

## FAHP News, July 14, 2014

**The International Peace Park:** Very few have heard of the International Peace Park, established in the 1920s on the border between the United States and Canada. It was first brought to my attention when I was in elementary school, and then it “dropped off the radar” for 70 years. It is probably little known because of its remote location on the border, with part of it in North Dakota and part in Manitoba (Canada). It is hard to find it on a map.

Finally, in 2004, when Ruth and I were planning a trip around the northwest in my new Lincoln Town Car, I located and planned to visit the International Peace Park. On our way home from Missoula, Montana, our most northwesterly point, we spent two nights at Bismarck, North Dakota, visited Fort Abraham Lincoln and the Mandan village sites in that vicinity, and planned the next day to move northeastward to the Canadian border. Passing through very small towns en route, we finally came to the park entrance, on the east side of the park right on the international border. Canadians wanting to visit would come to this same spot, and technically no one was crossing the border. My guess is that the park contained about 4,000 acres.

After buying a ticket to enter, we drove in and found ourselves on a circular road probably six miles in length that was supposed to be traveled in a counter-clockwise direction (it was a one-way road). Following instructions, we were immediately north of the Canadian border but technically in the park and not in Canada. The road continued through virgin timber not altered by human hands (except to build the narrow road). Eventually the road crossed back into what should have been the United States, but it was not; it was still part of the park. On the U.S. side, however, many manmade improvements existed, such as scout camps, athletic fields, and facilities for small camping conventions. At the end of the “loop,” we parked near the visitors’ center and went in to explore.

No one was around, neither staff nor visitors. Eventually someone appeared but was inclined to answer only the simplest questions. There were exhibits, however, from which we learned more. Soon after World War I, the Interior Secretary for the Province of Ontario promoted his idea of an International Peace Park, certainly a meritorious thought, and sought political and financial help to make it happen. A small committee of prominent people who should know about such things was assembled, and we were interested to learn that Pierre S. du Pont, whose Longwood Gardens was becoming recognized everywhere, was a member of this special group. Not only did a location need to be found, but proper planning for what such a park should contain was most important. While the eventual remote location made it difficult for high visitation, it still was necessary to have a park that would impress those who did come. I think it was dedicated in the early 1930s; I’m not sure whether President Franklin Roosevelt and the Canadian Prime Minister were there for that occasion.

The Visitors Center was right on the border, and wide glass windows faced west toward a mall probably  $\frac{1}{4}$  mile in length. At the far end of this mall was erected a very tall monument, right on the border, with appropriate inscriptions expressing the friendship between Canada and the United States. Flower beds surrounded this mall, but they were certainly not in a class with

Longwood Gardens. The park was maintained, but it was obvious that small amounts were budgeted, presumably by both countries, to keep it going. Before we left, there may have been one more carload of curious tourists like ourselves in the park.

Is it worth writing about? Probably not. I have visited perhaps 100 historic sites that I've enjoyed more. However, I was curious, and Ruth put up with my curiosity. If we had not gone, I'd be wondering forever what was in the International Peace Park. Certainly it was a great idea.

**Work Report:** On Tuesday, July 8, 7 volunteers were on hand, as follows: Jerry Novak (in charge), Ted Kamen, Bob Jordan, Brent McDougall, Mark Russell, Mac Taylor, and Dave Leon. Anne Cleary, Dan Citron and Susan Randolph also attended the Events Committee meeting.

Engine 401 was cleaned from use at Sunday's event, and the Rauch & Lang's battery water level was checked. Mark Russell worked on its speedometer connection. On the 607, Bob Jordan and Ted Kamen checked the water tank leak. Mac Taylor attended to the electric trains.

Work continued on cleaning up the back building, with Dave Leon hauling off several items to the trash before a thunderstorm blew in and caused a power outage at 8:10 that effectively ended the work night.

On Thursday, July 10, 10 volunteers made it to the work session, viz: Mark Russell, Jim Personti, Gerhard Maute, Eugene Maute, Ted Kamen, Geoff Fallows, Bob Jordan, Bob Stransky, Jerry Novak, and Tim Ward (in charge).

Mark Russell continued work on repairing the speedometer of the Model 607 while Jim Personti, Geoff Fallows and Bob Jordan developed a plan for repairing the car's electrical switch box. The back building cleanout continued, with Jerry Novak, Ted Kamen, Bob Stransky and Tim Ward reorganizing and making a dumpster run with trash. The Mautes continued their work in the FAHP library.