

## Dinosaur Fossil Expedition of 2024

I started the trip in September with a trip to the front range of Sequoia. I was going to go up to Panther Gap but the rangers said 5' of snow was coming, so I opted for a Front Range trail, the only one with a campsite within my range. However, the access road was in even worse shape than before so, as in recent past years, I had to add that to my hike. Otherwise, a nice night with a great view from that campsite. Probably my last time going there due to the increasing fragility of my old body. My photos at

<http://ikemi.info/Graphics2024/Sequoia2024/index.htm>

Time to continue on my trip with a Google map find of the Borden Chinese Cemetery. It looks forgotten but there people still tending some of the graves with flowers.

<http://ikemi.info/Graphics2024/ChineseCemetery2024/index.htm>

I chanced upon the Fossil Discovery Center near Chowchilla. Another example of quarry discoveries being put to use. Worth a stop if you are passing by and like fossils.

<http://ikemi.info/Graphics2024/FossilCenter2024/index.htm>

Next was a planned stop at Castle Air Museum to check up on it. The replica of the Japanese Ohka "Baka Bomb" had mysteriously disappeared and no one remembered it. I was wondering about myself until I found a reference to it on the internet.

<https://www.facebook.com/castleairmuseum/posts/a-replica-wwii-japanese-ohka-suicide-bomb-exhibit-now-on-display-at-the-front-po/1174454172736032/>

The B-58 is still not back together, but it's still there. Photos at

<http://ikemi.info/Graphics2024/CastleAirMuseum2024/index.htm>

My planning for this trip hinged around hitting Wakamatsu Farm on its open house day. This was the first Japanese settlement in California, let by a genuine Caucasian Samurai, John Henry Schnell. Quite a story.

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wakamatsu\\_Tea\\_and\\_Silk\\_Farm\\_Colony](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wakamatsu_Tea_and_Silk_Farm_Colony)

He even appears in the anime, **Meiji Gekken: 1874** which you can watch on Crunchyroll.

My photos of the visit at:

<http://ikemi.info/Graphics2024/Wakamatsu2024/index.htm>.

Note that the monument is actually outside the compound and accessible near the neighboring school.

Next on to Reno and the National Automobile Museum, formerly Harrah's. Had a good time there taking all the displays.

<http://ikemi.info/Graphics2024/Harrah2024/index.htm>

Had some time to take in a garden so headed to the sprawling Wilbur May Botanical Garden and Museum. They were getting ready for one of those light shows which is why you see all those models in the photos. Some looked pretty good even in daylight. There is also a farm there and a small lake. At the Museum you learn about Wilbur May and see some of his collections. Adventurer and philanthropist, the May company heir couldn't help but make money in spite of himself.

<http://ikemi.info/Graphics2024/WilburMay2024/index.htm>

A lucky discovery was the California Trail Interpretive Center outside of Elko, NV. Out in the middle of nowhere, this is a fairly elaborate museum with dioramas and outside displays detailing life on the California Trail. I recommend stopping there if you can.

<http://ikemi.info/Graphics2024/CaliforniaTrails2024/index.htm>

Another example of serendipity was coming across Wendover Historic Airfield Museum. Wendover was where the Enola Gay was based. The Museum includes original buildings and display of equipment used at the time. The tower, however was built for a movie. If you drive a little ways, you can see the Enola Gay hangar. There are also some exhibits in the barracks.

<http://ikemi.info/Graphics2024/Wendover2024/index.htm>

A planned destination was Hill Aerospace Museum at Hill AFB. This is a major museum.

<http://ikemi.info/Graphics2024/Hill2024/index.htm>

Another planned stop was Bear River Migratory Bird Sanctuary. I had made the mistake of trying to visit when the visitor center was closed. This time I had my act together and was able to get into the center, see the exhibits, and learn where the auto tour starts and goes.

<http://ikemi.info/Graphics2024/BearRiver2024/index.htm>

Next was the dinosaur phase of the trip, although birds are dinosaurs. I drove to Vernal, UT to see the Utah Field House of Natural History.

<http://ikemi.info/Graphics2024/UtahFieldHouse2024/index.htm>

The Field House was good preparation for visiting Dinosaur National Monument. It is famous for its bone quarry which supplied many museums, including the Carnegie that I had visited during the previous trip.

<http://ikemi.info/Graphics2024/Dinosaur2024/index.htm>

While staying at the Moab KOA I visited the small but information packed Moab Museum in town. They had a special exhibit on the Japanese American Experience &

World War II. I also learned about an isolation center for Japanese Americans north of Moab at Dalton Wells. They had an interpretive sign from the camp's site since the site is undergoing some kind of renovation.

<http://ikemi.info/Graphics2024/MoabMuseum2024/index.htm>

I made another mistake because I didn't realize that reservations are needed to visit Arches National Monument. So, I headed out to revisit Canyonlands, which was still very enjoyable.

<http://ikemi.info/Graphics2024/Canyonlands2024/index.htm>

While waiting for the bathroom there, a woman told me that you can get into Arches without a reservation after 4PM, and you should have enough time to drive entire park, if not having time to walk up to each sight. So, that is what I did. I checked out the visitor center to get information. Even at that time the lines were too long to ask a ranger questions, so I decided to take off with the brochure as my guide. Even after 4PM, the temperature was still overbearing, so I probably would not have wanted to do a lot of walking, although a lot of people were. Canyonlands hadn't been this hot, and in fact was quite pleasant. Arches does live up to its hype.

<http://ikemi.info/Graphics2024/Arches2024/index.htm>

I don't know where I had heard of it, but Goblin Valley State Park was on my must see list. It's a little detour to get there, but worth it. Did a lot of walking there.

<http://ikemi.info/Graphics2024/GoblinValley2024/index.htm>

On the way home, for a break re-visited the Frontier Homestead Museum in Cedar City.

<http://ikemi.info/Graphics2024/FrontierHomestead2024/index.htm>

All I can say was that it was really hot in Las Vegas. Couldn't resist visiting the opportunity for some air conditioning at the Las Vegas Natural History Museum.

<http://ikemi.info/Graphics2024/LVNaturalHistory2024/index.htm>

If you are in town, this is a fun little museum to visit and packs a lot of exhibits.