

Road Trip for Book Sales—a Pilgrimage

Part Four By Doug Boren

About a month after *Beyond the Horizons* was released, I decided to make an extensive road trip to the locales where the story took place. I thought that my chances of getting it into some of the tourist shops and bookstores in the area were good because of the “local” significance. But more than that, it was a pilgrimage of sorts for me. I had lived in years past at or near many of the locations, and the story came to mean so much to me, that I felt I owed it to my characters to walk the same ground they had. To live vicariously a small part of their lives, even if for a short time.

Day Two

I was somewhat apprehensive when I got up that morning. I still had over 300 miles to drive up into Colorado to see my son and his family. I didn’t really have the time to stay here at Glorieta. But it was so important, that I felt I didn’t really have any choice.

I got to the ranger station only to find that they still were not open. Although the sign said 10 o’clock, there was still no one around at 11:30. Damn, what the heck was going on? Looking through the glass door, I could see the rack of books inside, and felt my frustration rising. *My* book should be there!

Besides, I needed to get the ranger to take me in his four-wheeler to the battlefield. And how long would that take? There was a phone number jotted down on a piece of paper taped to the door for those who “need assistance”. My cell phone piled up the minutes as I called, time and time again, only to get an answering machine that told me they should be here by now.

Finally, I had to admit defeat. It was already after Noon, and I was due in Durango in just a few hours. One of the main goals of my trip would remain unfulfilled.

My despondency dwindled as I drove through the northern New Mexico high desert, towards the mountains of Colorado. This was the land of the Indian. Mescaleros, Jicarillas, Navajos, and Pueblos had once covered this land centuries ago. This is where Father Escalante and the Conquistadors had subjugated them. Once again, I felt the lure of history coming alive.

When I made it into Colorado, it felt almost like I was coming home. I had lived here before, in my college days, thirty years ago. They say you can’t go back. I don’t know. I recognized many of the places, but far more were strange to me as the towns and communities had grown, tripling in size over the years.

Where once there had only been green fields and clear creeks, there were now car lots and motels, and shopping malls. Instead of game refuges, there were now golf courses. This is progress? I shook my head with sadness.

As I drove through Durango, my mind lingered back in time, remembering when I had lived here before. I had just gotten married to Belinda, and life was so... *new*, then. Then, everything was possible. The streets and houses reminded me of so many stories, so many memories of times past. Most of them were *good* memories.

Before I knew it, I was sobbing with tears running down my face as I thought of Belinda. She had died just two years earlier, and I missed her. I missed her very, very much. Though she never got to read *Beyond the Horizons*, she had joked that I had better dedicate it to her. Well... I *did* do that. In some small way, she lives on.

Fort Lewis College sits atop a large mesa overlooking Durango. It was my intention to visit the college bookstore and try to get them to carry my book. Again the local significance was in my favor, not to mention that I was an alumnus of the place. I would return in a few days. For now, I needed some quality time with my son and his wonderful family.

When I got to his ranch, there was celebration all around. I'm glad he's doing well with his cattle, and making a very good life for himself. Certainly not too shabby for a kid who never finished High School.

After drinking my weight in good ol' Coors Light, and a delicious dinner of Mexican food the way it's supposed to be fixed, my heart had found its happiness again. I puffed on my cigar as I watched the sun disappear behind the mountain. It was called the Sleeping Ute, and sure enough, it looked just like a reclining Indian warrior.

Life is, indeed, good.