

MON 8.8.

WASHINGTON



Motto: *Al-ki (Chinook Jargon) – By and by*

Nickname: “Evergreen State”

Capital: Olympia

Tree: Western Hemlock

State song: “Washington, My Home”

First picture was taken before the US border and second just after it



Leaving Paul and heading for the CAN/US border; losing the way very shortly as my SATNAV was not set up and VP could not find his way. Luckily, we knew that we had to go to south, and as “All roads lead to Rome” we soon found the signposts to USA. At the border there were several lanes full of cars and consequent delays. My first mistake on US road happened right

there. As the car in front of me pulled up close at the passport officer’s box in front of us, I followed



it, and pulled up behind (as done in Europe). However, when the officer collected our passports, he gave me a severe dressing down -“Didn’t you see the sign STOP?”-that was about 10m back from his box. “It’s there for your safety, if there was a bomb-blast in a car in front you, it would blow you into bits and pieces!” Well, come to think of it, he was right.

Our next mistake was that we did not produce our ESTA visa (VP said they would have our names in the PC system, anyway), consequently we were redirected to a car park and told to go into the passport office. We did, but again did not take our ESTA visas with us. How many mistakes could we have made? Not only we had to queue up again, but the visa cost us another 8 USD! Silly old men! Since our return home, I have been getting regular emails:“Dear customer, your ESTA visa is still valid”...no wonder, it has never been used!



On our way to the first location- Mt. Rainier – we had to get through Seattle (population: city- 684,451; urban-3.5 mil.)

Interstate 5 in Washington as it passes through downtown Seattle. Thousands of cars on the highway were stopping every so often.

There were three lanes on each side of the highway. The inner one was used by cars that carried 2+ people, and this lane

was moving fast, as there were very few cars in it, whilst the other two lanes, with hundreds of cars, were mostly at a standstill, because there was only one person-the driver. Since in our car we were two persons, I used this lane, and only had to be careful not to break the speed limit.



On the way to Mt. Rainier NP we camped at Mounthaven camp, our first camp in the US. The camp was dark (due to the tall trees) and damp (due to the steady rain).

The first day I had driven 330km.

TUE 9.8.



On the way to **Mount Rainier National Park**. Behind the entrance gate we had bought the NP Pass for two at \$ 80.00. It was a good purchase as it would be used for all the National Parks in US.

The Nisqually Gate at Mount Rainier National Park



Driving up to **Mt. Rainier** we went along the **Nisqually River** and could not have noticed its power. Although the November 2006 floods were long gone the signs of it were still clearly visible. When it happened, **Pineapple Express** (it is also called **atmospheric river**, which is a more general term for such narrow corridors of enhanced water vapor transport at mid-latitudes around the world)

rainstorm delivered 460 mm of rain in a 36-hour period. Campsites and roads throughout the park were washed away. More up to date info - here was the first time I saw red huckleberry, no, these were not carnberries (back at home we only have blueberries).

Mt. Rainier (4,392 m) is the first and highest volcano in the Cascade Range that we are going to see. It is covered by no less than 25 glaciers. National Park covers 956km². About 1.8 million people visit Mount Rainier National Park each year. Mount Rainier is a popular peak for mountaineering with some 10,000 attempts per year with approximately 50% making it to the summit.

Forests of large, coniferous trees (Western red cedars, Douglas-firs, Western hemlocks, firs, pines, spruces, and others) dominate most of the Cascade Range. Cool, wet winters and warm, dry summers (largely a result of oceanic influence) favour evergreen species, whereas mild temperatures and rich soils promote fast and prolonged growth.



Map of the Cascade Range showing major volcanic peaks (there are over 160 active volcanoes there).

Black bears, coyotes, bobcats, cougars, beavers, deer, elk, moose, mountain goats and a few wolf packs returning from Canada live in the Cascades. Fewer than 50 grizzly bears reside in the Cascades of Canada and Washington.

Captain **George Vancouver** (22 June 1757 – 10 May 1798) was an English officer of the Royal Navy, best known for his 1791–95 expedition, which explored and charted North America's north-western Pacific Coast regions, including the coasts of contemporary Alaska, British Columbia, Washington and Oregon.

Mount Rainier was named after Admiral Peter Rainier. He named Mount Hood after Lord Samuel Hood, an admiral of the Royal Navy. Mount St. Helens was sighted by Vancouver in May 1792, from near the mouth of the Columbia River. It was named for Alleyne FitzHerbert, 1st Baron St Helens, a British diplomat. Vancouver's expedition did not, however, name the mountain range which contained these peaks. He referred to it simply as the "eastern snowy range". Earlier Spanish explorers called it *sierra nevadas*, meaning "snowy mountains".



Mount Rainier National Park



Mt. Rainier from the West



Mt Rainier from trail in park



Camping by the Cowlitz River (you see it on the above map). The place was not much visited by tourists, hence only at \$16.50. We got a site by the river reserved for fishermen.

A sign at the washing room read: "Each day is a God's gift to you, make it blossom and grow into thing of beauty." Nice isn't it?

This reminded me of Sandy's quote: "The greatest gift at our age is waking up in the morning". Sandy, a retired teacher, was of course that fit and fast lady walker from Victoria.

Throughout my travels in the USA, I came across numerous quotes here and there. Come to think about it, even in the UK they are fond of quotations. So, if I were to conclude that quotes are a part of Anglo-Saxon culture, I would most definitely say "Yes." To prove my point, look up "The Penguin Dictionary of Quotations."

So far I had driven 580km.