

Lincoln Legends Part II – Robber's Cave

Living in Lincoln Nebraska was really cool; it was interesting to be in the western part of the midwest and away from the Great Lakes region – there are differences both in culture and in topography. The story of Robber's Cave in Lincoln interested me for a few reasons, but especially for the wild-west themes; sandstone bluffs, outlaw hideouts – ok, so I've eaten dinner at one of Al Capone's old hideouts in the Chicago area which is now a steakhouse, but I was talking Jesse James-type outlaws... Hmm, interesting, old Lincoln had outlaws, and old Chicago had gangsters, there's one comparison...

Back from the minor tangent and onto Robber's Cave – the entrance is a now a sandstone bluff located behind a Subway restaurant. We did get a chance to visit it and found it quite easily, but by 2002 when we were there, it had been sealed. In the 1970's, there was a little old lady who would open up Robber's Cave for explorers who paid the admission fee. You would then follow her down a small rickety staircase and be on your own to explore the cave. I've read various reports on the internet about people who grew up on Lincoln and used to go down into the cave all the time – one person even talks of having kids' birthday parties down there! There are tunnels, rooms, a well, and even a natural fireplace with a chimney! There are also legends of western outlaws (like Jesse James, supposedly, though his presence at the cave hasn't been proven) that used to use Robber's Cave as a hideout to count their loot and evade law enforcement after robbing trains, stage coaches, etc. Before the outlaws took over, it's said that Native Americans used the cave for spiritual ceremonies. Robber's Cave also carries legends of being a stop on the Underground Railroad, an underground brewery, and a tunnel that connected the state penitentiary

with the State Hospital for the Insane. Hmm, that almost sounds TOO haunted to be true – supposedly patients and convicts would use the tunnels to escape. Then again, when we were there, I did note the State Penitentiary within view of the entrance to Robber's Cave. And speaking of Nebraska's death row, I'll note that NE is the only state in the country to still have the electric chair as the exclusive means of carrying out the death penalty.

But anyway, Robber's Cave is a neat place, steeped in many decades of history. And the reason I'm bringing this up now? [Robber's Cave is for sale!](#) Well, at least the lot that includes the sealed entrance is for sale – I'm not sure if that then entitles the owner to free roam of all the caves or not if they continue onto other parcels underground. If you'd like more details about the legends of Robber's Cave, [this is an interesting read](#).