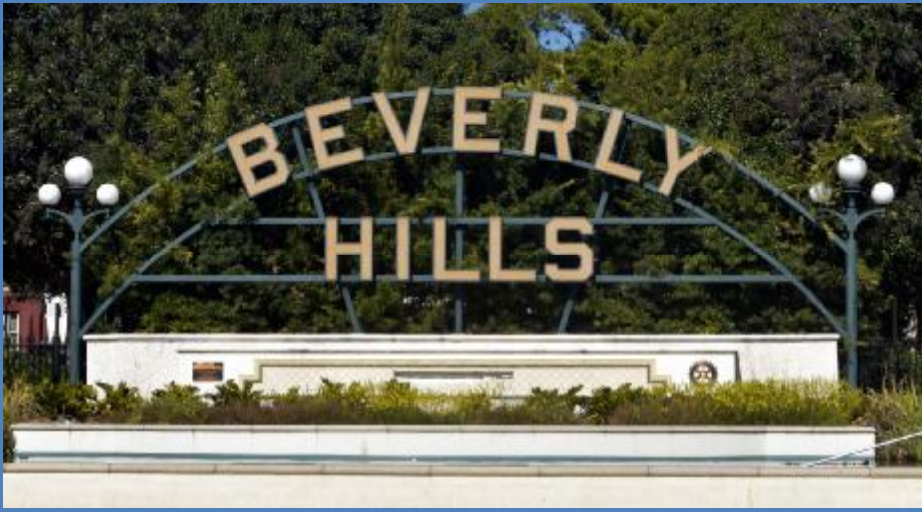




In Search of Eldorado

Link to the Eldorado Song: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VczD1olutQ8>



Hello to Family & Friends

I signed up for the Hop On Hop Off bus tour today. I thought it was the Starline tour but it's the Big Bus Tour.

It turned out ok because this bus (GoCard) does Hollywood and Beverly Hills, and the Starline (GoCard) does Santa Monica and Venice, and I definitely don't want to visit Venice again.

Unfortunately it was McDonalds for breakfast. Kind of forced by time on that one.

While I was waiting to cross the street I noticed the filming happening on the opposite corner. Not sure what it is, a tour guide said *American Wife* but I couldn't confirm that.

My goal for today is mostly Beverly Hills so I hopped off at the Beverly Gardens. Below is the iconic Beverly Hills Crest.



Day 55
Wednesday,
February 26th

Beverly Hills
mostly

Weather
50's to 80's Sunny

In Search of Eldorado

By Edgar Allan Poe

Gaily bedight,
A gallant knight,
In sunshine and in shadow,
Had journeyed long,
Singing a song,
In search of Eldorado.

But he grew old—
This knight so bold—
And o'er his heart a shadow—
Fell as he found
No spot of ground
That looked like Eldorado.

And, as his strength
Failed him at length,
He met a pilgrim shadow—
'Shadow,' said he,
'Where can it be—
This land of Eldorado?'

'Over the Mountains
Of the Moon,
Down the Valley of the Shadow,
Ride, boldly ride,'
The shade replied,—
'If you seek for Eldorado!'

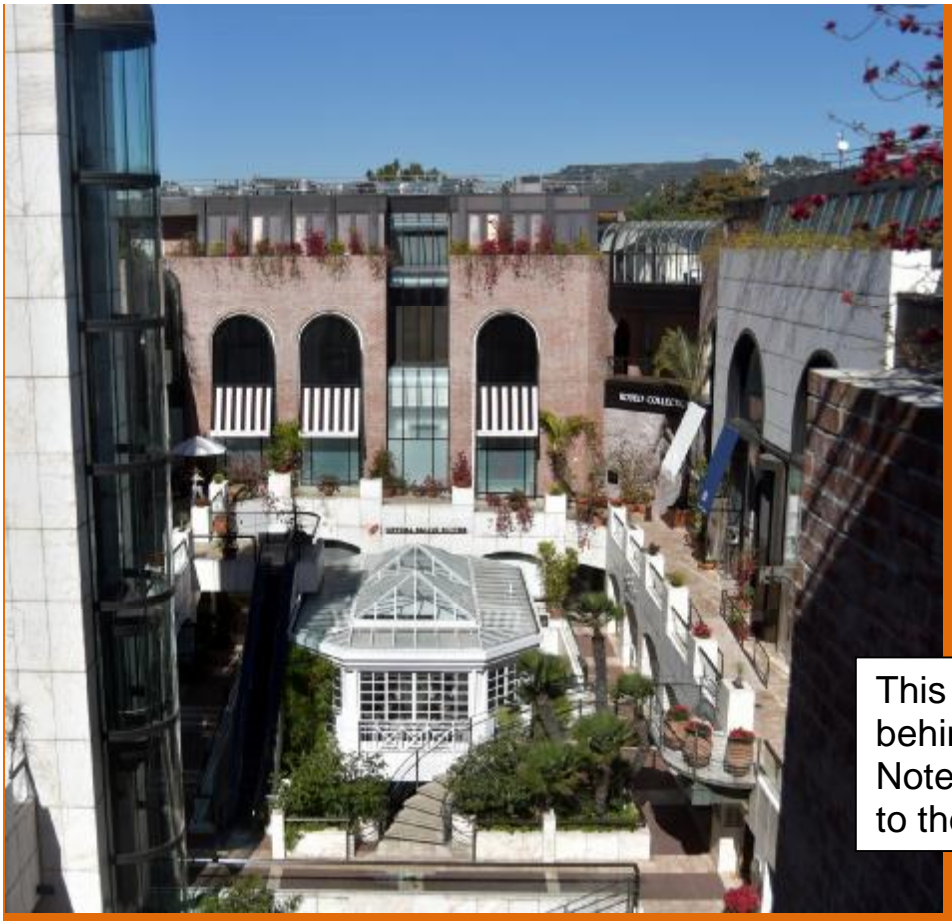


The corner movie shoot.



Here we are ladies, almost every woman's (don't hit me) dream shopping district.





This was a neat little courtyard behind the stores on Rodeo Dr. Note the three story glass elevator to the left.

This is Anderton Ct Shops, smack dab in the middle of Rodeo Dr on the east and designed by Frank Lloyd Wright.

Since I like FLW's designs I had several on my itinerary, but it seems most of them, like the celebrity homes, are hidden by trees, shrubs or walls.





Down at the south end of Rodeo Dr lies this little curving, cobblestone, European flavored walk. No traffic. It features Tiffany, Jimmy Choo, Versace and a few more that I've never heard of.

I only walked Rodeo Dr., but its part of what's known as the Golden Triangle. You can window shop but if you have to ask the price you can't afford it. Some stores are by appointment only, and some will not even let you in the door to take a picture.

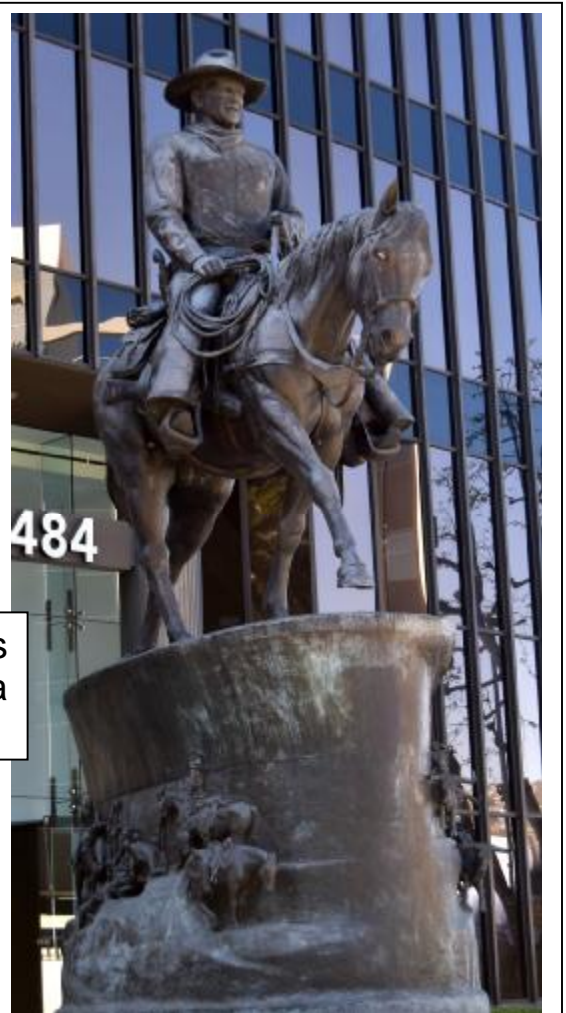




The Beverly Wilshire Hotel, better known as the, *Pretty Woman* hotel.



Oh look, another John Wayne sighting. His statue is displayed here because he was a long time spokesman for the bank.



After walking Rodeo Dr and turning onto Wilshire at the hotel (9500) I thought, well, it's just ten blocks to the John Wayne statue then I'll hop on the bus a little farther down. About 9000 I became amazed at how long each block is in Beverly Hills. Then I realized the bus doesn't stop on Wilshire until the way back. I wanted to hop on and then hop off at the infamous La Brea Tar Pits, now I'll have to hoof it all the way, 3.2 miles.



From Oil Wells to Fossil Fields

One million Ice Age fossils were dug up right outside these walls from 1913 to 1915.

Around the time that dozens of wells pumped oil out of this ground, workers dug 96 pits here looking for fossils. In a busy two-year period, their efforts paid off. One million fossils were found and saved for future generations. This work continues and the La Brea Tar Pits Museum now houses nearly five million fossils.

Saber-toothed cat

Smilodon fatalis

Saber-toothed cats were as large as African lions but more heavily built. They relied on stealth rather than speed to hunt, ambushing bison, camels, and ground sloths. Scientists are still investigating how these felines used their most memorable feature: their four-inch fangs. The "sabers" may have been used for stabbing and slashing, or biting open the soft underbelly of their prey.



The plastic saber-toothed (we called it a tiger) was one of my favorite dinosaur toys as a kid.



Dire Wolf *Canis dirus*

Rancho La Brea is widely known for its incredibly rich fossil deposits. These 404 Dire Wolf skulls represent only a portion of the more than 1600 wolves whose remains have been found here. It is thought that packs of Dire Wolves attempted to feed on animals trapped in the asphalt and became mired themselves. You can see that they are not all exactly alike in either size or shape. Research on these minor differences is sure to yield information about wolf evolution and population structure.

It's hard to fathom that they have unearthed (untarred?) over five million fossils here, and are still finding more every day.



This guy is bigger than my RV



Columbian mammoth

Mammuthus columbi

The trumpeting of Columbian mammoths once echoed from Canada to Central America. During the Ice Age they were the most common mammoth species in North America. At around 12 feet tall and weighing more than 17,000 pounds, this specimen would have been an average-sized animal (they could be more than 13 feet tall). Broad, ridged molars allowed mammoths—like cows and horses—to graze on grasses, sedges, and other tough plants.

My RV is 11 feet tall and weighs 12,000 pounds. Too bad mine doesn't graze on grasses, sedges and other tough plants.

Time for the outside tour. Look for the tar just bubbling up out of the ground.



Pit 91: Active fossil dig

You're standing in front of an active fossil dig! We first dug into Pit 91 in 1915 and continue to excavate here in the summer. We've found fossils of extinct saber-toothed cats and other large animals. We've also found fossils of smaller animals and plants. Come inside and take a look!

How old?

The oldest fossils from Pit 91 date back 44,000 years. The most recent fossils are 14,000 years old.

How deep?

We've dug 15 feet deep. We might find fossils up to five feet deeper.

Did you know?

We've even found the fossils of flies that fed on dead animals trapped in the Tar Pits.



A nice sense of humor



They're remodeling the Art Center next door and found more fossils as they dug the foundation. The blocks of tar are packaged into crates like this for future investigation.

LA BREA TAR PITS

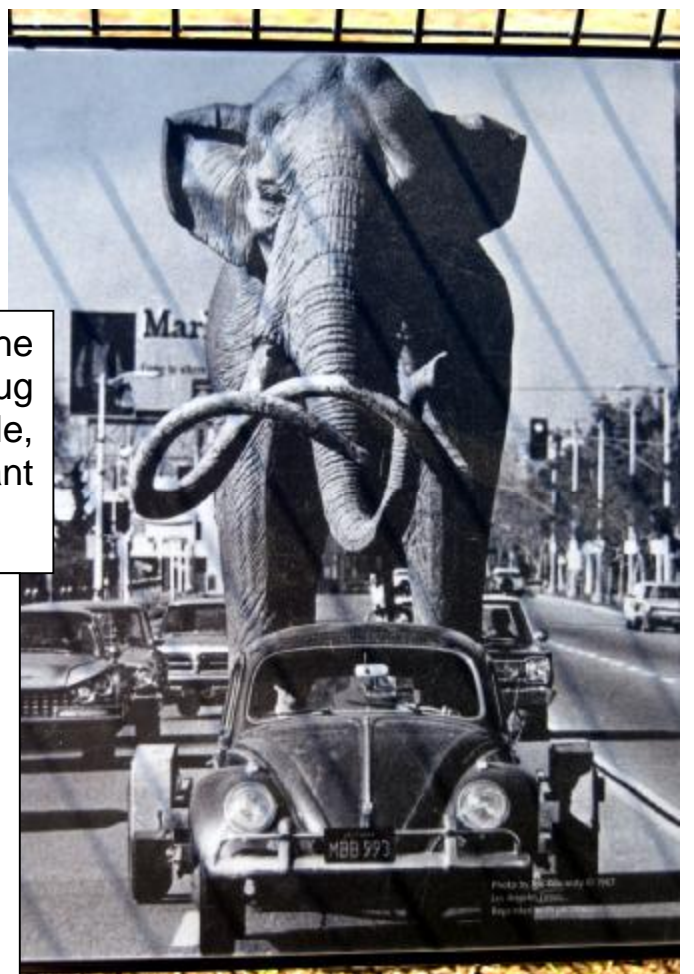
Lake Pit

This is probably the most famous image of the La Brea Tar Pits there is, without the fence of course. That part was a little disappointing.



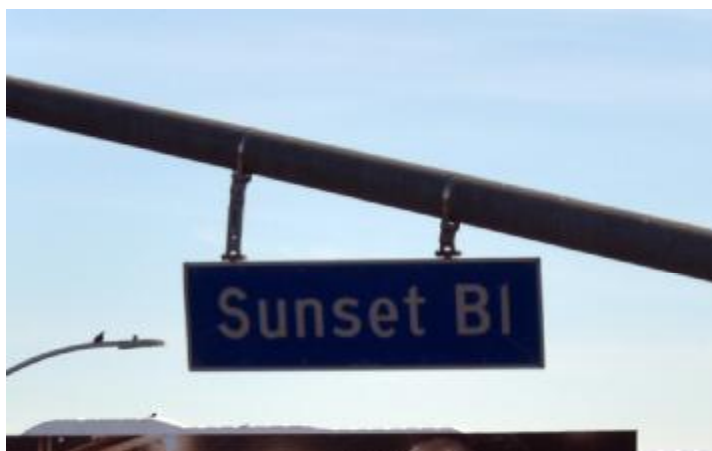
Los Angeles, 1968 > Howard Ball towed the male mammoth sculpture from his studio to here with his VW Bug.

This must have been quite the sight. Imagine the view of the bug being blocked by another vehicle, and all you see is this giant mammoth moving towards you.



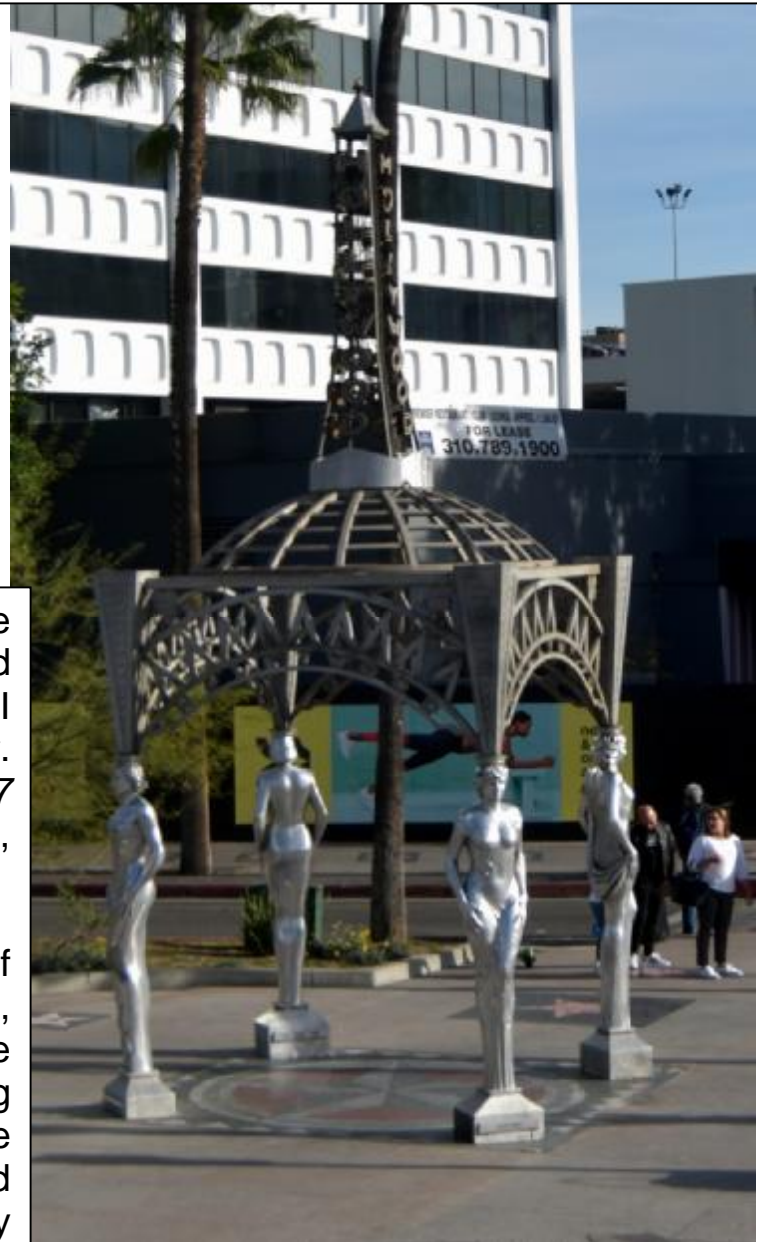
Can you see the bubbles where gas is escaping from under the water? There are about four of them in this photo. Then they would disappear and others would suddenly bubble up. The cause is methane gas.

This may be funny to you, but it wasn't to me. I left the Pits feeling tired and hungry. The bus stop is only a few hundred yards away. I checked the app and thought I had enough time. A hundred yards from the stop the bus whizzes past me, stops up ahead for 10 seconds then continues on its way. I was not going to run to catch the bus. AArrgghh! Thirty minutes til the next bus. Ok, time for lunch. There's a small diner in an airstream right on the plaza of the Arts Center. Chicken sandwich and a soda (\$10). I am leaning against a wall in the shade about 30 feet from the bus stop cause it's about 86 degrees out here. Watching the bus app on my phone for the location of the bus, it's still down around the corner. As I look up the bus goes whizzing by. It's not funny. I already have close to four miles in today and I'm on a bus tour. Next stop is another mile up the street. I was able to grab some ice cream at the Farmer's Market, which looks like a really excellent place if you want a wide choice of things to eat. And yes, I finally did catch the bus here. Funny thing is, I was the only passenger so the tour guide and I spent the rest of the ride talking this and that. I hardly ever looked at the scenery and he never told me anything about what we were passing by. We got back around to the first stop and I hopped right back on the next bus so I could grab some photos this time. Keep in mind these are all from a moving bus.



Above – Sunset Blvd, the Sunset Strip, home of *Sunset Blvd* with William Holden and Gloria Swanson and the famous line (which I already used during this trip) “Alright Mr. DeMille, I’m ready for my close-up”. 77 *Sunset Strip*, TV series of the early 60’s, among many others.

Right – A tribute to the interracial success of Hollywood – Dolores Del Rio (Hispanic), Dorothy Dandridge (African American), Mae West (Caucasian) and Anna May Wong (Asian). Marilyn Monroe used to be on the very top, but someone climbed up and sawed her off. It was all caught on a security camera.



A house up in the Mount Olympus neighborhood



The Chateau Marmot – Too many stars have gotten into trouble here to be listed, well, maybe just a few. Lindsay Lohan was kicked out for not paying her \$46k+ bill; Elizabeth Taylor nursed Montgomery Clift back to health here after he had a near-fatal car crash in 1956; John Belushi overdosed in 1982.



The Viper Room – Once partly owned by Johnny Depp, he took the heat for River Phoenix, brother of Joaquin Phoenix who just starred in *Joker*, who died on the sidewalk after leaving the club, also a drug overdose.



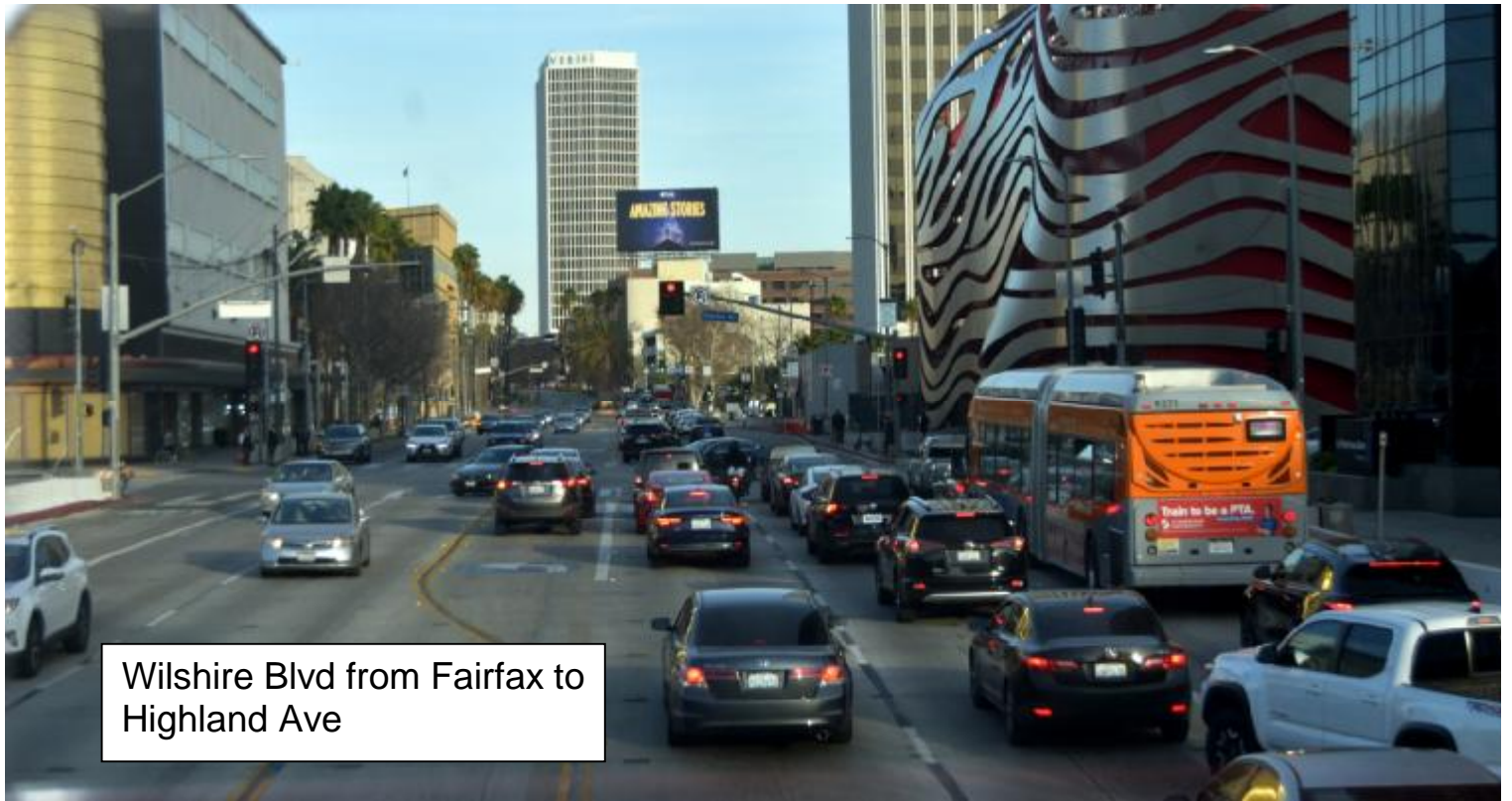


Carneys – Has been in movies and is famous for being able to get chili on anything



The Sunset Tower Hotel – A beautiful Art-Deco style high rise opened in 1931. John Wayne and Howard Hughes both lived here in the early 30's.





Wilshire Blvd from Fairfax to Highland Ave

And how many times have we seen this iconic studio entrance?



After about three stops everyone debussed except for the tour guide and myself (and the driver of course, but he was downstairs and we were upstairs). Once again we ended up yacking away. I told him about my travels, he told me about his life as a struggling actor from Chicago. And once again, with the exception of the Miracle Mile and Paramount above, nothing was described by the tour guide and I didn't really pay attention to the scenery. Except that one woman, wow.

I think I easily hit five miles today hiking around Beverly Hills and Hollywood. Beverly Hills is nice. Clean, no billboards (they stop, just like that, from West Hollywood to Beverly Hills), lots of greenery.

I parked at the Bed, Bath and Beyond again in Culver City without incident.

Not sure what I'm doing tomorrow. I have only a couple sights left on the GoCard so I made good use of that.

Tired.

Until next time.....