

Ask the Rambler: Why Does I-70 End in Cove Fort, Utah?

Series: FHWA Highway History Website Articles

June 30, 2023

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Ask the Rambler

Why Does I-70 End in Cove Fort, Utah?

Interstate 70

I-70 is 2,153 miles long. It is the fifth longest Interstate highway after:

- I-90: 3,020.54 miles from Boston, Massachusetts, to Seattle, Washington.
- I-80: 2,899.54 miles from Teaneck, New Jersey, to San Francisco, California.
- I-40: 2,555.40 from Wilmington, North Carolina, to Barstow, California.
- I-10: 2,460.34 miles from Jacksonville, Florida, to Los Angeles, California

Construction of I-70 to full Interstate standards cost \$4.084 billion.

The eastern terminus of I-70 would surprise the engineers who laid out the Interstate System. In the original September 1957 numbering plan, I-70 split at Frederick, Maryland, with I-70N continuing to a terminus at I-95 east of Caton Avenue in west Baltimore while I-70S provided a link to the planned Inner Beltway in Washington, D.C. Controversy prevented construction of either route to its original city terminus.

On May 18, 1975, the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) approved a request from the Maryland State Highway Administration to change I-70N to I-70 and change I-70S to I-270 from the split in Frederick to the Capital Beltway (I-495). By then, the segment of I-70S inside the Capital Beltway was doomed. In response to separate requests from Governor Marvin Mandel of Maryland (February 25, 1975) and Mayor Walter E. Washington of the District of Columbia (June 27, 1975), the FHWA and Urban Mass Transportation Administration (UMTA) approved withdrawal of I-70S inside the Capital Beltway from the Interstate System. Federal Highway Administrator Norbert T. Tiemann and UMTA Acting Administrator Judith T. Connor approved withdrawal of the Maryland portion on July 28, 1975, while Administrator Tiemann and UMTA Administrator Robert E. Patricelli approved withdrawal of the District portion on October 3, 1975.

The Baltimore segment of I-70 also faced opposition. On July 28, 1981, Governor Harry Hughes of Maryland and Mayor William D. Schaefer of Baltimore requested withdrawal of a portion of I-70 from the Interstate System. FHWA Administrator Ray A. Barnhart and UMTA Administrator Arthur E. Teele approved the withdrawal of I-70 from Security Boulevard just inside the Baltimore Beltway (I-695) to the I-170 spur on September 3, 1981. (Security Boulevard was named after the nearby headquarters of the Social Security Administration.)

With this action, the Interstate System in Baltimore retained the I-170 spur (3.35 miles) and the unbuilt I-70 segment (2.22 miles) from the spur to I-95 east of Caton Avenue. Because they were disconnected from I-70, the two segments (I-170 and I-70 between I-170 and I-95) were combined and renumbered I-595 as an I-95 spur in 1982. However, on July 22, 1983, Governor Hughes and Mayor Schaefer requested withdrawal of I-595 from the Interstate System. Administrator Barnhart and Acting Administrator G. Kent Woodman of UMTA approved the withdrawal on September 29, 1983.

As a result of these actions, the eastern terminus of I-70 is a park-n-ride lot near the Social Security Administration complex just inside the Baltimore Beltway. That's weird enough-but don't get the Rambler started on the eastern terminus in his hometown! It's a long story.

Instead, the Rambler will turn to the western terminus of I-70: an interchange with I-15 in Cove Fort, Utah. People ask the Rambler-did we think Baltimoreans were so desperate to get to Cove Fort that we were willing to pay \$4 billion to get them there?

Not exactly.

How to Become a Pipsqueak

The origins of the Interstate System can be traced to two reports submitted to Congress in 1939 (*Toll Roads and Free Roads*) and 1944 (*Interregional Highways*), each of which contained a map of an illustrative "Interregional System," as it was originally called. The maps showed an east-west route ending in Denver and a north-south route through Denver linking Cheyenne, Wyoming, and Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Seeing that motorists would be out of luck if they wanted to travel out of Denver to the west on an Interstate highway, Colorado took it personally! When Congress held hearings in 1944 on a pending Federal-aid highway reauthorization bill that would set the post-World War II program in place, Colorado was the only State to oppose the new highway network. State Highway Engineer Charles D. Vail

Colorado is opposed to the interregional system of highways in that the roads designated in Colorado do not reach any direct destination to the north, west, or south. I am also fearful that the tentative standards of design as given out [described in *Interregional Highways*] will encourage heavier loading than now recommended by the American Association of State Highway Officials.

Colorado highway officials favored inclusion of a route on a northern alignment following the U.S. 40/6 corridor west of Denver to a point west of Idaho Springs where U.S. 40 turned northwest. The favored route continued in the U.S. 6/24 corridor to Spanish Fork, Utah, south of Salt Lake City. As an alternative, the State considered a southern routing west of Pueblo via a combination of U.S. Routes 50, 285, and 24 that would link with the northern route at Dowds.

The Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1944 authorized designation of a 40,000-mile "National System of Interstate Highways." The Public Roads Administration (PRA), as the U.S. Bureau of Public Roads (BPR)/FHWA was called in the 1940's, asked State highway officials to submit proposals for Interstate routes. As part of Colorado's proposal, State highway officials advocated the northern route even though Utah highway officials had told them in 1945 that designation of the U.S. 6/50 route in Utah not only wouldn't be beneficial, it might actually be a disadvantage, considering the high cost of meeting the mandatory design standards. Further, the PRA did not favor the U.S. 6/50 location in Utah, which was (1) too costly because of the mountainous terrain through which it would have to be built, (2) Utah wasn't interested, (3) the parallel Interstate across Wyoming in the U.S. 30 corridor (future I-80) was too close, and (4) there was not enough mileage allotted to cover the 500-plus mile route in the two States.

Nevertheless, the Colorado Highway Advisory Board passed a resolution in June 1946 urging the PRA to include one of the western routes in the Interstate System. In transmitting the resolution to Commissioner of Public Roads Thomas H. MacDonald, PRA field staff reiterated their view: "To construct these routes to presently accepted standards of Interstate System [sic] could not be economically justified." On August 6, 1946, MacDonald informed his western staff that neither route would be considered.

The initial designation was completed on August 2, 1947. It contained 37,681 miles of rural Interstate routes plus their continuation through cities. The remaining 2,319 miles within the 40,000-mile limit was reserved for urban circumferential and distribution routes to be designated later. As Colorado feared, the east-west Interstate into Colorado ended at Denver. State officials attributed Denver's "dead-end" status to the failure to reach agreement with Utah on whether to extend the route along a northern alignment via U.S. 40 west of Craig, Colorado, to Salt Lake City or a southern alignment via U.S. 6/50 west of Grand Junction, Colorado, to Spanish Fork south of Salt Lake City.

The arguments against a route west of Denver and the knowledge that Colorado and Utah disagreed on the connection did not make the absence of a line on the map any easier to accept. Colorado Governor William Lee

Knous, who was described by *The Denver Post* as "a very mild and good-natured gentleman," had this to say:

The map which doesn't show a single road west of Denver is undoubtedly the work of some pipsqueak bureaucrat in Washington who has never been west of the Mississippi.

Helping the Bear

As discussions and hearings about the new program continued over the next few years, Colorado officials kept returning to the absence of an east-west Interstate highway across the State. In view of the continued debate, the BPR prepared an internal memorandum dated January 28, 1955, reviewing the information in its files on the subject. The memorandum summarized the issue:

It appears that the routes west from Denver or Pueblo have been consistently advocated by the Colorado Highway Advisory Board ever since 1944, but have met with opposition by the Division Office and the Washington Office because of the high cost of construction to Interstate standards, and the possibility of adding 500 miles to the length of the Interstate system which had been limited to 40,000 miles.

Colorado never obtained Utah's approval of the addition and the War Department omitted mention of the addition of such a route in their recommendations.

On March 2, 1955, Governor Edwin Johnson of Colorado testified before the Senate Subcommittee on Roads regarding the Interstate System. Colorado did not oppose the Interstate System, he said, but only wanted to be a full partner in it. The day before, he said, he had met with officials of the Department of Commerce (home of the BPR), including Commissioner of Public Roads Charles D. "Cap" Curtiss and Francis V. du Pont (former Commissioner, now Special Assistant to the Secretary). The Governor tried to convince them to use the undesignated 2,319 miles to give Colorado an additional 500 Interstate miles for an east-west route. To his frustration, they told him that mileage was reserved for urban segments that were going to be designated soon.

Governor Johnson's frustration was clear throughout his testimony. He said, at one point:

You are going to have a four-lane highway through Wyoming. You are going to build two four-lane highways through New Mexico and Arizona. Colorado needs to be able to compete with our neighboring States. We do not want to take anything away from them. We do not want them to get way out ahead of us, either, because these interstate highways are going to be very attractive highways for the East and West to travel on.

We want to be able to compete with them on even terms. Our tourist trade in Colorado is a very important industry. It is our second most important industry [behind agriculture] . . . If the United States Government is going to go in and build boulevards through Wyoming and through New Mexico which will attract the tourist travelers traveling east and west, Colorado is being dealt a very severe injustice.

It is a whole lot like the man who was praying about the bear. He said, "If you can't help me, don't help the bear." That is our situation.

The BPR prepared a second internal document, undated, in early 1955 on "Proposed additional Interstate route in Colorado and Utah." It summarized the activity during the period 1944-1947:

[In] accordance with the provisions of the 1944 Federal-Aid Highway Act, Colorado wished to include a route extending westerly from Denver. However, there was question as to whether there was economic justification for constructing an Interstate route through this mountainous area to the high design standards contemplated for this system. Furthermore, the State of Utah was not interested and in 1945 refused to designate the connection between the Colorado State line and U.S. 91 in the vicinity of Provo

or Spanish Fork. For these reasons the route was not included in the system which was designated and approved August 2, 1947.

The document listed several recent actions by Colorado and Utah promoting addition of the western route:

- In early December 1954, the Colorado State Highway Commission adopted a resolution "requesting the Bureau of Public Roads to take all necessary action to obtain an Interstate route through Colorado to a proper connection in Utah."
- On December 20, 1954, the Commission asked the BPR to consider "the establishment of a route which would originate in Denver and terminate in Utah, at or near Salt Lake City, the specific routing in Colorado westerly from Denver to be decided subsequent to the completion of any required engineering studies."
- In March 1955, the Utah State Legislature passed Joint Resolution No. 21 "requesting the Utah Congressional Delegation to join in petitioning the Congress to amend the Federal highway law in order to permit addition of a Utah-Colorado road to the National System of Interstate Highways."
- Around the same time, the 40th General Assembly in Colorado adopted House Joint Memorial No. 5 urging Congress to amend the Federal law to permit addition of the Utah-Colorado route.

The document pointed out that beginning in December 1954, the BPR had received inquiries from Governor Dan Thornton of Colorado, the State highway departments of the two States, and members of the Colorado and Utah congressional delegations:

Replies . . . were made pointing out that 37,700 of the 40,000 miles authorized in the Interstate system was designated and approved in 1947 and the remaining 2,300 miles have been reserved for additional routes into, through and around urban areas. Current indications are that the need for such additional routes will be greater than can be accommodated in the 2,300 miles remaining available for designation. In Congress in 1954 the question of increasing the 40,000-mile limitation was discussed. It was then decided desirable to bring the 40,000-mile system up to adequate standards before increasing the permissible mileage of the system.

In 1954, Congress was controlled by the Republicans. Following the mid-term election in November 1954, the Democrats gained control. Senator Albert Gore, Sr. (D., Tn), became Chairman of the Subcommittee on Roads. He included a provision in the Senate's 1955 Federal-aid bill that would increase the limitation by 2,500 miles. The Senate approved the bill, but the House was unable to reach agreement on its version of the bill, mainly because of disagreement on how to pay for construction of the Interstate System. In 1956, after a series of compromises, the House and Senate passed the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956; President Dwight D. Eisenhower approved the legislation on June 29.

Section 108(i) of the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1956 added 1,000 miles to the Interstate System. The BPR now had the mileage to designate the Colorado-Utah Interstate west of Denver but the issue of location remained to be settled. Where should it end in Utah?

Crossroad Cove Fort

Cove Fort dates to 1867 when Brigham Young, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, asked Ira Hinckley to build a fort on Cove Creek as a way station for pioneers traveling between Fillmore to the north and Beaver to the south. The fort was completed in November 1867 and served this valuable function for about 20 years. In later years, the Fillmore-Cove Fort-Beaver road remained part of the main north-south route between Salt Lake City and the Southwest. In the July 1924 issue of *Utah Highways*, State Auditor Mark Tuttle recalled a trip on the road in 1911:

There were practically no automobiles engaged in public transportation on the state highways in 1911 and all stage travel was made in the old-time stage coach. Between Fillmore and Beaver the roads were unusually rough and if traveling by private conveyance it required an all-day ride.

Because of its location on the main north-south road, Cove Fort was included in several named trails, including the Arrowhead Trail (Salt Lake City to Los Angeles), the Evergreen National Highway (Portland, Oregon, to El Paso, Texas), and the Pikes Peak Ocean-to-Ocean Highway (New York City to San Francisco, California, with a later terminus of Los Angeles). Although an east-west State forest highway connected Cove Fort and Sevier across the Pavant Mountains to the east, no major roads developed across the desolate, unpopulated part of Utah west of Cove Fort.

When the American Association of State Highway Officials (AASHO) approved the U.S. numbered highway plan on November 11, 1926, Cove Fort was on the north-south U.S. 91, a route from Great Falls, Montana, to Daggett, California (near Barstow). The approved plan did not include the east-west Cove Fort-Sevier road among the designated U.S. highways. Sevier was included in north-south U.S. 89 (Spanish Fork to the United States-Mexican International Boundary at Nogales) parallel to U.S. 91

Having begun as a service station for north-south travelers, Cove Fort's historic origins remained its core attraction to tourists in the 1940's when the U.S. 91 corridor was included in what became I-15 (Sweetgrass, Montana, to San Diego, California).

The Western Terminus of I-70

After enactment of the 1956 Act, the BPR had 2,102 miles of Interstate to designate. This total included the 1,000 miles added by the 1956 Act plus 1,102 miles the BPR had accumulated within the original 40,000 miles by routing the designated roads along the most direct paths between cities instead of the existing U.S. numbered highway in the corridor.

With this added mileage, the BPR worked with Colorado and Utah to address Colorado's complaint about the absence of a route west of Denver. The two States agreed on a western terminus at future I-15 in Spanish Fork. As late as May 7, 1957, the BPR was considering Spanish Fork as the western terminus. On that day, Deputy Commissioner and Chief Engineer Frank C. Turner submitted a memo to Federal Highway Administrator Bertram D. Tallamy with recommendations on designation of additional Interstate routes under the 1,000-mile expansion authorized by the 1956 Act. It began:

Based on a premise that the Congressional intent for authorization of the 1,000-mile Interstate-System expansion was to designate a link extending westward from Denver, Colorado, and northward from Sioux Falls, South Dakota, the following plan for designation of additional routes is recommended:

Category 1 - Routes added to conform to Congressional intent

	Miles
Denver, Colorado - Spanish Fork, Utah	489
Sioux Falls, South Dakota - Fargo, North Dakota	230
	719

After discussing other categories, Turner returned to Category 1 with a discussion of the views of the Department of Defense-an important consideration in designating mileage for the National System of Interstate and Defense Highways, as the 1956 Act had renamed it. Defense officials, Turner said, believed "that the greatest deficiency in the presently designated system occurs at urbanized areas." They wanted as much mileage as possible for service "both into and around" urbanized areas down to the population level of 125,000. Turner added:

On the basis of day-to-day discussions with Department of Defense representatives we do not think they would be inclined to question a Department of Commerce interpretation of Congressional intent in authorizing the 1,000 miles. In other words, they would probably concur in designation of the Denver

westward and Sioux Falls northward routes if Commerce Department wishes to approve them on the premise that it was the Congressional intent to designate them. Because of their strong feeling, (based on target analyses of our cities) for need for designating additional routes at cities, it is questionable whether they will concur in Category 1 routes on any other basis than "Congressional intent."

Maps prepared for internal use indicate that the BPR considered the Spanish Fork terminus throughout the year, although a map of recommendations in July 1957 showed the route with a terminus at Cove Fort. During final analysis of proposed designations, the BPR identified the Denver-Spanish Fork route as a "Duplication of existing service" and included a map dated October 1, 1957, showing the Spanish Fork terminus with an offshoot drawn from an unidentified point in Utah to Cove Fort.

On September 10, 1957, Administrator Tallamy approved a proposed Interstate numbering map prepared by AASHO in cooperation with the BPR. The map showed I-70 with its split termini on the eastern end and a western terminus in Denver.

A month later, on the 10th, Tallamy wrote to Major General Paul F. Yount, Chief of Transportation for the Department of the Army, to request review of the BPR's recommendations. Tallamy enclosed a map showing the routes to be designated. Although the file copy of Tallamy's letter does not make clear which map was enclosed, it appears to have shown a Cove Fort terminus for I-70.

General Yount replied on October 15. He was pleased with the addition of belt or circumferential routes "for traffic to pass around potential target areas where populations and industries are concentrated." However, he had several comments on the proposed inter-city routes, including the one west of Denver shown on the map:

The inter-city route from the Denver, Colorado, area, follows a westerly and southwesterly direction to what is now U.S. Highway No. 91 in the State of Utah. This will provide a direct route from central United States to the strategically important southern California area. The Department of Defense supports the addition of this route to the Interstate System only if it follows such a general location. If it turns and extends northwesterly to Salt Lake City it would be considered as duplicating the service presently provided by a route of the Interstate System and cannot in our judgment be justified.

On October 18, 1957, Secretary of Commerce Sinclair Weeks announced the segments designated with the expanded Interstate mileage. The additions included the western extension of I-70 to Cove Fort. An October 18 press release explained:

The route westward from Denver is a modification of one proposed by the states of Colorado and Utah. The proposal involved a route from Denver to Spanish Fork, Utah en route to Salt Lake City which would largely duplicate service provided by the designated Denver-Cheyenne-Salt Lake City route [via I-25 from Denver to Cheyenne and I-80 from Cheyenne to Salt Lake City]. By bending the western end of the route southward to provide a direct connection between Denver and southern Utah, it will be possible to serve traffic moving back and forth between Southern California and the Denver region.

The press release did not explain how the BPR had decided on a terminus at Cove Fort, other than its desire to end the route in a way that enhanced access to southern California. The FHWA's files do not explain the decision, either. However, because the mountains and forests in central Utah limited the options, the Cove Fort-Sevier road appears to have been the best choice among the few available for reaching future I-15 from Grand Junction, Colorado, by the most direct, practicable route on the way to southern California.

Like a Bombshell

All well and good, and the Rambler could end the story here. But wait!

The October 18 press release stated that Secretary Weeks "directed the [BPR] to issue letters of approval" for the new routes he had designated that day. That statement applied to all other States except Utah. The State had one approved route (Ogden-to-Echo Junction), one with reserved mileage (belt route at Salt Lake City), and pending approval of a route (terminus Cove Fort) the State had not requested. In fact, the announcement came as a surprise to Utah, which had finally agreed with Colorado on the extension to Spanish Fork. The BPR had not informed Utah of the change in the western terminus prior to October 18, when Tallamy notified the Utah State Road Commission of the decision by telegram.

In a letter to Commission Chairman C. Taylor Burton on October 21, Tallamy repeated the explanation that the proposed Denver-Spanish Forks-Salt Lake City route would duplicate the Denver-Cheyenne-Salt Lake City route. Therefore, "if the western end can be bent southward to provide a direct route for traffic moving back and forth between southern California and the Denver region, we consider approval warranted." He indicated that the BPR's preliminary studies "indicate that feasible locations exist":

If you and the Colorado Department of Highways agree with us on a modified route which would form a direct route for traffic moving back and forth between Southern California and the Denver region, we would appreciate receiving formal proposals which we are prepared to approve promptly, as part of the 1,000 mile expansion.

(Tallamy provided the same explanation to Chief Engineer Mark U. Watrous of the Colorado Department of Highways.)

According to State highway historian Ezra C. Knowlton, the news hit Utah officials "like a bombshell." The State had considered routings along U.S. 40 and U.S. 50, but had settled on the U.S. 50 routing to Spanish Fork. "No responsible local official had even suggested the so-called Salina Canyon-Cove Fort routing." Knowlton said:

This suggestion obviously pleased the people of south-central Utah but naturally aroused stormy opposition from those favoring a junction with U.S. 91 at Spanish Fork. Utah County people took the lead in demanding that the State Road Commission conduct a public hearing on the government's "arbitrary" action, threatening an injunction against the commission if this were not done. [Knowlton, Ezra C., *History of Highway Development in Utah*, Utah State Department of Transportation, 1967, page 597]

Governor Dewey Clyde, an engineering instructor at Utah State University who took office in 1957, joined with the State's congressional delegation in consulting with the BPR. They learned about General Yount's position that the routing to Spanish Fork could not be justified. According to Knowlton, the Governor concluded that, "Utah had no choice but to accept the Cove Fort routing, or have none at all."

The Utah State Highway Commission held a public hearing at the State Capitol prompting "spirited testimony" on both sides of the issue. Knowlton explained that, "Southern Utah people spoke in favor, and those from the north-central part of the state spoke against the newly proposed route." Nevertheless, the decision stood. A December 1957 evaluation by the Research Department of the Utah State Road Commission on the economic and traffic service of the Denver-Cove Fort routing, stated:

There was, undoubtedly, a great deal of merit in the original proposal for a Denver-Salt Lake connection; however, sight must not be lost of the fact that the Salt Lake area is already served by two major Interstate routes, one running North-South [I-15] and one East-West [I-80], and that the terminus at Cove Fort, as presently proposed, shortens the distance from Denver to Los Angeles by approximately 200 miles.

Knowlton stated that the route was important to Utah as well as Colorado because it would increase Interstate Construction funding for both States and the trans-mountain link between the two States could not come any other way. He added:

Utah's Road Commission was probably more shocked at the manner in which the news of the Washington decision on the Cove Fort route was released, than they were as to the decision. Surely this inadvertent news release from Washington was one of the most serious breaches of sound public relations experienced in the entire history of the federal road agency.

The commission approved the Cove Fort terminus by resolution on January 20, 1958, with the resolution describing the routing as:

From Cove Fort on U.S. 91, easterly via U-13 to the vicinity of Sevier Junction on U.S. 89, thence northeasterly to the vicinity of Salina on U.S. 89 to junction with U-10, thence generally easterly and northeasterly somewhat adjacent to U-10 to the vicinity of Castle Dale, thence generally easterly to a junction with U.S. 6 & 50 south of Woodside, thence generally adjacent to U.S. 6 & 50 to the Utah-Colorado State line.

Given that the State had preferred the routing to Spanish Fork, the commission approved the resolution with an understanding that Knowlton explained:

[It would] "take its place following the completion of the interstate highways presently now designated and only when additional funds for interstate construction may be authorized by Congress." Also, the commission committed itself to make every effort to improve with Primary federal-aid funds the 130 miles from Woodside to Spanish Fork, with special emphasis being given to the section from Helper to Soldier's Summit.

This understanding placated the communities on the original alignment to Spanish Fork, while reminding the BPR that the State did not appreciate its meddling.

Commissioner Ellis LeRoy Armstrong

Only four Federal officials held the title "Commissioner of Public Roads": Thomas H. MacDonald, Francis du Pont, Charles "Cap" Curtiss, and Ellis Armstrong. The Commissioner was the head of the BPR until President Eisenhower signed P.L. 84-966 on August 3, 1956, establishing the position of Federal Highway Administrator to head the BPR. The position of Commissioner was retained as a sort of "Executive Director" to handle day-to-day operations of the agency. When Curtiss retired on December 31, 1957, Federal Highway Administrator Tallamy offered the position to Armstrong.

A native of Cedar City, Utah, Armstrong worked 18 years for the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation. He was in private practice when he joined the State road bureau after Governor Clyde took office in 1957. Governor Clyde introduced legislation to reorganize the Utah highway department into a five-man policy commission, with a Director of Highways to run the program. The former professor asked his one-time assistant, Armstrong, to become Director in May 1957. Armstrong accepted Tallamy's offer and became Commissioner on October 13, 1958. He retained the position until 1961, when he became president of the Better Highways Information Foundation (now The Road Information Program). He later served as Assistant Regional Director of the Bureau of Reclamation and Commissioner of Reclamation (1969-1973), in addition to many years in the private sector.

In late January and early February 1988, Dr. John Greenwood interviewed Armstrong by telephone for an oral history conducted as part of the Interstate Highway Research Project of the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials. During the interview, Armstrong recalled that Governor Clyde's predecessor, Governor Joseph Bracken Lee (1949-1957), was not committed to the Interstate System:

The prior Governor, Brack Lee, was very conservative, and he had been convinced that the Interstate would never be built. Utah had prepared these preliminary studies that went into the 1954 report, where most of the general route locations were somewhat tied down, not in detail, but the general corridor, although some of the corridors were indicated back in the 1944 Interstate study. [Armstrong is

apparently referring to *Needs of the Highway Systems, 1955-84*, a BPR report that Secretary Weeks submitted to Congress on March 25, 1955.]

Well, then when the 1956 Act was passed, Utah hadn't gone any further, and as a result was right at the bottom of the list as far as getting any Interstate highway under design or construction. So we were starting pretty much from scratch when I came out to take over the Department-it was quite a challenge.

Armstrong also recalled the dispute over the location of I-70 in Utah:

Initially there was some resistance from Utah as some felt this would detour Southern California-Denver travel away from Northern Utah. It was still undecided when I came out. Our concept was that the route would come from Colorado and swing northwest down Spanish Fork Canyon to intercept Route 15, just south of Provo.

Well, that actually didn't make a very good balance, because it tended to direct traffic into the Wasatch Front area towards the east-west Route 80. For this reason, when this route was being considered in Washington, it was decided on the basis of discussions, and as I understand it, pressures from Southern California and Denver to provide a more direct route. So rather than come up to Spanish Fork Canyon and then kind of cut back, the decision was made to go straight west from Grand Junction.

In fact, that is what happened, but when they made that decision there were no detailed location studies. . . . They made the decision in Washington before they notified us. This was embarrassing. I was giving a talk to the Rotary Club in Provo, discussing the Interstate highway, and I got a call from the Associated Press in Washington. They said, "How do you like the Interstate mileage that comes into Cove Fort?" That was where it terminated as it intersected I-15.

I said, "Oh, you are mistaken. That should be Spanish Fork. You mean Spanish Fork, don't you?" And they said, "No." Then they explained where the route went through Richfield and then to Cove Fort. I couldn't believe it. It caught everybody by surprise. So there was a little bit of squawking.

But when we looked at it and considered everything, we didn't have any real objection. Some objection was more for a show, I guess, because we had been kind of neglected. I talk[ed] to Bert Tallamy later on [about] that, and he said they had discussed it and decided that if they didn't announce it and tie it down, that they would have one big fight on their hands. They decided to announce it, and let the chips fall where they may.

But it didn't make the Utah Highway Commission very happy. After they got through squawking, it turned out all right, I think.

Armstrong, whose published works include *History of Public Works in the United States, 1776-1976* (written with Michael C. Robinson and Suellen M. Hoy, American Public Works Association, 1976), died at his home in Salt Lake City at the age of 86 on January 26, 2001. His obituary in *The Salt Lake Tribune* said of him:

He is remembered for his great dedication, leadership, and accomplishments in Civil Engineering, and honored as a wonderful family patriarch, father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. A great humanitarian and one who was unswerving in his confidence in the goodness of his fellow man.

Not Quite Right

The approved routing included the Cove Fort terminus but was not as direct as the BPR desired. The BPR drafted a letter dated February 2, 1958, for Assistant Commissioner for Engineering George M. Williams to send to Chairman Burton. The letter, which was not sent, sought further study on the following point:

The eastern portion of the routing described in the resolution (Green River - vicinity of Woodside - Castle Dale - Emery - Salina - Richfield - Sevier - Cove Fort) is very indirect. What are the possibilities of selecting a much more direct line from Green River to the bend of State Highway 10 south of Emery? Our preliminary studies of aerial photographs of this region indicated that such a direct line was feasible. Even if Castle Dale ultimately proves to be a desirable control area, the line between it and Green River should be more direct than routing it by way of the Woodside area. A feasible location indicated by the studies is one from Castle Dale southeasterly as direct as practicable to the bend in U.S. 6-50 west of Green River.

After deciding not to send the February 7 draft, Williams wrote on February 21, 1958, to the BPR's Regional Engineer in Denver, K. S. Chamberlain, whose responsibilities included supervising the Division Offices in Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming:

The data furnished are not sufficient to justify the approval of the indirect location shown on the map submitted by the Utah State Road Commission. Aerial photograph studies made by Mr. William Pryor of this office prior to our suggestion of an Interstate route through southern Utah indicated that a more direct line from Green River to the bend of State Highway 10 south of Emery is feasible. We understand that the State plans to make extensive location surveys. Mr. Pryor is available for consultation and advice and would be glad to review his previous studies with State officials at Salt Lake City as an aid in their surveys. When the State selects a location based upon its further studies of alternate routes and requests your approval, we would be glad to review the State's proposal should you consider it desirable.

Pryor, coincidentally a native of Cedar City, Utah, was the BPR's expert on aerial photography. Armstrong, in his oral history, said of Pryor:

Well, they gave Bill Pryor the job of determining the location from aerial maps. Incidentally, he was from Cedar City and was about ten years older than me and as a boy lived in Cedar City next to my granddad. I knew the family well, and he was kind of my ideal in some respects, in that he was a straight A student through college and considered as a local boy [who] makes good.

The approved description of the route would read: "Cove Fort to the Utah-Colorado State line west of Grand Junction, Colorado," with the specific location between those points to be determined. The direct routing favored by the BPR would be followed.

Utah's I-70, an Engineering Marvel

As the commission made clear, I-70 would not be Utah's number one priority. Armstrong told Dr. Greenwood:

I made the decision and got the commission to go along, to focus on the urban areas-primarily through the Salt Lake County along the Wasatch front, where our heavy traffic was. Our basic policy that we set up was that first priority was for the big traffic needs, which was from Provo through Salt Lake City to Ogden. Then, in some of the areas where the existing primary route on the interstate location was worn out and had to be replaced, this was the next priority.

On this basis, I-70 was built gradually and not completed until 1990.

Although the routing favored by the BPR was more direct than Utah's proposal, its construction west of Green River would require one of the most spectacular engineering achievements on the Interstate System.

The section west of Green River crosses the San Rafael Swell, a large geologic uplift containing rugged and scenic terrain in a near desert climate. Of one segment, Henry Helland, Director of the Utah State Department of Highways, said in June 1968: "This project follows a drainage known as Spotted Wolf Canyon, a canyon so narrow in spots I was

able to reach both sides of the canyon walls [by stretching out his arms] before construction began." Where cuts were made, the drill holes were churned and the blasting powder set off in a way that minimized the impact on the terrain.

On November 5, 1970, 70-miles of two-lane highway opened through the San Rafael Swell from Green River to Fremont Junction. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held at the Ghost Rocks View Area about 38 miles west of Green River. As Clem Church, the Chairman of the State Road Commission said, the new highway made the towns of Green River, Salina, and Richfield "neighbors overnight" and was sure to open a new era of economic growth for the area. Governor Calvin L. Rampton, who flew in for the ceremony, said he understood it was the longest stretch of road built over a completely new route since construction of the Alaska Highway early in World War II and the longest stretch of Interstate highway ever opened at one time. R. D. Nielsen, Utah Director of the U.S. Bureau of Land Management (BLM) pointed out that the highway was built on desert land acquired from the BLM at less cost per mile than any other Utah highway.

On November 8, an editorial in the Ogden *Standard-Examiner* said:

This is the first time in history that travel into this scenic wonderland has been possible for anyone not equipped with a horse, a four-wheel drive vehicle or an airplane.

On September 28, 1990, Utah completed its segment of a four-lane I-70 with a ceremony at the Eagle Canyon Bridge in Emery County. The eastbound span had been used for two-way traffic as part of the original I-70 segment; the companion span for westbound traffic was 518-feet long and 205 feet high, with a 428-foot arch.

Governor Norm Bangerter participated in the ceremony, but engineer Archie Hamilton was one of the featured speakers. He was one of only three remaining UDOT engineers who had worked on I-70 from start to finish. Hamilton recalled how UDOT employees had traveled the route in 1959 with maps, a jeep, and a bulldozer. According to an account in the *Salt Lake Tribune*, "And the story goes that when the UDOT planners told a sheepherder in the area what they were doing, he fell over laughing." At one point, the "trio followed a pack of wild horses to find the best way from Devil's Canyon to South Salt Wash." He recalled the construction through narrow Spotted Wolf Canyon, which involved about 3.5 million yards of excavation. "It was one of the most significant highway construction feats of its time," he said.

This section of I-70 remains a scenic highway today. *Crossing America: National Geographic's Guide to the Interstates* (1995) says:

I-70 bisects this 2,400-square mile sandstone wonderland of buttes, pinnacles, deep canyons, and mesas that is sometimes called Utah's Little Grand Canyon.

Turkey Feathers

I-70 in Utah has, sadly, gained an unwanted nickname: "Cocaine Lane." It has become a route for drug couriers driving cross-country to the East Coast and points in between. On December 25, 1987, *The Washington Post* carried an Associated Press article by Laurie Sullivan about this problem. She quoted one officer as saying:

Most of them we've been catching have been coming up from Southern California. A good share are going to New York, but a lot of them are making drops along the way. We find maps or a note or something that says stop in Burlington, Iowa, or Kansas City or Indianapolis or any city along the way.

Utah State police had established an active interdiction program in Sevier County, but they think they are "nailing only about 1 percent of the drug traffic cruising past the county's gypsum hills, turkey farms and poultry processing plants."

The Rambler takes some consolation from the fact that Sullivan confirmed what the BPR thought in designating Cove Fort, instead of Spanish Fork, as the western terminus of I-70: Cove Fort does provide a convenient link to Southern

California. However, Sullivan's description of that western terminus suggests it has not prompted an economic boom for the area:

Interstate 70 from Baltimore ends as a rural roadway strewn with turkey feathers and debris from passing hay trucks.

I-70 in Colorado

AAA says that from Grand Junction to Denver, "I-70 follows the Colorado River past manicured mountains, fertile valleys, and breathtaking canyons." Traveling west to east, a motorist would find the highway equal to the view. For example:

Glenwood Canyon—One of the most challenging settings for an Interstate highway, and one that caused a 30-year controversy, has been transformed into a world-class scenic byway. Forty-plus bridges and viaducts—including precast box girders, precast I-beams, cast-in place, post-tensioned box girders, and welded steel box girders—as well as a tunnel were used to minimize damage to the setting. Completion of this section in October 1992 opened I-70 all the way from Baltimore to Cove Fort. At the opening ceremony, Federal Highway Administrator Thomas D. Larson said, "This project proves that desirable environmental goals and great engineering feats can be mutually compatible." *Crossing America* says, "The canyon is a marvel not only for its beautiful vistas and sheer cliffs but also for the interstate itself, whose four lanes squeeze through the gorge with little detriment to the environment or the view."

New Castle—Construction of I-70 was delayed while paleontologists chipped a dinosaur out of the banks of the Colorado River. The highway was to be constructed on the opposite bank between the railroad tracks and the river. But the riverbed would have to be shifted, which entailed cutting the bank back about 50 feet. During an open house, over 1,500 people visited the site to watch the dig.

Vail Pass—In 1973, District Highway Engineer Dick Prosenice told a reporter, "I think we're on our way to building some beautiful highway up there" in Vail Pass. And that's exactly what they did. Through innovative designs and construction techniques, I-70 was set into a sensitive and scenic mountain environment. Designers incorporated techniques used in the European Alps to minimize scarring, soil erosion, water pollution, and wildlife disturbance. The project included \$16 million worth of bridges. Two miles of I-70 were carried on pre-cast, prestressed, segmented box girders placed on concrete pylons to elevate the stretch 90 feet above the ground. The elevated segments were installed using gantries on completed portions of the highway to minimize the impact of heavy construction equipment on the mountainsides. Because the highway crossed an ancient migratory path for deer, an underpass was included in the project to allow them to move through the area safely. Built in the early 1970's, I-70 through Vail Pass was an attempt to build an environmentally sensitive highway through a challenging terrain, and many of the techniques used were adapted for use in many other locations, including Glenwood Canyon. (The project included archeological work that yielded over 400 animal bone fragments that provided data on subsistence activities in the region.) Incidentally, this pass was of little transportation use until U.S. 6 went over it in 1940. It is named for Charles D. Vail, the State Highway Engineer who built the U.S. 6 roadway through the pass and who fought to ensure the Interstate System included an east-west highway across the State. (He died in 1945.)

Hogback—A section just west of Denver near Golden is a monumental natural artwork. The freeway is cut through a prominent terrain feature called the Hogback, formed 50 to 80 million years ago by the gigantic upheaval that produced the Rocky Mountains. The cut was made with broad terraces, exposing the underlying strata in well-defined pastel bands that have been used to teach geology. In June 1970, Federal Highway Administrator Frank Turner described the section of I-70 as an example of how a highway can enhance the environment. He said:

This is one more example of how highway officials are anxious to cooperate with conservation and citizens groups—and how often construction of the vitally needed new Interstate freeways can actually leave the environment better than it was before.

The Eisenhower/Johnson Memorial Tunnels

The first bore of the Eisenhower/Johnson Memorial Tunnels under the Continental Divide west of Denver opened in March 1973. The tunnel was initially called the Straight Creek Tunnel but in September 1969, Governor John Love proposed to rename it after the former President, who had died on April 4, 1969. Mamie Eisenhower, the President's wife, was born and raised in Denver. In fact, Mamie Doud and Dwight David Eisenhower were married in the gladioli-filled music room of the Douds' Denver house on July 1, 1916 (the same month, the Rambler notes, President Woodrow Wilson signed the Federal Aid Road Act of 1916 on the 11th) and were frequent visitors while he was President.

A design contract for the 1.6-mile tunnel was signed on February 23, 1966, by Governor Love, with Federal Highway Administrator Rex Whitton and Chief Engineer Turner among those in attendance. The signing took place at the Denver Hilton Hotel, site of the American Road Builders Association convention that week. At 9,000 feet, the tunnel would be the longest tunnel built with Interstate funds and it is located at the highest point of elevation on the Interstate System.

A Woman on the Job

Everyone anticipated engineering challenges. But no one expected the tunnel project to be a flashpoint in the women's liberation movement. But that is what happened.

The story began in November 1970 when Janet Bonnema inquired about several openings with the Colorado Highway Department. She met the qualifications (e.g., applicants had to be under the age of 68) and passed the required tests. She received a letter from the Department advising that "Mr. Janet P. Bonnema" would be employed at the Straight Creek Tunnel if "he" wanted the job. Checking on the offer, Bonnema was advised by a State employment officer not to take the position. "Women are taboo in the mines and tunnels of Colorado." He added, "Those workers would flat walk out of that there tunnel and they'd never come back."

She took the job, but after working 18 months as an engineering technician, had never been inside the tunnel. "I am not allowed to do the same work as the male engineering technicians," she told a reporter, "even though I am physically able, in better condition and have more stamina than many of the male engineering technicians." Bonnema, who rode her motorcycle to the job each day, had been captain of the University of Colorado ski team and regularly climbed mountains for sport. She also was a pilot.

In response to an inquiry from a woman reporter, the State acknowledged that the 33-year old Bonnema was "smart as a whip" and was "doing a great job up there." However, the contractor wouldn't let any women, not even female reporters, in the tunnel.

On November 9, 1972, after Colorado's voters agreed to amend the State constitution to guarantee equal rights for women, Bonnema made her first stroll into the tunnel. She was accompanied by several reporters, including a woman reporter. "Get those women out of here," a worker shouted before 70 of 100 male workers walked off the job. At least one quit outright. He said, "They had a woman in the tunnel, and I will not work there for that reason. It's a jinx. I've seen too many die after a woman was in the tunnel." He did not cite examples.

Bonnema paid no attention as she slogged through the mud. Of the walkout, she said, "They're making \$8 to \$10 an hour. What's the matter with them?"

The State estimated that the walkout cost about \$10,000, but as expected, the men returned the next day to complete the job.

On November 14, she tried again. Dressed in coveralls and a hard hat for a second trip into the excavation, she was ordered to the top of the tunnel instead. She told a reporter for the *Denver Post*: "We were suited up to go into the tunnel but a guy wanted us to install an instrument on top so we went up. I'd never been allowed to do that before." Atop the tunnel, according to the article, she went inside a concrete pipe to install an inclinometer to measure layers of earth. "It was a lot of fun on top and nobody walked out." She added that the miners hadn't recognized her in coveralls

and hard hat. "I had a good disguise." She was looking forward to her new accessibility. "Before, I wasn't allowed to set foot outside my office."

Opening Day

Nearly 6,000 people were employed on the tunnel project in the course of its 5-year construction period. They worked about 4.9 million "manhours" (the Rambler can use a sexist term in this case with some assurance, except as noted) and blasted and drilled through 7,789 feet of rock and earth under the Continental Divide. Three men lost their life working on the project. The tunnel cost \$116.9 million, more than twice the \$49.6 million contract awarded for its construction and was completed 2 years behind schedule.

The first bore of the Eisenhower Memorial Tunnel opened on March 8, 1973. The ceremony was held inside the tunnel's east portal because of the 34-degree temperature and occasional snow flurries. Members of the Eisenhower family could not attend, but Mamie Eisenhower wrote to Governor Love, saying, "How proud Ike would have been with this honor, for he loved Denver and Colorado."

Governor Love called the tunnel "a tremendous accomplishment for Colorado." He said:

Historically, the people of Colorado have since the beginning sought transportation access to the West, by tracks and trails over the mountains, by railroads crawling their way over deep passes, by the Moffat [railroad] Tunnel, and by improved, modern highways.

This tunnel, as part of the interstate system, represents the most recent, and possibly the most effective, answer to tying east and west Colorado together and opening the way West.

W. K. McGlothlin, project manager for prime contractor Straight Creek Construction, Inc., stated that previously, "all the truckers avoided this country" and took their east-west trips outside Colorado. The tunnel would change that. The *Denver Post* account of the ceremony added:

McGlothlin laughed as he spoke of what he called a standing joke among some of the tunnel workers. "Up here, they call it [the tunnel] the longest bathroom in the country," mainly because of the antiseptic look of its tiled walls and porcelain-enamel ceiling.

The first driver through the tunnel received a summons-for trespassing. The historic moment occurred in late 1972, when a driver who had been drinking decided that he, not Governor Love, should have the honor of being the first person to drive through the tunnel. He had to drive past the signs prohibiting traffic and through foot-deep mining "muck" and mud. When he emerged, his car was covered with the "goopy stuff," according to a construction spokesman. But Marion Wooldridge was first, as he had the pleasure of explaining to Judge George Gaubatz of Clear Creek County Court. The judge dismissed the charge on the grounds that the signs prohibiting traffic at the tunnel entrance weren't adequate.

Following the opening ceremony, Governor Love entered his vehicle and led a cavalcade of cars, carrying top tunnel engineers and others, on the first official trip westward through the tunnel. They traveled 9 miles to the Silverthorne interchange where they were able to reverse course for the return trip. After they passed through the tunnel eastbound, the Eisenhower Memorial Tunnel was opened to the public.

By July 1973, more than 1 million vehicles had passed through the tunnel. On a day in June 1992, the Eisenhower Memorial Tunnel counted its 100 millionth vehicle.

The Johnson Bore

The Eisenhower Memorial Tunnel contained only two lanes, one in each direction. The limited capacity led to backups at peak periods, particularly on weekends when motorists headed home from the ski slopes came off four-lane I-70

into the two-lane tunnel eastbound for Denver.

By May 1973, the State was planning a second bore. After 3 years of design work, the State awarded the construction contract for the second bore on August 11, 1975. Construction work began on the 18th, with "hole-thru" on August 17, 1978. The second bore, which cost \$144.9 million, opened on December 21, 1979.

In January 1978, the State Legislature adopted a resolution calling on the State to name the second bore in honor of Edwin C. Johnson, the former State legislator, Lieutenant Governor, Governor, and United States Senator who had fought for extension of I-70 west of Denver in the mid-1950's.

Although the two tunnels are referred to by outsiders as the "Eisenhower Tunnel," the facility is known to insiders as the Eisenhower/Johnson Memorial Tunnels.

Extending I-70 West of Cove Fort

Even as I-70 was under construction in Utah, officials to the west expressed interest in extending the route along the U.S. 50 corridor to California.

For example, in March 1968, Senator Alan Bible reported receiving over 700 post cards signed by citizens of White Pine County in eastern Nevada requesting the western extension. He reported the support to Frank Turner, then Director of the BPR (a unit within the FHWA following creation of the U.S. Department of Transportation). The unit was developing a report to Congress on highway needs, to be submitted in April, but Bible reported that "it is not known whether the Bureau will propose enlargement of the Interstate System, creation of a new system of highways, or a program of upgrading existing primary and secondary roads." Nevertheless, he conveyed the interest of White Pine County to the FHWA:

You may rest assured that I shall do all I can to see that tourist and commercial travel is not diminished because of the federal highway system.

Actually, the Nation's first Secretary of Transportation, Alan S. Boyd, had transmitted the initial National Highway Needs Report to Congress on January 31, 1968. The study questioned the desirability of expanding the Interstate System, which "is accomplishing a job that needed to be done at a particular stage in the development of the Nation's highways." Instead, the study suggested the Federal Government help the States build an intermediate, supplementary system of about 66,000 miles. It "seems unlikely" a divided freeway design could be justified for all routes on an intermediate system; two-lane roadways could be expected to serve travel needs adequately for the normal 20-year design period.

Despite this recommendation, Congress in the Federal-Aid Highway Act of 1968 increased the statutory limitation on the Interstate System by 1,500 miles, bringing the total to 42,500 miles. In response to the FHWA's request for applications, Utah did not include the extension of I-70 among its proposals. Instead, the State explained that it would support the extension as its fifth priority only if its four higher priority routes were approved. Nevada considered the extension its fourth priority. California listed the extension as its seventh priority. The FHWA's regional office summarized the situation:

Existing traffic is very low and there is apparently only limited growth potential. Average daily traffic in 1967 on the routes in Utah that converge near this point was 300 on U.S. 50 and 65 on Utah S.H. 21. Extension of the Interstate route would serve only one or two minor populated areas in Utah and no defense installations. In our judgment such a routing is not a critical need in the Interstate system highway network.

Secretary Boyd announced the allocated mileage on December 13, 1968. Given the limited official support for the I-70 extension, it was not among the new routes.

Efforts continued to secure the designation, with the National Highway 50 Federation taking a lead role. On October 6 and 7, 1969, the Subcommittee on Roads of the Senate Committee on Public Works held hearings in Carson City and Ely, Nevada, on "Designating Highway 50 as Part of the Interstate System-Nevada." Testifying before the subcommittee, Senator Howard W. Cannon of Nevada explained that he had secured a commitment for the hearing a year earlier from Committee Chairman Jennings Randolph. The least of his concerns, Senator Cannon explained, was that Carson City was one of the few State capitals not on the Interstate System. In addition, designation of U.S. 50 as an extension of I-70 would "change the face of our country and increase the enjoyment, convenience and well-being of all traveling Americans."

It was not to be. This and later efforts to secure designation of U.S. 50 failed. Today, traffic volumes on U.S. 50 across Nevada remain low. This reality prompted *Life* magazine, in its July 1986 issue, to declare U.S. 50 in the State to be "The Loneliest Road" in America:

"It's totally empty," says an AAA counselor. "There are no points of interest. We don't recommend it." The 287-mile stretch of U.S. 50, running from Ely to Fernly [sic], Nev., passes nine towns, two abandoned mining camps, a few gas pumps and an occasional coyote. "We warn all motorists not to drive there," says the AAA rep, "unless they're confidence of their survival skills."

Rather than being offended or defensive about this negative superlative, Nevada embraced this nickname. The State Legislature officially named U.S. 50 the "loneliest Road in America," and local groups along the route promoted its use with an "I Survived Highway 50" campaign.

Driving West

In July 2004, the Maryland State Highway Administration installed a sign in the median of I-70 just west of the Baltimore Beltway:

Columbus	420 miles
St. Louis	845 miles
Denver	1700 miles
Cove Fort	2200 miles

In the October 23, 2004, edition of *The Baltimore Sun*, Robert Benjamin explained that the sign resulted from a concern about safety "and a touch of geographic whimsy":

Maryland highway engineers erected it to test a new type style on road signs; it's called Clearview, and leaving aside a lot of technicalities, it's supposed to be a lot more legible at night, particularly for elderly motorists. Given that the sign was a test, engineers didn't want it to provide "critical information, like the next exit," says Valerie Edgar of the State Highway Administration. So Columbus, St. Louis, Denver ...

Cove Fort's inclusion on the Maryland sign already paid off for state engineers by prompting all sorts of calls, giving them openings to grill the curious about the sign's visibility. That's no longer needed; the sign passed muster. The state may even add a Maryland locale to it. But, we're assured, Cove Fort will remain.

Just in case Baltimore readers were so intrigued that they wanted to visit Cove Fort, Benjamin informed them that they could reach it in about 34 hours of driving (not counting stops):

And what you'd find there is a 100-foot-square compound bounded by 4-foot-thick, 18-foot-high walls of black volcanic rock, the Cove Fort, a former Mormon way station for pioneer travelers heading south from Salt Lake City toward southern Utah and beyond. The 137-year-old fort, built by the grandfather of

the current president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is now an immaculately restored church historic site drawing more than 80,000 visitors a year.

The nearest city is Beaver, Utah, with only 2,500 residents but renowned as the birthplace of the outlaw Butch Cassidy and Philo T. Farnsworth, the inventor of TV. Apart from that, it's ski resorts, alpine vistas, big cattle ranches, "and absolutely nothing but beautifully gorgeous countryside," says Carl Madsen, the church elder who oversees Cove Fort.

The Rambler and I-70

In the years before cable reached his home, the Rambler once planned to get on I-70 and drive to Norwich, Ohio, to see the National Road/Zane Grey Museum. The idea that the Rambler would actually go somewhere, or even take time off, was so unusual that his coworkers decided to encourage him by staging a Bon Voyage party on the Friday before his vacation. The festivities, though brief, included a "Bon Voyage" sign and chocolate chip cookies.

He was going to leave for the museum on Monday, but something came up, so he put it off to Tuesday, then Wednesday, then Thursday, then Friday, then put it off to a later time. The following Monday, he sheepishly returned to work, where his coworkers eagerly awaited news of his fabulous I-70 journey into history. When he explained that he hadn't left the Baltimore-Washington area, they were not amused.

To date, he has not made it to Norwich. As for Cove Fort, the Rambler says it is so exotic a destination that it is not even on his list of Places He Wants to See But Not Bad Enough to Actually Go See Them. It is there, nevertheless, and the Rambler invites other travelers to enjoy the trip.
