

'Truly amazing'

Written by Deb Egenberger
Thursday, 23 June 2011 19:49 -



4-H Heritage Tour takes teens on whirlwind trip.

When Gothenburg teenager Peyton Maline received a letter more than a year ago from the Dawson County Extension Service inviting her to consider a 15-day trip to see a few landmarks of America's heritage, she wasn't really interested.

But after Maline and her best friend Leah Loostrom talked more about the 2011 4-H Heritage Tour, each girl gained a new perspective.

"We decided it would be a fun adventure if we did it together," Maline said.

It turned out to be more than a little adventure for the soon-to-be senior at Gothenburg High School. It was more like a trip of a lifetime.



"We saw so many truly amazing things," said Maline, who was selected by the group as Gothenburg's reporter for the tour. "It was a great opportunity, just like 4-H is a great opportunity."

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Forty-seven 4-H'ers from Dawson County, including Extension sponsors Bruce Treffer and Andrea Nisley, boarded a charter bus in Lexington at 5 a.m. on May 29.

The ultimate destination was the nation's capital but there were a variety of fun stops planned on the way to and from Washington D.C.

After a stop in Omaha, a windshield tour through Iowa's Amana Colonies, a visit to Chicago's Museum of Science and Industry and a tour of the Henry Ford Museum in Michigan, the bus headed toward the Canada border.

"They're not as protective going into Canada as they were when we came back into the United States," Maline said, explaining each tour participant simply had to show his or her passport to enter Canada.

Niagara Falls, from the Canadian side of the attraction, was what again Maline called amazing.

"It's just beautiful and we took this boat ride right up in the falls," she said. "You get soaked but it's really cool."

A second day in Canada allowed Maline and the group to try pea soup served during a dinner theater production of, "O Canada Eh."

"I like peas," Maline said, "but I'm not gonna lie, I didn't like pea soup. The maple chocolate cake was really good, though."

Once back into the U.S., day five was filled with driving.

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"A lot of people slept," Maline said of the long bus rides. "Some people watched movies or listened to music or read."



The site of the Boston Massacre, Paul Revere's home, Harvard University and Old Iron Sides were the main stops in and around Boston.

Then, Maline said, it was on to the highlight of the trip for her.

"I loved everything about New York City," she said. "You hear about all the expensive shops there and all the people and Central Park. It was definitely my favorite part."

Maline said she made a stop at one of those expensive purse shops hoping to pick up a memento but she left the store empty handed.

"Um, I didn't have that kind of money with me," she said laughing.

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Rockefeller Center, the 86th floor of the Empire State Building and a two-hour boat tour took most of the day. Maline said Times Square wasn't on the agenda but they found time for a few of them to walk there. It ended up being her favorite part of the trip.

"It was so cool," she said. "I watch 'Good Morning, America' that is filmed there all the time and it was really neat to be right there with all the screens and the lights."

From New York, the group traveled to Washington D.C., driving past the White House and exploring many of the national monuments there.

In her free time, Maline chose to visit the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Museum.

"I'm really glad I went there," she said. "I think everyone needs to experience it and see how other people were treated. I know it made me realize how we take a lot of things for granted."

Arlington Cemetery, Capitol Hill, the Library of Congress and the U.S. Supreme Court were among other closeby stops.

Maline said it wasn't until the group reached Lancaster, PA, that they got their first home-cooked meal in an Amish community.

"That whole experience was incredible," Maline said. "Again, we take a lot of things for granted."

The rest of the trip home was a lot of bus time but Maline said a stop at Churchill Downs in Kentucky was well worth it for a horse lover.

"We were looking at \$4 million horses," she said. "That's hard to believe."

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Maline said the girls were hoping to buy hats traditionally worn by women at horse races but the cost was a little pricey.

“So we had fun taking pictures instead.”

Maline is now a proponent for the Heritage Tour as well as 4-H.

“It gives you so many opportunities and teaches you so much,” she said. “It’s well worth it.”