

Lincoln Legends

Just in time for the Halloween season, as I mull over costume choices for myself and my two youngest, haunted places have come up in conversations recently. These recent topics have reminded me of a few such places in Lincoln Nebraska...

Back when we were a little family with only one toddler, we lived in Lincoln for a year. It was a great city – large yet rurally isolated and without the sprawling suburbs we had grown accustomed to after growing up in the Chicago area. After a few months in Lincoln, I was charmed by the city and began reading up on local history, which is where I found out about the interesting stories of Charles Starkweather and Robber's Cave.



*(Caril Fugate and Charles Starkweather
before the murder spree)*

Charles Starkweather was a young, lower-class, James Dean wannabe who dated a younger girl named Caril Fugate in Lincoln in the 1950's. There is some debate about Caril's role in the horrific events for which the pair is known, but Starkweather was convicted of the murders of 11 people in Nebraska and Wyoming during a 1958 eight-day-long murder spree. Starkweather was executed by the state in 1959 at the age of 20, while Caril served some time and is now presumably living a quiet life. I think it would be interesting to see an

interview with the now 68-year-old Fugate, but like everyone else involved in the horror, she deserves her privacy and probably guards it. So anyway, Starkweather is buried in a large, beautiful cemetery nestled amongst rolling hills in the heart of Lincoln called Wyuka Cemetery, and has the unusual (however macabre) distinction of being buried in the same cemetery as some of his victims. Caril's dilapidated house (where the first murders, those of her family, took place) no longer stands. But Starkweather had a huge grudge against upper class folks, and the beautiful house of the Ward family, a wealthy couple who along with their maid fell victim to Starkweather's massacre, still stands. Also interesting are the many works of pop culture inspired by the rampage; movies such as *Natural Born Killers* (though this one is very loosely based), *Badlands*, and books: characters in both Stephen King's *The Stand* as well as *Outside Valentine* are based upon Starkweather, Caril and some of the victims. Interestingly, the author of *Outside Valentine*, Liza Ward, is the granddaughter of the wealthy couple that were victims of Starkweather in 1958.

So anyway, if you're into that kind of thing, plenty to see in Lincoln based upon the Starkweather case alone, but that was actually a super-huge tangent that took me away from the original reason I wanted to write this post! Guess I'll save Robber's Cave for my next post...

FOOTBALL! Time To Blog, Except...

... I've gotten engrossed in another video game. And because I'm a mom of 4 and don't have a lot of extra time, my blogging

frequency is going to suffer while I divide my spare time with mindless gaming, oh well. With the start of the NFL season and back-to-school-time, I will have more time at home for my favorite quiet activities like reading the newspaper, blogging, and playing video games while my husband watches football (Go Bears!). I thought I'd be rolling out blog posts, but then my husband put an N64 emulator on my computer, distracting me with what is quite possibly the best video game ever made – in my opinion, anyway: The Legend of Zelda: Ocarina of Time. It's an adventure game, which is my favorite genre of video game, but I'm very picky – there has to be large 3D worlds to explore, as well as a variety of puzzles peppered with the perfect combination of inventory, fighting, and weaponry. This version of Zelda has everything, and this is actually my second time playing it through. Currently I'm in the second dungeon (Dodongo's Cavern) which is probably my least favorite in the entire game. Once I get past it though, I have lots of fun ahead – there are plenty of areas left to explore; including an underwater colony and the inside of a volcano. This game also skips ahead 7 years, and you get to see what Hyrule (the country you are defending) looks like in the future when your character has grown into a young man from a little boy. Here is a screen shot:



...which makes me want to get back to it so I can kick some Dodongo a**!

GO BEARS!!!

Time to close this blog?

Seeing that today is the one month anniversary of my last blog post about my life, that is a valid question. The filler is interesting, but what about my two jobs, one of which was once the emphasis of this blog? This week was actually a milestone for my new job. For the first time my commission exceeds the \$50/day they have been paying me since the start of training last June. It's still not much, but the job promises to pay more eventually. And what about the camera training the owners have asked me to take charge of? One of them has plugged me as the national camera trainer to one of the clients after they noticed my pictures are pretty good. Great- a standard to live up to! ☐ .I still wonder how much I will be paid for this training whenever it happens.

At the moment I am subbing, or trying to, for two full days a week plus mornings five days every two weeks (every other week I go to two places on Friday so I can't sub that day). I am signed up in three districts this year but so far have only worked in two. What? Yes I did say two before, but then the third sent me a welcome note without my having signed up again so I stuck with it. Since they were the source of some of my jobs so far, it looks like I made the right choice there. I have subbed for one (half) day of middle school so far- the rest have been in elementary schools. I actually took a bilingual first grade job- something I try to avoid during the main part of the year. I also just took a job for a kindergarten morning Monday at the very school I went to for K through most of 2. Oddly enough, while I can remember the names of all my other elementary teachers, I can't for this school. I wonder if I will be in the same classroom I was in for my own kindergarten? I wonder if I will even recognize

anything at the school. I am pretty sure I took no assignments there last year.

Let's see what I can say about the jobs I've taken so far. The first-grade bilingual class was a little rough as the plans the teacher left were not very detailed, often requiring me or one of the assistants who were in and out of the room throughout the day to find the required materials. The kids were also not very good listeners, but whether that was because of limited English skills or other reasons I couldn't say. Another couple of days I was in a position where there were *no* plans. These were for special-ed teachers who didn't even have set schedules yet being the beginning of the year so I ended up helping out in different classrooms throughout the day. I wouldn't be the least bit surprised if I found out that they came in the next day and said, "I had a sub?" I don't think I was expected... The junior high job was a teacher who had both 7th and 8th grade classes, and all I did was supervise as they used computers to work on projects. I was worried when not just my classes, but others as well used the laptops throughout the morning with little time to charge them, but according to one teacher the batteries actually hold out for some six hours or so, something I have never heard of in laptops. My own computer lasts for three or less, but with its specs I am not surprised.

So why have I not been keeping up on my friend's blogs even if I couldn't be bothered to update my own? I don't know. If you want refrain from ~~posting~~ commenting in return I will understand.

Four Day Weekend, Already?

But didn't school JUST start? And wasn't the kids' first weekend a THREE day weekend? Yes and yes. But to be **fair** (pun intended), this 4-day weekend was not planned in advance, well not entirely, anyway. It began with Monday being Fair Day for the kids – our county fair opens tomorrow, and the kids are off school on Monday to go to the fair and also because many of them have 4-H projects that will be judged at the fair on Monday – that was a planned day off. So then today, my husband was driving our daughter to school, when he realized he was the only one on the road and at the school. At least, that's what he thought -it was so foggy they couldn't see much of anything... so they returned home only to find that there was a two-hour delay because of the fog – our phones had been turned off so we didn't get the early morning call... So anyway, the 2 hour delay turned into an entire fog day because the dense fog would not clear early enough for the school district to send the buses into the country to pick up the kids. Fog Day on Friday + Fair Day on Monday = the first 4-Day weekend of the new school year, taking place on only the third weekend of the new school year! Luckily our student calender is set up to include 5 calamity days, and in NW Ohio, early morning fog is considered a calamity, I guess! What will we do when the 5 yearly calamity days are taken out of the calendar since the governor's plan calls for calamity days to be phased out? Wait and see, I guess...

And now I have to totally rearrange my day – so much for advance planning! I'll have to juggle the not-4-kid-friendly errands I have with my husband's planned business call – keeping 4 kids quiet and out of the way for that? Good luck to me! These are the times when I wish he had his own office... The benefits of working at home outweigh the negatives of him working at an office of course, but on days like these, ugh! It's funny because I'm not native to NW Ohio

and so both fog days and fair days are new to me – man, would I have loved these as a kid. As an adult... not so fun. Maybe we can have another calamity day later this year when we have nothing planned and we can just sit inside and watch movies and play games all day... Then, let it snow!

Thinking of the Fair

Our local County Fair starts this weekend. I don't think I missed this fair since I came with my wife and oldest daughter back in 1983. While it has change some, it really hasn't changed at all. Most of the same vendors come year after year, the local producers (pork, beef, dairy) serve the same food. There are always fresh fair donuts. ☐ The biggest thing this fair has to offer is all of the hard work the kids put into their projects. Animals, displays, showmanship, riding skills can all be seen. The fun I get from this is seeing the fun the kids have.

Even though my youngest was home for the Labor Day holiday last week, she wants to make the trip home again for a trip to the fair. She still has friends that will be showing their animals. She may get to run into a friend or two. One never knows at the county fair.

A Whim? It Was The 19th

Pregnancy Test!

I've blogged about the [Duggar family](#) before – they are famous for having a TLC reality show about their large family of 20. That's two parents and eighteen natural offspring – no adoptees, no foster kids; just two people who don't believe in birth control and who have the utmost faith in God and their marriage. I blogged about their daily routine (involving a cool-looking, specially outfitted custom-built house for a large family – think industrial size kitchen appliances and 4 washer / dryer sets) that seems to be successful in keeping their 20-member household functioning smoothly. I also linked to their website, which had pictures of the interior of their custom-made house. They had their own buffet line built into one of the kitchens, and their dining room has a drink station with cups for each of the 18 kids. As a parent of 4, I find their larger family way of life fascinating. Actually, some of their practices have changed since the eldest Duggar offspring is now moved out, married, and expecting a baby of his own.

Not to be outdone, his mother Michelle is pregnant with her *nineteenth* child. She says she took this latest pregnancy test “on a whim”, which is difficult for me to comprehend when she's had probably around a dozen and half positive pregnancy tests in her life. She said she was nursing, and her infant grew fussy – in the past, a fussy nursing infant meant that mother's milk had pregnancy hormones, so that's why she took the test. I can't imagine having kids close enough in age to be able to find that out once, let alone to test it over and over like a theorem. And another thought on this – when Mrs. Duggar gives birth to child #19 (wonder what personality traits can be attributed to #19 according to the psychologists who specialize in birth order? Do the books go that high?), she will have spent roughly one-third of her 42 years on this Earth pregnant. I hope for her sake she doesn't

go through a pregnancy withdrawal when her body is done having kids. But for now, the family seems happy as can be, and what's interesting is that Michelle's first grandchild will be about 5 months older than his or her aunt or uncle. And let it be clear that I'm not putting these people down – they have a solid family and all these kids seem well cared for by two loving parents who are still married, not to mention LOADS of siblings... more power to them!

Number 2 Meets Number 4

What an accomplishment to an already stellar career that shows no signs of ending anytime soon. Tonight, Derek Jeter joined Lou Gehrig (The Iron Horse, The Pride of the Yankees) as the all time Yankee hitter at 2721. A bunt, a blast, and a rip to right field brought the new and old icons even. Even if he is a graduate of Kalamazoo High School in that state up north where he spent a semester as one of those unmentionables, Derek has handled the spotlight that comes with the stripes with integrity, and maturity over the past 15 years. Even if I were not a fan, I would find it difficult to not cheer for the shortstop phenom. Jeter's work ethic makes it nearly impossible for him to place any solo accomplishment above those of the team... There is no "I" in team. While standing on first base following his third hit of the night, Mr. November rose his helmet not once but twice and acknowledged the ovation from the fans (including his parents), his teammates, the opposing team, the entire crowd at the home of the bombers. Play ceased however briefly for the star to have his moment. And at Captain Clutch's next at bat... he is walked and the crowd goes wild with boooooooooos as the pitcher is retired and the Yanks score 4 and lead the TB Rays 4-2. Unfortunately, it will take some doing for Derek to get to Pete Rose's MLB

All Time Record of 4256 hits. WOW! It took 70 years for someone to even the First Baseman's record. So... unless something terrible happens in this the top of the ninth the record will remain tied. And.... THE YANKEES WIN! **THEEEEEEE YANKEES WIN!!!!!!**

Another Installment of Cute

I realized that I hadn't emptied my camera in awhile, so when I finally did, I found some great pictures!



Told you it was a busy Labor Day weekend!



The girls dressed Charity up like a princess – her blue eye always gets photographic red-eye, but she actually let the kids dress her up! Wonder what kind of

food they enticed her with...



The "baby" has been climbing everything in sight. Here he is on top of the folding table in the laundry room. And he's been running while using his walker-toy; he went right from crawling to running! Guess it's time to start calling him a toddler!



Here are all 4 four kids in the same cart at Menard's... awww!



And this is the ~~baby~~ toddler's

first time going all the way up in the tunnels at the McDonald's Playplace – he loved it!

That's my job

As I've said in previous posts, my youngest is now off at college. Earlier this year she also turned 18. By the laws of this land, that does make her a legal adult. For the past 25+ years I've been doing my best to raise my daughters. I not only wanted to get them to legal adulthood, I've been trying to get them to mature adulthood. It was, of course, my job.

I've often said that I've had little to do with how my daughters turned out. Their mother was the primary reason they turned out the way they did. My job was to follow her lead. I thought I did that very well. Even after she died, I tried to follow her lead. She had a way with her daughters, I could never hope to do as well.

Anyway my youngest is now a young adult. In my eyes, she has grown in to a very mature young lady. Now I can say all four daughters survived into adulthood. Me, I'm just the guy who listened to their mother. Hey, it's my job.

Two Laborious Days Or Surviving The Fumes

My Labor Day Weekend beginning Saturday afternoon was full of

labor (at least the first two days of it). Overnight Saturday into the wee hours of Sunday, a group from our sister store across the state line came and stripped and polished our floors... not a job I would be first in line to accept. However, Saturday I found myself doing the menial task of clearing displays and whatever could be moved from the sales floor into the backroom. Small chest freezers were defrosted, pallets full of 24 packs of Pepsi product were pulled back, gumball and sticker machines, Rug Doctor rental machines... EVERYTHING! Some customers began to wonder if we were moving out. WOW! I hope not! I remember the last time I was part of this prep being July 4th Weekend of 2008 although I was assured that the process was completed since then. By the time 8 PM rolled around I was ready to call it a night. HOWEVER, I was asked to come in at 7.30AM Sunday morning to help move everything BACK to the floor. VERY begrudgingly, I agreed.

7.30 AM Sunday morning. I arrive at the store to find nothing even being attempted to be moved into place. I also notice the quite distinguishable aroma of waxed floor and more than a little slickness as I make my way inside. The manager informs me that the floor is not nearly ready to have all of the displays put back. UGH!!!! I could have stayed at home for at least a half-hour longer. However, if she was willing to pay me for an hour of standing around in the office off the floor... who was I to argue? I did get a free donut out of the deal.

So, by the time 2PM came around, I was once again ready to call it a day. Diane must have been ready for me to call it a day because as soon as the hour began she said: "Go home." The fumes from the cleaner still lingering created a slight sense of weirdness. Once again, customers very strangely commented that it smelled good. By 7.45AM, I had had enough of the odor thank you very much. At 3.00PM, I could still smell the after effects of the cleaning. When I went to work at noon today (I did have Labor Day off), the scent still

lingered. But I still am glad that I did not spend the night
polishing. □