

VIRGINIA

DAY Eighty-Four Washington DC to Dale City Virginia 92km

Nov 1 Thursday D 91.03km M 47.2 A 14.8 T6h A8h45 total 6651.3 km

Wind some wind but not really hampering

Temp warm ride 15C

Road Condition quit good.... Some spots with little shoulder More traffic In suburbia all day.... The bike trail Arlington to Mt Vernon very nice Paved and slight grades At Occoquan it became more hilly until Woodbridge

Food: Breakfast included in Howard Johnson room.... Toast, apple and juice... Ken went for the donuts

Lunch Occoquan town... funky little tourist town couldn't get our bikes close to the restaurant that was up some stairs between 2 buildings so we made our own bagels with cream cheese

Supper simple... 3potatoes salad, Coleslaw and candies (the girl who checked us in gave us a bag of Halloween chocolates!) We will have to watch our diet again soon!

Accommodation: Tenting in Prince William Forest Park \$25. Good Sam park Spiders.... DADDY LONG LEGS everywhere!



Overall: What a day... We left Washington DC very easily thru the downtown area and over the Arlington Bridge to the Mount Vernon Bike Path which went for about 20km along the Potomac River to Old Town of Alexandria... Incredible condos all along this way... must be where all the rich people that work in DC live as we didn't see a lot of condos in DC... one neat condo was a WW11 Torpedo Factory made into lofts... saw an ad for one \$2400./month to rent a 1000sq ft 2.bedroom.....





Going over the Arlington bridge to Virginia



Left Howard Johnson on New York Ave

LEFT on 1st street NE

RIGHT on K St

LEFT on 5th street

RIGHT on F street to the White House

LEFT on 15th to the MALL

RIGHT on the MALL over to Lincoln Memorial, around the memorial and get on the left side of the bridge sidewalk

Over the Arlington Bridge and left onto the Mt Vernon Bike Trail

Followed the Adventure Cycle route Map 33 and 34 to Price William Parkway where we went down into Woodbridge to visit my niece and then went back to the Prince Charles Park CG

65.7 Left on Prince William Pkwy

66.3 Right on Hillendale 1.5k

67.8 Rt Dale Blvd 1.6

69.5 Lt Lindendale 3k Surrydale Dr for Topaz

72k Left St Charles Dr 0.9

73k Left Spriggs Rd 3km

76k Left Dumfries (234) 1.3k

Arrive at Prince William Valley Trailer Pk

We added 16km going to see Topaz but well worth it!

Lunch was a near catastrophe... Ken took his GPS /Odometer off , set it on a step and then we decided not to stop there.... He remembered just as we were heading out, went back and they were gone, but the kitchen staff of the nearby restaurant had them... Whew.. lucky they were honest.



We did a side trip to visit my niece Topaz at her work as she was working 3-11 at a Fed Ex Kinko shop while she goes to school in graphic design for computer games. It was really neat to see her as we haven't seen each other for over ~8years.... she is a very good looking young lady ... I could really see her Mom Alyce in her now. She has dyed her hair a neat color of red which really suits her. No special young man in her life... she said she has no life between school and working ... she is very busy that's for sure going to a artist convention tomorrow and will be doing sketches for people to earn some money so she can enjoy the convention too. She seems very focused which was neat to see.... Didn't spend as much time as we would have liked, but maybe we can entice her to come up for a visit sometime. I will have to write Mom and let her know how well she appears to be doing. She said she has been having some issues with headaches, but had a series of injections that seemed to work. I think I'd have headaches if I was burning the candle at both ends, so to speak, too. She mentioned she couldn't go back to Alberta as too cold... We couldn't live here as too populated.. ++ traffic

We had to race against the dark to get to the campsite.... We saw a road on the map that thought might take us there shorter, but Ken didn't want to chance it and with little time to study it we set off on the planned route. Lucky to have a off road bike trail for the last 6km . Pulled into the RV park just at dark... we could have save \$10 by going on to the tenting only sites, but we thought best to get the tent up and have a shower , eat and hit the hay. Tomorrow is another long day. Set up on a "bed of leaves" with the squirrels chattering and the minor drone of the hiway.

I cann't remember a time when you got more Canadian \$ in exchange for US\$



Leaves and more leaves

DAY Eighty-Five Dale City Virginia to Fredericksburg VA 103.58 km

Nov 2 Friday D 103.58 km M 47.1 A16.5 T6h14 A9h total 6754.9 km

Wind minor

Temp COLD in the morning 5C warmed up slowly but I wore my coat most of the day 12C

Road Condition Started off with a bike path then on minor roads to very busy by Fredericksburg... periods of no shoulder, but intermittent traffic. I seem a little immune to the traffic. Virginia drivers are not very bike friendly. They all seem in a hurry and don't want to wait till safe to pass!

Food: Breakfast back to our usual apples, cottage cheese, a bagel for Ken

Lunch Interesting Picnic by a state prison... it said visitor parking and they had a picnic table so we made lunch Just as we were finishing a "guard" came over and said we were trespassing on state property and asked us to leave... he was friendly enough when he saw we were just having a break and lunch... I said we were just trying to decide who to visit.... He laughed and said that was a first! They are right on the Adventure Cycle route and have never seen to his knowledge cyclists stop at their picnic table!

Supper soup and veggie burgers at the KOA.... We planned to use the Kelly Kettle and found out there is a FIRE BAN throughout Virginia so they lent us their microwave



Accommodation: Fredericksburg KOA very nice but the price is a little outrageous \$28.60 with no electric, no pool, no amenities! But we did our washing, used the internet and power in the laundry room. Some very noisy "sump pump" fan every once and a while at night

Overall was a good day on gradual up and downs, thru forested acreages the whole day.... No towns or amenities for first 50+ km. Then there was a corner store with gas and making greasy burgers etc, but no washrooms. They were really rude. Said they didn't have a public washroom and didn't live nearby so didn't know where there was one... how they can serve food and not have a washroom.... Only in America. I went across to the RESCUE services and used theirs! You don't realize until you ride a bike day after day how often there are no bathrooms... and the state of many bathrooms! Mom used to say check the bathroom before eating in a restaurant as it is a reflection of the cleanliness of the kitchen!

We make a short stop at the Civil War museum... and we cycled thru the battle fields... interesting they call them "fields" but they are really hilly bushy areas. There was one battle that 15000 were killed and >100000 total died in this area.... One woman we met said.... The US wasn't known for it's negotiating tactics.... I told her they still aren't

ROUTE: We followed the Adventure cycle maps 34 and 35 and for once the campground is right on the route!

These Route 1 signs seem to be our route, but we aren't sure as Adventure Cycle does not mention them nor they Adventure Cycle.... Will look up on the internet



Typical view along our way

DAY Eighty-Six Fredericksburg KOA to Richmond, VA 111km

Nov 3 Saturday D111.96 km M 40.4 A16.8 T6h 39 A10h total 6866.8 km

Wind some from the back

Temp 10C overnight 15C thru out the day

Road Condition Varied left the campsite just as got light.... 0715 thru miles and miles of modest acreages on gently rolling terrain to Ashlund, then on to Richmond and thru to a south side Motel.

Food: Breakfast pear and yogurt Ken added a bagel and cheese

Lunch 3 salads{potato, Broccoli carrot marinate, blackeyed bean} in Ashlund Interesting that the train goes right down the center of main street.... Not slowly I might add, but at full speed and does not blow the whistle!

Supper soup

Accommodation: Westside Motel King size bed is bigger than our tent! Very clean with new bed ; wifi and HBO if someone was not too tired to watch it



Interesting Fences along the way

Overall Was nice to have 60km done by noon but we still didn't go to our destination which was 10 more km The fall leaves continue to be colorful ever since Minnisota. The leaves were falling like in a snow storm today and the acreages didn't have any lawns but were more like "cottages" with the houses surrounded by tall trees. At one point I thought it must be a "Native reserve" as every house was the same a 1000 sq foot, cinder block or brick with 1 foot of leaves on the ground and every dead car they ever owned. Then once we were past Ashlund, the homes became more upscale with large lawns and expensive cars. Richmond is 200,000. pop. And we just sailed thru town with no problems.... And out Hwy 1[301] I think it helped that it was Saturday. We seem to find the areas of town that we don't really fit in color whiz, that our spandex pants really look out of place in the grocery store and bikes are ridden maybe by kids..... but know one bothered us.



Did watch the weather and see that Maine is getting plummeted with a storm... our friend Derryl will be in the middle of that trying to complete his Northern Tier route on a recumbent. Hope he is holed up somewhere dry! Looks like we should have good weather for the next week so going to head for the coast!



Adventure Cycle Route map 35, 36, 37 No campgrounds so we are in one of the million motels... why so many ? Who knows



This was incredible to us... the train went right down the middle of main street with no protection to people walking. No whistles sounded.... Town prefers a quiet zone.... Has ringing bells at the road crossings, but nothing for the side walking pedestrians... I guess everyone there is used to them.

DAY Eighty-Seven Richmond to Isle of Wight 130km
Nov 4 Sunday D 130.11 km M 40.3 A17.4 T7h26 A10.5h total 6997.0 km

Wind West but only a problem when we went into Wakefield

Temp Frosted overnight so glad to have been in a Motel, got up to 15C but still in a vest while cycling

Road Condition Very quiet winding roads all day until we got redirected into Wakefield for groceries and I suggested we go on 460 State Hiway for 7miles to get back on route.... 1 ft shoulder and fast traffic, but 4 lanes so no problem on a Sunday

Food: Breakfast Apple and yogurt for me, Ken had apple, cheese and crackers

Lunch Well we went 60km without any sign of restaurant or groceries Disputanta was to have a store, but not; Dendron just has a store opening next week so we went on to Wakefield which has a nice store, restaurants and a motel

Supper PB, banana buns so yummy!

Accommodation: Blackwater CG [\$10.20} I was so glad to arrive here It is off 620 onto Beale Rd the turn left on Whispering Pines Rd (650) There is a fire ban so no hot meal, although another tenant has a fire we could see past his tarp enclosures This is another long term stay spot a little run down , well hard to tell as the leaves are deep and the trees are not bear yet. They have a lake, but the sign says no swimming due to poisonous snakes and snapping turtles. They have a pool which is closed. The lake is stalked with fish which we could go fishing for if we wanted. We were met by a flock of guinea hens at the office, not real tame, but they did return as soon as we left the area.

The fellow who checked us in , Sam, doesn't leave the campsite, nor drive, but was an interesting character. His Great grandfather was Samuel Moore of the Moore business formes will look him up.... This fellow doesn't seem to have taken after his grandfathers entrepurnial skills.... Pitch black by 1730... what is the point of Daylight saving time ?

Overall We set off at first light 0630 after much discussion as to when first light would be as it just changed to Daylight wasting time. Ken thought it should be sunrise at 0830 as they advertise you get an extra hour of sleep, but that is sleeping while the sun is up! Anyways it was great to be a Sunday and early to head away from Richmond. We were off the Adventure cycle route as we went down on 1/301 to hwy 10 east to Hopewell and back on route. Then we wiggle woggled thru the country crossing over the Blackwater River all day.

Also soya beans and sign of corn. We looked for peanuts.... Didn't see any plants, but did see a field with them laying on the top of the ground... we think they were harvested already and those were missed ones. Will see tomorrow.

Did notice a sudden change in accents... much more "southern belle" voices.

It was a long long day made longer but the soon to be propriator of the grocery store in Dendron... he sent us down Hwy 31 for groceries... which we did need.... And this added 10km to an already long day.





We road by miles and miles of these “hunters platforms” every 100 yards was another numbered platform labeled Blackwater Hunting club. We later learned that they have a “turkey shoot” I don’t know if the turkeys are there or they let them loose so the hunters can pick them off. This fire tower seemed abandoned. Every night we still hear the guns going off, but luckily as we were cycling thru this area we didn’t hear any.



Cotton Harvest

We went thru farming where they are harvesting COTTON. Very interesting. Something I have never seen, nor had any idea how it was done other than from movies when it was picked by slaves! They harvest it with a combine similar to the corn and soya beans. The cotton “balls” separate and are blown into the combine and then they blow them into a wagon pulled by a tractor. The tractor driver goes to a compacting machine and dumps the load and it compacts until a huge bail is formed. Then they cover the top with a shrink wrap of plastic... it sits on the ground for how long we don't know. The cotton on the plant is fluffy and has a hard seed inside each ball which there are 4 in each buddy thing... Really technical! The compact bail is very firm... I could not make a dent in it!



DAY Eighty-Eight Isle of Wight VG to Merchant's Millpond [North Carolina] State Park 78km

Nov 5 Monday D77.93 km M 30.7 A17.4 T4h28 A7h total 7075.2 km

Wind from the west so a little inconvenient but not much

Temp Lovely and warm after a cool start.... 0C so frost on the cars windshields.... Unseasonably cool they say... to 15C by afternoon and in tank top

Road Condition good, no shoulders but lots of route has new pavement

Food: Breakfast gobbled up a apple [from BC yet] and cottage cheese and were off by 0715h

Lunch stopped for a coffee break at Hardees... No wonder America is fat! You can't get just plain ice cream even though they have it to make these "milkshake things" with sugar syrup added.... No price to put in the cash register so she couldn't sell me any! Everything they sell is fat filled and huge servings....

Supper

Accommodation: Millpond [North Carolina] State Park \$15.00 is interesting spot steeped in history. Donated by a canoeist who couldn't see it developed with homes. There is canoe only and hike in only camping. No full service camping so mostly tenters come here. Have tent platform spots so pegs go in and it is level! Electricity in the wash-house with hot showers and a shaver plug to recharge the batteries! There is a fire ban but not posted before we cooked our veggie burgers and beans... the lady ranger who by the way packs a pistol, said our little wood stove is okay to use.

Just a note about Millpond CG they have snapping Turtles, water snakes and Aligators in the Mill pond! And they go canoeing ! Not me!



Overall much better day than yesterday... we were awoken by the crowing of roosters and the Guinea hens at 0430h

We packed up about 0630 and left after our breakfast on quiet roads... the river is more like a swamp... every time we cross it the trees on both sides are flooded for 20 or so yards either side and there doesn't seem to be any movement to the waters. We crossed over into North Carolina

It was really nice to arrive with 3hour of light left so we Had our supper and then I spent an hour in the wash house working on my logs and pictures. Getting thinner isn't always a blessing either my bike seat is wearing out [which is quite likely] or I am! Will give some serious thoughts to gear for next year.

Went by lots of farms... we saw them transporting the cotton in trucks... how they get those bales in we aren't sure. We haven't seen any tobacco growing, but they smoke everywhere in all restaurants, etc so I'm sure they are growing it still. Yesterday we saw a fellow unloading soyabeans [farmer we suspect... very strong looking middle aged black man] into a silo. He had a sign indicating they grow peanuts, but not anymore... more money in soya, corn and cotton. We also saw signs for Potato farming but didn't see any growing. The leaves are just beginning to turn here and the fields are not harvested yet... We also saw advertised "peanut straw" Don't know what that is used for?





Entered North Carolina at last 3 states to go!

Looking forward to starting down the Atlantic ocean. No storms forecasted. The ride... amazingly nice for the population density. Rural roads mostly on our travels using the Adventure cycle route



Family grave sites all along the way.... We don't see this in Canada that I know of. Just beside houses or in an alley.



We noted that the farm houses were a lot like these built in 1800 or so. Like in Scotland with 2 chimneys, one at each end of the house for the heat. Note how the height the ceilings must be as each floor is really tall.

I decided that this must be the original home on this Cotton Plantation. Not quite the pillars and the tree lined drive up to it, but seems like from the movies. The house seemed to face this way and when we went around the side it had what looked like another front that way and on the third side too.... Not a duplex just a fancy house.



VIRGINIA

VERY BIKE UNFRIENDLY

HILLS

ROADS WINDING

GARBAGE IN THE DITCHES ++

INDUSTRY

NATIONAL HISTORY: CIVIL WAR... not many flags flying here

INCREASED POPULATION

AGRICULTURE: PEANUTS, COTTON, SOYA