

# One Nation Under God - Walk Across America

Vol. 5 No 10

October 2006

*Be still, and know that I am God...*

Psalm 46:10

On October 7 as I quickly walked southward along Route 93 towards Logan, Ohio, that verse kept echoing in my mind. For the next five days, I kept fairly quiet and just listened to the sounds of God's creation and His children; and that verse kept repeating itself, over and over. On the evening of the sixth day, I would finally speak with passion to a small congregation in Logan.

On Sunday October 8, Nadine and I attended Pine Grove United Methodist Church near Conkle's Hollow. This small simple white-framed church has not changed much since it was first built in 1873. When Nadine asked where the restroom was, she was directed to the outhouse behind the church. As the service started, Pastor Mike Memrath asked for the bells to be rung. Since Nadine was sitting closest to a rope that penetrated the ceiling, a woman in the pew in front of us told Nadine to pull the rope. Four gongs later the service began. After the service was over, Pastor Mike quickly left for a service at his second congregation and Sunday school started. The lesson of the day was on Chapter 4 of Judges, which was about Deborah, prophetess, a judge and a leader of men in battle. The Sunday school teacher, who was female, pointed out that God today also raises women to lead in the church. By the end of the week, I would learn the importance of the lesson.

Because of the television reports of severe weather arriving in Ohio by midweek and clearing afterwards, I decided to walk on Sunday afternoon. The trek along the eastern half of Burr Oak Lake was fairly uneventful, but Monday proved to be very different. The trail along the lake from the Ranger Station to Boat Dock #1 was very beautiful with the autumn leaves reflecting on a perfectly still lake. In the parking lot, Nadine was waiting for me. After eating lunch, Nadine and I strolled along the west side of the marina toward the area where the trail reenters the woods. There between the boats, two women were fishing and one waved to us. Normally I would walk over to talk them but not this time. Nadine walked back to the two women as I proceeded ahead on the trail. Soon I felt like an intruder in the stillness of the forest, as my footsteps on newly fallen autumn leaves pierced the serenity of early afternoon. Suddenly the sound of, "Kraannk, kraannk, kaannk!" overshadowed my footsteps. A blue heron was startled by my intrusion into its vicinity and sounded an alarm for the rest of the creatures that lived near Burr Oak Lake. Then the heron flew off, soaring over the lake looking like a pterodactyl from a Jurassic Park movie. Later I rested by sitting on a log. Stillness again covered the forest like a blanket, until an acorn fell from an oak tree bouncing off of several branches before the forest floor quickly halted its downward travel. This was nature that most people in the cities never get to enjoy.

After two hours of walking, I reached Tom Jenkins Dam, where Nadine was supposed to meet me at the parking area. She was nowhere to be seen. I sat at a picnic table under a pavilion until she appeared two minutes later. She spent ninety minutes listening to and praying with Shirley, one of the women who were fishing at

**Boat Dock #1.** Shirley was staying near the park at her daughter's cabin with friend, Dorothy. Shirley was divine appointment number one for us during the week.

The next day the American Discovery Trail followed a steep uphill dirt road into Trimble Wildlife Area. Two deer leaped across the road. Wild turkeys could be heard from either side of the road. Soon I was confronted with a closed gate and barbed wire fence. The trail now entered the property of Smoke Rise Ranch Resort, a 2000 acre working cattle ranch. I crawled under the fence and walked along a dirt road towards the ranch office. Nadine was waiting there for me with lunch. As I ate lunch, an older gentleman with a white cowboy hat and a large silver belt buckle approached me and sat beside of me. 88-year-old Walter Semingson owns the resort. For about ten minutes, Walt, once an owner of two ranches in the West, told me how he came to own this ranch in Ohio. Presently Walt would rather be home on the range in Montana or some other western state than the lush green hills of Ohio. I pray that Walt gets his dream.



The trail descended one and a half miles on a macadam road into Murray City, the first of three little cities of the black diamonds (coal) that Nadine and I would visit. By the time I reached the restored Murray City Train Depot, the calve muscles of my legs had tightened and I was in pain and felt that I could no longer walk that day. We went back to our motel room in Logan and I rested. During the four years of our ministry, I suffered through blisters (most hikers do), bruised toes, and the aches and pains of using muscles that I don't usually in my normal workweek, but this was the worst. As we viewed the weather forecast for Wednesday, rain, high wind and hail was possible, not a good day for hiking. For most of that night, I tossed and turned with little sleep. I know there is a Bible verse, *all things work together for good to them who are called according to His purpose*, but at that time I could not see how.

The next morning we drove back to Murray City. I felt sore and weak and did not really want to walk. Just as we reached Murray City, it started to pour. Nadine turned to me and said, "I think we should pray about this." I told her I thought we should go back to Logan. We turned around but I asked Nadine first to drive to the town of Shawnee. During my research of the area, I saw photos on the Internet of Main Street Shawnee. This is a town that needs prayer. Situated on a hill, Shawnee became a boomtown in the 1870's because of coalfields near the town but prosperity only lasted into 1920's. Since that time, the town has seen a gradual economic and population decline. With two opera

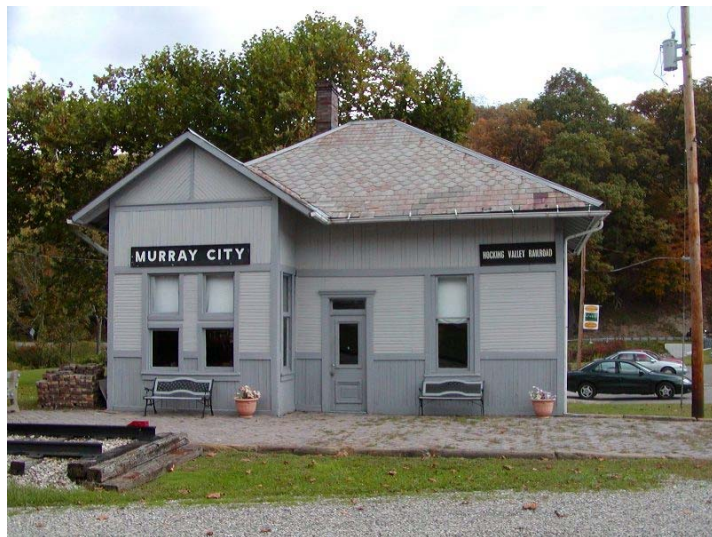


houses and many other businesses, the town was the showplace of Perry County, Ohio. Now Shawnee is fighting for survival. With a population of over 600 people, there are no gas stations, markets, clothing stores or doctor's offices that I noticed. It did have a gift shop, a library, a bar, two churches and a small restaurant.

After taking some photos of buildings along Main Street, Nadine and I decided to eat at the only restaurant in town, Shawnee Village Restaurant. Since we were not locals, Theresa, the waitress, asked why we were in the area. Nadine told her that we were prayer walking across America. After Theresa went back into the kitchen, I heard her tell someone, "They're prayer walking across America." That someone was Shelia Hatfield, cook/waitress/ manager/dishwasher/owner of Shawnee Village Restaurant. Shelia came out of the kitchen sat with us and asked, "Before you leave, can you pray for me?"

Shelia, divine appointment number two, is one of the hardest working people I have ever met. From 2 PM to 6 PM (closing time), she is the only worker at the restaurant. Not only does she know most of her customers' names, she generally knows what they will order. One of the customers told me, that once he got up and began to help her when a large group of people arrived. I also know that she will go out of her way to help one of her regulars if they are ill. Nadine stayed with her for two hours as I prayer walked the steep hills of the town, since the rain had temporarily halted. When I returned to West Main Street, lights from the building at 127 beckon me to it. This was the headquarters of the Little Cities of Black Diamonds Council. Local historian, Cheryl Blosser, gave me short history of the town and its roll with the coal miners' labor unions. Main Street Shawnee is listed on the National Register of Historic Places but needs a lot of tender loving care to restore it to original grandeur. When I returned to the restaurant, Nadine and Shelia were leaving to walk the desolate sidewalks of Main Street to pray together without anyone listening excepting our Lord.

After Nadine and Shelia returned, we left so I could walk more of the American Discovery Trail. All soreness and pain have left my body, but of course the rain came back as soon I got out of the car onto Salem Road to walk eastward to Murray City. After only four miles, I reached Murray City Train Depot again. We had made an appointment for a personal tour of depot, which now houses a museum. Larry Mitchell, vice-president of Murray City Improvement



Committee, graciously showed us the depot that also contains history of the town and the coal mines that even travel under parts of the town. Surprising the railroad for some years was only way in and out this coal mining town, which once had the largest coal mine in the world. There is also a caboose and a train engine that is part of the museum. Larry narrated a ten-minute silent video showing the past

times in Murray City. Before we left, Larry give us a book, Remembering Murray City, Ohio (number 6). On its cover is a photo of President Harry Truman with Mr. and Mrs. Joe Stone, two residents of Murray City.

Thursday, I walked a short distance and then Nadine and I visited Robinson Cave in New Straitsville. In that shelter cave, Christopher Evans, one of the key founders of the United Mine Workers of America, held secret meetings. During the 1880's, the miners struck. The state militia was called when skirmishes broke out but by then the miners had set fire to five mines. These fires were never successfully extinguished and caused roads to be relocated as late as the 1970's. (As I was writing this newsletter, a coal miner died from an explosion in a Pennsylvania mine. My grandfather was a coal miner in Pennsylvania. He died from black lung disease before I was born. The plight of the coal miner is never ending. Without the coal miner, our nation may ever have been a world power.)

On our way back to the motel, we stopped at the Logan Public Library to read our emails. Since our motel was close to the library, I decided to walk back to the motel. Less than a block from our motel was a storefront church with its unique name, The Fathers House. A sign stated that there was Thursday praise and prayer service in the evening. We attended and heard Pastor Cheryl Miller lead worship with praise songs that she had written. After praying for individual needs, Pastor Cheryl asked me to speak. I pointed to the painting of Jesus that was behind the pulpit. It was the same painting that hung in Bridgeport High School for more than 30 years. It is no longer in that school in West Virginia. After Americans United for Separation of Church and State and the West Virginia Civil Liberties Union sued in federal court to have the painting of Jesus removed, the painting was stolen. I spoke on since Jesus, the Bible and prayer have been taken from our schools, public and private schools are no longer safe havens for our children. The small village of Nickel Mines made national news the week before with the slaughter of innocent Amish children. Nickel Mines is about 25 miles from my home. Then I spoke on the battle in America to save our unborn and unseen children, which is the abortion issue.

I sat down but not for long. Pastor Cheryl called Nadine and I to the front where the congregation prayed for us. We were also anointed and prophesized to by several of the church members. This is the first church in which we were prayed for during a service. After the service, we were invited back the next time we are in the area. Pastor Cheryl, divine appointment number three, as a child lived in Bridgeport, West Virginia.

The theme of women of God in Bible is very important to the church today. Deborah and Esther are heroines in the Old Testament. Sara and the harlot, Rahab, are mentioned in the faith's hall of fame in the Book of Hebrews. Mary Magdalene was the first to see the arisen Jesus. Today women are Sunday school teachers, intercessors, evangelists, and even pastors as saw at The Fathers House in Logan.

One time slave and abolitionist, Sojourner Truth, in her most famous speech explained, "Then that little man in black there, he says women can't have as much rights as men, 'cause Christ wasn't a woman! Where did your Christ come from? Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman! Man had nothing to do with Him. If the first woman God ever made was strong enough to turn the

world upside down all alone, these women together ought to be able to turn it back, and get it right side up again! And now they is asking to do it, the men better let them.”

The main lesson that Nadine and I learned from his month’s walk is to have quiet time with our Lord. Many times we go into prayer without quiet time or praise and give Jesus our ‘to do list’. How can we expect Him to answer our requests without first listening to Him? Today for Nadine and I, the words, *be still, and know that I am God*, are more than words written thousands of years ago. They are reality and we know our Redeemer lives.

To learn more about the One Nation Under God –Walk Across America, go to our web site, [www.walkacrossamerica.info](http://www.walkacrossamerica.info). Note: The web site has not been updated since March except for the slideshows.

God bless,  
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Total miles walked of the American Discovery Trail - 731 miles  
Number of prayer walkers - 58 prayer walkers  
Number of people praying for America - 47,788 prayer warriors