new cars (about the only new cars you see in some towns). Contractors get rich building new courthouses and prisons. Government swells with prison guards, judges, clerks, and administrators. Lawyers get paid to prosecute offenders and defend them. It is a good thing we have plenty of poor young people without any political power to send to jail. Gazing at the Memphis courthouse, gleaming after its $6 million remodeling, it occurred to me that if middle class white people were going to jail instead of making a buck off the Drug War, the nation's enthusiasm for it might abate.

If people are using drugs, it is not for want of proper education. Not only is every urinal in North Carolina equipped with a "Say no to Drugs" plastic soap holder in the bottom, but the anti-drug message is being delivered from a lot of nicely renovated schools. Kids may be idiots, but the physical plant at least bears witness to the ever-increasing share of gross national product devoted to education.

Speaking of education, as I drove into downtown Dallas, a billboard sold a Christian academy with the following points: No Drugs, No Guns, No Condoms, No Sex Education, No Compromise (all in letters six feet high). I wonder what will happen when they get on Internet...

I stopped at State Fair Park to see its Art Deco treasures and stumbled upon the remains of the previous night's World Cup soccer match. One hundred thousand people shelled out $50 to $150 to fill the Cotton Bowl. A security guard who'd been there said it was moderately crazy. Did you seen any Americans? I asked. "No. People came from all over. Argentina, Spain, German, Austin..."

Texas history under all six flags (Spain, France, Mexico, Republic of Texas, US, and Confederate in that order if I'm not mistaken) is glorified in the State Hall. I was the only visitor and Willie Cooper amplified the exhibits with some of the history he'd seen during his 69 years in Texas. Willie served in WWII and the Korean War before coming back to Texas to help build a motel. He ended up managing the motel also, which was ironic because at the time (1958), blacks couldn't stay there. He came up to Dallas from a small town to distribute newspapers.

"I married a woman who couldn't cook so I had to learn to. That's why most my eight children have gone into cooking. One of them ran a donut shop until he got too successful and they shut him down. When you get successful, there's no end of people shooting at you."

He asked me why I wasn't married. I said I couldn't understand it either. After all, I expected no more from a wife than Admetus got from Alcestis.

"You know there was a slave woman here who was traded for 1500 pounds of sugar. She must have been one sweet woman. All women are sweet if you know how to stir them up. Otherwise the sweetness just stays in lumps at the bottom."

What's the trick to stirring?

"You can't be mad. If you are mad you are just going to stir up anger. If you are sweet you'll stir up sweetness. You've got to make sure you don't get too crazy about a woman. Otherwise you'll end up like O.J. Simpson. If one of them leaves, it is just a matter of time before another one comes along."

How long did his marriage last?

"Forty-eight years and nothing could have been easier."

As I endured the 350 miles of US 287 that separate Fort Worth from Amarillo, I recalled the words of my friend Mike from Houston: "God made Texas and then saw that it was dry, flat, hot, and filled with sagebrush and scrub. He thought about reworking it but then decided to just make some people who like land like that."

When I reached I-40 and Amarillo, I stopped for dinner at the Big Texan. I decided against joining the 22,000 people since 1959 who've tried to eat a free 72 oz. steak dinner. I wasn't scared by the $50 charge if one doesn't manage to eat the whole thing, including shrimp cocktail, salad, rolls, potato, etc. in one hour. The fact that 4,000 have succeeded, including a 63 year-old grandmother and an 11 year-old boy, didn't interest me much either. When I looked at the 72 oz. steak, it occurred to me that a Samoyed dog could have the thing down in about 3 minutes, although he might balk at the salad.

I pitched my tent at the Tucumcari KOA, only hundreds of yards from the soothing sounds of the Interstate.

Sunday, June 19

Santa Rosa calls itself the SCUBA diving capital of the Southwest. Sure enough, mobs of divers crowded around the Blue Hole, an artesian well about 30 ft. in diameter and 80 ft. deep. Most of them were getting certified. Somehow it didn't seem fair that they got certified by stepping off a diving board while I had to walk 200 yards down a rocky beach in Hawaii, then swim 200 more yards out through the heavy surf of Oahu in the winter.

Susie and Stephen greeted me in Santa Fe and we caught up on events since March. I went downtown to get a library card and some guidebooks and discovered that the Santa Fe library doesn't have overdue fines! Talk about a New Age we can live with. I guess they just visualize a world where people return books. I biked up Canyon Road from Susie's house and found myself quickly on a dirt road 500 feet above the city. It was poetically beautiful, especially after all those miles of flat country. The sun played cat-and-mouse with a variety of ominous dark thunder

clouds, but there were always broad swatches of blue sky with white clouds visible. Adobe houses glowed golden and the Sangre de Christo mountains, the southernmost range of the Rockies, glowed red enough to justify their translation: "Blood of Christ."

Monday, June 20

I rose at 6 am to drive "up the hill" to Los Alamos, 45 minutes from Santa Fe. It was pouring rain for the first half of the drive, but I could see mountains 50 miles away. You won't be here long before you understand why Georgia O'Keefe could spend a whole summer painting clouds. When it does rain, the clouds have the good grace to remain high above the ground so you can enjoy the saturated colors of nearby objects and the brightly illuminated landscape in the distance.

We spent the morning signing forms in a big group. With each form, the woman would say "sign at the bottom and put today's date, 6/20/94." Nobody blinked when they signed away their intellectual property rights on a dense two-page form we were given 15 seconds to read. Nobody minded swearing to defend the Constitution of the State of California against domestic and foreign enemies even though we hadn't been shown a copy. (I asked for a copy and the 21 year old running the show glared at me. I really just wanted to see if it guaranteed citizens sunflower seeds and self-esteem. California comes up because we are all University of California employees officially, under contract to the Department of Energy.) However, when the woman slipped after ten times and said "sign at the bottom and put today's date, 6/14/94," everyone stopped. They looked up in unison and asked "6/14?"

After the forms ceremony, I had to go through eight hours of General Employee Training. It is apparently not OK to remove A-bombs from Los Alamos property. Nor are we allowed to gamble or use drugs here. Nor can one use a fire extinguisher unless one has been trained with a "real dummy fire extinguisher" and "real dummy fires." Then we were shown a 10-minute video on how to use the fire extinguishers we weren't allowed to use. At the end I raised my hand and asked "since we aren't allowed to gamble, are we going to get a video on how to card count in six-deck blackjack also?"

That the face of Los Alamos is changing was readily apparent from the complexion of my fellow new hires. Sarah, an attractive stylishly dressed graduate student at the Monterey Institute, was being trained to tell former Soviet Empire subjects to "just say no" to nuclear proliferation. Kathy was going to work in training. A whole slew of people were going to work in environmental studies. One of Sarah's old chums from Dartmouth was going to try to figure out what happened back in 1940's when they pumped radiation into human beings. Those of you who've seen me cry like a baby and run to Mommy Maple for even the simplest

calculus problems will be shocked to learn that *I was the nerdliest person hired that week*.

Fortunately the street names don't reflect the nation's wimpy new soft-on-Communism attitude. I got to my cubicle by turning left on Oppenheimer, right on Trinity, and best of all, left on Bikini Atoll. They said I'd be stuck in a trailer, but my cubicle was actually in a double-wide mobile home, part of three glommed together in the middle of a vast parking lot.

July through August

The romance of working at the place where Big Science was born never wore off. Even though my lack of clearance kept me "outside the fence" within which the bomb physics staff toiled, I couldn't forget that the world never thought about science the same way after Los Alamos. Before the Manhattan Project, it wouldn't have occurred to anyone that simply throwing money and brains at a scientific problem would be enough to solve it. Science proceeded at its own pace, largely through serendipity. That the greatest war in history could be ended by assembling a bunch of eggheads and feeding them 2% of GNP for a couple of years gave the world faith in government-funded science.

Echoes of the achievement at Los Alamos resonated through public debate through the 50s and 60s. Nobody would have proposed going to the moon had not the Manhattan Project succeeded. Even most of our grand social projects were partly inspired by the physicists and engineers of Los Alamos. Americans were the first to get the Big Science religion from Los Alamos and are probably going to be the last to lose it in this day and age when problems seem beyond scientists. For example, you won't see a group of Belgians demonstrating in the streets bitterly complaining that their government isn't spending enough on AIDS research. It isn't ingrained in their psyche that the government is capable of knocking over specific scientific problems merely by allocating funds. Yet in America, we still think that we can beat Nature if only we are willing to devote enough money and brain power.

So much for Los Alamos National Laboratory as part of the Collective Unconscious. Day to day, the Lab was probably the most supportive place I've ever been when it comes to getting work done. Your project is important and the place runs on a wartime footing. Think a piece of equipment will speed up your research? It shows up in a day or two. Think UNIX is destined to be unreliable and mysterious? Not at the Advanced Computing Laboratory, where I worked; Stephen and Jerry know as much about the Suns, Crays, and Connection Machines as the people who built them. Need a journal article? Send email or call the library and they'll send you a copy the next day. Can't wait? Drop by the comfortable library in person; it is open 24 hours.

LANL would definitely be work-heaven for a physicist or applied mathematician. As a computer scientist, however, I missed being at MIT in the midst of many of the field's pioneers. Nonetheless, so many of the new developments in computer science are being made outside of MIT that it was refreshing to be in a place with a more outward-looking orientation. There is a contempt for work done outside 545 Technology Square that keeps the people inside from being completely familiar with often relevant papers. At Los Alamos, though, there are people who are interested in keeping up with the entire academic world's progress in particular areas and those folks are better able to answer questions than some of their MIT counterparts.

I occasionally heard grumbling about bureaucracy or DOE regulations, but as a graduate student I was almost completely isolated from both. Except for the personnel department, whenever I did have to deal with the LANL bureaucracy, it was remarkably efficient, helpful, and friendly. The overhead at the Lab isn't very different from what it is at MIT, which is remarkable when you consider that MIT doesn't have to maintain hundreds of miles of barbed-wire fence and enough guards and heavy guns to repel the entire PLO.

Social adjustment was another matter. I'd been so completely happy with life on the road the previous summer (writing *Travels with Samantha*) that I assumed being in New Mexico would be easy. Moving and traveling are very different though. When traveling, I didn't expect to have a social life or friends in every town. One week after moving to Los Alamos, though, something inside me decided that I was a social failure if I didn't have a dinner invitation every night as I did back in Boston.

This might have been a serious problem if I'd lived in Santa Fe. Time and time again people complained about how unfriendly the town was.

"I had lots of friends back in New Jersey. But I've been here for two years and people don't really even meet my eye on the street," was a typical lament.

Hispanics and Indians didn't seem to have much trouble, with their relaxed lifestyle and large extended families, so I decided that the main problem was that it was difficult to be a work-obsessed yuppie and still feel that one had a rich social life as might be possible in the East or in LA.

If Santa Fe would have been tough, my choice of housing brought me close to despair for the first month or two. The Lab offered me a two-bedroom apartment to share with three other male graduate students. The $168/month price didn't upset me, but my vision of what the bathroom and kitchen would look like after a month did. I settled down in a two-man dome tent in the National Forest two miles from my office.

Practically speaking, this was ideal. I'd wake up every morning in a quiet pine forest to brilliant sunshine, maybe a deer or two, and a view out over the mesa to

the Sangre de Christo Mountains 30 miles to the east. It took me three minutes to drive from my tent to the Wellness Center. Although free, this is nicer and less crowded than 99% of commercial health clubs. Weight machines bore me to tears, but when they were a 15-second detour from the shower, I couldn't regard my wimpy musculature with complacency. After working out and chatting with the Pueblo Indians and Hispanics that make up the security force, I'd shower with LANL-provided soap and shampoo before rolling two more blocks downhill for a breakfast at the remarkably good cafeteria.

Mornings were great, but the evenings were terrifying. I'd sit in my office from 5 pm to midnight alone every night before driving up the hill to my tent. My social life was centered around the town of Los Alamos, which can be the loneliest community of 10,000 in the world.

Before I showed up, I figured the town and the lab would contain a random sampling of the technical elite. That was true during World War II when the lab sucked in every available physicist and engineer in the nation. I hadn't been there long before I realized that a process of self selection obtains here. Consider the thoughts of a graduating PhD physicist.

"Let's see... I've got my PhD and I want to move to a state where I'll be left alone. That means Alaska, Montana, New Mexico, or Wyoming. I don't want to have to talk to students so that rules out universities. Maybe I could even find a job where it would be *illegal* for me to talk to more than 1000 other people worldwide. Say, that pretty much narrows it down to Los Alamos."

Once our exceptionally anti-social scientist decides to work at the Lab, he is faced with another decision: live up on the hill with the rest of the people who like to keep to themselves or commute from Santa Fe where he'll waste 90 minutes or two hours every day in the car and possibly get sucked into art gallery openings.

The result of this self selection is a town where you seldom hear the word "dinner party." People like to come into work at 9, think alone in their offices, bore each other to death at the occasional meeting, and go home to wifey at 5. When you ask about recreation, it is invariably a solitary outdoor pursuit or maybe going out to dinner with the wife. I can count the number of deep conversations I had with Los Alamos residents on the fingers of one hand. After lunch with a Harvard geologist who'd been through GET training with me, I said "Jerry, this was a really good discussion. I'm so glad to finally connect with someone who both works and lives up here."

"Philip, I don't know where you got that idea. My wife and I just built a house in Santa Fe. You couldn't pay us to live up here in Los Alamos."

On one of my summer mountain bike excursions, I stopped to talk with a woman who lived in White Rock, a satellite town of 8,000 that makes Los Alamos

look positively cosmopolitan. Now that her kids were grown, didn't she mind living in White Rock with just her husband?

"Oh, we moved her a couple of years ago because we like the outdoors and the West. White Rock is great. Of course, you recognize everyone because you see them every day at the Lab or in the supermarket, but people create their own sense of privacy by not saying 'hello' even if they've seen you a hundred times before."

Not everyone adapts so well. One graduate student described his fellow young physicists as "the healthiest group of alcoholics in the world. These guys drink half a bottle of whiskey every night at a bar, then get up at 7 am and bike 30 miles up a mountain before coming into work."

Marital problems are conspicuous in such a small community. The most likely "co-respondent" in a divorce is a neighbor and fellow Lab employee. One local woman married her first Lab employee at age 19 and then married three more in succession, each time moving up the organization chart. She's 45 now and divorced from a deputy director.

"What I hate about people in this town is that they don't understand wife swapping," noted a 20-year Lab employee. "You aren't supposed to keep the other guy's wife! One guy in my neighborhood was down in Espanola and some Hispanic teenager stole his 357 Magnum out of his car. Like an idiot, he chases after the kid and the kid shoots him with his own pistol. He's in the hospital recuperating for six months and in the meantime his wife starts an affair with his neighbor across the street. When he gets out of the hospital, his wife marries the neighbor and he marries the neighbor's discarded wife."

Not everything about the town is bad, though, especially if you are a middle class Midwestern white person. This is your ideal version of New Mexico. You've got the best climate and scenery in the state for starters. Adobe? "Living in the dirt is for animals; our houses and businesses would look right at home back in Missouri." Mexican food? "We'll take real American food, thank you very much: Pizza Hut, McDonald's, a diner, a few Chinese restaurants, and one semi-upscale place for taking out interviewees." Hispanics? "Thank you but we can live without their violent crime and illiteracy (we'll let them take the grunge jobs at the Lab, though, especially because it will make our affirmative action program look successful); why do they call themselves 'Spanish' anyway when they are obviously at least half-Mexican to judge by their brown faces?" Indians? "We have a tough time telling them apart from the Hispanics; besides, they like to stick to their pueblos." Rich people from Los Angeles making us sick by building million-dollar houses and driving around in $100,000 BMWs? "They can stay in the Santa Fe hills."

In making New Mexico just like Kansas, Los Alamosans have been remarkably successful. In a society where everything is criminal, there is of course plenty of crime, e.g., teenagers drinking alcohol, people smoking marijuana. However, there is virtually no behavior that John Stuart Mill would have felt government had a legitimate right to stop. Don't bother locking your car; nobody is going to steal your Alpine radio (even if they might take your wife).

Friday, September 23, 1994

I was just getting to really like Los Alamos. I'd met the town intellectuals and had two or three dinner dates a week and a lunch date every day if I could tear myself away from my beloved Macintosh Common Lisp. Weekends with Susie and Stephen in Santa Fe, with its string of Friday night art gallery openings and super deluxe art market (check out the Allene Lapides Gallery if you are there) kept me sane. However, it was getting cold in my tent and I decided that LANL was a better place to finish a computer-aided law thesis than to start one. I started driving back towards MIT and Harvard Law School.

New Mexico beckoned me back even as I drove out into Colorado. A cloudless sky overhead and the surreal autumn light made Taos and the beautiful valley of Arroyo Honda shimmer. I finally understood why the place attracted so many painters. New Mexicans describe their state as "Land of Enchantment" or "Land of the Flea and Home of the Plague" depending upon mood, but I'd concluded for sure that this was the land of the cracked windshield. I couldn't believe that I'd survived both the Alaska Highway and a summer in New Mexico with my windshield intact.

Fifteen miles short of the Colorado border, on a smooth highway with no evidence pebbles, a pickup truck coming the other way kicked up something that put a dime-sized crack right in front of my eyes.

It was 8pm and almost pitch dark when I got to the campground at Great Sand Dune National Monument. A ranger narrated a half hour slide show on Colorado wildflowers, all of which were long dead, for a miscellaneous collection of Swiss-Germans and Coloradans. Her presentation was devoid of the usual National Park Service New Age philosophy except at the end: "next time you look at a wildflower, feel the wonder." Wind and cold was about to penetrate my Gore-Tex Thinsulate parka so I was happy to pitch my tent and get into the sleeping bag. The wind was so strong, though, that it would blow part of the tent in on my head every now and then. Ear plugs were essential to keep the howling wind noise out.

Saturday, September 24, 1994

I managed to push myself out of bed at 6:45 by reminding myself that I hadn't come all the way here to miss the shadows on the sand dunes. The scenery was

perfect. A field of Colorado fall color, mostly yellow and maroon, backed by a 700 foot high sand dune over which towered the sharp peaks of the Sangre de Christos. I hiked out onto the dunes for a bunch of footprint-free shadow-filled shots but felt no desire to climb all the way to the top through the viscous sand.

Air conditioning, telephones, satellite TV, and Internet have ameliorated some of the hardships of life in the real West, but breakfast at the Oasis cafe just outside the park taught me that it is still a different world. My waitress had been a passenger in a car when a rock came through the windshield going 110 mph.

"We're still looking for the truck that kicked up the rock," her father noted. "She might have been killed if she hadn't had her head turned sideways."

As it was, she still had some nasty scars and hadn't been able to start at Arizona State University as planned.

"You can be decapitated by a Kleenex box in the back seat if you stop short," noted the waitress's young grandmother. We appeared skeptical. "It's true. If you're going 60 mph, a Kleenex box can take you head right off."

"If I had to choose between a rock and a Kleenex box, I'd take the Kleenex," I offered.

"Me too," said the waitress.

I drove through open range in a flat valley north towards US 285, a scenic route that follows the spine of the Rockies for a thousand miles or so. I stopped to check out an alligator and fish farm before pressing on to Salida. Like every Western town, there is the inevitable strip of WalMart, fast foods, and supermarket, but Salida has a vital brick downtown as well. I learned that the town was home to one of America's nicest mountain bike rides, the Monarch Crest. You take a shuttle bus up to 11,000' for $10, then climb just 1000' more along the Continental Divide, then ride mostly downhill for the rest of the 35 mile trip. That's my kind of biking and it broke my heart not to be able to stay another day in town and do it.

I ate lunch at the First Street Cafe with Norm, a 5th-generation German-American who grew up in New Jersey but joined the 10th Mountain Division and trained at Fort Hale, north of Leadville, Colorado.

"It was all volunteer and great skiing, but camping in minus 40 degree weather wasn't much fun."

They fought the Germans in the mountains of Italy, 990 of the 15,000 men falling to enemy artillery.

"I was on a ship near the Azores en route to retraining for the invasion of Japan when we got news about the Hiroshima bomb. I didn't believe it. There was a guy who'd been a DJ before the war who put together a daily news show for men on the ship from what he got over the ship's radio. He was a renowned prankster and

none of us who knew him believed the atomic bomb story. When we found out it was true, we were walking on air for days."

Not everyone in Salida is so thrilled with the work of Los Alamos, however. A downtown storefront is the studio and home of the artist/agitator Dr. Doom. He campaigns against Republicans, nuclear arms, and a litany of other right-wing ills by driving around the West in placard-covered vehicles and dumping drums labeled "nuclear waste" on roadsides. The election of Bill Clinton has taken a lot of the wind out of his sails even if nothing substantive has been accomplished on any liberal front.

After a shower and dip in the Salida hot springs, I spun up through yellow Aspens, green pines, and bald high passes to the southern entrance of Rocky Mountain National Park.

Sunday, September 25, 1994

The Shadowcliff youth hostel takes the "hostile" out of hostel with a glorious view over Shadow Mountain Lake to at least five mountain ranges. I spent the day hunting great photographs of Aspens, waterfalls, and the Rockies, but somehow never hit my photographic stride, perhaps partly due to spirit-lifting but photographically boring cloudless blue skies.

Towards the top of the park road, which goes up to 12,183', making it the "highest continuous paved road in the US," I began to feel short of breath and get a copper/salt taste in my mouth. A ranger at the 11,750' visitors' center said the metallic taste was a common symptom of altitude, which reassured me. Two Malamutes looked perfectly at home at altitude and their owners turned out to be good souls from Hewlett-Packard's Greeley scanner division. Two guys came over to join the fun and when they heard us talking about exchanging JPEGs of the dogs over Internet asked for the *Travels with Samantha* URL because they were students at the Air Force Academy.

Driving in gathering darkness through narrow valleys, I knew that I was really out of the park when I passed a Vishay sales office. Hewlett-Packard is taking over Colorado and their Loveland division apparently buys the fancy Vishay resistors. It was a very lonely and trying trip on US 34 for an hour before I reached I-76, which punches diagonially northeast from Denver into Nebraska. I collapsed at 11:30 in an interstate-side motel in Julesberg, Colorado, two miles short of the border.

Monday, September 26, 1994

Crossing into Nebraska was thrilling out of all proportion to the flat brown landscape. This was my first new state of the trip and 48th in my life. Iowa and South Dakota were the only states I'd not visited. Writing something interesting

about Nebraska is a challenge. Doing it when you cross the state on I-80 in ten hours is impossible. An average farm started with a fine white farm house in the middle of an acre of green lawn surrounded by square miles of corn. Iowa is supposedly the state with the highest percentage of millionaires, but Nebraska can't be far behind as I didn't notice too many people among whom this agricultural wealth would have to be divided.

The state capitol in Lincoln is a fine Art Deco monument with a 14-story tower from the top of which Emil, a WalMart stock clerk, proudly showed me the attractions available to the city's 200,000 residents. Emil was excited to be working in this Walmart which was three times larger than the one he'd left in western Nebraska. The governor and local press were coming to see their store's latest innovation: whenever a mother lost a child in the store, an announcement would come over the PA system that would cause every employee to stop work and search for the kid. It sounded sensible, but then I thought "this is Nebraska, what's going to happen to the kid anyway?"

After dinner in the quaint yuppie Old Market section of Omaha, a vast metropolis of 300,000 an hour east of Lincoln, I debated sticking around town so that I could stalk pictures for *Heather has Two Mommies* in the renowned Omaha Zoo. Responsibility prevailed and I charged across the Missouri River for a dark ride through suddenly hilly Iowa. After the open spaces of New Mexico, dodging the heavy semi traffic of I-80 at night made me pretty nervous, plus my headlights seemed to be aimed too high and were irritating other drivers. It was midnight when I checked into a Days Inn just west of Iowa City. The desk clerk was a smoking kid from University of Iowa who was taking a "using Internet" course. He was getting college credit for reading *Travels with Samantha* on the Web! "Should I lock the car?" I asked, "I've got a lot of cameras in it."

"This is Iowa. People don't steal things."

Tuesday, September 27

I crossed the Mississippi into Illinois in the "Quad Cities" area, where chiropractic was invented and is still headquartered. The art of highway maintenance that is so carefully practiced in Iowa and Nebraska seems to have fallen into disrepute in Illinois. As the moonscape of I-80 pounded my bones, I recalled an engineer from Caterpillar who described his summer working for the Illinois Department of Transportation.

"They worshipped the twin gods of Waste and Incompetence."

Anxious to get to the Art Institute before closing time, I passed up the Ronald Reagan Birthplace, 32 miles off the interstate. I needn't have hurried. Tuesday is not only "free day" (though the others are "pay what you can" like the

Metropolitan) but "open until 8" day. I wore out my feet and learned that the museum has a lot of good pictures but no Vermeers.

Despite my September interlude in Boston, I was overwhelmed by the big city feel of Chicago after a summer in New Mexico. The scale of the buildings, lakeshore park, lake, and traffic awed me. Every faced looked as if it betrayed an interesting story. It was overstimulating, but not quite as nerve-wracking as navigating rush hour Chicago traffic moving bumper to bumper at 65 mph in a minivan with no rear visibility due to overpacking.

The mills of Gary, Indiana ringing the lakeshore just southeast of Chicago looked truly Satanic. I wanted to stop for a picture but couldn't figure out how so I pressed two hundred miles northeast on I-94 into Ann Arbor, Michigan. For the first hour of my trip, I was educated by Studs Terkel interviewing Roger G. Kennedy, the director of the National Parks Service, and author of *Hidden Cities, the Discovery and Loss of Ancient North American Civilization*. My American history textbooks implied that, although the Aztecs and Incas may have had impressive cultures, that the North American Indians had never been more than nomads thinking about their next deer supper. The truth is apparently that the Ohio river valley in the fourth century A.D. was dotted with cities containing impressive earthworks and hundreds of thousands of people. This was well-known to George Washington and his contemporaries who evinced a genuine scientific interest in these cities if not a respect for the descendants of the city builders. When white Americans were engaged in a systematic program of displacing the Indians, they didn't want to think of them as having been capable of advanced civilization and hence the knowledge was lost to laymen if not to historians. [Jeff and Lori assured me later that if I watched public TV instead of the Simpsons, I'd have learned about this long ago; Anne Marie assured me that if I grew up near some of the big sites, such as Cahokia, Illinois, just across the river from St. Louis, I'd also have known.]

Wednesday, September 28 (my 31st birthday)

Phil Donahue flung cheap shots at famous defense lawyers on the motel breakfast room TV while I munched donuts. Neither Donahue nor his audience approached the wit of one lawyer: "What's the difference between a spermatozoa and a lawyer? The spermatozoa has a 1 in 6 million chance of becoming a human being."

University of Michigan has some nice Gothic architecture in addition to the usual state university Bauhaus horrors. I sat for a moment in the supremely comfortable and soul-inspiring student union reading the daily paper. One photo that caught my MIT-trained eye was of the school's new Star Trek club; it was of four attractive women.

After my year of litigation with Ford Motor Company, the city they'd built in Dearborn drew me like a magnet. I skipped Henry Ford's 52-room limestone mansion and the various corporate campuses because I wanted to concentrate on the Henry Ford Museum and Greenfield Village, who charms allegedly couldn't be fully explored in less than two days.

Henry Ford, who fought a libel suit over whether he said "History is bunk," built a 12-acre replica of Philadelphia's Independence Hall to house his treasured documents of American invention. The museum opened in 1929 and resembles an airplane hanger inside.

Don't look for Smithsonian-style explanations of technology; the museum's credo is "We gots the stuff and here it is." Edison's last breath is in a test tube next to Abe Lincoln's death chair, not far from the death car of John F. Kennedy, not far from an old McDonald's sign, across the corridor from a silver collection, adjacent to a bunch of vacuum cleaners, which are a stone's throw from a bunch of old wooden farm machinery. Old people say that this is how the Smithsonian was when everything was housed in the "castle" on the mall and that it was better then. For them the Henry Ford Museum represents the last authentic museum experience available in America.

Irene, a museum staffer, two retired ladies from Oklahoma, and I paused for a conversation. Surrounded as we were by the greatest American inventions of the past century, we naturally discussed.... O.J. Simpson.

"Do you think he's guilty?" Irene asked.

"I've been living in a tent all summer with no TV. I'm not educated enough to say," I responded.

The two Oklahoma ladies remarked that it was amazing how many people thought that he wasn't guilty or that, if he was, he shouldn't go to jail. They'd never met any of these people, but they'd heard reports that they existed.

Irene nodded her head but I decided to stir up the pot with a slightly stretched argument from David Hume.

"Why do you think that everyone shares the belief that justice is good? For example, if we had a society of superabundance, property-based laws and courts would serve no purpose. Would there be any point in prosecuting someone for stealing your car when you could just as easily walk down to the corner and get another one for free?"

My listeners looked slightly puzzled but I pressed on.

"What if we had a society with resources so limited that you couldn't get enough to feed your family no matter how hard you worked unless you stole. People in that society wouldn't think property laws and courts were useful either. It is only in a middle-class society where folks believe that reasonably hard work will yield a reasonable standard of living that justice is considered good. If the TV

networks find a black guy in the ghetto who believes, whether or not it is true, that there is no honest way for him to get ahead in this world, there is no reason to suppose that he'd buy into our middle-class concept of justice. Admittedly O.J.'s crime was a crime of passion, not of property, but once you get the ideas that courts and laws aren't serving your community, you probably don't think they are useful for anything."

Greenfield Village is a 120-acre confection of Americana, albeit an extremely inventive and litigious Americana. Henry Ford liked certain buildings all around the country, especially the homes of inventors and self-made men of industry. He wasn't content to take snapshots; he physically dragged the buildings here. Thomas Edison's complete Menlo Park laboratory is here. The chemical-stained bleary-eyed workers are gone, but old women relate with pride how he got 1093 patents.

"If any of the workers got sick, Edison would mix up a cocktail of chemicals at that bench over there and make them well. They were all working so hard that they couldn't afford to have anyone sick, you see."

Edison was Ford's hero, you see, and the whole place was dedicated to Edison in person when it opened in 1929 (Edison was 82 at the time). The Wright Brothers weren't far behind and get two spots: one for the bike shop/workshop and one for their home. Ford was no racist and Booker T. Washington's house is here to prove it. Nor did his reputation for Jew-hatred seem warranted standing in front of Mrs. D. Cohen's perfectly preserved millinery shop.

A whimsical mood prevails in Greenfield Village. A lovely Stephen Foster memorial fronts the circular pond with working steamboat. Model T Fords cruise the streets, a steam train circles the complex, and children ride a wooden carousel. Nothing American would be complete without various ripped-off parts of Europe, of course, and Henry Ford wasn't content to replicate a la Busch Gardens. Parts of the Cotswolds and Switzerland were excised and rest here.

Although the $20 combined ticket price isn't very different from Disneyland's, the corporate stage management and heavy-handed spin control is absent. The bookshop contains a full selection of biographies of Ford and none of them gloss over Ford's worldwide publication of anti-Jewish propaganda from 1921 through 1927, when he retracted his views, and continuing much later in Germany and many other foreign countries. The continued popularity and availability of Ford's work in the 1930's in Germany, Ford's acceptance in 1938 of Germany's highest honor from Adolph Hitler, and Ford's refusal to reaffirm his 1927 retraction clouded his reputation further. However, at the end of the war, Ford began to see and state that he'd been mistaken about the International Jew and noted that he should figure out how Hitler and Germany had managed to cause so much trouble. Ford only had two more years to live so it languished on his "to do" list.

I didn't feel inclined to judge Ford harshly. On the witness stand in the "history is bunk" trial, he proved embarrassingly ignorant of history. He seems to have been nice to all the Jews he knew personally and appears to have refused to finance Hitler despite rumors to the contrary. It is a tragedy of capitalism that the ill-informed opinions of the rich assume titantic and profound proportions in the public mind. We automatically assume that poor people must be stupid—otherwise why wouldn't we just give them money instead of social workers, Medicaid, food stamps, etc.—and that rich people must have done something wonderfully innovative and clever to get that way.

As the museum closed at 5 pm, I headed through Detroit's mellow rush hour towards Canada. A gas station attendant warned me to "watch out for those Canadian drivers." I took his advice seriously, reasoning that anyone who chose to live in the traditional Murder Capital of the US was probably not easily alarmed.

My first stop in Canada was the sister city of Windsor, Ontario, where I photographed the Detroit skyline from the riverfront and chatted with Leonard, who was fishing, and Candis, his friend who was an 8th-grader. The metric system doesn't seem to be taking root in Ontario because Candis said she was more comfortable thinking in pounds than kilograms.

Lower Ontario seems like a flatter version of Iowa: cornfields and smooth highway. Without federal subsidies, however, the farmhouses were functional rather than palatial and never surrounded by huge expanses of lawn. Every acre was put to some use and millionaires appeared to be thin on the ground.

Stoked with Poulet McCroquettes from McDonald's, I made it all the way to Niagara Falls by 11 pm. I remembered being awed by the Falls when I was 10 on the Great Family Trip to Upstate New York (complete with sister screaming in the back seat). I had never seen anything on that scale before. After traveling in the West, Alaska, and New Zealand, however, the Falls don't seem unbelievable outsized anymore even if the sheer amount of water staggers the New Mexican mind.

They'd turned off the lights on the Falls at 11 pm so I shuddered in the darkness at the lip of the more graceful Canadian Horseshoe Falls before returning to the solid neon of the tourist streets. The Canadian side is famously less tacky than the American side, so seeing wax museums every few meters, a Ripley's Believe it or Not museum, a Guiness Book of World Records museum, every kind of carnival game and booth, I shuddered to think what the American side would be like.

Thursday, September 29, 1994

Tivoli Miniature World was my favorite tourist attraction in Niagara Falls. Where else can you get the Taj Mahal, Arc de Triomphe, and Eiffel Tower all in one

picture with the 600'-high Skylon Tower in the background. Models of medieval cities and cathedrals are exquisitely detailed and precise. I even saw Mt. Rushmore, which I'd scratched with regret from my touring program despite the fact that it would have made a perfect 50 states.

Determined to make the Falls look as small as Tivoli Miniature World, I hopped into one of Niagara Helicopters's Bell Jet Rangers for a bird's eye view of the city, gorge, power project, and Falls. This was living.

I drove back into the US and straight along the shore of Lake Ontario past tidy corn, apple, pear, and berry farms. It was painful to go through Rochester without stopping at any of the Eastman-funded monuments to photography, but I was anxious to get to Oswego, a couple of hours east.

Oswego, New York is a dream town for any public relations person looking for a challenge. The town contains three nuclear power plants and a concentration camp for Jews.

Friday, September 30, 1994

Fort Ontario's earthen walls sit on high ground above the mouth of the Oswego River and Lake Ontario. It is a New York State Historic Site that is being restored to its 1868 appearance. I barged in on Patrick Wilder and Richard Lacrosse, Jr., the two on-site historians, and asked about the fort's World War II history.

"We can tell you about that," Patrick said, "but the fort's most interesting history was during the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. Fort Ontario was the embarkation point for the world's first boat people. Did you ever wonder where the English speakers of Canada came from? 'British North America', as it was then called, was just French settlers and Indians until the Revolutionary War. During the war, loyalists from all over the 13 colonies came to Fort Ontario, which was held by the British, and embarked across the Lake to British North America.

Fort Ontario isn't too far from the Proclamation Line, which was one of the causes of both the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812. The British gave the Indians jurisdiction to the west of the line and the white settlers jurisdiction to the east. A fellow like George Washington who'd already claimed 500,000 acres in Ohio couldn't be expected to be very happy with this arrangement. People forget that there were revolts not just in the 13 colonies but in the Caribbean as well and that the goals of the Revolutionary War included establishing a country that was much larger, including Canada, Bermuda, and the Bahamas. The settlement of 1783 that ended the war was brokered by the French.

They told the Americans that the most they could hope to get was the 13 colonies and that promising to honor the Proclamation Line and compensate the

loyalists for their homes wasn't so bad, that they could possibly gain some of the other goals in the future. So the Americans signed.

Between the Revolutionary War and the War of 1812, the population of the U.S. went from three million to over seven million. That wasn't from immigration and it was mostly in the northeast. What happened is that men in the northeast had four or five wives and twenty children. They'd go through wives the way you'd go through oxen. When one got worn out and died in childbirth, they'd get another. The oldest son would get the farm and the rest of the kids would move out to the Ohio river valley and clear some of the forest the Indians were intent on preserving. When the Indians would kill one of these guys, his relatives back in Massachusetts would complain to their Congressmen and they would pressure the president to send in troops. This caused the Indians and the British to complain that the US wasn't honoring the 1783 agreement or the 1796 agreement, which finally ended British control of forts such as Fort Ontario. In return, the Americans reiterated their promise to honor the Proclamation Line, which they didn't, and compensate the loyalists, which they didn't.

Meanwhile, the British were at war with Napoleon. When the Royal Navy needed a merchant vessel, they'd grab one from the English merchant marine and pay the owner a fixed sum. The owners didn't like that so they would reflag their vessels in the US and claim that the ship could no longer be appropriated because it was American. And what do you think would happen if a Royal Navy ship pulled into a port next to an American merchant ship? The sailors on the British ship were poorly paid, poorly fed, got shot at, and often received the cat o' nine tails. They'd see the well-fed, well-paid, happy American sailors on the neighboring ship. There would be a couple of splashes in the middle of the night and the American ship would have a couple of new crewmembers.

The British didn't like to see their merchant fleet or their navy shrink so they took to stopping ships on the high seas and looking around to see if the men or ship had previously been British. If so, they'd seize the ship and the men and sometimes even hang a few navy deserters. One time, they even boarded an American warship and took off a few deserters and when word got to the newspapers, Americans everywhere were humiliated and outraged.

The war started, though, when the French encouraged the Americans to take Canada and renounce their agreement regarding the Proclamation Line. The US expected it to be easy because they figured the French up there would welcome liberation from English rule.

Well, we lost. It was our first Vietnam.

The French in British North America didn't want to be part of the U.S. The British let them keep their law, elect their local politicians, and practice Catholicism. Many of the New England states had established Protestant churches at the time."

"Oh yes," I recalled, "I think Massachusetts had a state church until 1820."

"That's right, plus they ran into 10,000 British troops. You won't read about the attempt to take Canada in history books, though, because we lost those battles. One of the nice things about not being occupied after a defeat is that you get to write your own history of the war.... Of course, the Germans and Japanese were occupied and they've been doing it anyway... Well, if you look at an American history textbook, what you'll mostly read about is a naval battle in New Orleans. It was irrelevant to the main currents of the war and we mostly won because of luck and the fortunes of war, but we won so you get two pages on it. Nobody mentions that none of the war's objectives were achieved and that we actually lost some territory.

Anyway, these are the kind of stories that the loyalists who fled to Canada have been passing down through the generations up there and you don't have to push a conversation very far over there before you dig up a different look at the American Revolution."

Most of what I'd thought about the fort's role in World War II turned out to be wrong as well. A little background may be helpful first.

Although numerous European governments on both sides of the conflict appealed to the U.S. to shelter some Jews from the Holocaust, FDR was adamant about not letting a single Jew become an American citizen throughout the war and he was also adamantly opposed to temporarily sheltering any refugees. However, by 1944 pressure from countries such as England had become so intense that FDR felt he had to make at least a token gesture. Consequently, it was decided to accept one boatload of refugees.

I'd thought that these 982 people, most of them Jews, were saved from the Holocaust. However, I learned from Patrick that they'd already escaped the death camps and were residing in liberated Italy. Thus, the U.S. was really doing the Italians a favor by taking 982 mouths to feed off their hands.

Roosevelt wanted to make sure that these folks never became permanent U.S. residents and imprisoned them in Fort Ontario behind barbed wire. I thought that he'd succeeded and that they were eventually deported. However, I learned that the imprisonment wasn't comprehensive during the war, for school-age children were let out during the day to attend Oswego Public Schools, and I also learned that FDR's plan was thwarted.

Congress was also opposed to letting the refugees stay, but Harry Truman felt sorry for them. In 1946, when Congress was in recess, Truman unilaterallly ordered all 982 across the border into Canada for a day and then readmitted to the U.S. by special presidential order; 899 ultimately settled permanently in the U.S. and 50 or 60 returned recently for the 50th anniversary of the Fort Ontario camp.

Several excellent books have been written on the subject: *Haven: The Unkown Story of 1000 WWII Refugees* by Dr. Ruth Gruber, the former liaison between the refugees and the government, *Token Refuge*, by Sharon Lowenstein, and *Don't Fence Me In*, by Joseph Smart, the former commander of the camp.

I walked around the fort with my camera, but was disappointed to find that none of the buildings from the refugee camp remain. They were torn down by the city and state after the federal government turned the land over to them in 1946. The fort itself is being restored to its 1868 appearance and the whole park is going to concentrate on this particularly uneventful period of the fort's history. Exhibits and information that don't relate to this period will be torn down.

Today's museum has a very informative well-designed artistically-presented series of exhibits on the fort's history from 1726 through WWII. All the exhibits are professional with a unified graphic design, except for the one wall given over to the refugee camp days. This looks like an afterthought and basically consists of a bunch of photographs tacked to the wall.

One of the saddest wall hangings is an engraving showing the town of Oswego in 1852. It looks beautiful and bustling with tall ships at every dock and graceful buildings at the mouth of the Oswego River. Today, there are ugly docks and oil storage tanks where the tall ships once berthed.

Before leaving town, I headed out to the nuclear electricity plant complex. The first two reactors are cooled with lake water and look like generic factories. The third and last was built with a characteristic cooling tower because people were concerned about heat build-up in the bay.

A nice Energy Center explains the wonders of the reactors, how safe nuclear energy is, and how one eighth of New York State's power is generated here. Three Mile Island isn't mentioned in the exhibits.

I left Oswego at 3 pm and threaded my way around the east shore of Lake Ontario and then east into the Adirondacks to Saranac Lake. The Adirondacks that you can see from the road have a much more settled look than the White Mountains. There are large areas of near-wilderness, but one has to get far off the main roads to see them. Still the foliage was marvelous.

Saturday, October 1

Driving back to Boston through the Adirondacks and southern Vermont in foliage season may not be heaven, but as a homecoming technique it sure beats driving up the Jersey Turnpike in the rain after having all of one's posessions stolen in Filthadelphia (see *Travels with Samantha*, Chapter XVII).

The Adirondacks began to grow on me on Route 73 southeast of Lake Placid. This was the highest and wildest part of the part so far, under a blue sky with wispy clouds. At Ft. Ticonderoga, I took a ferry across Lake Champlaign then continued on 73 to 100, the spine of the Green Mountains. After photographing Moss Glen Falls and Texas Falls, I stopped for an excellent lunch at the Rochester Cafe in Rochester. Despite some very interesting conversations with Vermonters who'd given up the city because they didn't like the pace and the imposed value system in which things not done to earn a buck are considered a waste, I regretted stopping. My leisurely lunch caused me to arrive in Quechee 15 minutes after the last launch of the day in the Quechee Balloon Festival, which I had completely forgotten about.

I wish I could say that something really interesting happened in the last moments of the trip but I-89 and I-93 down to Boston in the dark are not the places for epiphanies.

All I can say is that I'm back at MIT and pretty excited about continuing my computer-aided law research as part of the new Information Infrastructure (Web) Group.