**It’s a Runderful Life**

A map of the united states

Description automatically generatedOctober 1st, 1979. “That day, for no particular reason, I decided to go for a little run. So I ran to the end of the road. And when I got there, I thought maybe I'd run to the end of town. And when I got there, I thought maybe I'd just run across Greenbow County. And I figured, since I run this far, maybe I'd just run across the great state of Alabama. And that's what I did. I ran clear across Alabama. For no particular reason I just kept on going.” So began the three-year long trek of a man named Forrest, Forrest Gump. Starting from his hometown in rural Alabama and ending in Monument Valley Utah, [the prolific runner crossed this great nation almost five times](https://travegeo.com/Forrest_Gump), covering 15248 miles before he got pretty tired and decided to go home.

[Forrest’s first stop was in Santa Monica](https://marathonhandbook.com/forrest-gump-running/), where he first glimpsed the mighty Pacific. Having already come that far, our intrepid hero decided to turn around and keep going. Our first stop however, corresponding to the earliest fossil evidence (3.8 bya), comes a couple hundred miles later after traveling through the Mojave in the little town of Primm, NV. Primm, which is situated directly on the CA-NV border on I-15, is most known for being the home to the Bonnie and Clyde getaway car, which is famous because they did not, in fact, get away.

As Forrest does, he kept going, eventually finding another ocean. He kept going, once again figuring that he might as well just turn around, eventually bringing us to our second stop, this time in chilly Fargo, ND. In the timeline of the earth, this corresponds to a time with significant amounts of O2 entered the atmosphere. This also brings us almost to the half-way point in our journey.

After quickly saying hello and goodbye to first the Pacific and the Atlantic oceans, Forrest started running west, already on the final leg of his journey, where we pass through the small town of Clyde, NC, near the Smokey Mountains. This spot matches the Cambrian explosion in the earth’s timeline.

600 miles west of Cylde, Forrest came across Little Rock, AR, after already travelling almost 14,000 miles. In earth’s story, this is when vertebrates left the water and first colonized land.

A close-up of a dinosaur

Description automatically generated with medium confidenceContinuing our journey to the west, we pass through Weatherford, OK, home of Apollo 10 commander Thomas Stafford. With less than 1,000 miles to go, this corresponds to the end-Permian extinction in earth’s tale.

A picture containing outdoor, nature, building, sky

Description automatically generatedMy new favorite dinosaur, [Gojirasaurus](https://www.activewild.com/triassic-dinosaurs/), walked the earth around 210 mya. For Forrest, this stop occurred just east of Amarillo, in the small town of Groom, TX. Returning to the Gojirasaurus, it was one of the largest Triassic carnivores. It is the best solely because of its name; ‘Godzilla Lizard.’

We are nearing the end of our journey. 65 mya life on earth experienced the end-Cretaceous extinction, while Forrest had crossed into Arizona, and the small town of Window Rock. This town is named, as you can probably guess, after a rock with a hole through it. But the town also houses the WWII Navajo Code Talkers Museum.

Life continues on, 7 mya may have seen the last common ancestor between chimpanzees and humans, but all Forrest saw was a scenic spot in Arizona called the Double Deck Mesa Windmill.

A person with long hair and a group of people walking on a road

Description automatically generated with low confidenceWe’re almost at the end of our journey. 1.8 mya saw the earliest known appearance of Homo Sapiens. Forrest, in contrast, just crossed the border into Utah.

16,000 ya, the mammoth skeleton immortalized in the Florida Museum of Natural History died. Forrest finds himself only 264 feet short of his final stop.

And this brings us to the present day. In the history of the earth, this corresponds perfectly to today (at least for today). For Forrest, his journey ended in the iconic Monument Valley. I hope you have enjoyed our trek across time and the US.

