

## The Road to There and Back

*08-24-2015 by Harry Zirkelbach*

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Life is a series of selections. You are home, young. Mom asks “Want dinner?”  
You reply, “What’s my choice tonight?” She explains. “Yes or No”.

Setting off for any journey, invariably has the choice of returning to starting point. Go to the store, Writers on Monday, movie, whatever, these are local commonplace events.

Farewells with a destination other than return home are the essence of adventure, new life. Highlights on the road are irrelevant, no matter uniqueness, for the goal dominates. This is often a life changing event, buying or renting a new residence, headed to College in a distant city, marriage, entry into military, prison, to name a few. For these the journey is of little significance.

Then there is that intermediate trip to a seldom visited distant friend or land.

With the advent of the United States Interstate Highway system beginning in the 1950s, that long distance drive changed. It became safer, and faster, though more tedious. Smaller cities of our country were by-passed. Instead of a stop in Podunk for a rest, then gas, then a meal, it became a right turn off the interstate for these services, at what turned out to be a Chain store, one stop for everything.

This had been introduced by State controlled Interstate segments, particularly in Pennsylvania, Indiana and Ohio, where State Government built the road, collected a small toll, franchised the rest stop, added amenities like play grounds, small parks. A welcome respite for any family.

On four times between 1962 and 72 our family drove to the East Coast.

Truthfully, driving that distance can be really boring without children. With them, games were brought, or invented, to pass their time while the driver plodded. Guess how many miles must be driven on the Interstate and thru major cities, for eighteen eyes searching, find a license plate on passing cars from all 50 States. No, your guess is too low.

In these trips we were interested in those at the destination. Once there, try to delay departure. So when the return journey began, more improvisation. About the time the Mississippi river was reached, the bypassed highways, US 6, 24, 30, 36, 40, all leading to Denver, were introduced to the children. We look for those having summer attractions, like a celebration, circus, museum. The co-pilot became the director, reading literature at each stop highlighting events further west. Who can forget Hannibal Missouri where Tom Sawyer had his pals pay him to paint the fence that he was obliged to paint. That very good Circus at Sioux City, Iowa. Cheese-making at the Maytag Farm in Newton Iowa. The inadvertent cut-off to eat in Gary Indiana at a McDonalds. On entering, we are the only anglos. Well, we never had better service, or food. Everyone made certain our family safely got back into the VW.

Barbara and I still vacation in Colorado. Recently used the Glenwood Spring pool, crossed McClure Pass, picked peaches in Paonia, drank wine with Frank Young at his Olathe Winery. Gambled at the Ute Casino in Ignacio; swapped tales with a friend in Oxford Colorado, Crossed Wolf Creek Pass in rain squall, that east side water emptying into the Gulf of Mexico. Climbed and slid down the Great Sand Dunes barefoot.

Colorado, a great vacation choice.  
Especially with limited Interstate driving.

