

Dallin Evans

Wheeling WV Impact Fellowship experience

Wheeling is in the middle of a long row of river towns at the center of the Ohio river valley, which became important as a bridge west across the river. As such it is centered around several major cities, and many more cultural and historical landmarks. One of the most exciting things for me about the prospect of moving to Wheeling West Virginia was its history as the first seat of the new state, but even more so for its pre-Colombian history. The town directly south along the Ohio river is called Moundsville, it is named for a huge mound left there from a people called the Adenas. The Adenas were the first in a series of mound building civilizations that lasted from c. 1000 BCE until c 1500 CE. When Europeans first settled the Ohio valley those mounds covered the valley, but the people that built them had disappeared and so nearly all of them were destroyed. It was an amazing experience to live among them, visit the remaining mounds and learn from their mysteriously sophisticated and absent culture.

Apart from the mound building people of the Ohio valley another fascinating and unique cultural landmark near Wheeling the Palace of Gold. The Palace is a Hindu shrine, which serves as a pilgrimage site bringing people of the Hindu faith and others from around the country, It is a beautiful temple set on one of West Virginia's majestic hilltops overlooking lakes filled with Swans, statues of Vishnu and Krishna, flower gardens and lotus ponds. I had known about and was expecting the moundbuilder sites, but was surprised to find that kind of a cultural landmark next to Wheeling. In all my time in Wheeling and participating in this program, this was an amazing opportunity for myself to experience.