

Vacation



I just returned from vacation with John and the boys. John started going to Silverton Colorado at 15 years old and it became a favorite trip that he takes almost every year over the 4th of July. I'd never been before and couldn't wait to experience it with him. It was beautiful! We were all over the mountains on four-wheelers, which, by the way, is something that never seems to tire the male species.

On one of our mountain rides, we came upon a small ghost town nestled in the mountains called **Animas Forks**

<http://www.ghosttowns.com/states/co/animasforks.html>. <http://www.ghosttowngallery.com/html/animasforks.htm>

Animas Forks was once a small mining community that was vacated as the area mines were depleted. I looked at the small houses and wondered what life must have been like for those who once inhabited them. The winters were brutal and the mines were treacherous so the life expectancy under those conditions was less than 50 years. It's almost impossible for modern day Americans to comprehend what life in an environment like that would be like. No plumbing, no electricity, nothing but wooden shelters in the shape of small houses.

Recently in the news a politician found himself in trouble for stating that American's had become a Nation of whiners. Though an unpopular statement for a political figure, I have to

say that in many ways, I agree with him. We have become a Nation of spoiled brats who take for granted all of our comforts and luxuries. As I think back on Animas Forks I realize that I too often fail to recognize my blessings and comforts. I came home from vacation and need another vacation to recoop.

I'm not completely certain, as I write this entry, why these random thoughts have come together but I find myself contrasting my tiredness from an un-restful vacation against the lives of the inhabitants of Animas Forks. I'm not saying that it's not ok to be tired, and Lord knows I'd rather have spa treatments at a 5 star resort over four-wheeling through muddy mountains any day of the week BUT, I am blessed to have taken an exhausting 10 day vacation to one of the most beautiful places in the Country and to return home with all my aches and pains to my warm bed in my beautiful home with all the advantages of life at my fingertips.

One night on our trip, we sat and watched a movie, "The Guardian" (a great one if you haven't seen it) and there was a line in the movie by the character Maggie: I quote:

I mean if my muscles ache, it's because I've used 'em. It's hard for me to walk up them steps now, its 'cuz I walked up 'em every night to lay next to a man who loved me. I got a few wrinkles here and there, but I've layed under thousands of skies with sunny days. I look and feel this way, well cuz I drank and I smoked. I lived and I loved, danced, sang, sweat and screwed my way thorough a pretty damn good life if you ask me. Getting old ain't bad Ben. Getting old, that's earned.

John and I talked about that line as we moaned and groaned with our aches and pains over the past week while recovering from so much fun. We have pain in our bodies because we live a full life. We decided that rather than recognizing our pain and overlooking our blessings, that we should celebrate our pains more and simply practice *acknowledging* our blessings. I learned that we have blessings ONLY if we recognize them. If we don't see them are we blessed by them?

Next year on our trip to Silverton, we are hoping to take all the kids, Kelsey, Daron and Clint as well. I will have more aches, more mountain rides, I will cook twice as much over a Coleman stove and will come home more exhausted! I am blessed!

While away, we also had the pleasure of decorating our four-wheelers and riding in the 4th of July parade in Silverton. Let us never forget the price paid so that we could freely experience this wonderful life! Even at \$4 a gallon for gas, may I learn to give thanks for having a beautiful car to pump it into!