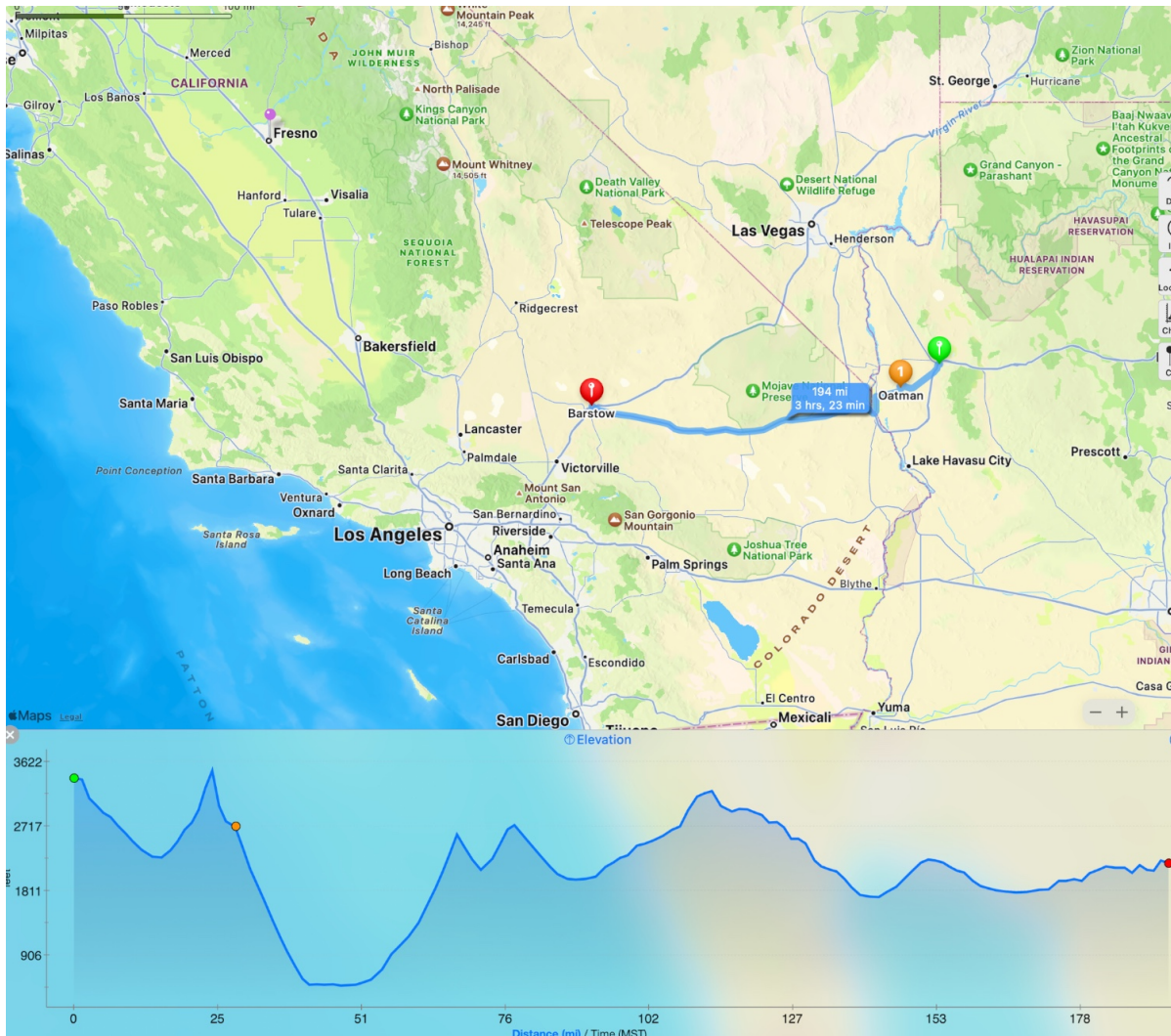


Day Sixteen | Roger's Travelers Notebook



Our second to the last night on the road and I was up early, as usual. My routine is to head out to the hotel lobby for coffee, morning reading, and writing. Carol joins me later, after some quiet time of her own.

We had a short drive, the shortest of our trip, from Kingman, AZ to Barstow, CA. Since we would have arrived too early to check into our hotel in Barstow, we took a detour to an old “ghost town” in Oatman, Arizona on old Route 66.



The road to Oatman truly was a drive through the rugged west in all its glory. Back in the 1930s and 1940s, people motoring west traveled in at their own risk in their Model T Fords and other emerging vehicles of the day. As the sign below states, it must have been a Road "For Adventure" for those heading west.





There were twists and curves and hairpin turns slowing us down to 10 miles an hour or less.



Around a bend, I spotted some manmade steps leading up the side of the cliff. Why were these steps here in the middle of nowhere?



I had to pull over to the side and investigate. "I'm going to climb those stairs and see what's up there." Carol replied, "In your flip-flops?" Well, I wasn't going to dig out my shoes from my luggage, so I said, "Of course." Plus, it looked *fairly* safe. I shouted back to Carol, "It's an easy climb." She said, "Yeah, but how about coming down!" When I got to the top, it was a long way down. A man loves adventure.



What was up there?



At the top of the mountain, there was a small spring. A tank made of rocks and mortar was built there long ago, likely over a hundred years ago. We believed that the tank had two

functions: supplying water for radiators and providing water for the burros used by gold prospectors to carry mining supplies.



It is said that people dreaded traveling this route that they often hired locals to drive their cars over the pass.



We arrived in the old town of Oatman after a challenging journey. Although it's called a ghost town, there are still around 100 people living there. At its peak in 1917, during a massive gold strike, the town had 10,000 residents. The gold strike was so significant that it produced approximately 173 million dollars' worth of gold in today's currency.



After World War II, the price of gold dropped, causing the mines to close and the town to essentially die. However, today, some of the mines have reopened due to gold being at a historic high!

As we drove into the old town, it felt like we're going back in time.



Oatman's main tourist attraction is the wild burros that roam the streets.



These burros are wild. They are descendants of the burros abandoned by prospectors during the gold rush. Arizona has around 6,000 wild burros, with 500 to 1,000 in the Oatman area. Feeding burros human food is discouraged because it can lead to diabetes. Some burros have developed the condition from eating processed junk food. This situation carries a message, don't you think? The message can be summarized as "MAHA."

Some of the shops sell food, some kind of grass pellets, that we bought for a \$1.00.



They were sweet little creatures.



I couldn't resist taking this photo. What a setup!



Speaking of MAHA, *Make America Healthy Again*, Oatman is truly Trump Country. Trump gear was sold everywhere. I got talked into buying a Trump 2020 hat for \$5.00. The man said, "You should buy it. After all he won that election too." In another shop, the proprietor saw my hat and asked where I was from, "California" I said. "It is good to see you wearing that hat!" She said, enthusiastically. Most people think there are no conservatives in California. But they are wrong. California has the most registered Republicans of any other state. But the problem is, there are more Dems too!



It's time to head to California. When we left the town, we encountered more burros in the middle of the road. I drove around them cautiously, but they approached our windows, hoping for food.



We stopped to get affordable gas, just a quick refill, one last time before entering California and facing a **price increase** of over \$2.00 more per gallon.
The Colorado river marked the border of California.



Tomorrow is our final push home!