Wandering Indiana . . .

I have had the fortune of traveling to several communities over the past month. Check out some of the places to visit and see.

Fort Wayne continues to impress me with all they have done to grow as a community and all they have done to revitalize downtown. As a kid we would visit the Three Rivers Festival and Johnny Appleseed Park and enjoy everything associated with summer fun and festivals. How about checking out The Coliseum, a great place to watch the Mad Ants play basketball. Or Parkview Field to watch the Tin Caps. Parkview Field is not only a baseball venue but a downtown park that can be visited and explored even when there are no games being played. Headwaters Park is a great redevelopment story. Removing blighted industrial areas and creating a family and pedestrian friendly park bordered by the St. Mary's River. Follow the trails along the Maumee or St. Joseph's Rivers and go find the Old Fort. There are plenty of other places to see, parks to visit and in particular I suggest wandering around and checking out some of the scenery and architecture in some of the older residential areas.

Southwest Indiana has always been one of my favorite parts of the state. We took a trip to Vincennes and experienced some of Indiana's oldest history. Check out Grouseland - William Henry Harrison's home along with all of the other state historical sites. You have to check out George Rogers Clark National Historical Park and take in the great view of the Wabash River and stroll the park grounds.

New Harmony was the next destination. Renting a golf cart and touring the community is a great way to take in the sites. The visitor center is a great place to start and find out about the community. Check out the Roofless Church, the Labyrinth (don't get lost), the historical buildings, and the eateries in downtown. It is well worth the time to visit and spend some time reading about the "utopian" communities of the past.

Evansville continues to grow. As another one of Indiana's Regional Cities/Areas (Northeast and North Central are the others) it continues to amaze me how in particular the downtown area grows. The Ohio Riverfront continues to get better and continues to create public space for its residents and visitors. The IU Medical Campus is coming out of the ground, the Tropicana is building its new facility and the Ford Center is an awesome venue to watch my UE Purple Aces play basketball. Check out the historical residential area south of downtown which reflects the history and financially stable area that was prompted by the river traffic from back in the day.

Clarksville/Jeffersonville/New Albany – another great place to travel and visit is this group of cities (Clarksville is a town) just north of the Ohio River and Louisville. We had a wonderful time visiting and recreating while in these communities. Our first stop was the Culbertson Mansion State Historic Site and tour. What a house? A great philanthropist and businessman, William Culbertson was very much a huge part of the development of the area and in particular New Albany. Before or after the tour, you should walk up and down "Mansion Row" and see all of the beautiful old historic homes. For those with a sweet tooth and a bit of nostalgia, head over to Jeffersonville and get some chocolate at Schimpff's Confectionary. Going through their candy museum will bring back many fond childhood memories. It is located in downtown and there are multiple places to dine and shop. It is so awesome to see downtown's coming back to life! While staying in downtown we were very impressed with the Big Four Pedestrian Bridge. This is the former railroad bridge that now allows people to cross over the Ohio River and go into Louisville. We rode our bikes and enjoyed the many sights and sounds, the people and the fun atmosphere that was all along the trail. The riverfronts for both sides of the river were very much a place for gathering with friends and family. Our last venture was taking our bikes along the levee trail through Clarksville and checking out the Colgate Clock (it's huge), the Falls of the Ohio State Park and George Rogers Clark House.

The above summaries were high points and very brief descriptions. You have to get out and wander and experience things for yourselves. There are many places to see and great opportunities to get out and enjoy, stroll, eat and relax. Good luck with your travels.

~ Jeff Banning