

Earl's Diary - Thursday, January 30, 2014

Dear Loyal Readers, One and All;

This morning arrived overcast. It appeared that it might have sprinkled during the night. The ground didn't seem to be saturated - BUT there were rain drops on my windshield! I treated myself to staying in bed until 8:30. By that time it was time to get up! After putting The Peanut back together, eating a little breakfast, and checking e-mails, I climbed aboard and we were off.



The drive up Tehachapi Pass is always an interesting experience. At 4000 foot elevation, the pass has snow only occasionally. There was no snow on this trip. About half way up the west side, the Tehachapi Loop can be observed. A back road takes a traveler to a good viewing point.

Here is your sightseeing lesson for today.



The Tehachapi Loop is a 0.73-mile long "spiral" or helix, on the Union Pacific Railroad line through Tehachapi Pass of the Tehachapi mountains in Kern County. The line connects Bakersfield and the San Joaquin Valley to Mojave in the Mojave Desert. Seeing a daily average of almost 40 trains, the line is one of the busiest single-track mainlines in the world.

One of the engineering feats of its day, the Loop was built by Southern Pacific Railroad beginning in 1874, and opened in 1876. On the loop, the track passes over itself, lessening the grade. The loop gains 77 feet in elevation as the track climbs at a steady 2% grade. A train more than 4,000 feet long thus passes over itself going around the loop.





After approaching the top of the pass, it's obvious the wind blows much of the time. Windmill turbines cover whole hill sides. I spied this photogenic scene, grabbed my camera and quickly pulled over to capture the moment.



After passing by Mojave, I turned north on highway 14. Further down (or up) the road I passed through Red Rock Canyon State Park. This park features scenic desert cliffs, buttes and spectacular rock formations.

Due to its unique features and proximity to Los Angeles, Red Rock Canyon has frequently been used as a filming location for motion pictures, television series, advertisements, and rock videos.

Among the many westerns filmed there were *The Big Country* and *The Outlaw*, as well as such diverse movies as *The Mummy* (1932), *Zorro Rides Again*, *Jurassic Park*, *I'll Be Home for Christmas*, *Missile to the Moon*, *The Car*, *Westworld*, *Savages* (1974) and *Airwolf*, 40 guns to Apache Pass, the last film of Audie Murphy, was filmed there in 1966. The 2005 music video *Cater 2 U* by Destiny's Child was also filmed at this location.

Historically, the area was once home to the Kawaiisu Native Americans, who left petroglyphs and other evidence of habitation. This area also served as a Native American trade route for thousands of years. During the early 1870s the colorful rock formations served as landmarks for 20-mule team freight wagons that stopped for water.



It was cloudy and overcast and the colors did not stand out, so I grabbed these pictures off the internet.







I arrived in Lone Pine about 1:00, just in time to get The Peanut set up, and have a bite of lunch. I am now comfortably parked at Boulder Creek RV Park.



Some things to know about Lone Pine: During the 1870s, Lone Pine was quite an active supply town, furnishing goods and services for gold and silver mining communities. After pioneers crossed Death Valley they finally nestled in the Owens Valley. The town got its name from a lone pine tree which grew beside a creek. The tree is now no where to be found!

Lone Pine was a booming mining community. Miners used tramways with strong cable and ore buckets to carry silver, lead, zinc, salt, borax, and dolomite (marble) up and down the mountains, through tunnels and caves then put on steamships. Yep! steamships! You see, Owens Lake, back

then, was 30 to 50 feet deep in spots. Two steamships crossed Owens Lake with its cargo to Olancho. The cargo was then shipped by rail to Los Angeles.

One of the area's major tragedies took place back in the early 1900's. The land owners of Owens Valley were conned into giving up their water and property rights so that the growing city of Los Angeles could now divert the Sierra Mountain Water which once flowed into the lake. Now the water flows by an aqueduct and supplies water to L.A. for domestic use. As a result, what you now see of Owens Lake is a dry lake which causes major dust problems.

I am certainly glad I took the alternate route yesterday through the San Joaquin Valley to here. The altitude at Lone Pine is 3733 feet. However, as I look off to the east, what do I see? New snow on nearby mountain tops.

As I took a short drive through town, more snow to the west! I'm sure chain controls would be on the road further north on highway 395. The pass at Mammoth mountain is 8000 feet! That's only 100 miles from here! Remember, that was my original planned route.



Well, dear readers, that is my report for today. I only traveled 160 miles, but it was filled with interesting sights. I plan to be in Lone Pine for the next 3 nights. There are a couple of fascinating sights to see and tell you about.

Thanks for coming along with me. Bye for now - - Earl