

THE TRIP TO SOUTH DAKOTA

Day-1; June 11, 2009 7:09 am Marilyn and I pull into the lane of Rick and Jan Ellingers house where there is J.T. and Esther Taylors 1963 Nova, and Ron Van Nattens 1963 Nova SS. Pulling out of the garage is Rick and Jan's 1965 Nova SS. We pull Marilyn's 1975 Nova LN into the driveway and the group is complete. J.T. waves everyone into the house where Jan has made breakfast sandwiches, and J.T. has made breakfast burritos. Alexis and Crystal, J.T and Esther's daughters, are playing with Gidget while the rest of us are finishing breakfast. We all made a pit stop and we were off to the Black Hills. The day was sunny and we were all glad to be on the road. After a couple of stops for gas and food we were getting close to Custer when it started raining which stayed with us until we reached our home for the next few days, the Super 8 in Custer SD. We checked in and some of us hit the hot tub, while others hit the pool. We all went to bed early and excited about the days ahead.

Day 2; Up early wiping off the cars heading for Mt. Rushmore. Ron and I were in the turning lane to Mt. Rushmore when Rick's car stopped running. Rick had the hood up just as you entered the entrance lanes. We all walked back down to see what was up. Rick had installed an electronic ignition in the 65, 30+ years ago and it decided he got his moneys worth. Rick saved the original points plate and a set of points in the truck all this time. He rewired and de-electronic-ed the distributor on the spot and we were on our way. After some picture taking, ice cream eating, gift shopping and gazing at four Presidents sculptured in solid granite we were off to Crazy Horse

Crazy Horse is a story that is well told about the passion of a Lakota Chief and the man who gave every thing he had to immortalize him in stone. The undertaking of this project is still being attempted by the children of the sculptor that started it, and funded by the public. With a movie, museum and a community center, it is much more than just a monument, and a **not to be missed** spot on any trip to SD. Back to the Super 8 in the daily rain storm. Next up Bear County.

Day 3; Up, wiping the cars off again and we are off. Bear Country is a place that congers up thoughts of seeing live bears frolicking in the woods, or as seen on TV bears ripping off car doors to get to the food in side of them. For one member it was the latter. As we entered the bear area there was a sign that read "bears will move, do not stop". This was because there was a bear pacing back and forth in front of the cattle guard at the entrance. I could imagine him seeing the bear, reading the sign and saying **WHAT!!!!!!** The bear was so intent on trying to find a way passed the cattle guard he moved just like the sign said. After the adult bears, we parked and visited the zoo where there are several different adult and baby animals with the baby bears being the stars of the show. You could watch those baby bears all day so we had to pry some members into the gift shop. You know they are fascinating if you have to force some

people **in** to shopping. Ok, that was a third of the day and we still have quite a drive to the Badlands. Wall is about 10 miles from the Badlands and about 60 miles east of Rapid City. If you take the small scenic route through the Badlands you get a feel for the shock and awe of “what the hell happened to the ground”!! The land rises up to form tall pointed mounds, and in the same acre can drop a hundred feet down into a small or large crevice. This happens over and over for miles. This is a place on earth that as a pioneer you would most certainly **not** want to see while you were sitting atop of your Conestoga! Although interesting, even the short loop gets old quickly and you can’t wait to get to Wall for the largest drug store in the world. Badlands State Park is one of those places you just have to see once in your life to believe. The weather is sunny and holding as we turn into Wall to see the store that was built buy offering a free glass of ice water to visitors. Of course there are the shops, but they have everything from a juke box that you can see every instrument being played to a Tyrannosaurus Rex that comes out to feed every 22 minutes. I am not going to try and explain what Wall Drug is like, as it is to unique to describe. I hope we have supplied enough pictures to do the job. We had our usual drive back to Super 8 in a rain/hail storm. But this drive was 120 miles and it rained the whole way, Oh...except when it **hailed**

Day 4; The sun was shining and it was a wonderful morning. The rain the night before had caused some flooding and there were large puddles in the parking lot and the street, so we wiped off the tops of the cars and called it good. After breakfast we were off to Custer State Park to view the wildlife. Because of the moisture in the last 6 weeks the park was lush and green. The drive through the park was relaxing compared to the rowing we did the night before. The weather seemed to take a toll on the animals in the park. We usually see a large heard of Buffalo this park is famous for, but it was not to be this trip. As we stopped in different areas to take in the view we started to notice that since the animals were not present the interest shifted to our cars. When we parked we did so in a manor that we wanted to take pictures of our cars and people were pulling over to do the same. I guess they had to take pictures of something. And it didn’t hurt our ego’s one bit. As you drive through the park there are two small tunnels that were cut is such a way that if you look through the tunnel you can see Mt. Rushmore in the background. I am sure we have pictures of that. As you get close to the exit of the park there are two bridges called the Pig Tail Bridges. They encompass a 360 degree circle in about 500 feet. You just kink your wheel to the right for one and left for the other for about the count of 10 and if you look up you can see the car that was just behind you. It’s almost like an amusement park ride you take in your car. As we exited the park the National Guard was on maneuvers and people stopped and took pictures of them to, which brought our egos back down to earth. Well since the Buffalo didn’t want to make an appearance we went on to Hill City. This little tourist trap was known for a train stop, a hay ride, and a gun fight in the street which use to be reenacted 2 to 3 times a week. But the hay is being used to feed cattle, and economy has taken its toll on the outlaws. They can only afford enough ammo to attack the town on

