Follow our Travels through

Freedom's Frontier
NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA
Happy July, folks! Though summer in July can be hot, hot, hot, the Freedom’s Frontier staff braved the temperatures on Friday, July 15, 2016, for a Fieldwork Day in Excelsior Springs, MO, where they visited potential Partner sites, and the historic Elms Hotel and Spa, 401 Regent Street in Excelsior Springs, MO (http://www.elmshotelandspa.com/the-elms-history.htm), which is likely to be the location for the Freedom’s Frontier Annual Luncheon this November. The hotel is listed on the National Register of Historic Places, and has elements of both Gothic Revival and Tudor Revival architecture. For a history of the Elms, follow the link above – or follow this link to read about the hotel’s “ghostly presence” (http://www.elmshotelandspa.com/ghostsand-paranormal.htm). With Executive Director Jim Ogle at the wheel, staff gathered to get on the road.

More information on the history of the Elms is available in this article from the Kansas City Star, published just a few days after our journey there, called to the attention of Marketing Director Sonia Smith by Freedom’s Frontier Board of Trustees member John Dillingham:
On the hotel’s registration desk, you can see this cash register, and bell, with mailboxes behind the desk, adding to the Elms’ historic feel.

Walking the grounds was relaxing and the gazebo offered some shade for discussions about visiting again in November.

Managing Director Julie McPike, Executive Director Jim Ogle, and Education and Interpretation Manager Liz Hobson checking out a large meeting room at the Elms Hotel.

Sonia’s selfie with gazebo visible in background.
Staff had an excellent lunch at the **Ventana Gourmet Grill**, 117 W. Broadway, Excelsior Springs, MO. Here’s what it looks like inside (photo from the restaurant’s webpage), and the lunch portion of the New Orleans Pasta (**Sonia**’s pick) was enough for two! (**Julie** and **Jim** had the Sugar Burger – Smoky brown sugar glaze, sautéed onions, Cheddar cheese, bacon on a grilled bun. Doesn’t that make your mouth water?)


Mural n the side of the Ventana Grill building.
After lunch, staff walked just down the street from the Ventana Grill, and visited the **Hall of Waters Visitor Center and Cultural Museum**, 201 E Broadway St., which also houses the Excelsior Springs City Hall. The Hall of Waters was a WPA project. It was built in 1937, at a cost of over $1 million. In its heyday, one could buy waters from a variety of the local springs. Here’s an article in the local newspaper, The Excelsior Springs Standard, which outlines some ideas presented for the future of the Hall of Waters: [http://www.excelsiorspringsstandard.com/news/architects-give-alternate-visions-for-hall-of-waters/](http://www.excelsiorspringsstandard.com/news/architects-give-alternate-visions-for-hall-of-waters/) and here’s some history of the Hall of Waters at RoadsideAmerica.com: [http://www.roadsideamerica.com/story/16236](http://www.roadsideamerica.com/story/16236).
Clockwise from top left: Jim Ogle
Signing us in the guest book at the former spring water bar in the Hall of Waters Visitor Center and Museum;
some of the interpretive panels that circle the room; the bar where one could buy Soda, Iron, Manganese,
Calcium and other "healing" waters.
Although we weren’t expecting a tour of the Excelsior Springs Museum and Archives, 101 E Broadway St, Excelsior Springs, MO (http://www.exsmo.com/museum/), time allowed, so in we went! The building, formerly a Clay County State Bank (Est. 1894), is a Clay County, MO, Historic Landmark. Find information about, and old pictures of, the bank here: http://www.exsmo.com/museum/banks/clay/clay.html.
Display case exhibits tell the stories of the various springs, and products available to improve one's health.
Oversized photos line the walls.

American Legion Drum and Bugle Corps, Clyde Gustine Post 236, Excelsior Springs, MO, National Health Resort, 1927.

Milwaukee Depot, built in 1887, after a main line from Chicago to Kansas City was built by the Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Paul and Pacific Railroad Company. The train pictured is the Southwest Limited. The depot operated until the late 1960s and was torn down in 1973. The cupola, sign and a bench are at the museum.

Broadway Street, looking east, before the bank was built, before 1906.
Sonia liked this exhibit of 2-inch lead figures of World War I military men, medical personnel, tents, tanks and more donated by Lester Rowland. Here's a bird's-eye view of a few scenes from the display.
No summer outing is complete without ice cream, is it? And so to end our day, we visited the Dari B Drive-In, 901 Isley Blvd, Excelsior Springs, MO (http://www.dari-b.com/), “a family tradition since 1954.” We had sundaes and shakes and other of the ice cream treats they’ve been offering for more than 60 years.

We are always grateful to our Partners, and other sites, that allow us to come in and get the inside information about the many places in 41 counties in western Missouri and eastern Kansas that make up the heritage area.

You can find out more information about partnering sites by visiting our webpage at www.freedomsfrontier.org, and clicking on the “Places to See” tab. We hope that you will visit these sites and continue to follow our travels!