



G. Willikers (left) and S. Knauss (right) at Car Henge in Alliance, Nebraska

August 20, 2022
Lincoln, NE to Crawford, NE

As we were preparing to leave this morning, one of our Lincoln-based colleagues, who I shall refer to as “B”, brought us a strange and beautiful clue: a small piece of prairie agate which clearly depicted three migratory birds in flight, which she had received some days before in an envelope postmarked from Crawford, NE.

A hot debate this morning on whether to follow the clue to Crawford. G. and S. opposed, on the well-founded grounds that Birdish will-o-wisps have derailed ESTAR(SER) researchers with exactly the same regularity as a mid-plot red herring in an episode of Scooby Doo.

Though we initially intended to follow the historic Union Pacific rail line – which ran from Council Bluffs through southern Nebraska and Wyoming before curving upwards in Idaho, running along the border of Oregon and Washington, and then sharply veering north towards Seattle – I couldn’t get the agate out of my mind. Since reading Dostoevsky’s *The Gambler* many years ago, I have suffered from a mostly harmless but acute case of PGA (Phantom Gambling Addiction). To make a long story short, though I knew the risk in following the agate clue to be great, I felt that the reward would be even greater if we succeeded in finding the Birds.



Mysterious piece of prairie agate depicting three migratory birds in flight (detail)

Now I am writing from Fort Robinson RV park in Crawford. It is very late, but the man who checked me into the RV camp just now was jolly as could be. Almost too jolly for 3 in the morning...

In any case – looking forward to see what tomorrow will bring.

Pseudo Fossils at Trailside Museum, Crawford, NE

