

The Wall

A popular tourist destination in the Midwest is Wall Drug. It is a stop on the way to the Black Hills. Been there, done that, sat on the stuffed dead horse.

Back in 1984, I was in a slightly different time zone and visited a different wall. It is also a tourist destination. One that is well known around the world and is, in



fact, one of the few man-made entities that can be seen from outer space. It is quite a Great Wall.

I was in Nanjing working to install a wave-making system. I was doing the software. A board in the computer failed, and we were dead in the water until a replacement could be sent from

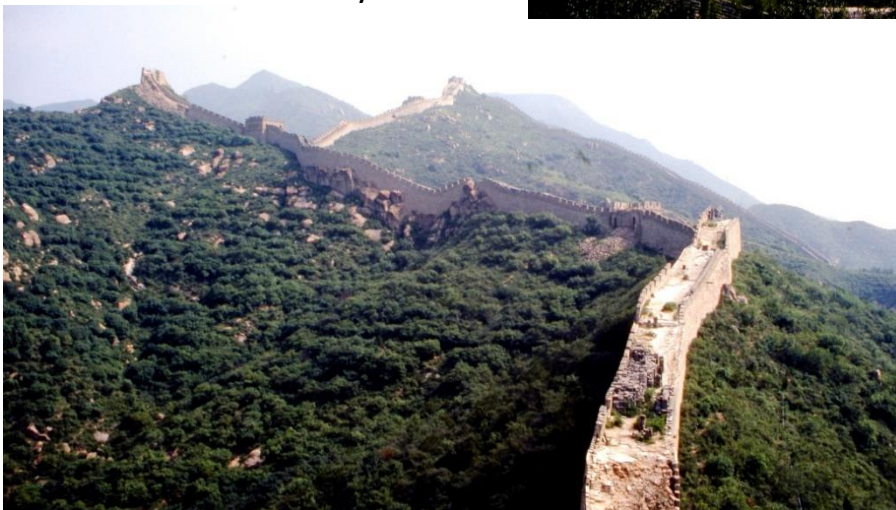
Minnesota. I took the opportunity to go to Beijing and have a look. The Great Wall looked intriguing, so I hired a taxi for the day.

Like any tourist destination, one of the first things you will see is a souvenir shop. I gave that a miss on the way out and



headed to the wall itself.

There were quite a few people also visiting the Great Wall, and I joined them for the first part of my visit, working my way



through the throngs. It is, to say the least, an impressive piece of engineering and execution.

The first part of the wall is quite



well preserved, or at least it has been kept up to resemble its original state. When I visit places like this, my inclination is to move past the crowds and see the less visited places.

As I got farther and farther, I was finally



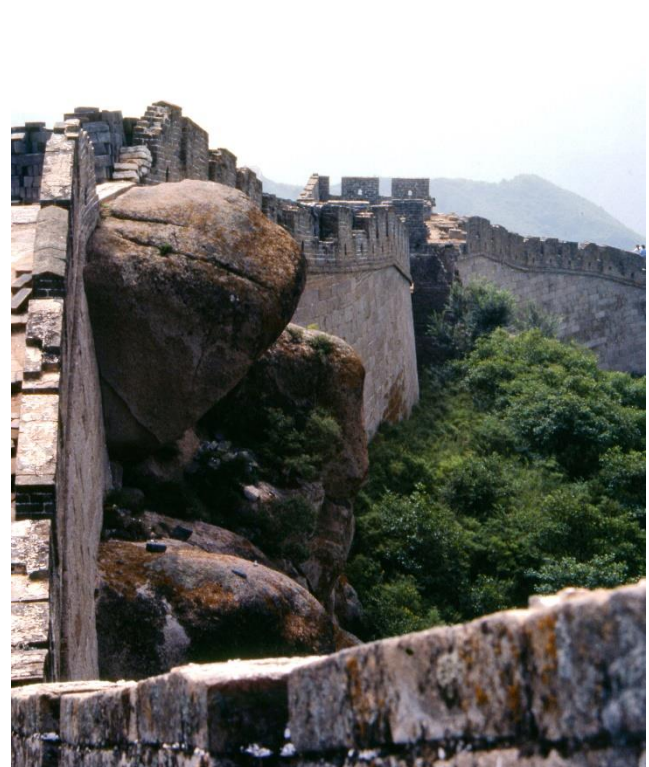
past the touristy, maintained part. The wall is centuries old and subject to the ravages of time. Walls had crumbled and the nice even surface that I started walking on was no longer available. Now it was a bit of a

rock scramble
and I found
myself nearly
alone. The
throngs were
staying on the
restored part.
I could
browse, pick
up stones,



take photos at my
leisure.

I might have even
picked up a piece of
rock and put it in my
bag. Not sure where
that piece of the
Great Wall ended up.





I probably walked a couple of miles beyond the part usually travelled.

I had asked the taxi driver I had hired to wait for me to return. When I got back, I was engulfed by the usual throng hitting the souvenir shops and the food stalls.

I think I bought a Tee shirt or two to bring home for my kids.



It was a nice side trip that I was able to take while waiting for the parts to arrive to get the system I was working on up and running. When the parts arrived, I got the train back to Nanjing and resumed work.