
CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

MY RETIREMENT YEARS IN DENVER

INTRODUCTION

It is hard to remember the timing of all of the various vacation trips taken while living in Denver and particularly those at Christmas. At times, they kind of all come together in a blur, which requires help from others to sort them out. However, at this point I need to back track a little to set the scene for Esther's illness that eventually culminated in the loss of her life. We had traveled to Utah during the Christmas of 1982 to visit Valerie and family as well as to see Gene and Theresa. Some members of Valerie's family were sick, as I remember, and Esther as well as Celeste came down with the crud before we returned home. It settled in their chests and they both had light cases of pneumonia after their return to Denver. It took some antibiotics as well as rest before they conquered the problem. A few months later, Esther began to show the signs of Parkinson's disease, which gradually increased in severity during the next seven years.

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When the diagnosis was made, the doctor surmised that her illness of the previous January triggered the Parkinson's disease. Whether that was true or not, we may never know but we do know that her health began a downward spiral 6 months later. Three years after that, when I retired, she was noticeably less mobile but still got around quite well. She was tickled pink with the opportunity to go to Germany to pick Tom up from his mission and see some of the sights Valerie, as well as I, had mentioned from earlier trips. She was proud of Tom, as was I and looked forward to seeing him again.

RETIREMENT PREPARATIONS

Esther and I had talked about our retirement years from time to time and agreed we would stay in Denver where we were accessible to our

respective extended families and where we expected Celeste as well as Tom and his family would continue to live. Also, we were within reasonable visiting distance of Valerie and her family as well as our extended families. We loved the Front Range area around Denver and felt more at home there than we did in southern Idaho. So much had changed in Idaho during our absence; we had no real interest in moving back to Boise. Being near our children seemed more important and Denver satisfied two thirds of that desire, i.e. for Celeste and Tom.

Also, we talked about traveling around the country on extended trips utilizing a motor home or good-sized trailer. This would allow us to visit Valerie and Jared for extended periods without infringing on their hospitality. Being in the same house for more than a week with loved ones can

frazzle the nerves and emotions of even the most amiable people. Having a separate mobile home in the vicinity seemed like a good solution, which would provide

the necessary space for withdrawal while allowing frequent visits during extended stays. Besides making our visits to Georgia more comfortable, such a unit would also allow us to visit places around the country in comfort as we traveled. Our first investment, however, involved some changes in the home we expected to stay in for the remainder of our time on this earth. The trailer and the necessary truck for towing could come sometime later.

A KITCHEN MAKE OVER

Our decision to make our current abode in Denver our retirement home prompted a desire to make it comfortable and more suitable for such a purpose. Prior to my rather sudden retirement from Schlumberger, we decided to remodel the kitchen. Esther wanted more

cupboard space and we wanted to upgrade the appliances as well. We sat down with a friend in the ward that we attended, who did that kind of work, and drew up the necessary plans.

The new kitchen would have a double oven with a built in microwave above them. The stovetop would be placed on an island in the center of the kitchen, which would increase available counter space as well as provide additional cupboards. The corner cupboards contained rotating shelves for easy access and one cupboard designed for can storage would roll out so as to provide easy access to all cans stored therein. The lower cupboards also had roll out lower shelves for easy access to heavier storage items. We even had a couple of tin lined bins for flour storage as I remember. We also added a skylight to brighten up the room, which proved to be a welcome addition. All in all, it would be the kitchen Esther had always wanted as well as being ideal one for our later years. Additionally, we had new cabinets put in both bathrooms to modernize them to a degree.

We decided to let the contractor have access to the house during our vacation trip to Germany, which would soon take place. We had complete confidence in him and hopefully, the work would be done and the mess cleaned up by our return date. Unfortunately, that did not occur but at least we had cupboards by then. I believe we suffered through a couple more weeks of work after getting back from Germany but ended up quite satisfied with the results. The overall configuration really didn't change from that shown in figure 16-4 but an island was now located in the center of the kitchen floor and the two ovens and microwave were located in the top left corner of the cupboard area. Additionally, we added cupboards above the left counter top, which had been simply a breakfast bar previously. Finally, we had enough counter as well as cupboard space with appliances we truly enjoyed and a skylight that really brightened the interior.

REVAMPING THE EXTERIOR

With the kitchen complete, I began thinking of the exterior, which had really been a bear to paint even though it involved only eaves, soffit and gables. The gables in the rear were particularly challenging because of the hillside and walkout basement. When painting them, I found myself over two stories above the ground. I realized that that was risky enough at the age of 53 and convinced me that I wouldn't be up to

it for many more years. I decided to have these areas covered with anodized aluminum of similar color to that already in place. Esther and I decided on a light cream color for the main exposed areas with a medium green trim. The results turned out fine and it appeared that we had made the right decision. We might tire of the color but that was another issue.

We loved to barbecue and eat on the back deck. It provided a nice view with a secluded and shaded area for dinners in addition to an area for talk and pleasant relaxation. The only problem involved was the rather short time each year that it was reasonably comfortable. We probably spent a good deal of time on the deck for about four months a year. Wanting to extend that time as much as possible, we decided to enclose the deck with sliding glass doors and screens so we could close it off during the colder periods and open it up during the summer months. Soon this was accomplished along with indoor-outdoor carpeting, which I installed and we had the deck we wanted. I could barbecue all year long by opening the door next to the grill, we could now relax on the deck some eight months of the year and I didn't have to shovel the snow off during the winter. Once again our investment proved very satisfying.

The year after we moved into the house we had an unusually wet spring and I found that we had a water problem in the basement. The water was entering in at the southeast corner of the basement, which would be the lower right hand corner of the spare bedroom as shown in figure 16-4. Though it was worse after a hard rainstorm, it proved to be continuous throughout the summer. I decided the source was from lawn watering as well as rain uphill from us or to the south. Apparently, there was a porous channel roughly ten-feet underground, which funneled water from those lawns right to our uphill basement wall. I discussed the problem with several people and decided the only solution was a drain around that corner of the house, which would intercept the encroaching water and funnel it around the house into a gravel filled, underground pit. There it could slowly dissipate into the clay like soil without causing a problem for neighbors downhill from us. I found a suitable contractor who dug down to the house footings around that southeast corner and placed a 6" plastic pipe with small entry holes throughout to catch the incoming water. Solid pipe was then run from the receiving pipe to the pit of gravel he dug in the

back yard off to the top right corner of Tom's bedroom as I have it designated in figure 16-4. Coarse gravel was then placed around the receiving pipe to prevent soil encroachment and plugging of the pipe. The ditch was then covered and the lawn replaced. Guess what, it worked and we had no more water entry from that source. The carpet was laid down once again and I felt confident that the problem was solved for good.

Well, it was from that source but another unforeseen problem slowly reared its ugly head.

A few years later after Tom and Julie moved into the basement, I believe, he came roaring upstairs during a heavy thunderstorm yelling the basement is flooding. I ran down and found water streaming into the room through the basement window on the south. We began mopping and bailing as fast as we could to minimize the water encroachment into the neighboring rooms. Finally the storm passed over and we were able to clean the thing up. Of course, we had to pull up the carpet in that room and the neighboring bedroom of Tom's; pull it back and let it dry along with the padding. What a mess. After the storm, I went outside to try to determine the reason for the sudden problem. Well, it was apparent the ground next to the house had settled after the trench had been filled. In lighter rains, the water simply made a puddle next to the house but this particular rain had come in torrents. The low spot had filled allowing the water to run into the window well and hence the basement. Of course, the solution was to haul in some more dirt and raise the ground level next to the house so the water would run

towards the street. This we did and once again the problem was solved, this time for good, thank goodness. It seemed we now had a secure and enjoyable home. I didn't see any more problems arising and thus any more need for changes to the house during my retirement.

A VACATION TRIP TO GERMANY

As mentioned in chapter 16, Tom had received his mission call in late June 1984 or the 30th, according to Celeste. I believe we finally took him to the missionary training center at Provo in

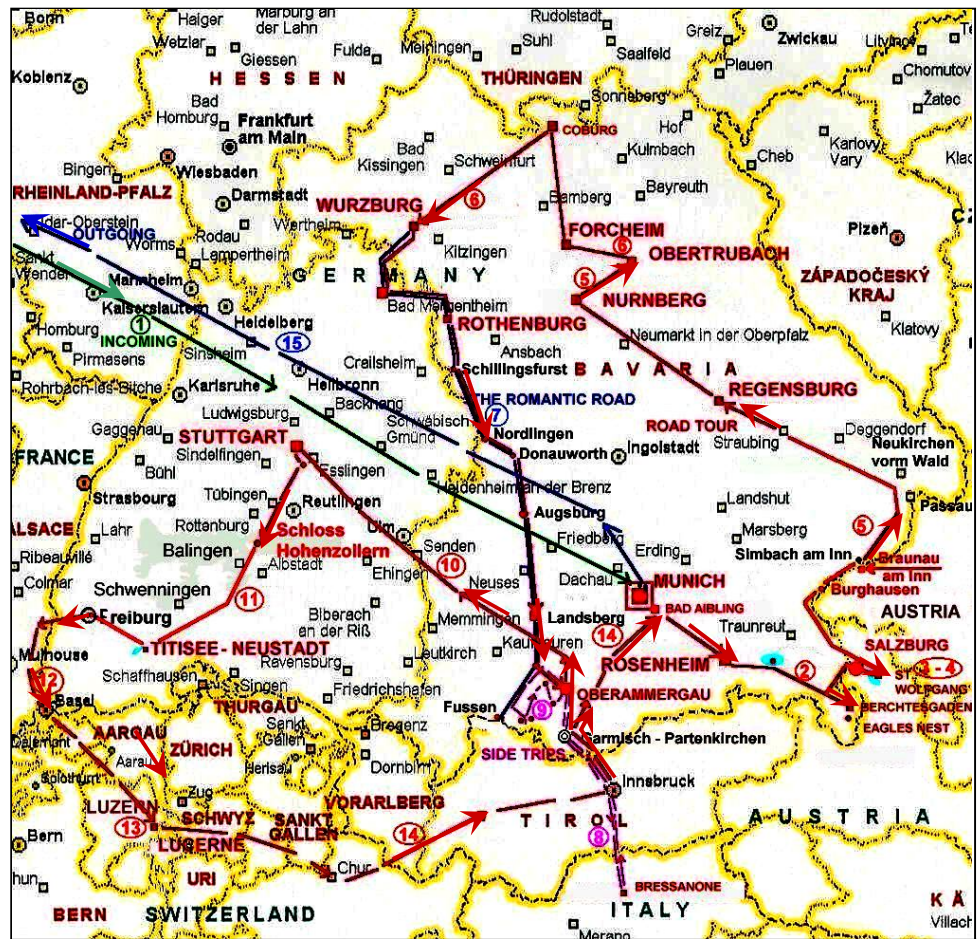


Figure 17-1 The approximate route of our tour to and through Germany, France, Switzerland and Austria in the summer of 1986.

early July. As mentioned earlier, he had initially been called for a period of 18 months, which was later extended, with our approval, to 24 months. Now the time had arrived for his return and we were going to pick him up and enjoy a trip to Europe ourselves. Celeste had arranged the timing of her vacation to coincide with our trip so she could accompany us. Though I had made a couple of trips there on business, it would be a first for both Esther and Celeste.

Needless to say, they were both excited and it was a great deal of fun just making plans where we would go and what we would see. This went on for several months and included an itinerary, which would allow us to visit points of interest in Austria, Bavaria and Switzerland. Our time would be limited to two weeks. We wanted to enjoy areas we thought would be the most beautiful as well as visit some of the towns in which Tom had served. We enlisted his help, of course, as well as that of a local travel agent who booked our flights and the hotels we finally selected. The tour would begin and end in Munich. We would arrive on August 1st. and depart August 14th. The little map of figure 17-1 provides a bird's eye view of the route we took while in Europe and identifies major points of interest. The area or route of each day is numbered in a circle to help define our location. Hopefully, this will provide some continuity and meaning to later discussions and descriptions of events making up the tour.

THE TRIP TO MUNICH – DAY ONE

Esther and Celeste had arranged for a lady across the street named Elsie to watch the house and take care of the dogs. I doubt that either of them would have left if they had been unable to place the dogs' care in hands they deemed capable. We finally got to bed about 1:00 AM on the 31st. of July after packing last minute items. We were up early and on the way to the airport in plenty of time to catch our 11:15

support my story or perception of the events making up this wonderful holiday trip.

Three hours later, one hour on the clock, we landed in Atlanta and were met by Valerie and



Figure 17-2 Tom and I and our green machine right after our arrival at the Hotel Linder in Bad Aibling, located in southeast suburbs of Munich.

Jared. We had a short lay over there but were on our way to Munich at 5:30 Atlanta time, data once again provided by Celeste. It would be a ten-hour flight to Munich and I knew we would get little if any sleep considering the accommodations and our state of mind.

The plane made a stop in Shannon, Ireland and we managed to get a quick tour of the area via the air. It seems the runway in Shannon is somewhat short and a large plane like the Boeing 747 has to touch down right at the near end of the runway to provide sufficient room to bring the monster to a stop. Well, our plane came in a little high and the first thing we knew, the engines were on full throttle and we were headed back up before even touching the runway. As the plane made a big circle around Shannon, the pilot came on the intercom and explained the need for a second approach. The countryside was a beautiful green and gave credence to Ireland's name as the "Emerald Isle". A Russian plane, Aeroflot I believe, was setting by the terminal with several guards, or so they appeared, in dark suites. They were very mysterious looking and gave us plenty of imaginative ideas for speculation as we watched them. As I remember, we didn't get off our plane but simply watched the Russians until our plane headed for Munich. The iron curtain was still intact at that time and our eyes remained riveted to their plane, as if we might see some startling incident to add to our trips experiences.



Figure 17-3 Celeste, Esther and I at Hotel Linder just after our return from the two-week tour.

AM flight. These specifics are chronicled in Celeste's journal, providing most valuable data, which I shall feel free to not only steal but also embellish with my own rather poor memory. I use her facts as the framework or a lattice to

All that effort was wasted, however, because we were soon airborne again without any thrilling incidents having taken place with the Aeroflot plane or its occupants.

FINISHING OUR DAY IN MUNICH

Soon after leaving Ireland, we found ourselves descending into the Munich airspace. We landed a few minutes later and quickly passed through customs. There were no hassles or even detailed inspections in those days prior to the 09/11/01 incident. Plane hijackings and bomb threats were still in their infancy.

MUNICH AND BAD AIBLING

As we left customs, there was Tom waiting patiently for us. After getting our baggage, we went over to a car rental counter, Hertz I believe, and picked up the Volkswagen bus we had reserved. I soon coined a name for it, i.e. "the green machine", because of its color as seen in figure 17-2 and my turning green with envy when the big Mercedes roared past us on the autobahn. I reserved it because of its available baggage space and the fuel economy it promised. You see, I had driven around Germany with Jared and Valerie and was well aware of the inflated gas prices. What I didn't bargain for was a motor problem, which occurred as we neared Austria on the second day and continued intermittently on through the trip. I'll talk more about that later.

Tom, of course, would act as our chauffeur, he being familiar with the area around Munich and more importantly, being able to read and speak German. I could see myself trying to react to his guidance, as I would have to struggle with road signs and traffic. It would be much better if he had the wheel and could make driving decisions without having to make me understand. What I didn't anticipate was his limited ability with the throttle, i.e. stopped and wide open. He was OK around town but on the autobahn the pedal was pressed to the metal, as the old saying goes. Apparently, he felt obligated to try to keep up with the Mercedes on the road or at least limit the number that could pass. I feel sure we set some speed records for a Volkswagen bus and certainly don't remember any such vehicles passing us on the autobahn. When I said something to Tom about slowing down, he would retort, "Dad, the speedometer is registering kilometers per hour, not miles." I don't think he realized that both my eyes and my math were still pretty good at that point in time. I

could see the speedometer and could multiply kilometers by 0.62 to determine miles per hour rather quickly. I wasn't bothered when my answers came out 70 or below but when they crept up to 80 and 85, I had to say something. I had more faith in his driving than I did in that green tin can we were in. German engineering may be good but I knew enough about the pitfalls of machines in general to realize that the green machine was capable of failure and I wanted to be in a position to come to a stop in a reasonable distance. He, on the other hand,



Figure 17-4 A photo of the Glockenspiel taken by Celeste in down town Munich.

seemed oblivious to such danger and constantly edged the speedometer up to 130 and 140 kilometers per hour. I held my tongue as long as it was below 120 or roughly 75 miles per hour. I'm sure he was getting tired of me telling him to slow down but I wanted to see Bavaria and other points of interest before departing for the Promised Land to meet St. Peter.

After leaving the airport and prior to going to Bad Aibling, we stopped at the mission home to get Tom's luggage and to meet the Mission President, Bruce M. Lake and his wife. They

were delightful people. We chatted a few minutes before heading out to our Hotel, which was located in a suburb of Munich. Soon we were checking in at the Hotel Linder, which was roughly 400 years old according to the info we got. Even so, the beds were comfortable and the food quite good. We rested a while before going to dinner.

Tom wanted to eat at Trader Vic's. He had developed a liking for that restaurant in Denver



Figure 17-5 Konigsschloss Herrenchiemsee, Ludwig's castle located on an island in Chiemsee

and wanted, I suppose, to see if its German counterpart was as good or better. He also wanted to show us the Glockenspiel in

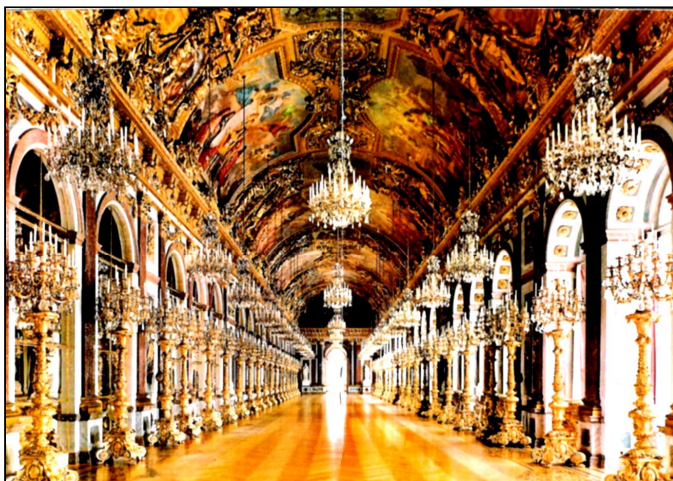


Figure 17-6 Great Gallery of Mirrors in the Konigsschloss or Royal Palace at Herrenchiemsee

downtown Munich, which was nearby. Then again, he may just have used the latter bait to lure us to his restaurant of choice. Who knows? He wouldn't say and we were still too tired to argue, not having recovered yet from jet lag. First, we went and ate, which was probably a

mistake. We were all so sleepy that we could hardly get through the main course, let alone the dessert. People probably thought I had no manners because my face was in my food half the time. It wasn't that I was that hungry, I just couldn't hold my head up. I did determine that food taken in through the nostrils is not nearly as good as when chewed, savored and swallowed through the mouth. I suppose, I helped rekindle the ugly American concept, which seemed prevalent at the time.

After dinner we walked or maybe drove a short distance to the Glockenspiel. Celeste took a photo of it, which I have included in figure 17-4. Even though it was rather late in the evening, the area was crowded, as you can see. We may have rambled around to a few other places but I suspect that Tom found us rather boring at that point because of our sleep deprivation. I don't know that we are exactly stimulating company even under the best of conditions but jet lag had definitely taken its toll. Soon he was ready to head back to the motel and save his energy for another day when our responses would be something more than what or where or huh. Needless to say, we had no trouble going to sleep, once back at the hotel. I couldn't have rated the sleeping accommodations that night because we went out with the light and didn't stir until 8:00 or so the next morning.

DAY TWO – AUGUST 1, 1986

As I remember, a continental breakfast came with the room in most places we stayed. They typically consisted of various breads, sweet rolls, cheeses, fruits, juices and coffee. Some spreads were better than others but all were quite good. In fact, it was easy to over eat in an effort to try everything offered. After enjoying this first experience with a German breakfast, we checked out and headed for Chiemsee, a large lake southeast of Munich, which lay in our path to Salzburg. I have learned that the word "see" is attached to virtually every body of water of any size in Germany, Austria and Switzerland as I perused the Internet. For instance the North Sea is the Nordsee, so I assume "see" must mean sea or body of water. I left all translation of German to Tom.

Tom had served for a time in the city of Rosenheim, which was also in our path for the day. I believe we went by the apartment he and his companion stayed in while there and viewed a few sights, mainly buildings, in the area. We were intrigued by the manner in which the

Germans embellished or dressed up their buildings. Rosenheim was just the beginning of our awe struck eyes because we continued to see similar sights everywhere we went in Bavaria. Celeste managed to take pictures of several such buildings and houses, some of which I'll include in appropriate places. She also mentions buying cheese and bread for lunch there and then going on to Chiemsee or Lake Chiem. I have since found that my previous supposition of the word "see" was correct.

HERRENCHIEMSEE

King Ludwig had a castle on an Island in Chiemsee, which is called Konigsschloss Herrenchiemsee. Konigsschloss means Royal Castle and the German word Herr means Lord



Figure 17-7 The little German town of Berchtesgaden near Hitler's Eagle Nest.

as well as master etc. I assume Herrenchiemsee must mean the Lord of the lake or something close to that. I have included a photo of it taken from a postcard in figure 17-5, just to demonstrate its beauty. We could have taken a boat ride out to the castle but chose not to because of time limitations. Even so, I bought a little booklet describing the castle, complete with photos. I felt comfortable with the photo's authenticity without taking the trip because other pamphlets describing other castles proved that the photos accurately depict the real thing. I mention this because of the opulent and lavish, even excessive decorations and furnishings you are about to be treated to via the photos in this chapter. The first photo is the Great Gallery of Mirrors at Herrenchiemsee illustrated in the photo of figure 17-6. Others will follow as we visit Neuschwanstein and Linderhof. There are 52 candelabras and 33 crystal chandeliers adorning the Great Gallery of Mirrors. Engravings are from the era of Louis XIV and his

actions are glorified in the paintings of the vault or arched ceiling. The room is an exact copy of the Galerie des Glaces in the palace of Versailles. It seems that Ludwig II admired the French Bourbons, particularly the Sun King, Louis XIV. He could trace his name to the Bourbons because his grandfather, King Ludwig I, was his godfather and none other than Louis XVI was the godfather of King Ludwig I. Apparently this motivated his inordinate desire to include replicas of many varied items in the Palace of Versailles. The gold color adorning the walls of the Great Gallery of Mirrors as well as the candelabras is, in fact, gold plating. This excessive use of gold is found throughout all of his castles, as are beautiful tapestries and

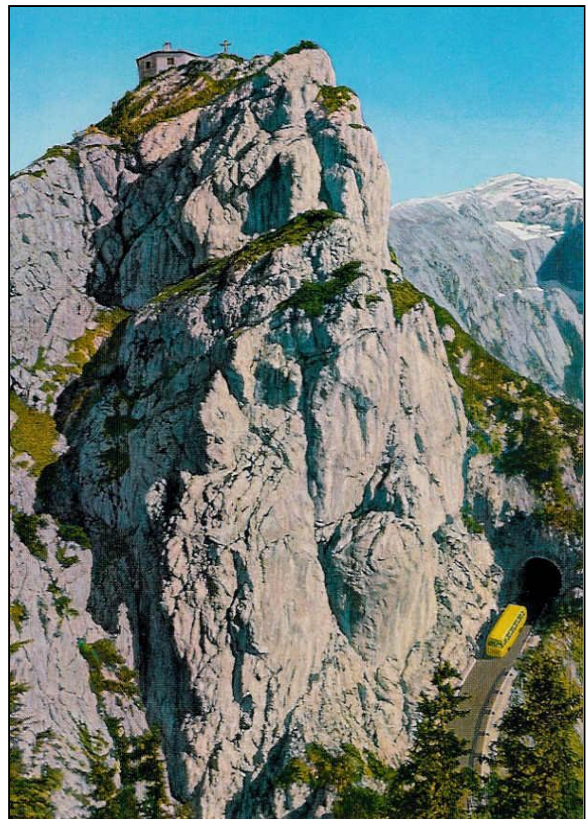


Figure 17-8 Mountain crag on which Hitler's Eagle Nest is located; an appropriate name.

paintings. For me, the excessive gold detracts from the beauty. After a lunch of cheese and bread next to Chiemsee, we headed out.

THE EAGLES NEST

Tom wanted to see the "Eagles Nest", that hideaway or retreat that Hitler had built for his self and is often referred to as "Hitler's Tea Room. It was located in the Bavarian Alps near

Berchtesgaden, not too far off of our path to Salzburg and St. Wolfgang. See figure 17-1.

We arrived at Berchtesgaden, a beautiful little town, early in the afternoon and followed signs to the entrance or ticket and bus loading area for Eagles Nest. See figure 17-7. No one was allowed to drive right to the entrance of the Eagles Nest because of limited parking and the rather narrow and dangerous road leading up to it. Anyway, the tickets were rather nominal in price and we could concentrate on the view.

We boarded a bus after perusing materials in the gift shop. There were stories and photos describing the construction of the retreat. The



Figure 17-9 A view of the rugged terrain surrounding Hitler's Eagles Nest.

equipment available in those days, i.e. 1938 era, was rather crude compared to today's massive machines. Although I don't know which mountain or even if it was one of the peaks shown in figure 17-7, one can imagine the difficulty in blasting and cutting a road to the top of either peak therein. More dramatic views of the actual peak on which the Eagles Nest sat are given in figures 17-8 and 17-9. Notice the bus in the lower right climbing the tortuous path to the top or entrance, which lays within 500 feet of the actual nest. Figure 17-9 provides a real sense of the extreme ruggedness of the area. Building that road was a project, which cost many lives in addition to a considerable

monetary investment. Though it is now a beautiful tourist attraction well worth visiting, in my mind, it is a monument to Hitler's ego or vanity and selfishness. He and his cohorts had no regard for the lives lost in building such a monument just as they showed no mercy for the Jews. Their only thought was for the scenic

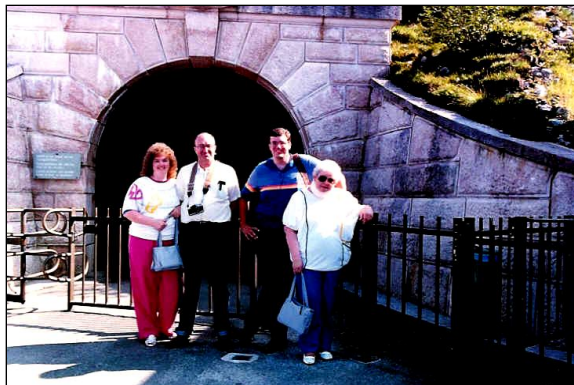


Figure 17-10 The felicitous four in front of the elevator tunnel to the Eagles Nest.

grandeur and comfort it would provide, as an isolated retreat, while they concocted their devilish plans for achieving world domination.

Well, enough of my philosophy on Hitler for now. Let's get on with the tour. The ride up the winding road to the Eagles Nest entrance was spectacular for anyone who loves beautiful scenery. The road, perched on ledges blasted



Figure 17-11 A post card photo of the Eagles Nest, on a somewhat brighter day.

from the granite mountainside, provided a view that was beyond description, at least for my limited vocabulary. Beautiful views upon views of magnificent vistas unrolled before our eyes as we rounded every bend of the road. I must admit, that I was truly enthralled by the sheer beauty of nature that we were witnessing. It is easy to see why Hitler apparently liked this area.

Soon we were at the actual entrance to the Eagles Nest. There was a good-sized parking area for busses to load and unload but way too small to handle vehicles of the many tourists there. The entrance consisted of an opening to a tunnel drilled several hundred feet into the granite mountainside. See figure 17-10. After having our picture taken, we proceeded back into the peak to an elevator in its center. It appeared to be made of brass and carried us some 500 feet to the top where we exited into the Eagles Nest. After looking around the building, we emerged into a somewhat hazy atmosphere and found ourselves on a high peak

very soul, when we have the opportunity to drink in such beauty.

Figure 17-11 provides a view we observed from a vantage point to the east and a little higher on



Figure 17-12 Valley floor north of Berchtesgaden from the Eagles Nest.

looking down on the valleys below in three directions. To the south or left from my perspective, were some higher Alpine peaks. In spite of the haze, the view was spectacular in all directions. I'll try to provide some idea of its beauty through a couple of photos. Of course, I have learned, as I'm sure you have, that photos, no matter how good, can never really reproduce the beauty and feeling one gets when looking out over some spectacular scene created by our Father in heaven. There is a certain awe, which I believe is spiritual in nature that grips ones



Figure 17-13 More detailed map of Salzburg St. Wolfgang area in Kammergut, Austria

the peak. Note the hang glider in the distance to the left. The individual involved had jumped



Figure 17-14 The entrance to the White Horse Inn or Hotel Weisses Rossli.

from a neighboring peak to the left and sailed out over the valley, which presented a rather dramatic scene. My photo of his activities,

however, contained only the glider and a hazy sky as background. To give it more relevance and through the magic of the computer, I was able to transfer the glider into the snapshot of the Eagles Nest, which was a learning experience for me. It represents one more benefit of the struggles I've had in writing an autobiography. It also adds fuel to the skepticism so prevalent in today's society. If an old guy like grandpa can alter a picture within reason, what's to stop a professional? It might cause one to ask, "Is this really an autobiography? You may never know kids, until you get to the other side and see just what mansion the good Lord has placed me in.

The photo of figure 17-11 was taken from a post card. It provides a better idea of the beauty we



Figure 17-15 A postcard view of White Horse Inn taken from a boat on the lake

were treated to than does my photo of the same scene. In mine, the haze obscured the distant scenes. Consequently, panoramic views were degraded even though closer scenes were still quite good. Even so, I have included another photo of this particular part of the trip in figure 17-12 which provides the reader with a view of the valley floor north of Berchtesgaden. I had another photo of Konigsee or Royal Lake to the

west of the Eagles Nest but elected not to include it because of the haze. Figures 17-7 through 17-12 will have to suffice in providing an idea of the beautiful scenery surrounding us. Adolph certainly had a selfish eye for beauty.

ON TO WOLFGANGSEE

After spending a couple of hours on top of the mountain, we grabbed a bus down and took a quick tour of Berchtesgaden before departing for



Figure 17-16 A street scene of St. Wolfgang near the White Horse Inn.

Salzburg and St. Wolfgang. As you can see from figure 17-1, it wasn't that far to our evening's destination, which was fortunate because we were kind of caught up in the history of the Eagles Nest and ended up spending more time than we had really planned. Additionally, the green machine began to act up from time to time. It would run fine for a while

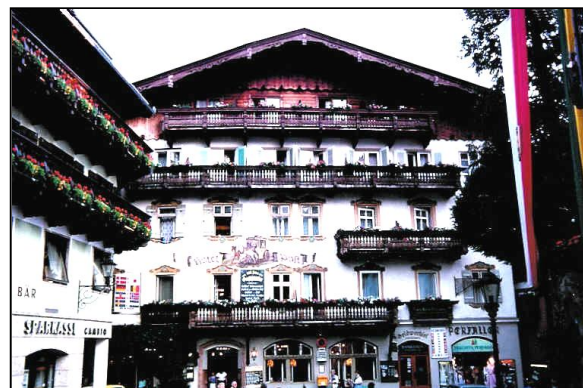


Figure 17-17 Side of the White Horse Inn as seen from the street to the lake.

and then the engine would begin to miss and our speed would drop off. In a way, I suppose it was a blessing because it slowed Tom down a little. However, I remember becoming rather concerned while driving between Salzburg and St. Wolfgang. I thought for a while the engine

was going to stop completely but we struggled on to our destination located on the east side of the St. Wolfgangsee. We finally arrived at our hotel, the Whitehorse Inn, about dinnertime and checked in. I swore I would call Hertz and change the vehicle out on Monday, this being Saturday evening. Figure 17-13 provides a more detailed map of the immediate area, which I'll refer to from time to time in our experiences.

The streets of St. Wolfgang are narrow and at the time of our arrival, the immediate area was



Figure 17-18 Para Sailing, one of the activities taking place on St. Wolfgangsee.

crowded with people and vehicles. Tom didn't want to drive down a little hill into the mess he saw, primarily I believe, because of the way the



Figure 17-20 St. Wolfgang & the tower of White Horse Inn across St. Wolfgangsee.

car was running. At any rate, we parked on the main thoroughfare or highway leading into town and walked to the hotel entrance, which is shown in figure 17-14. After checking in and finding our rooms, we brought the car down to unload but continued to park in the lot previously spoken of because, quite frankly, "There was no room at the inn". How's that for utilizing an old phrase? Our rooms had access to balconies

overlooking the Wolfgangsee as shown in figure 17-15. Everything was top-notch from the rooms, to the view, to the food with which we later treated ourselves in the dining room. I'm sure there wasn't a one of us who wouldn't recommend the White Horse Inn to people who might be going to visit the area.

DAY THREE AUGUST 2, 1986

The following morning, Sunday, we enjoyed a continental style breakfast. Though that at Hotel Linder had been good, the available selections didn't compare to these at the White Horse Inn.

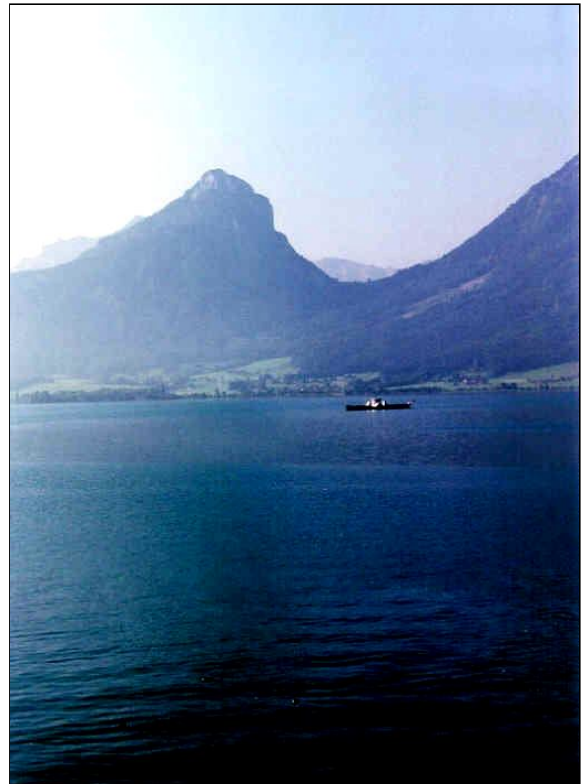


Figure 17-19 Scene of St. Wolfgangsee from our balcony where we relaxed.

The buffet consisted of numerous breads, cheeses, meats, rolls, fruit and cereal as well as coffee and juices. We settled for juice and water, of course. The milk for the cereal was more like half and half, as I remember. The only complaint I had was that there was too much food, too many selections and it was all too good. I think we all ate more than normal but what the heck, it came with the rooms.

Later that morning, Tom and I went into Salzburg to attend church while Esther and Celeste rested. Esther's Parkinson's + was at the point where she tired easily and the previous

day had given her about all she could take. I don't remember too much about the church service other than it was in German or Austrian. I suppose they are the same but don't know for sure. In any case, I was able to sing the hymns and of course, take the sacrament but the rest went over my head like a V-2 rocket. Before and after the service, Tom chatted for a while with members. He introduced me but I could do little but smile and shake hands. A few people, as I remember, spoke English and in those cases, I could act more intelligent. Anyhow, we enjoyed it, Tom more than I, and shortly thereafter, we headed back to the St. Wolfgangsee and the White Horse Inn.

By the time we returned, Esther and Celeste were up and around. Celeste had been taking



Figure 17-21 The Catholic Church in which the wedding of "The sound of Music" was filmed at Mondsee, Austria.

pictures and I believe they had been wandering around the little down town district as well and undoubtedly browsed around in any little tourist shops that were open. Though I found a few pictures of my own, hers were more complete. She seemed enthralled by culture and architecture and shot many rolls of film. I, of course, didn't have the foresight necessary for providing illustrations of the visit. In defense of

my rather blasé attitude, however, I might add that I had no intention of writing an autobiography at that point in time. I never reviewed photo albums unless forced to by those who hold them dear and saw no purpose in collecting pictures I would never use. Thank goodness for daughters who demonstrate a zest for new and interesting things. Actually, I did take some and even found a few to use such as in figure 17-9. The majority of them are hers, however, or from postcards.

Figures 17-16 and 17-17 depict street scenes, first, near the hotel and second, the side of the hotel, providing an idea of the architecture typical of this old Austrian village. After lunch we spent the rest of the day walking around the village and simply enjoying the atmosphere of



Figure 17-22 The Rathaus in Mondsee, which is the town hall, as I understand it.

this beautiful little town. That evening we spent a little time relaxing on the balcony while watching various boats, people water skiing and swimmers down below our hotel. Figure 17-18 is a photo of someone parasailing on the lake while figure 17-19 provides a general view of the scenery that lay before us from our balcony. Celeste took the photo while Tom and I were in Salzburg earlier that Sunday.

DAY FOUR – AUGUST 3, 1986

During breakfast I told Esther that I was going to hold off in calling Hertz about the car. It ran better for Tom and me going into Salzburg and I thought it might be more convenient after our return to Germany, if it was still warranted. That was fine with her. She left such things up to my judgment. My decision seemed to satisfy her.

MONDSEE AND THE SOUND OF MUSIC

Esther really enjoyed the movie "Sound of Music" and had watched it each time she got a

chance. She and/or Celeste were up on such things as to where it had been filmed, etc. but hadn't breathed a word to me prior to our trip. When I posed the question, "What shall we do today?" she shot back, "Let's go to Mondsee and see the church where they filmed the wedding scene in Sound of Music". Then she added, "We could also go into Salzburg and see the Von Trapp home and the convent". I didn't have much taste for going back into Salzburg again. It was just a big city with a lot of traffic. I settled for Mondsee and Esther seemed happy. I think she hit me with the whole package while intending to settle for Mondsee because she quickly agreed. I had been ambushed. This idea had been in the girls' minds since before leaving Denver, I'm confident but never did they breathe a word of it until the trap was sprung. You see, she knew I wasn't that interested in such things even though I kind of enjoyed the movie, once that is. I'm not sure just how many times Celeste and Esther had seen it. In any case, this became our prime activity for Monday of the coming week or day four. We would immerse ourselves in the trivia associated with that very popular show.

We backtracked around the lake to the northwest end before hanging a right for Mondsee, which was the name for both the town in question and the lake on which it was located. See figure 17-13. As we rounded the lake, Celeste got a shot of St. Wolfgang and the White Horse Inn across the lake, which I've displayed in figure 17-20. It's a pretty view of the area and seemed worth presenting. It didn't take long to arrive in Mondsee, a village about the size of St. Wolfgang. The church was easy to find and, as you can see from figure 17-21, it was already busy with tourists. We fit right in with the crowd. We stepped inside, which was open to tourists and viewed the alter area and the general appearance of the interior. Esther and Celeste seemed to remember the scene from the movie and talked about them coming out of the church but old grandpa had no recollection. I just nodded in agreement as they relived the movie scenes. I was happy when they were happy and this seemed to make Esther's day. While we were there, we spent a little time touring the town. Celeste took a picture of the Rathaus, which means town hall, I believe. It appears in figure 17-22 and seems to have gobs of tourists around it as well. Little else seems to come to mind from that day except the beauty of the lake with its

surrounding scenery. Of course, the little town was immaculate as seems to be the case for all Austrian and German towns but the scenery of



Figure 17-23 A castle of unknown name, located in Burghausen, Germany.

Bavaria and the nearby alpine forests, lakes and mountains of neighboring countries definitely made the greatest impression. If there was more open space, as in the U. S., I wouldn't mind living there but even the countryside is filled with people in little towns. There is no



Figure 17-24 Burghausen, Germany with a church steeple & castle in the background.

wide-open space like the western U. S. It was late afternoon when we headed back to St. Wolfgang. Esther was tired but happy with her "Sound of Music experience".

We would have a long day on day five. We walked around town, had a nice dinner and relaxed for the evening. We would be up early for the trip to Obertrubach the next day, a little town that Tom had worked in and in which he had made friends with a German couple. We would stay at their house for the night.

DAY FIVE – AUGUST 4, 1986

On day five we checked out right after breakfast. We would miss those wonderful meals that we

had enjoyed in the hotel as well as the beautiful scenery. However, had we stayed later, the cost would have sky-rocketed, I suppose, because we had run out of things to see and probably would have found ourselves involved in activities such as parasailing, water skiing, riding the ski lifts, etc., all of which didn't come free and besides, there was to see in the days remaining.

BURGHAUSEN

We headed back to Salzburg and grabbed a two-lane highway headed up along the German – Austrian border. Note the route identified by a



Figure 17-25 The river Inn, which separates Germany and Austria near Braunau.

circled five in figure 17-1. We continued to ooh and ah at the countryside we were being treated to. We stopped for a little while in a little town called Burghausen, which was in Germany but right next to the Austrian border. I suppose we were taken with its beauty because Celeste took



Figure 17-26 A building in Braunau, Austria, which was, supposedly, Hitler's birthplace.

several pictures including a castle. At this point we were still quite impressed with the castles we saw along the way but later became more selective when we found out just how common

they were. The one we spotted in Burghausen is shown in figure 17-23. Another photo of the town proper with the castle in the background and a church steeple with various buildings in the foreground appears in figure 17-24. Celeste loved the German houses and public buildings. She had other pictures but these will have to do or I'll never finish this chapter. Then again, they may be more interesting than my dialog.

BRANAU

After our short stay, we were off to Braunau, Austria, which was Hitler's birthplace. We had crossed the river Inn a ways north of Burghausen and now paralleled it as we approached Braunau. A little town called Simbach am Inn is located on the north bank of the river and Braunau am Inn on the south bank. We crossed the river Inn to go into Austria once again, which appears in figure 17-25. At this point in time, the Austrians were somewhat less than proud of Hitler's birth as an Austrian and made no effort to publicize the building location. It wasn't identified in any way but Tom had somehow learned of its location and wanted us to see it. It is shown in figure 17-26. There is some question in my mind as to whether this is actually the house he lived in because it looks more like a hospital or something. Maybe it's the hospital he was born in. However, it is placed in her album at the appropriate point and I'm not about to argue with her. She always wins when I question her photos or journals. I know the shot was taken from the car because, as I remember, Tom said the Austrians frowned on people even seeing the place, let alone photographing it. They would just as soon forget that he was born anywhere near them. Shooting on the fly would account for only a portion of the house showing in the photo.

Somewhere in this vicinity, I think we picked up our usual bread, cheese and drinks for lunch. We all enjoyed these German items and saw no need to change our menu. Celeste mentions that we ate lunch in front of Hitler's house in her diary, so I guess that's the place. Apparently, we weren't too nervous about being in that vicinity. We then headed north by northeast towards Passau. We would intersect an autobahn just south of Passau, which would take us into Regensburg where Tom had served for a time and eventually to Nuremberg. I found the latter spelled at least three different ways, i.e. as shown and Nurenberg as well as Nurnberg. You can take your pick but I will use

the American version, as you will see a little later when we arrive there.

Both girls needed a potty stop while still on a rather ordinary German highway, somewhere south of Passau. We finally came to a little service station, which was old and run down. I'm not sure just how far we were from a town of some sort but the girls insisted they couldn't wait, so Tom wheeled in. We would buy some gas, which we needed as well. The girls took off for the station office while Tom talked to the man who appeared to provide the service. I guess they still hadn't heard of self-service. Tom stayed outside and I followed the girls inside with the intention of using the restroom as well. As I opened the door, Esther and Celeste were trying to find out just where the restroom was but couldn't seem to make the German lady understand. The couple was probably in their 60s. About the time I came in, both of the girls



Figure 17-27 A typical Catholic cathedral, which is located in Regensburg, Germany.

crossed their legs and pointed at their mid-section while doing a little dance. All at once the lady's eyes lit up and she exclaimed, "Ah yes, the bathroom", in German, of course and pointed in that direction. They took off in a run. I'm not just sure who got there first but

apparently things worked out because they both returned with pleasant smiles replacing their earlier pained looks. I then went in myself and took advantage of their communication solution without trying to talk to the lady. I would leave that for Tom when he paid for the gas. Surely his conversation would be more enjoyable.

Soon we were back on the road again and intersected the autobahn a few miles south of Passau, which it by-passed. We didn't bother to go in even though it was a decent sized city. Tom hadn't served there and we knew of no historical significance attached to it, so we headed on to Regensburg. The Volkswagen

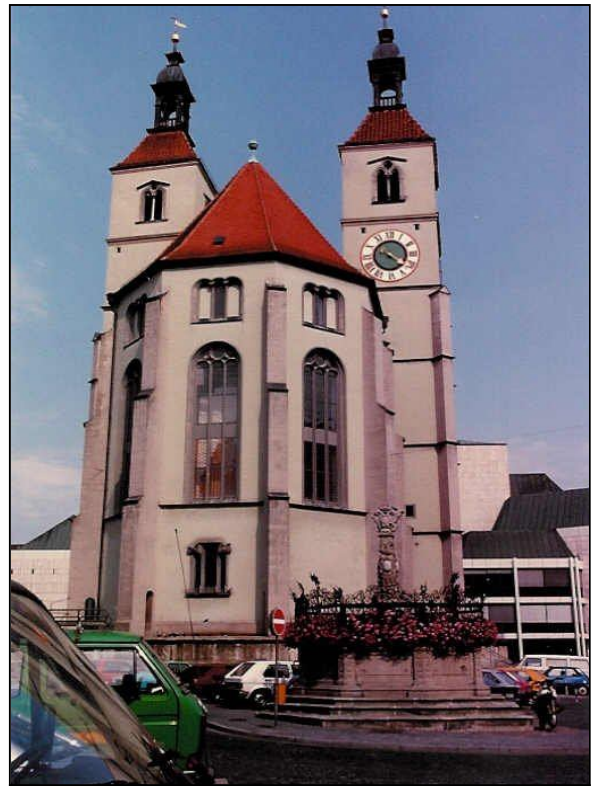


Figure 17-28 A typical Lutheran church. Notice the green machine parked nearby.

would run fine for a while and then begin missing. More than once, we pulled over and I checked for loose spark plug connections but to no avail. About the time I would get mad enough to call Hertz, the engine would smooth out and I'd change my mind. I knew such a change would cost us a day's time. So away we went with our fingers crossed just like the girls legs had been. Their success gave me motivation to see if such action would work for the car. Apparently it did because we ended up keeping the same car in spite of some anxious

moments. Sometimes, I think it was an intervention of the Lord used in controlling Tom's speed at critical times. I know he got up to 140 kilometers per hour or 87 mph but Celeste says his speed got even higher when I sat in back.

When she said something he would say, "Hush, dad will hear". Well, so much for the untested judgment of youth. It's no wonder their car insurance is so high. Of course, now days he has mellowed a little and finds his self acting in my role with his young ones. Wait until they learn to drive.

REGENSBURG

We made good time to Regensburg and were soon taking a tour of the city, led by Tom. He knew the town well and showed us several sights while there. Celeste managed to capture a couple of churches there on film, a Catholic cathedral and a large Lutheran church. Often they looked a lot alike. Tom said the best way to



Figure 17-29 Building in Hitler's Nuremberg complex near the parade grounds.

determine the denomination was to look to the steeple. A Catholic church always had a cross on top while the Lutheran churches made do with a weather vane. When going to a new village or small town, they would use this as an indicator of the beliefs of the townspeople they would encounter. Figure 17-27 portrays the cathedral while figure 17-28 illustrates the Lutheran church. I believe that's a cross on the center steeple of the cathedral while a weather vane does occupy the left steeple of the Lutheran church and maybe the right one as well. Though the cathedral is more ornate, both are beautiful.

Tom wanted to purchase a handmade chess set he had seen in a little shop down town. He loved chess and this would be a nice memento of his Bavarian missionary service, at least in his

mind. We were pleased with his dedicated service while on his mission as mentioned by his mission president, Elder Lake. I agreed to buy it for him, since the price was reasonable. The latter is a trademark of my economic decisions, which I suspect, you have already figured out by now. Prior to the purchase, I made a stop at a local bank; one Tom had used, to change some dollars for deutsche marks. With that and the purchase completed, we headed northwest out of town towards Nuremberg along a nice four-lane autobahn.

Nuremberg was roughly a hundred kilometers away and we arrived there some 45 minutes later. Had I turned Tom loose, we might have made it in thirty and then again, we might not have made it at all. Actually, he was a good driver then but still hadn't gained the precautionary instincts a safe driver needs. That came with time, I suppose, since his life's driving record is as good as I know of. Anyhow, we arrived safely and ate dinner at a gasthaus or restaurant across from the American Army base.

NUREMBERG

Tom had served in this area as a zone leader just before being released and had baptized an American serviceman whose name was Walt Williams, as I remember. They became good friends and continued to make contact after their return to the U. S. In fact, he later visited Tom while we lived in Denver. Their acquaintance led to an interesting coincidence after this young man's discharge, which seems worthy of telling.

Walt was from Farmington, New Mexico to which he returned for a time after his discharge. His mother and father were divorced. She continued to live in Farmington but he had moved to the Gainesville, Georgia area. Tom, of course, was born in Farmington, which gave them a connection of sorts. I suppose that connection played some role in their friendship but that's not the coincidence I alluded to.

Soon after his discharge, Walt decided to live with his dad for a while. In so doing, he began attending church in Gainesville, Georgia. Jared Garfield was bishop of the ward at that time but any conversation they might have had when he arrived, hadn't uncovered Walt and Tom's friendship. Sometime after Walt's arrival in Gainesville, he decided that he would like to serve a mission like Tom had. This led to a meeting with the bishop and a deeper discussion of Walt's background. He talked

about his conversion while in Germany and the path that had led him to Georgia. Jared, with his typical curiosity, asked if he remembered the name of the missionary who baptized him. You can imagine his surprise when Walt said, Tom Obenchain. Jared, exclaimed, "That's my wife's brother". I feel sure that coincidence led to many more minutes of conversation between the two and probably an invitation to dinner.

Can you imagine the probability of a young man from Farmington, New Mexico being baptized in



Figure 17-30 The small German town of Obertrubach northeast of Nuremberg.

Germany by a missionary from Denver, Colorado accidentally ending up in a ward in Gainesville, Georgia where and while the missionary's brother-in-law was serving as bishop? The odds seem like a million to one.



Figure 17-32 My moment of subdued conversation with some of the natives.

Walt had already decided to serve a mission, so the need for the Lord's hand being involved isn't apparent but who knows? There may well have been a purpose behind this great coincidence, as I like to call it.

Well, back to Nuremberg during our visit there. Being somewhat of a history buff, Tom had spent some time looking over various items

making up Hitler's legacy. I can't remember everything he showed us. In fact, only the parade grounds stand out in my memory. Figure 17-29 is a photo of buildings adjacent to the actual grounds. I believe, this was also the place where Hitler and his cohorts stood as they reviewed their goose-stepping minions. To me the whole place had a rather dark and eerie feeling about it, so I chose to include an appropriate photo. That may be one of mine



Figure 17-31 Esther and I standing in front of our bed and breakfast facility in Obertrubach northeast of Nuremberg.

because of its obvious quality, you decide. Somewhere in this complex, I believe, is the site of the Nuremberg trials. Regardless of their historical significance, I was ready to leave when Tom was satisfied. Whether it was the dark and depraved spirit that seemed to hover over the place or my rather tepid interest in history that



Figure 17-33 A view of Obertrubach's main street or our entrance to Forchheim. Which?

dampened my enthusiasm, I can't say. In any case, we were soon on our way to Obertrubach for a night's rest. We looked forward to meeting the German couple and relaxing for the night.

OBERTRUBACH

Tom had made friends with a German family in Obertrubach who ran a bed and breakfast. He

was impressed with the area, which was referred to as little Switzerland or Franconia. Franconia, according to my dictionary, was a medieval duchy, which was later taken over and ruled by the bishops of Wurzburg and became part of Bavaria around 1815. It is a beautiful little area of rolling hills and forests with small farms and towns dotting the landscape. Obertrubach is such a town and is shown in the photo of figure 17-30. We drove slowly through the town and eventually to the site of our bed and breakfast accommodations, where Tom introduced us to the proprietors, his friends of recent acquaintance. Apparently, he had had gospel discussions with them but they never became interested sufficiently to join the Church. Even so, they remained friends and he apparently visited them from time to time.

The exterior of the house wasn't particularly impressive, at least in the only photo I have. See figure 17-31. However, it was beautiful



Figure 17-34 Forcheim, town-square. The foreground building is the Rathaus or town hall, I believe, but it may be the 2nd one.

inside in terms of rooms and furnishings and it was bigger than the front view would suggest. The basement was the area set up for guests and among other things, had tile floors. It was immaculate, roomy and comfortable. It was relatively late when we arrived. We spent a few moments discussing the day's activities as well as those waiting for us the next day before retiring for the night. The accommodations were excellent, in fact, among the best we were to experience on our trip. We had two rooms as usual and all slept well, as I remember, due partly to the comfortable beds and partly to exhaustion from a busy day.

DAY SIX – AUGUST 5, 1986

As usual, we were up early and eager to be about the day's experiences. Even so, we didn't

beat our German hosts. They were up and about before we awoke and had a delicious breakfast prepared for us by the time we were presentable. As seemed to be the case everywhere we went, the breakfast was a continental style with breads, sweet rolls, cereals, cheeses and meats along with juice and coffee or water. Hot chocolate was apparently unknown and milk was primarily for cereals. Even so, I could usually get a glass of the latter even though my request usually brought out a rather surprised look. In any case, I never met a German breakfast I didn't like, with one exception, which occurred in Wurzburg the next morning. The biggest problem we had was in restraining ourselves to a quantity sufficient for our day's activities.

After breakfast, the man of the house gave us a short tour of the property, I believe. I vaguely



Figure 17-35 Downtown Forcheim side street between two buildings, which led to the apartment of Tom and his companion.

remember the house setting on the side of a hill with the back down-slope such that the basement was of the walkout variety. Apparently they kept a few small animals, as evidenced by the Shetland ponies I have shown within figure 17-32. I like horses of any kind and

obviously couldn't resist the impulse to befriend them a little. Besides, their neighs were in English or at least I could understand their friendly solicitation of a little petting, as they extended a warm "welcome to the farm". We chatted with our hosts who spoke some English, as I remember but I could be wrong. We may have done our visiting through Tom who was invaluable as our personal guide and official translator. After the tour, we departed with Tom pointing the green machine towards Forcheim, our next stop. Our hosts waved to us as we left, which added a note of friendship not received in the larger hotels even though the personnel involved were very polite.

Forcheim lays about 30 miles or 50 kilometers west of Obertrubach. It seems we took another tour down main-street in Obertrubach before heading out. Though I don't remember the exact route we took, it was different than that from which we had arrived. Even so the countryside was as beautiful as before with rolling hills and green meadows broken up by forested areas. We moved right along even though the country highway and our desire to absorb some of the beauty encountered acted as a restriction to Tom's speed, at least to a degree. We were 45 minutes to an hour en route to Forcheim and arrived before lunch.

FORCHEIM

Forcheim was another city in which Tom had served and, as usual, he was quite familiar with it. The photo of figure 17-33 was either of down town Obertrubach or the outskirts of Forcheim. It is located in Celeste's album right where we left the former and headed for the latter. Thus, it could belong to either group. I choose to believe it is of Forcheim but Celeste doesn't identify it nor does she make any comment in her very informative diary. By the way, she volunteered her diary, after considerable coaxing, that is. It has helped immensely in clearing the cobwebs of the last 18 years, from my mind, which seem to have obscured what little information was still lying therein. Without it, I might have left out half the trip, which, in some ways, would probably be a blessing. Wow, has it really been that long? Longer now, as I proof read previous material.

We spent some time in the downtown area or city square of Forcheim, as seen in figure 17-34. The buildings, I suppose, were the most unique Bavarian style buildings we had seen to date. Consequently, Celeste was busy with her camera while Esther and I mainly looked around

and enjoyed the sights. Tom was always nearby and we bombarded him with questions regarding



Figure 17-36 A view of the Coburg castle as it is approached from Coburg.

primarily the buildings and activities we were witnessing. As far as we were concerned, he

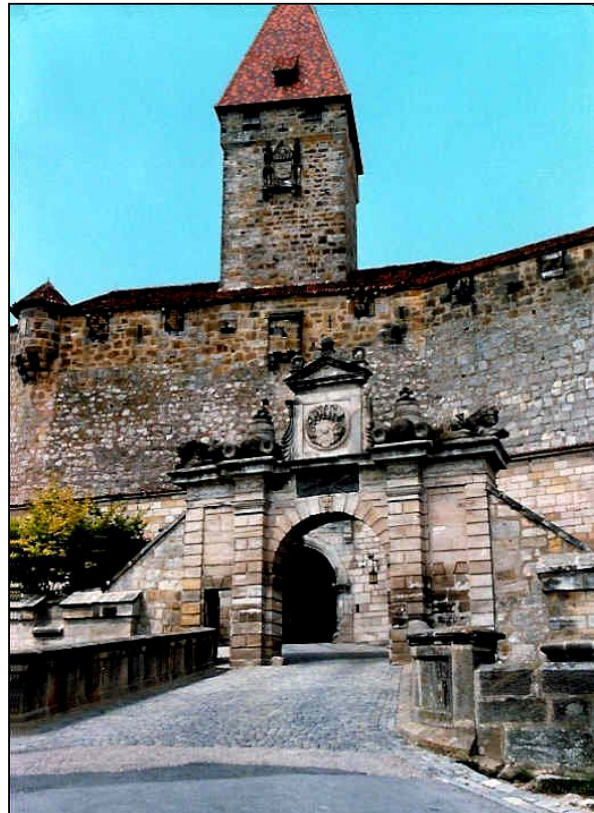


Figure 17-37 Coburg castle entrance as one approaches it from the parking area.

was the expert, even though his time in Forcheim was somewhat limited.

From the square he took us to the neighborhood in which their apartment was located, as shown in figure 17-35. There was a side street located

between two groups of buildings, which I finally found a photo of. It looks more like an alley in one of our cities, which, of course, reflects the age of the town and societal demands of that time. In any case, it met their needs quite well. They lived relatively near the town square with bakeries and grocery stores nearby. Obviously, these were important facilities. As zone leaders they also had a car, I believe. What more could two young missionaries ask for, who are engaged in the Lord's work?

It seems to me that there was some kind of celebration going on while we were in Forcheim but it may have been in some other city. Placing



Figure 17-38 One of the buildings within the castle complex with its ramps.

such activities in their appropriate locations is more than this aged brain can muster. Not even Celeste with her dutiful diary made a comment about such an event but I know it happened. I don't forget happy times but I do seem to have a problem with chronology in this crazy cranium. She does say we purchased bread and cheese for lunch, which is undoubtedly accurate because that was part of our modus operandi during the trip and, unlike me; Celeste is right about what she writes down. She remembers little things like that and I don't.

To emphasize that difference, I can't remember where we ate either but it must have been somewhere between Forcheim and Coburg or maybe while we were at the castle. I don't suppose that's of any historic significance or even of any interest to whatever audience I might have but it does give one a little more insight into my nature and the need I have always had for sufficient food.

COBURG

From Forcheim we headed for Coburg, a little town about 50 miles north of Forcheim, which had among its possessions, bragging rights of a

castle with the largest medieval armor collection in the world. The town was located near the northern border of Bavaria and another German state called Thuringen. At that time the "iron curtain" was still in existence and Thuringen was part of East Germany. As we approached the town we could easily pick out the castle, which was located, as usual, on top of a hill. The photo of the castle from a post card is shown in figure 17-36. We headed straight for it, not even stopping in town, as I remember. Tom had heard about the armor collection and being a history buff, wanted to see it. That was something that appealed to me as well and even Esther and Celeste seemed enthused over the prospect. Fortunately, we could drive almost to the castle because even though Esther was still mobile, she tired easily at this point in her illness,. We walked the short distance to the castle entrance, which was through a large gate shown in figure 17-37. From there it was still a considerable distance, as we walked around the grounds and eventually into the castle proper.

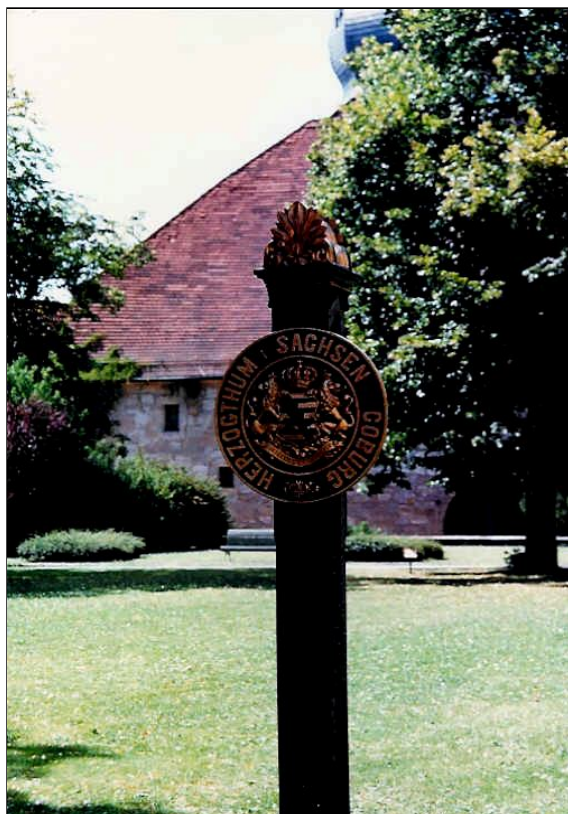


Figure 17-39 An emblem with the coat of arms for Herzogthum Sachsen Coburg.

Esther managed to tour the many available sites within the walls of the castle including the various buildings with their displays of medieval

knights and armor inside. Needless to say, it taxed her strength quite a bit but I believe she felt good that she was able to be a part of everything. Figure 17-38 is a view of one building with some associated ramparts and cannon. The couple seen in the photo is simply two unlucky participants who had no idea they would end up in my autobiography. No, I did not get permission from them for the use of their images. If they ever find out and try to sue me, I suspect I will be long gone and they will have to look for me in the spirit world where money has no value. They can have any and all loose change that I manage to carry on my person as I cross that border separating our mortal and immortal existences. How-some-ever, they had better leave my wife alone or I'll be back.

Celeste took several pictures of the various buildings making up the complex but I'll limit their use just to a few, which will show the



Figure 17-40 A different view of the Coburg Castle grounds and main building.

beautiful grounds, an emblem, which appears to include their coat of arms and a view of the countryside surrounding the hill on which the castle is located. We'll begin with the emblem and coat of arms in figure 17-39. Just what the

German inscription is telling us is beyond me. Through the Internet, I did find that Herzog means Duke and Sachsen means Saxony. Maybe the inscription means something like Duke of Saxony at Coburg but I leave its exact translation up to someone that knows German. This area, I believe, is part of Upper Saxony. Following the emblem is another view of the grounds, which is displayed in figure 17-40. There isn't much to comment about in this photo other than the beauty that the combined grounds and building produce. There was greenery everywhere we looked.

We spent a good deal of time on the grounds enjoying the architecture, the fortified walls and the gardens, as well as the view of the surrounding countryside. However, our main purpose was to see the armor worn by the

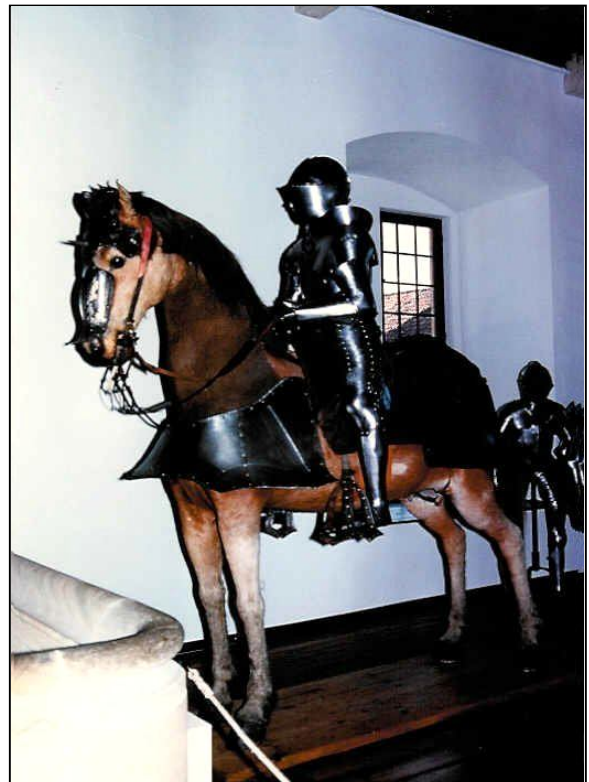


Figure 17-41 A knight in shining armor situated on his war horse at Coburg.

knights of old. At least that was Tom's and my main purpose, which we eventually exercised. The girls came along but not with the enthusiasm Tom and I had.

There were all kinds of armor and weapons of war situated throughout the building dedicated to that display. They were interesting to observe and in most cases, seemed well crafted. The

apparent small stature of the knights was the thing that surprised us the most. I don't believe the ones wearing the armor could have been much taller than 5 foot six or so. One can get an idea of their size by looking at the two photos, figures 17-41 and 17-42.

The knights look small to me relative to the horses on which they are mounted. The horses weren't of spectacular size either but appeared to be about the size of an average western saddle horse of today. There may have been larger knights around as well as larger war horses but we saw none so simulated in the displays nor did we see any larger suits of armor. Even so, they (the knights) probably appeared gigantic to any foot soldier or other person who might be in their way as they bore down on them with their lances or war clubs.



Figure 17-42 Could this be a replica of Sir Lancelot on his trusty steed?

Those on the ground were probably of similar size and the mounted knight must have appeared a most fearsome foe, as they attacked. Even so, I must admit that I was a little bit disappointed to realize that my childhood heroes of Sir Galahad and Sir Lancelot weren't at least 6 feet tall. It would appear that we were

bamboozled, as kids, by the Hollywood image-makers back in the days of my childhood.

Figure 17-43 is a photo also taken in the Coburg Castle but which seems a little out of place. I think Celeste took the photo because of its unusual nature. At first glance it appears to be a statue or figurehead of King Neptune designed for the prow of a ship. Notice his crown and forked spear. However, if you look closely, you can see that Neptune is on the front of a sleigh, which is designed for a single horse, as evidenced by the one singletree hanging down in front. The two sleigh runners come together in front above Neptune's head with a replica of Pegasus on top. You can also see the sleigh's seat in back of Neptune not readily apparent, as well as several horse collars hanging on the wall. One can imagine a duke or other member



Figure 17-43 King Neptune guiding a sleigh with Pegasus in the lead.

of royalty riding through the snow covered terrain in this rather unusual sleigh.

THE IRON CURTAIN

We stayed some time at the castle, as I've indicated earlier and found ourselves rather short on time to complete the day's agenda. We wanted to visit the iron curtain and see the

adjacent no-man's-land that we had heard about those last several years. Fortunately, the East German border was only a few kilometers to the north and soon we were staring at this abomination from the West German side. We could see the fence or iron curtain, which lay in an open space of several hundred yards directly in front of us. A similar space must have lain on the other side, which we couldn't see. Guard towers were spaced along the fence.

A sign on our side gave warning to stay out of the open area in front of the fence or risk being shot (See figure 17-44). The legible words read Landes – Grenze or country border and below it Achtung Grenze or Attention – Border. The smaller illegible type spoke of the danger or consequences of venturing out into the open space, according to Tom. Obviously, well-trained marksmen manned the towers along the fence. I would love to have gone out a ways and thumb my nose at those manning the towers. However, at my age of 58 at the time, I questioned whether I was still “faster than a speeding bullet” and decided not to tempt those guys with the telescopic sites on their rifles. They might well get the last laugh but the absurdity of the thought, at least, gave me a little chuckle inside. Needless to say, there was a rather dark and foreboding spirit hovering over us once again and we had little desire to stay any length of time. The day was pretty well spent and we decided to head for Wurzburg where our accommodations for the night were located.

WURZBURG

Wurzburg was located 60 or 70 miles to the southwest of Coburg and I suppose it took us an hour and a half to arrive at our hotel. As I remember, there was no autobahn involved to allow Tom to reach flying speed and he settled for a pace more amenable to my nature. Besides, Wurzburg was a rather good-sized city and he had to negotiate the city streets to reach our hotel, die Wurzbürger Hof, located in the center of town. Celeste took a picture of it, which is displayed in figure 17- 45. As you can see, it wasn't exactly modern, having been spared by allied bombs. That was rather unfortunate, for the Obenchain tour, as you will see later. The green machine with Tom at the wheel, I believe, stands proudly at the entrance.

There was an elderly man attending the check-in desk who; we found out later, was somewhat more modern than the facilities we were later



Figure 17-44 Celeste, Tom and Esther discussing East German border signs just north of Coburg.

treated to. My first impression was that the hotel resembled an old museum, which had been unattended for years. However, it being booked as a last resort by our travel agent, we knew it was too late to make a change and we wouldn't have known where else to go anyway.

After check in, Tom and I hauled in the necessary luggage and we headed for our rooms located on the second floor. Tom went up the stairs while Esther, Celeste and I took the elevator along with the baggage. The elevator



Figure 17-45 Die Wurzbürger Hof, our hotel with medieval accommodations while in Wurzburg.

was mighty old; I would guess an early 1900 model, manufactured about 1920 or 1930. With everybody in, I pressed the second floor button. We heard the electric motor engage and after

some hesitation the elevator moved slowly upward. With the floor about midway up the door height, the motor lurched, then stopped and the elevator fell back to what I suppose was ground zero. That is, I think it was the bottom of the shaft and the bottom of the doors leading into the lobby, were now about at chest level. We all had expelled a gasp of surprise with a measure of fear during the sudden descent but we all seemed okay.

I don't remember whether there was an alarm on the silly thing. We were the ones that were alarmed. I pried the doors open and helped Esther and Celeste climb out. Next I set the luggage out and finally myself. Obviously, the three of us with our luggage had exceeded the weight limit. It was a sobering and somewhat humbling thought and we vowed, at least I did, to re-instate our diets as soon as we returned to Denver. As it turned out, this activity was the highlight of the low point in our trip. Well, after a good laugh, we climbed the stairs following Tom's example and the two of us, Tom and I, made an extra trip for the bags.

The hotel furnishings were of the same vintage as the building itself and gave us the impression of traveling back in time. Fortunately, we had stopped at a point in time after the invention of the bathtub and commode. The tubs were short with high sides, probably designed for the knights we had visualized at Coburg. There was no shower, a modern convenience you know but everything seemed to work. I remember the city noises that punctuated the air and wondered whether we would sleep or not. However, the beds were comfortable enough and according to my recollection, we spent a reasonable night. I believe we had eaten somewhere along the road prior to our arrival at the hotel and after a little conversation, retired for the night. It might well be that a long and tiresome day had more to do with our sleeping through the night than did the beds, who knows? In any case, I don't remember any disturbances outside or in.

DAY SEVEN – AUGUST 6, 1986

Morning found us up early, ready for the day's adventures. They should be somewhat romantic in nature, since we were to travel "The Romantic

Road". According to information gained from the Internet, the road was a trade route during the middle ages and still retains much of its medieval character. Figure 17-1 portrays its approximate location and extent, as it winds from Wurzburg southward to Fussen lying at the base of the Alps. For clarification, remember the general location of the road therein is in blue, while our overall route is in red. As a second thought, I have included a more detailed map of the road proper, which highlights the various towns along the way in figure 17- 46. The term romantic came from, I suppose, the following description of the area. "The road often winds through forgotten sections of countryside, connecting walled towns and picturesque villages. Travelers may enter a town through an arched gateway complete with guard towers. Inside, you will find Gothic Cathedrals, much Fachwerk, houses and often a medieval festival. Fairytale castles and the Alps complete the charm". Fachwerk, according to

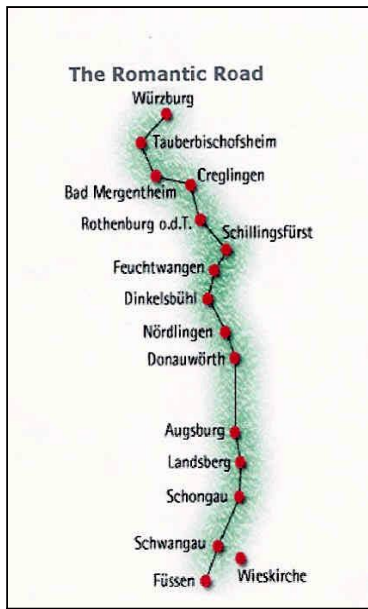


Figure 17-46 A map of towns or villages along the Romantic Road.



Figure 17-47 A map of the Rothenburg walled city with points of interest identified.

my Internet German-English dictionary, means timbered framework. I assume that they are referring to the exposed framing, which is

typically seen on Bavarian buildings. Generally, it seems to be stained a dark brown and appears as a trim.

Now, let's get back to the day's activities. First, came breakfast, something we always looked forward to and which prepared us for the events of the coming day. Well, somewhat like the elevator, the meal began with a lurch downward. They put out the usual fare but the spread was far from the extensive continental breakfasts we had been experiencing. It was, however, in keeping with the medieval charm we were to experience that day. That is, the milk was sour and the breads rather stale. I suspect that they had been waiting for someone like us to pass through for some time. We managed to find a few things we could tolerate and ate sparingly. We would get some fresher bread, cheeses, etc. for lunch that day. As we left, we agreed that the best part of our stay that night was the sleep we obtained and maybe the laughs of dismay at the food and our elevator experience. In the language of *das Vaterland*, "Wir haben hereingelegt" or we had been taken in. Even so, we headed south in high spirits towards our destination for the night, Oberammergau, which is located near the Austrian border but somewhat further west than Salzburg.

ROTHENBURG

The main attraction of the day, this seventh day of the trip, was Rothenburg, the best-preserved medieval city in Germany. Though there were many interesting sights to see along the Romantic Road, time necessitated priorities and Rothenburg was one of those we deemed worthy of our limited time. As you can see, Rothenburg is the 4th town along this historic road and is about 50 road miles from Wurzburg. We arrived relatively early, about 10:00 AM I suppose, and parked just outside the city wall. Virtually all of the parking is outside the walls but the walled old town is about ½ a kilometer square. Thus, everything is within easy walking distance. To allow the reader to better follow my somewhat disjointed description, I have included a map of the walled city in figure 17-47. The parking areas are designated with a **P**. Notice the city had five gates with black-circled areas along the wall representing guard towers. The Spital Bastion was the fortifications for the hospital and became an important part of the town's fortifications. It anchors the southern or lower extension of the city walls. Notice the gates are designated with three black circles.

Apparently, this symbolizes the two guardhouses and the main tower usually associated with each gate. Some of the later



Figure 17-48 Rothenburg, behind the Double Bridge, with its towers and fortifications.

photos will illustrate this arrangement. Notice the various streets have names ending in *gasse*,

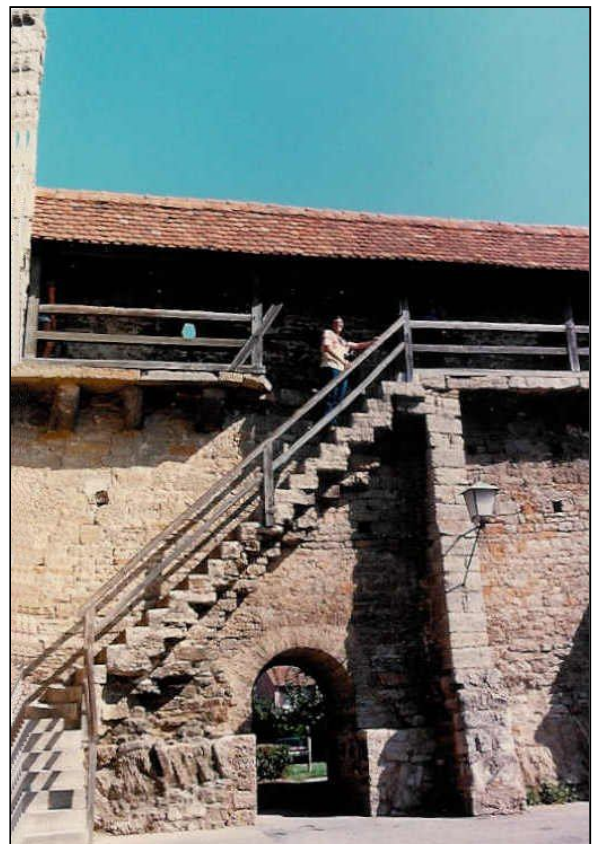


Figure 17-49 Tom climbing the steps to the top of the wall near one of the gates.

which means, among other things, alley or lane. Likewise, one of the meanings of *Platz* is plaza, which appears to be the case on the map displayed in figure 17-47.

Next, let's look at a photo I found in a tourist's guide (figure 17-48), which provides a better idea of the fortifications of the town as well as a



Figure 17-50 The Klingen Gate or Klingentor with its guard towers.

view of the Double Bridge, which spans the Tauber River. You can see several towers associated with the town walls and gates. Others appear to be within the town and associated with buildings. We entered



Figure 17-52 The Rathaus or town hall in Rothenburg. This is a beautiful example of unusual medieval architecture.

Rothenburg from the northwest, as I remember, probably through the Klingen Gate or Klingentor. Almost immediately, Tom ran up some steps

leading to the top of the walls and was captured there on film by Celeste. See figure 17-49. As you can see, the walls were very high, probably

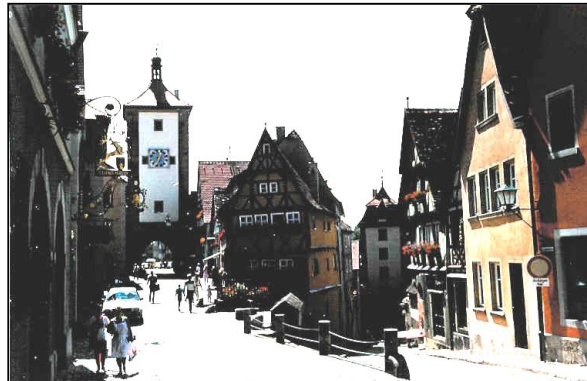


Figure 17-51 "The little crooked house" is obviously the building in the center.

30 to 35 feet. From that same vantage point, she also took a nice picture of the Klingen Gate, substantiating my earlier assumption of entering



Figure 17-53 The White Tower or Veisser Turm built in the 12th century.

therein. The distant towers of figure 17-50 identify the location of the gate with the wall and the street in parallel in the foreground.

As we went into the center of town we were told the author of several childhood stories as well as poems had lived here in the so-called "Little



Figure 17-54 Markusturm or Markus Tower, at the end of Rodergasse (Roeder St.).

Crooked House". Among his poems was one, which I remember from childhood and spoke of the "Little Crooked Man". I believe it went something like this.

"There was a crooked man, who walked a crooked mile. He had a crooked dog with a little crooked smile. He bought a crooked cat that caught a crooked mouse and they all lived together in a little crooked house". Now that may not be exactly correct but that's what came out when I scoured my crafty but comical cranial computer's C-drive for possible poetic patter. This results from some 65 years of undisturbed confinement in this marginal memory of mine, so

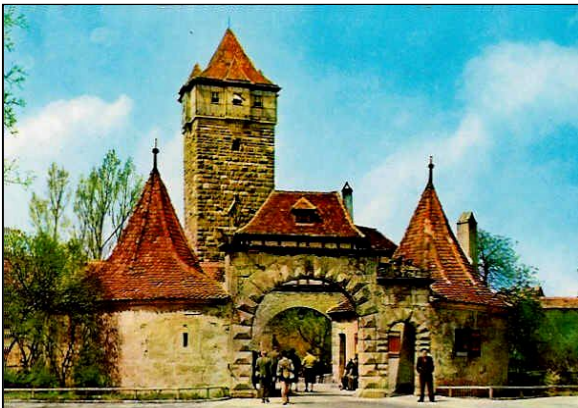


Figure 17-56 The Roeder Gateway or Rodertor located at the end of Rodergasse.

cut me a little slack, please. In any case, the little crooked house is shown in figure 17-51.

As the morning progressed, we visited several different sites in the town such as the Rathaus of figure 17-52 and the Veisser Turm or White

Tower of figure 17-53, before eating lunch in a little café. I also remember climbing up some stairs to the top of a building from which we

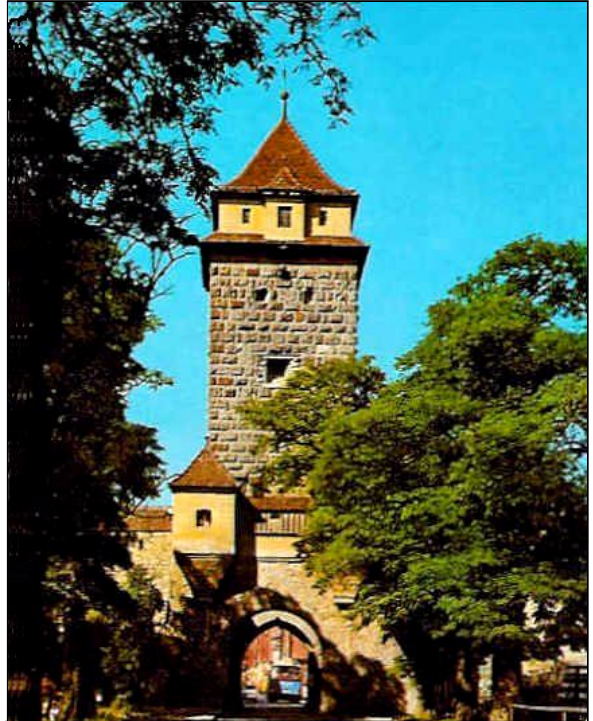


Figure 17-55 Gallows Gate (Galgentor) located at the end of the Galgengasse.

could see the city. I think it was the Rathaus but I'm not sure. In any case, I formed a mental picture of the roof of the St. Jacobs Cathedral from that perspective and it still resides somewhere in the cobwebs of my old bean.



Figure 17-57 Spitalbastei or Hospital Bastion on the south end of Spitalgasse.

Luckily, I found some pictures taken from that tower including one of the St. Jacob's rooftop but due to space limitations, I'll opt to show a better one in figure 17-54. It was from this tower looking west down Herrengasse or Gentry Lane

towards St. Francis Church and Burgton or Castle Gate with its associated gardens. You can identify the Rathaus on the town square near the city center as well as the Burgton and church in the map in figure 17-47. Notice that St. Jacobs Cathedral is located near the town square as well. The photo with St. Jacobs Cathedral in it didn't provide a very good distant view because of being blocked by the church.

Time was drawing short, as we tried to crowd in the last important sights before heading back down the Romantic Road for our next night's stay in Oberammergau. I think we were able to get in all the various towers highlighted on the map of figure 17-47 before leaving. Either



Figure 17-58 Our hotel in Oberammergau. Our rooms were to the extreme right front.

Celeste didn't capture them with photos or she has the pictures stored somewhere other than in the albums I have borrowed. Even so, all is not

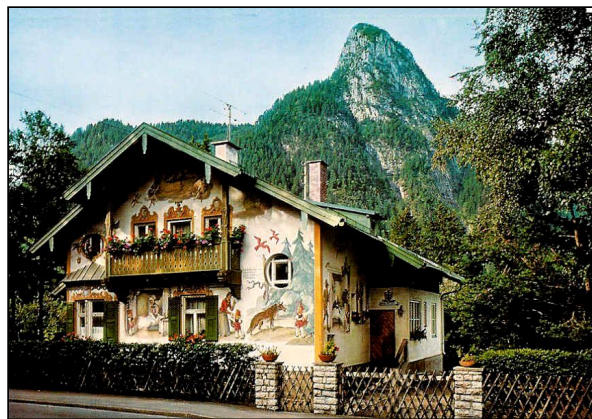


Figure 17-59 Rotkappchen-Haus with the same mountain seen from our hotel.

lost, as I found post card photos of the most interesting gates and towers, which will complete the medieval scene I have been talking about. They appear in the photos of

figures 17-55, 17-56 and 17-57, which portray the Gallows Gate, The Roeder Gateway and the Hospital Bastion respectively. From the Internet, I learned that the hospital was originally located outside the town proper but later included within the fortified walls. I assume that the external location was meant to prevent the spread of disease but haven't verified that. It appears, from the map shown in figure 17-47, that the extension of the city walls to include the Hospital Bastion or Spitalbastei was indeed an add on to those of the original city fortifications. Notice the main road to the hospital, Spitalgasse, begins at the Siebersturm or Seiber's Tower. A little research in my booklet on the town indicates the Siebersturm was originally the south gate to the city. The protective walls were initially built in the 12th century and later expanded to include additional housing as the city grew. The hospital area was included in a second expansion in the 14th century. Both the Spitalbastei and Kobolzeller Gate were added in those later expansions.

Our time in Rothenburg with its medieval history compensated somewhat for the Wurzbürger Hof and its medieval breakfast. Our day was now on a high note as we rolled on down the Romantic Road in the green machine. We kept a steady pace, slowing only for traffic and to gaze at an occasional castle or other interesting sight along the way. As you can see from figure 17-46, we drove through several towns or cities, which we didn't take time to explore. We had our agenda and stuck to it most of the time. I suspect that we could go back and spend a whole day in the various communities along the Romantic Road without becoming bored. Arriving at Schongau, we angled a little more to the east, going through Peiting, Rottenbuch, Altenau and Unterammergau before arriving at our hotel in Oberammergau.

OBERAMMERGAU

My natural curiosity sparked a desire to understand the difference in the names of the last two towns. One meaning of Unter is lower while Ober means upper among other things. They both lay in a valley along an unnamed stream, on the map that is, with Oberammergau being upstream. I can only assume the names come from their positions in the topography. Probably the stream is the Ammergau. I could probably find out with a little research.

We checked in at the Hotel Bold, shown in figure 17-58, which was our temporary home for the

next three nights. Our rooms were just fine. The milk was sweet and the breads were fresh. We no longer had the medieval curse of Wurzburg to dampen our spirits but only the beauty of the Alps to our south, which acted as a tonic to enliven our weary bodies. It had been another long day, full of excitement but somewhat tiring, especially for Esther. I don't remember doing too much that evening other than eating dinner and riding around Oberammergau for a while. Celeste and Esther were almost overcome by the storybook houses we saw along every street we toured but I'll save that and the pictures for day eight.

DAY EIGHT, AUGUST 7, 1968

A night's sleep along with curiosity for the coming day's events always seemed to invigorate us. We were up early and had a typically pleasant German breakfast before heading out. First we would drive around



Figure 17-60 Oberammergau Main Street with Bavarian gingerbread building.

Oberammergau to photograph some of the houses we had seen the night before. Actually, I'm not sure just when Celeste did her photographing and I suppose that I had just as well admit it rather than be caught in a little white lie later. Of course, she may never read this and

then no one would be the wiser, not even Tom. His memory of such things is about like mine, rather vague and disjointed. Their importance is only catalogued in the minds of those who held the events and photos most dear, meaning



Figure 17-61 A Bavarian restaurant with an English sign & unidentifiable characters.

Celeste and maybe Esther. We had a scenic view of the Alps from our hotel but I chose not to include it because of other priorities. The mountain dominating our view from the room is that shown as a backdrop in figure 17-59. Celeste mentioned that our rooms were on the second floor of the extreme right hand section of the hotel in figure 17-58. As you can see, she remembers all the details.

As we drove around Oberammergau, Esther and Celeste couldn't seem to get over the many homes decorated with characters from various children's stories. She bought a postcard

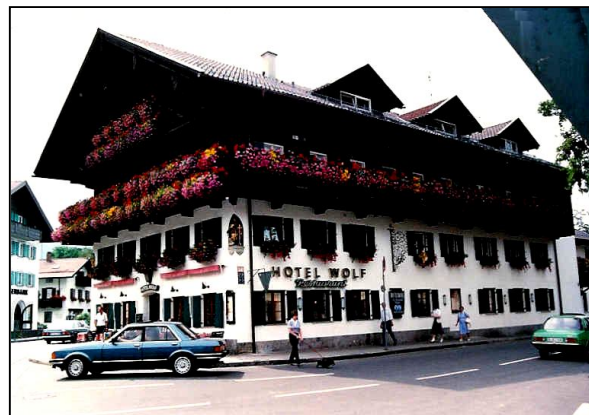


Figure 17-62 Hotel Wolf with its brightly decorated exterior in Oberammergau.

featuring the Rotkappchen-Haus, which is shown in figure 17-59. As you can see, all of the characters are from "Little Red Riding Hood". Places of business were also decorated with

mythical as well as biblical characters. The business located in the main building of figure 17-61 appears to be that of a drug store with the architecture being typical Bavarian gingerbread. The external frame, so obvious, would be Fachwerk, spoken of earlier. Such was the majority of business buildings throughout the town, which established that Bavarian flavor.

We made more than one pass through town, stopping from time to time to view a particularly attractive home or business building. Celeste usually took a picture of all those that were worth stopping for. I'm not sure she has them all



Figure 17-63 An Oberammergau business, which is decorated with biblical figures.

posted in her album. However, I'm including three more photos, which help provide the flavor of the area that we found ourselves in. They will be labeled as figures 17-61, 17-62 and 17-63. They are self-explanatory and need no tiring

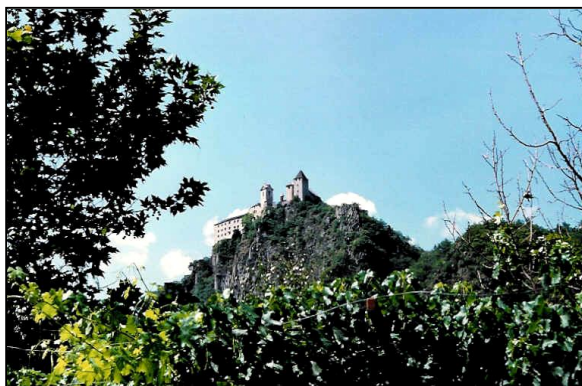


Figure 17-64 A castle or maybe a convent on a distant hilltop in western Austria.

dissertation from me, so I'll spare you the pain, except for figure 17-61. To the right of the photo's main subject, you will see a gentleman and I use the term loosely, doing a little window-shopping. That, my good friends, is Thomas James, I feel sure, due to his stature and the

shiny spot on the back of his head. You see, he used to tease me about my shiny dome until he returned from his mission. At first, I thought maybe he had repented but later came to the realization that he now had nothing to brag about. He had finally been overtaken by "Gene Obenchain" and didn't really want to talk about it until he eventually lassoed Julie. At that time, the security he obtained in marriage seemed to help him gain a certain philosophical comfort not found in young bucks on the prowl.

AN ITALIAN SASHAY

During this particular day, we decided to go into Innsbruck, Austria and were there well before lunch. It was only about 50 kilometers to the south. Knowing we had plenty of time, we decided to go on to Italy to eat lunch and then return to Innsbruck and spend more time there. That way, we could say we had been in Italy even though it wasn't on our agenda. After all, we were trying to gain a reputation as international travelers and this was a simple way to increase our repertoire of experiences. Maybe that's a stretch of repertoire's definition but for me, it fits in principle.

There was a nice four-lane autobahn going south from Innsbruck and we made good time. We had to climb over the Alps, of course, which slowed us somewhat but there were no major traffic problems to contend with. The Austrian highways are excellent, as are those in Germany but one can't help but notice a decrease in quality as the Italian border is crossed. The road was smooth enough but the guardrails were rusted and the overall appearance was poorer. Whether that's true everywhere or not, I don't know but the contrast was significant as we made the transition between countries. We had no particular objective in mind and continued for 45 minutes or so. We must have been in the vicinity of Bressanone, shown in figure 17-1, when we decided to stop for lunch. The town we chose appeared to be a small mountain village amidst beautiful scenery. We pulled into a rather ordinary looking restaurant just off the autobahn or whatever it is called in Italian.

When we walked into the restaurant, there was only a single Italian family of two adults and two children eating. We took our seats nearby and, of course, the children were very curious about these strange people who had come in. A waiter brought us menus, which we couldn't read but we did figure out what spaghetti and

meatballs were. They came with a salad and bread. Obviously, the food was ready because it was brought to us in a few minutes and we began to chow down.

Tom had learned the European method of using his fork with his left hand and saving the right for the knife. He also wound his pasta around his fork before each bite and was able to get a decent sized bite in his mouth. Esther and



Figure 17-65 A castle or convent situated in the foothills of the Alps in western Austria.

Celeste followed suite but not old dad. I had been eating spaghetti for years and found the easiest way to enjoy it was to simply cut it up like one would a pancake and then pick up the desired portion with my fork. This I did and was enjoying it immensely when I heard a giggle coming from the next table. I looked up and saw the little boy pointing at me and talking to his sister. Though I couldn't understand their



Figure 17-66 An Austrian monastery or convent with cross on building right side.

Italian, I understood their facial expressions and gestures. They both laughed and were thoroughly enjoying my manner of eating, while their parents tried to quiet them. I had obviously made their day because they were still smiling when they left. Obviously, I didn't know how to eat spaghetti the Italian way.

During our trip through, which was primarily through Austrian countryside, we saw several small castles or convents nestled on hilltops. I think Celeste must have photographed everyone she saw. I'll include a couple of them to provide an idea of the beautiful countryside we enjoyed as well as the apparent need of various nobles to build fortress like homes on hilltops. Obviously someone was after them or at least they were expecting creditors to come looking for them. In hindsight, I now suspect they had their charge cards maxed out and weren't even making minimum payments. We have their counterparts in American society today, you know. They also live in big homes on hilltops overlooking the city, with cards maxed out but enjoying to the very limit, their ability to procure the finer things of life. Then again, maybe that's just a "sour grapes" comment on my part. We also saw a monastery or maybe a convent

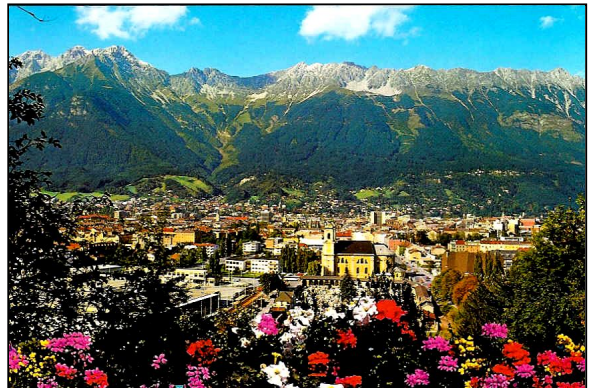


Figure 17-67 A view of Innsbruck as one approaches the city from the north.

located on a similar hill. The castle is designed to keep people out, while one might say the latter are designed to keep people in. Both are interesting in their design and location. Figures 17-64 and figure 17-65 contain two of Celeste's castle photos, whereas figure 17-66 is either a monastery or nunnery, take your pick. Although it may take a magnifying glass to see it, there is a large cross identifying its occupants, which is located on the extreme right wall of the building.

INNSBRUCK

As we came back into Austria and neared the city of Innsbruck, we were treated to a beautiful view of the river valley in which the city was situated, as portrayed in figure 17-67. Celeste took a couple of pictures of the overall city but also bought a beautiful postcard with flowers in the foreground. Unfortunately, her competition won out and the latter was used in the figure.

Even so, she can be complimented for her choice of cards and she wins hands down for memory retrieval. Of course, she hasn't got much competition, has she?

Tom had served for a while in Innsbruck and seemed to know his way around the city. As usual, he led and we simply went along for the ride. I might have taken a sterner approach to his leadership, had he been guilty of unpleasant experiences but I couldn't even blame the

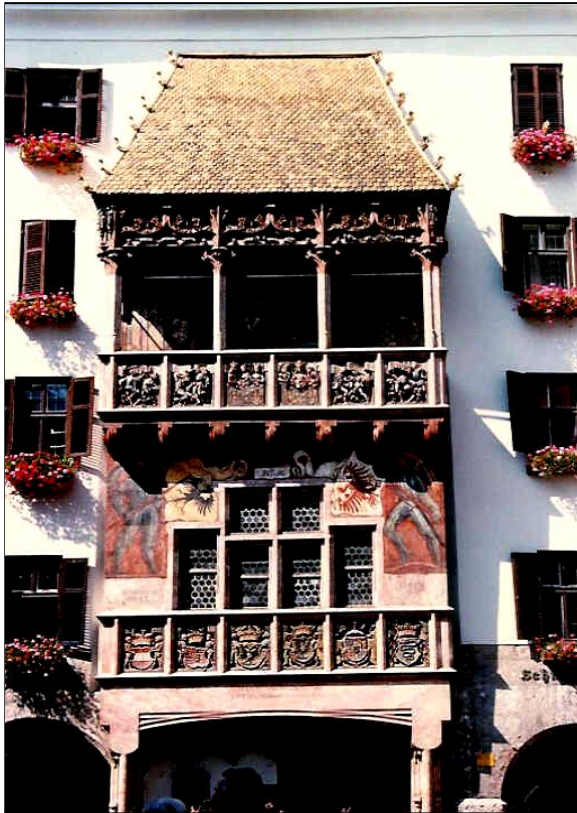


Figure 17-68 Innsbruck building and golden façade, given by a prince to his bride.

Wurzbürger Hof on him, which we had accepted so innocently from a travel agent. Once again, his unerring guidance took us to some of Innsbruck's more interesting spots, which made our time there of more value.

We spent some time walking around the downtown area, looking in various shops and visiting some old landmarks. One landmark of interest was part of a series of adjoining buildings facing a street in the center of town. It had kind of a frontal porch or balcony sticking out from the building. The roof of the balcony was covered with gold as was the various ornamental works, which adorned the front of the balcony as well as the supporting façade. It seems a certain

Austrian prince or at least a nobleman became infatuated with a beautiful woman and he adorned her future place of residence with gold to win her hand. I suppose the inside was provided with furnishings in keeping with its frontal façade but unfortunately, we couldn't enter. It appears in figure 17-68.

As you know, the winter Olympics were held in Innsbruck in the early eighties, though I can't remember the year. I do know it was before 1986 because Tom took us to an area where we could see the ski jump before we headed back to Oberammergau. Celeste's picture of it is shown in figure 17-69. As you can see, we didn't get very close because one has to look carefully at the horizon to see it clearly. According to Celeste, we ate dinner in



Figure 17-69 An Innsbruck street with the Olympic Ski Jump in the background.

Innsbruck, as well, before heading north. I can't imagine that particular event escaping my memory, considering my penchant for food. Maybe it was the trauma I experienced at lunch with the two little Italian kids that wiped it out or maybe the menu just couldn't stand up to the spaghetti and meat balls we had for lunch. Whatever the reason, we went back to our motel and spent a second restful night or, at least, I

did. We had already set our agenda for the following day, which included the Weiskirche and three castles of King Ludwig II. Whether any or all of these future experiences produced dreams or thoughts to disturb the others sleep, I can't say but I had no problem.

DAY NINE, AUGUST 8, 1968

This particular day, we planned our lunch in advance and took picnic necessities. There would be no towns of reasonable size along our route or any opportunities to purchase lunch at the various castles as far as we knew. The first two castles on our list were together or within a half a mile or so of each other. One, Hohenschwangau, was a much older castle, built in the 12th century by the Knights of Schwangau and is shown in figure 17-70.

HOHENSCHWANGAU

According to my little information booklet, the castle's most important epoch occurred shortly after its construction when it became the center of minne-song. A minne-singer was much like a troubadour of France and Italy, in that he was



Figure 17-70 Schloss Hohenschwangau, the home of minne-singers in the 13th century

usually of noble birth and knightly rank. Apparently these individuals were poet singers who not only composed their songs and poems but sang them as well. They often lived an itinerant life, traveling from place to place to carry out their performances. The Schwangau Knights were minne-singers and vassals of the Welfen dynasty as well as the later Staufen dynasty who frequently visited the castle. Prince Konradin, the last of the Staufen, was beheaded in Naples at the age of 16. He had lived in Hohenschwangau. The Knights of Schwangau died out in the 16th century and the castle was exposed to ruin. Apparently, during the Napoleonic wars Schloss Hohenschwangau was

heavily damaged in the years 1800 and 1809. However, because of the castle's excellent location, the ruins were purchased by Crown Prince Maximilian and restored from 1832 to



Figure 17-71 A postcard photo of Neuschwanstein Castle (frontal view).

1836. The Crown Prince later became King Maximilian II, who was father of our central character, King Ludwig II. The latter inherited the castle and spent most of his life there. He



Figure 17-72 King Ludwig II, just after death. Portrait is by Georg Schachinger.

received Richard Wagner in this castle and at Linderhof. However, the great artist was never invited to Neuschwanstein or Herrenchiemsee due to the King's tragic death in June of 1886.

NEUSCHWANSTEIN

King Ludwig II ascended to the throne in 1864 at the age of 18. Apparently, Hohenschwangau didn't suite him or fit his noble station in life because he began building Neuschwanstein on the hill to the east of Hohenschwangau in 1869. He also built Linderhof from 1874 to 1878 and



Figure 17-73 Minstrel Hall for concerts to be held upon the castle's completion

began Herrenchiemsee in 1878. Neither Neuschwanstein nor Herrenchiemsee were complete at the time of his death in 1886. Interestingly, a fourth castle, Falkenstein, was in the planning stages with work scheduled to begin during that same fateful year. He became known as the builder of castles and virtually

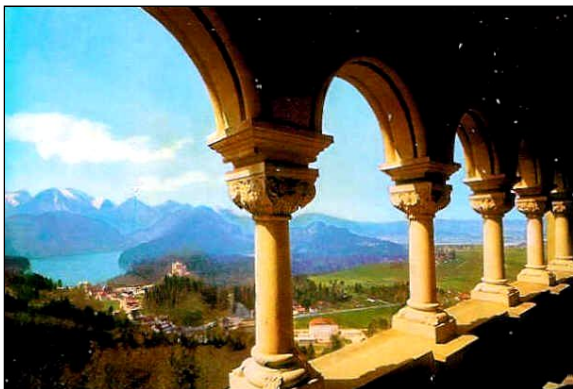


Figure 17-74 A view from the balcony of Neuschwanstein displaying the Alpsee.

bankrupt Bavaria. Some believe those who opposed his ruinous conduct murdered him but such was apparently never proven.

We spent little time at Hohenschwangau and in fact, didn't even go inside. The parking lot was at the foot of the hill on which Schloss Neuschwanstein was built and rather close to the older castle. There were already plenty of tourists around when we arrived and consequently, Neuschwanstein became our

focus of interest. To get ahead of the crowd, we proceeded right to the latter and were able to catch a buggy ride up the hill to the front gate of Neuschwanstein. The walk would have done



Figure 17-75 King Ludwig's bedroom at Schloss Neuschwanstein.

Esther in, I believe, and particularly so, when you consider the actual castle tour. Neuschwanstein is truly a fairy tale castle. See figure 17-71. It was included in many scenes in



Figure 17-76 The royal dining room, fit for a king, at Schloss Neuschwanstein.

Chitty, Chitty, Bang, Bang. At the time I saw the movie, I thought the castle was make believe but sure enough, there it stood in plain sight right before our eyes that 9th day of August 1986, just 100 years after Ludwig's death. The lake, showing sporadically through the trees in that figure, is probably the Alpsee, which appears more clearly in figure 17-74. Unfortunately, we didn't get over to the lake because of the time constraint. In spite of our hurried effort, there were many people ahead of us and we had to wait in line for the actual tour. Even so, the wait was not more than 20 minutes or so.

Esther, realizing her limitations, counted the steps as we ascended into the castle. In total, she climbed 200 steps and descended the same

but there was no doubt that she thoroughly enjoyed the tour. Having seen the movie, she was quick to point out things she remembered along the way. The intricate architectural work was truly amazing and the paintings adorning the various walls were beautiful. The kitchen was really gigantic and had hot and cold running water.

The castle was many years in the making and as I've said, Ludwig didn't live to see its completion. I would say the official tour lasted about an hour inside the building. Though we weren't allowed to take photos inside the building, I managed to get pictures throughout via the commercial postcard route. I will include



Figure 17-77 King Ludwig's Royal Study adjacent to his royal bedroom.

several of them, which I have carefully selected to provide the reader with some sort of a reasonable impression of Ludwig, the man, as well as the castle's lavish interior through photos, illustrating Ludwig and the various rooms with figures 17-72, 17-73, 17-74, 17-75, 17-76 17-77 and 17-78.

During the tour, they described several of the castle's features, which clearly demonstrated a complete disregard for cost, an appetite for the opulent and a passion for the very best of everything. It has been said that part of Ludwig's purpose behind the building of, at least Neuschwanstein, was to help alleviate extended unemployment in Bavaria in 1869. In so doing, he enlisted the skills of the greatest artists of the time, the most skilled artisans and apparently, the very best engineers.

You will note the extensive use of gold throughout all of the rooms as well as various wall murals and tapestries. The result is nothing short of magnificent, though the excessive use

of gold in some rooms, i.e. the ministerial room of figure 17-73 seems, in my opinion, to degrade the overall beauty. This decadent attitude of



Figure 17-78 King Ludwig's yet to be completed throne room at Neuschwanstein.

Ludwig's seems to peak in Linderhof and Herrenchiemsee, which were built later. The man appears to have lost it in the painting of figure 17-72. Admittedly, the painting was

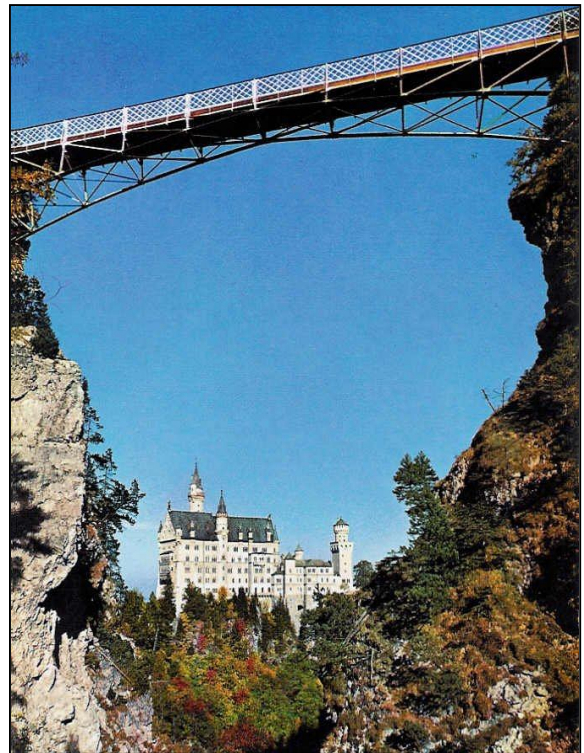


Figure 17-79 Marienbrücke bridge over the Poellat gorge with Neuschwanstein afar.

completed the year after his death but I expect it represents an impression of the man, gained by the painter prior to his decease. If not, he must have derived it from others that knew him.

The mechanical features of the castle represent the very best in engineering for the time. One feature, in particular, which I remember was the heating system. Believe it or not, Neuschwanstein had central heat. Immense



Figure 17-80 Queen Esther, Prince Tom & His Majesty returning from Marienbrucke.

stoves on the ground floor beside the kitchen sent their heated air through shafts to the upper stories to warm the occupants. The immense amount of firewood required, was transported to the stoves by means of a lift. In addition, the kitchen was absolutely modern for the time, have both hot and cold running water available. It also had automatic spits for roasting game and poultry. Rising hot air in the chimney turned a turbine, which through a gear system turned the



Figure 17-81 Wieskirche in southern Bavaria, built by Dominikus Zimmeran

spits. Along with this, some of the escaping hot air of the chimney was funneled off to a plate warmer where the dishes could be heated. All this was available without electricity in 1885. Just think what he would have done today with our mechanical and electrical marvels.

After the tour, we roamed around the courtyard and even followed a trail or narrow road up the

hill behind the complex. Celeste and Esther apparently came along with Tom and me on the trail because the photo shown in figure 17-80 was taken during that little sashay. We probably spent another half hour higher up the hill just enjoying the view of the castle and the surrounding woodlands. The Marienbrucke or Queen Mary's Bridge spans the Poellat gorge along the trail and provides magnificent views in all directions. Celeste had a nice photo of the castle from the bridge but it was second to a photo displaying both bridge and castle, which I found in a Rothenburg pamphlet. That photo is displayed in figure 17-79. The photographer must have negotiated the gorge's steep walls to

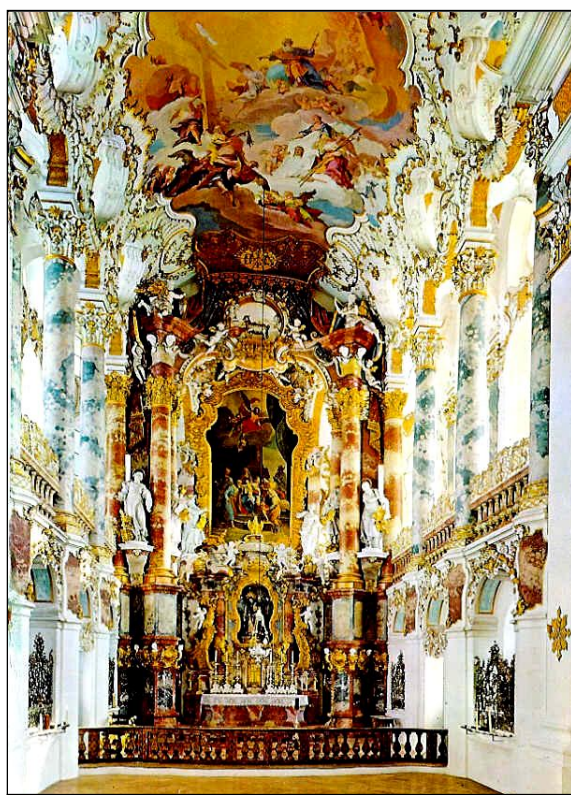


Figure 17-82 Chorraum mit Hochaltar or choir room with High Altar and partial view of its ceiling fresco.

get deep enough to frame the castle as he did. It is a gorgeous shot.

I remember Esther being very proud of the fact that she made the tour through the castle without help and taking this little side trip as well. As we left the castle gate area, Esther fell, probably from being over taxed by the day's activities but the fall didn't really hurt her. I was a little ways away and several people came to her aid before I could. She was more

embarrassed than hurt but we could see her physical strength was gradually going downhill. As I remember, Esther and Celeste took a buggy down the hill to help her conserve her strength but Tom and I walked. I think we ate lunch in the parking lot near Schloss Hohenschwangau before departing for Wieskirche and another castle of Ludwig's known as Schloss Linderhof.

WIESKIRCHE

I had visited Wieskirche with Valerie and Jared several years earlier and was truly impressed by the artwork inside as well as the story behind it.

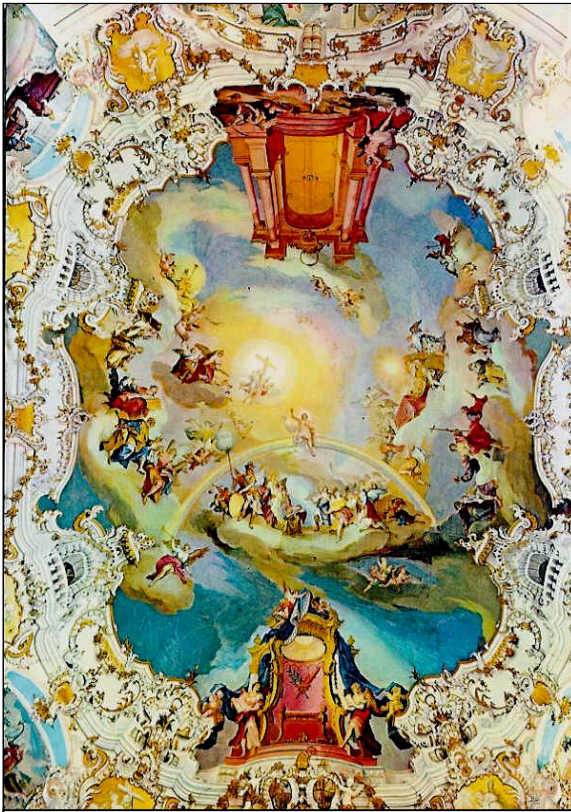


Figure 17-83 Deckenfresko or ceiling fresco adorning the Wieskirche chapel.

As a result, my sales pitch for including it in our tour had built up considerable anticipation in the others. They were all quite disappointed when we found out that it was being refurbished. We stopped for a few minutes as we passed by but couldn't go in. As I remember, the inside was full of scaffolding, which prevented us from seeing the beautiful frescos adorning the walls and ceiling, as well as the sculptured art. I briefly mentioned them in chapter 15. In my rummaging around in my old pictures and pamphlets on Germany, I ran across some

postcards with photos of the Wieskirche and will include some selected scenes for you to enjoy.

We will start with figure 17-81, a photo of the exterior. The church sets in a rather flat area surrounded by rolling hills with the Alps as a backdrop. One, Dominikus Zimmerman, apparently built the church during the period of 1746 to 1754. It's not clear to me whether he was also the artist who dedicated his life to the artwork therein or not. It would appear he was, though I can't vouch for it, because I can't read German. However, J. B. Zimmerman (1680–1758) apparently painted the ceiling fresco of the chapel (figure 17-83), judging from the



Figure 17-84 Kanzel und Chorempore or pulpit & choral gallery at Wieskirche.

German notation on that particular card. He may have been the brother or son of Dominikus. Figure 17-82 provides a view of the high altar area and choir room with its individual ceiling fresco but no mention of J. B. Zimmerman is made. Every card does, however, indicate that Dominikus built the church. Figure 17-84 is an enlarged view of the Kanzel and Chorempore or pulpit and choral gallery. It seems to me, that on my first visit there with Valerie and Jared in 1977, the sermon was delivered from the pulpit

and it appears, hymns by individuals were also sung from that point, maybe in conjunction with the choir located just below the pulpit.

As I have said, I was impressed with the beautiful artwork throughout the church but even more amazed to learn that one individual could



Figure 17-85 Schloss Linderhof as seen from the south with garden and pool.

dedicate his life to build such an edifice. It would seem his primary pay would be the sense of both spiritual and physical accomplishment in the finished product. Such people would be few and far between in today's society where the almighty dollar reigns. One might suspect that



Figure 17-86 The King's royal bedroom at Linderhof. Note the gold trim & chandelier.

they were in that day as well but the sheer number of such highly ornamented churches in Europe would seem to dispute that thought.

SCHLOSS LINDERHOF

The last activity for this rather full day would be our visit to Schloss Linderhof, which was really Ludwig's principle palace of residence after its completion in 1878. We arrived there in the early afternoon and spent a couple of hours

touring the grounds and the inside of the castle. The inside tour was guided and proved to be very interesting. Once again, they wouldn't allow photos to be taken of the inside premises but postcards could be purchased, which covered every room. They made no effort to curtail photos outside, which allowed Celeste and I to click the shutters to our heart's content. Even so, I have chosen a postcard view to show the exterior in figure 17-85. In this case, it came from Celeste's album.

Linderhof had been his father's hunting lodge, known as Konigshauschen or royal house, lodge or villa. It was located in the Graswang valley. Ludwig acquired more land around the lodge and began transforming it, around 1872, into a royal castle, which was finally complete in 1878.



Figure 17-87 The Hall of Mirrors with its tapestries, chandeliers and gold décor.

It is smaller than any of the other castles but seems equally as gaudy, if not more so, from the overuse of gold decoration. This opulent use of gold will be quite obvious in the included photos.

As we entered the castle, the vestibule or entryway contained a bronze statue of Louis XIV and the Royal Sun symbol of Louis XIV was painted on its ceiling. These, once again, demonstrated his connection to the Bourbons with whom he seemed obsessed. I only vaguely remember the layout of the castle but it seems the royal bedroom was in the back. It is shown in figure 17-86. The King could lie in his bed of royal blue and gaze out the window at an artificial cascading waterfall. In the evening he had the giant chandelier of candles to cast its flickering lights on the golden accessories of the room to sooth his royal countenance. It would appear he had designed the environments of every room for soothing all his waking moments.

Note the lavish gold décor on the woodwork, chandelier and ornamental fixtures.

All the rooms were virtually covered in gold, as much as 50 to 60 percent of the walls and ceilings. This guy was obviously aware of his station in life and apparently didn't care about much else other than feeding his own ego. I will



Figure 17-88 King Ludwig's Royal dining Room. Note the gold in the room.

include a few more photos that demonstrate just what a nut cake he was. There's little doubt in my mind that he was murdered because his only concern was himself and the image he portrayed to the people. Figure 17-87 is a photo of the Hall of Mirrors, which along with his dining room of figure 17-88 further demonstrates Ludwig's obsession with gold and I assume, its symbol of



Figure 17-90 King Ludwig taking a sleigh ride in his golden sleigh.

wealth and ones station in life. If I sound a little disgusted with this guy, it's only because I am.

There were other quirks in his character, in my opinion. These were manifested by some of his other additions to the castle, which include a Moorish Kiosk and a Grotto or artificial cave. I guess small caves or grottos in beautiful gardens are fairly common but his was definitely in excess like everything else he did. In figure

17-89 we see him being rowed round his grotto lake by a servant while he listens to various operas. The background of the cave holds a



Figure 17-89 King Ludwig floating in his gold shell boat on his grotto lake.

painting by August Heckel, which illustrates the first act of Wagnerian opera "Tannhauser". Machinery in the grotto generates artificial waves for reality and, of course, Ludwig's enjoyment as well. In figure 17-90 we see a painting of King Ludwig II taking an evening ride, a delight to him, in his golden sleigh in the countryside around Schloss Linderhof.

Ludwig II bought a Moorish Kiosk, designed by a Berlin architect Karl von Diebitsch, from a Bohemian castle, Zbirow Palace, where it had been placed in an associated park. He had it erected one year later at Linderhof. It is illustrated in figure 17-91. He then had a Peacock Throne erected in the apse or altar area of the kiosk. Though we didn't get to see it, the photo is such a beautiful thing that I decided to include it here as figure 17-92. The stained glass windows behind the throne can be artificially lit from the outside. There is no doubt that Ludwig enjoyed the beautiful things of life but it seems, he lavished them all on himself with little thought for his subjects but why worry

about them when they had his royal countenance to admire.

After spending a couple of hours at Linderhof and uttering expressions of amazement each time we entered some new area or building, we decided to move on. We would back track across Bavaria to Stuttgart, which is located in

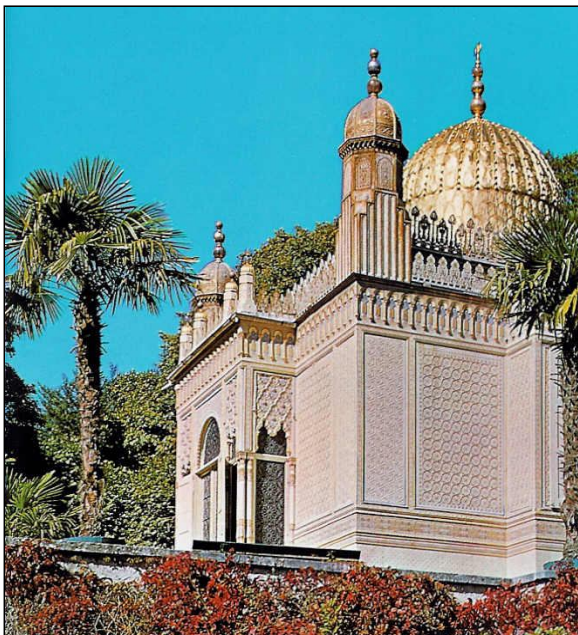


Figure 17-91 Moorish Kiosk at Linderhof containing the Peacock Throne.

Baden Wurttemberg, a hundred kilometers or so to the northwest. Soon we were back in Oberammergau and in Celeste's words, "We ate dinner in a pizza joint. I really enjoyed it. The music was a little loud but the pizza was good".

DAY TEN, AUGUST 9, 1968

Tom had spent both Christmases of his mission in Stuttgart and wanted to return to show us around. We had procured reservations at a hotel called Schloss Weitenburg, an old castle transformed into a reputable hotel restaurant or at least, supposedly so. We were now a little cautious after our Wurzburg experience. However, this hotel advertised itself as an old castle, not trying to cover up its medieval origin but rather, utilizing it as a come on.

STUTTART

I don't remember much about the trip from Oberammergau to Stuttgart. I suspect that it was related to the fact that the car was now running better, Tom had the pedal to the metal and the scenery flew by too fast to focus on.

Then again, maybe I was relaxing a little more and dozed off for a time. Celeste makes no comments regarding that part of the trip either, so it must have been uneventful.

We arrived in Stuttgart rather early, probably around noon because we were at our hotel in the late afternoon after spending a couple of hours in the city. I remember driving into the city center and passing some relatively large hills along the way. According to Tom, those mounds contained the rubble from Allied bombs, which was disposed of as reconstruction ensued. The city seemed much more modern than Wurzburg, which, undoubtedly, was due to the city's rebuilding. Wurzburg apparently had

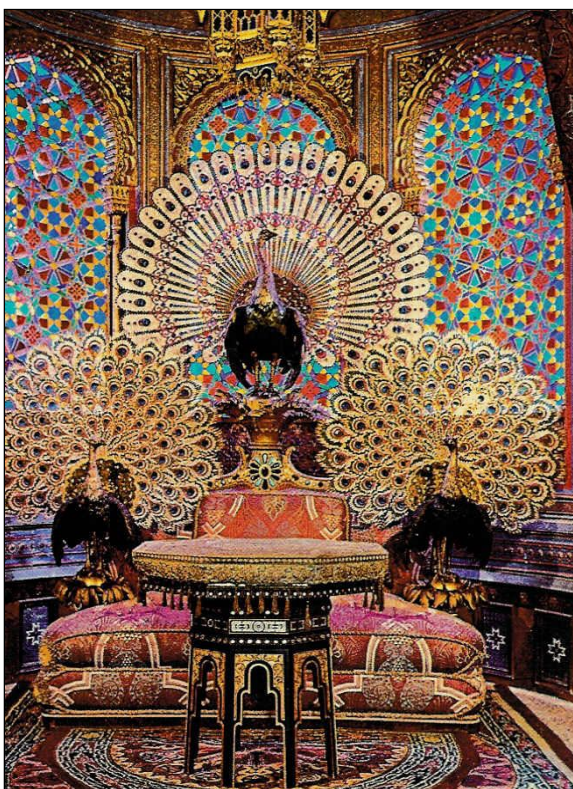


Figure 17-92 Peacock Throne, which is located in the apse of the Moorish Kiosk.

few, if any, targets of interest and was spared the havoc that Stuttgart suffered. It appears Stuttgart was the more blessed of the two, though the citizens therein might not agree.

SCHLOSS WEITENBURG

Our hotel, Schloss Weitenburg, was located a ways south of Stuttgart on a hill, which overlooked a valley harboring a small community surrounded by agricultural land. Figure 17-93 provides a postcard view of the

castle. Our rooms were located on the opposite side of the main building and provided a beautiful view of the valley just mentioned. We could look out the windows and imagine ourselves as royalty looking down on the serfs in the valley. They, of course, would be providing the necessary crops for our comfort and royal taste buds. Figure 17-95 provides the view just described while figure 17-94 illustrates the castle grounds themselves, somewhat better than that of 17-93. Note the castle shadow in the valley below in figure 17-95. If you look closely, you can see the shadow of the castle turret with its four little corner towers.

After check in, we found our rooms next to each other with somewhat dated but comfortable furnishings. The floors throughout the upper stories were of wood and along with the stairs, creaked with every step. This sound effect along with some doorways, as in figure 17-96, added to the medieval atmosphere, I suppose, the castle was meant to project. My experience illustrated in the photo made an indelible impression in my old noggin, one, which I have no trouble recalling. You see, we noticed the miniature doorway when we first entered the room and carefully took note of it to prevent banging our heads when we made essential visits therein. However, the note was hardly completed when a primeval urge dispatched me on the fly to initiate such a trip. Needless to say, I banged my head solidly against the doorframe and almost went to the floor before staggering through the door. Tom, my only witness to the occasion, burst out laughing, showing little or no regard for my physical well - being. I suppose he figured I was okay because I was able to slam the door. As I sat down, almost forgetting why I came in, my head spun with kaleidoscope like impressions while I tried to gather my senses. I continued to hear Tom's guffaws for some time and when I finally came out, he continued to chuckle after a dutiful, "Are you okay" statement. Well, I was and I never made that mistake again. Of course, when Tom slammed his head in a similar manner a little later, I made no effort to contain myself and did my best to return his obvious concern for me with a little interest.

The castle grounds, a portion of which is shown in figure 17-94, were nice but not particularly impressive. None-the-less, we enjoyed walking around and looking at the old remnants of the associated gardens. The view from the hilltop was also nice, which I have pointed out

At one point in our stay we went down into the valley to look around because of its pleasant appearance. In so doing, Celeste felt impressed to take a picture of our hilltop retreat, which is shown in figure 17-97. During that little trip, we could now play the role of the serfs and look up at our royal master's abode outlined against the



Figure 17-93 Schloss Weitenburg, our hotel for the night on a hill near Stuttgart.

sky. We could then imagine all of the luxuries he was enjoying while contrasting it with our own meager fare. Oddly enough, we almost instantly decided that looking down was preferable to looking up and with all my princely stature I shouted, "Home James", giving Tom the right to whip the horses to a lather or, in our case, put the pedal to the metal and we headed up the hill. Of course, Tom responded with glee, finding his



Figure 17-94 Weitenburg Castle & grounds.

usual joy in that particular activity. He was at his best when demanding more than those rather pitiful horses, which are found under the hood of a Volkswagen could offer. In reality, it took a long straight and even level stretch to build up any speed with the load the Obenchain group had placed in it. Because of the situation, hills were a nemesis for Tom and the puny horses that resided under the hood.

DAY ELEVEN, AUGUST 10, 1986

The following day would be Sunday and we decided to attend the American ward Tom had served in when assigned to Stuttgart. We got up



Figure 17-95 Valley of serfdom as seen from our royal perches in the castle above.

early enough to pack, load the car and make it to church at the appointed time. It must have been a little early for Tom because he crashed



Figure 17-96 Re-enactment of the real thing, portraying my first visit to the john.

on the floor of our room while we were waiting for Esther and Celeste. I was in their room trying to expedite things when we heard a scream just outside their door. We ran out and

the maid exclaimed, "There's a dead man on the floor of that room", pointing at my room. I laughed and said, "That's just my son catching up on his sleep". Even so, she wouldn't go in until I woke Tom up to verify his condition and allow her access to clean. Tom and I finished packing the car and we went to breakfast. I don't remember much about the dining facilities but they must have been only average. Anything great would have made an impression comparable to my collision with the door frame and offered some assuagement for the incident. We left soon after and made it to church on time. The ward was composed primarily of service personnel and their families and reminded me of our home ward. That's one thing about the Church; it's the same wherever you go.

After leaving church, we headed south towards Titisee-Neustadt in the Black Forest where we would spend the next night. I can't be sure of the exact route we took but I do know we went out past the Stuttgart airport, headed south and eventually came to Schloss Hohenzollern. After visiting the castle, we continued on to the Black Forest and Titisee-Neustadt. I have shown our probable route in red on the map of figure 17-98, with the airport, castle and Titisee-Neustadt as control points. Since Tom isn't here to argue with me and probably won't read this until after I'm gone and maybe not at all, I can choose the route I want without getting permission, so there you go. Old dad wins this one.

We arrived in the Hechingen area about noon, I would imagine. Along the way we scanned signs as well as the countryside for items of interest. As we were driving along the two-lane highway, Celeste or maybe I spotted what appeared to be an impressive castle on a hill to the east. The distant view we had is shown in figure 17-99, which should help you understand why we made the effort to get a closer look.

SCHLOSS HOHENZOLLERN

The castle wasn't on our list of things to see but the apparent size and number of turrets that were evident convinced us to head in its direction. Tom took the closest road we could find, which headed in that direction and soon we found ourselves at the foot of the hill on which it sat. Even though a road led up to the castle, tourists had to walk. The only real tourist parking space was at the base of the hill. There were no buggies or other conveyances to rent, so Esther and Celeste elected to stay in the car while Tom and I made the walk to the top. It

was a good half-mile and maybe more but soon we found ourselves at the gate. One could walk around the grounds and, I believe, take a guided tour but of the latter, I'm not sure. Whatever the case, with the girls waiting in the car, our time constraint wouldn't allow the time required for the tour. I bought a little brochure or pamphlet with a beautiful view of the castle on the front. It also gave some of the history of the castle, which I referred to as we walked around the grounds. Celeste had a postcard with a nice photo of the castle, as shown in figure 17-100. I may have bought it for her or she found it in a gift shop at Titisee-Neustadt because she didn't make the climb. Being better suited for my book, I used her resources. It's unusual nature and availability prompted me to include a ground plan of the castle in figure 17-101.

The Hohenzollern Castle has a long history, dating back to the early 11th century. The present castle is the 3rd to be placed on the hilltop. It seems the origin of the House of Hohenzollern is steeped in darkness and is unproven at best. The name was mentioned in a monastery account in 1267 in connection with the first castle. One son, Friedrich IV of Nuremberg inherited the castle and other Swabian possessions as Count of Zollern. Continual divisions in his posterity led to eventual destruction of the first castle in 1423 by an alliance of 18 towns located around it. A later member of the line Count Jos Niklas von Zollern eventually laid the foundation stone of the second castle in 1454. Supposedly, it was more beautiful than the first but became a victim in the 30 years war and eventually fell into decay. In 1819 Crown Prince and later King, Friedrich Wilhelm IV, visited the area. He was related to the Swabian Zollerns and was so impressed with the site that he supported the construction of the third or present castle on the hill. Fortifications for the hill were built first and then the castle itself, which was inaugurated in 1867. It was built more as a memorial for the royal family and was never lived in by a member of the House of Hohenzollern until 1945. Only military personnel had been stationed there. At that time Crown Prince Wilhelm and Crown Princess Cecilie took up occupancy for a period of time. Since 1951, Prince Louis Ferdinand has stayed there for various periods of time. Differing events are now held there, such as charity

events and large family occasions. If we could prove an Abendschön link to the Hohenzollern line, maybe we could have one of our reunions



Figure 17-97 The silhouette of Schloss Weitenburg outlined against the sky.

in the castle. It might be disguised as a "charity event" because of our desperate needs. Then again, we would probably find out we were

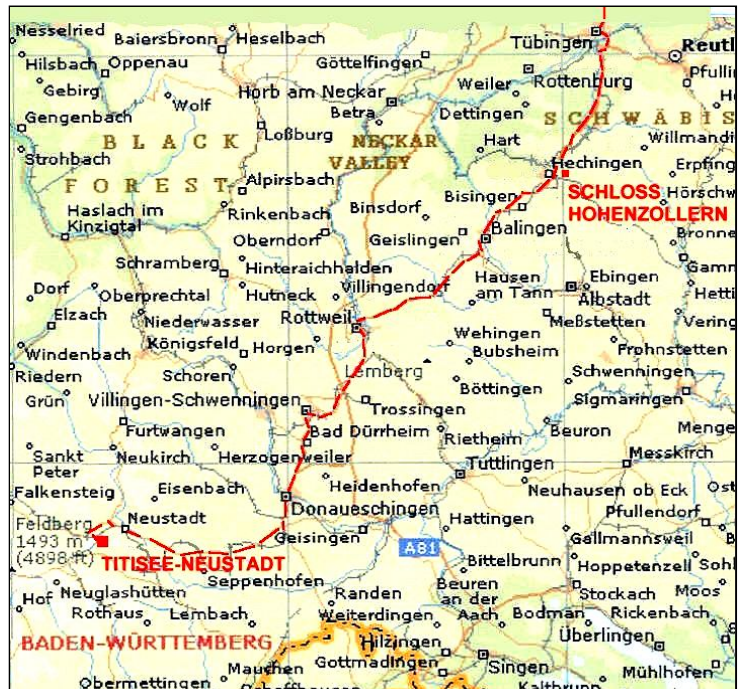


Figure 17-98 Map showing the location of Schloss Hohenzollern relative to Titisee-Neustadt.

related to a servant or maybe the serfs over whom they ruled.

HOTEL ADLER POST

After returning to the car and discussing the castle a little with Esther and Celeste, we headed to Donaueschingen where we turned

west to Neustadt near lake Titisee. We checked in to our hotel, the Adler Post (figure 17-102), a relative modern facility, for a change. The rooms were nice as well as reasonable, which surprised me a little because the Black Forest is another tourist area. The hour was rather late when we arrived and after cleaning up, we went directly to the dining room. The food was excellent with choices being closer to those in the United States. The prices turned out to be the best of the trip, considering the quality of the food. Not only that, we were able to get plenty of ice water, in a pitcher no less. Up to this point, we had to order bottled water and when we asked for ice and a pitcher they looked at us like we were crazy or maybe just Americans. The salad was excellent or, at least more to my taste, not having a preponderance of dark and strange leafy vegetables. We had a German waiter, no surprise, who was learning English and he delighted in speaking to us for practice. All in all, it was a very pleasant dinner experience.

DAY 12, AUGUST 11, 1986

Morning came and the girls wanted to stop in Titisee to buy some mementos. I remember them each buying cuckoo clocks and Celeste bought two nutcrackers in the form of tin soldiers with German uniforms. She gave one to Esther but both were placed in our living room on the



Figure 17-100 Schloss Hohenzollern located near Hechingen, Baden-Wurttemberg, Germany.

mantel, I believe, when they returned. Celeste still has them but the clocks are long gone. Ours quit and would have cost more than it was worth to fix. It seems we went near the lake, maybe to eat lunch or something. Tom pointed out a trail he had walked quite often while

servicing there, which led around the lake. The Black Forest area is beautiful, of course but we didn't spend much time there because Lucerne, Switzerland was our next stop and we wanted to arrive at a decent time.

On the way to Freiburg, which lay to the west-northwest of Titisee, I suggested we take a little

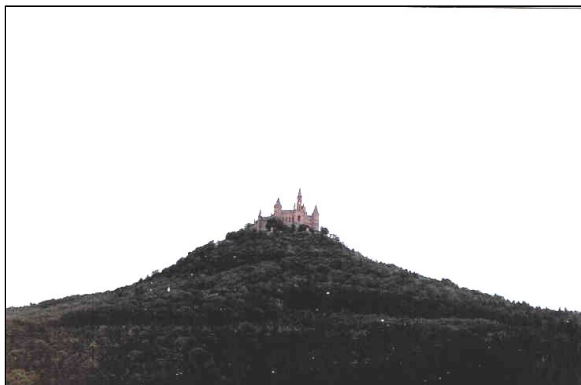


Figure 17-99 Schloss Hohenzollern near Hechingen, Baden-Wurttemberg.

detour into France. That way, all could brag that we had been to France as well as Italy, Austria and Germany. Heck, we could have gone into East Germany too, if it hadn't been for those guys in the towers with telescopic rifles. Anyway, Freiburg is only about ten to fifteen kilometers from the border and a highway through Mulhouse, France led directly to our planned entry point into Switzerland, i.e. Basel. See figure 17-1, which illustrates our approximate route. I believe we just blew on past Freiburg and into France because of time. I remember the French highway being two-lane, rather crowded and somewhat dated in its construction. Certainly it was a far cry from those in Germany, particularly the autobahns. Our progress through France was slow but the distance was short and we could now claim it on our travel log. Before long we arrived in Basel, presented our passports and moved on to the autobahn leading to Lucerne.

LUCERNE AND THE CHATEAU GUTSCH

We arrived at the chateau, located on a hill overlooking Lucerne, in the late afternoon and checked in. Our rooms were on the third floor, as I remember and looked out over the city. Figure 17-103 is a photo of Lucerne taken from the hotel. We planned two nights here so as to have time to look around the city. Also, Esther wanted to pick up a gift of some kind for Elsie, our neighbor, who lived across the street and

express her appreciation for watching the house and feeding the dogs. Deep down, she had designs to do a little personal shopping as well but didn't share that with me.

After cleaning up and resting a little while, we ate dinner in the hotel dining room. The food was excellent but the prices were high, well above anything I had seen in Germany. Even so, I was able to choke back the tears, muffle my voice a little and pretend I hadn't noticed or didn't care. All such effort was ridiculous, of course and I decided to enjoy myself and play the role of a rich American. I suspect the family had some understanding of my discomfort because they all made reasonable choices, much to my relief. We thoroughly enjoyed the dinner while we exchanged views of the day's experiences.

After dinner, it seems to me, that at least Tom and I went into town with the primary purpose of trying out the Cog Railway available for hotel guests. It ran straight up and down the hill between the city and hotel. It was free for hotel guests only and I wasn't about to pass up the deal. I'd have to ride it all the next day to make up for tonight's dinner. Anyhow, the cars are raised and lowered, between the two stations on the hill's slope of approximately 45-degrees, by means of cable powered by a cogwheel. It's similar to the elevators used to carry people to the top of the arch in St. Louis. It's noisy and a little slow but safe and relatively cheap. From a guest's standpoint, it sure beats driving into the city and trying to find a parking place. The trip was interesting but uneventful and having satisfied our curiosity, we returned to the hotel for the evening.

DAY 13, AUGUST 12, 1986

The next morning we were up relatively early and had a light breakfast. We could grab something more substantial in town if and when the urge occurred. As we headed down the cog railway, Esther was a little hesitant to trust her safety to that thing. It was noisy and the hill was steep. She obviously wondered whether it would hold together or would the car we were in suddenly go screaming to the bottom. Well, her fears were unfounded and soon we were stepping out of the car at the bottom of the hill quite safe and sound. Even so, she didn't want to ride the silly thing anymore than she had to.

We spent the day looking around the city, shopping for tablecloths and other mementos

and of course, taking a few pictures. Celeste and I both had our trusty cameras by our side like any good tourist would. We both took

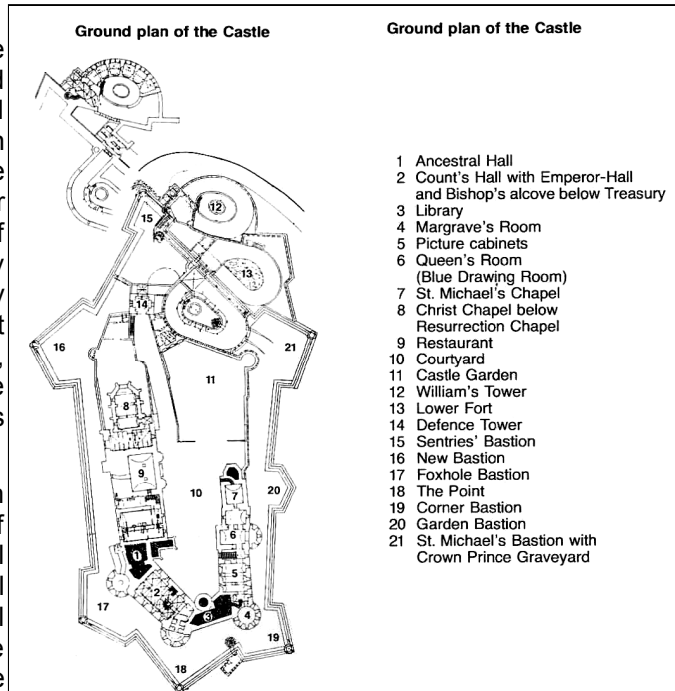


Figure 17-101 The grounds plan of Schloss Hohenzollern near Hechingen, Germany.

photos of Chateau Gutsch on the hill because it stood out rather prominently. Hers was somewhat better I have to admit and is displayed in figure 17-104. If you look closely at the photo, you can see the cog railway coming straight down the hill as well as a sign identifying



Figure 17-102 Our hotel, the Adler Post, in Neustadt by lake Titisee in the Black Forest

the hotel as Gutsch. In either case, a magnifying glass will help. In fact, it is probably essential if you really want to see them and actually read the sign. The sign lays just to the right at the top of the railway.

Esther was taken by the beautiful tablecloths and luncheon sets, which she saw in one particular store. We must have spent a couple of hours there before she finalized her purchases. Though I can't remember everything she bought, I do know she got Elsie a nice luncheon set as well as one for herself. She also picked up a nice tablecloth with matching cloth napkins. What else was purchased

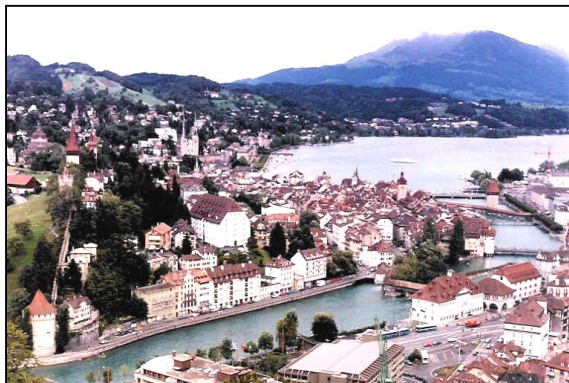


Figure 17-103 Lucerne, Switzerland as seen from our rooms in Chateau Gutsch.

escapes my mind at this point but I do know we spent a bundle. My normal tightwad inclinations gave way to my satisfaction in seeing her thoroughly enjoy this trip and her one big spending spree. Such was out of the ordinary

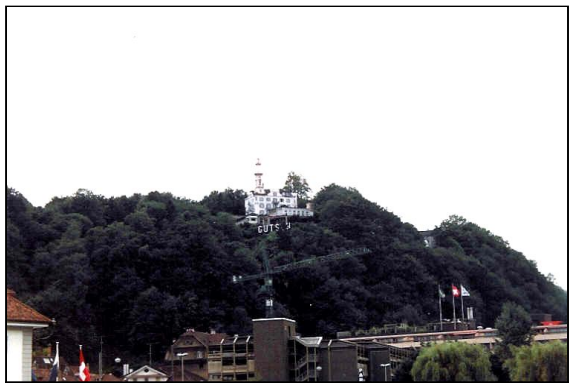


Figure 17-104 Our hotel, Chateau Gutsch, as seen from the city below.

for her and she deserved it. In such situations, what can one do but stifle their normal tendencies to say something.

Around noon, we started looking for a hamburger joint or someplace a little more economical to get a bite to eat. I surely didn't see the need to go first class for every meal and felt a nagging desire to conserve after the shopping spree. So, what did I do?

I stepped around a corner; what did I see?
A hamburger sign, as plain as could be.
Reading McCheapers, a sight for sore eyes.
Junk food to satisfy, both gals and the guys.

I took Esther's hand; saying come, let us go.
This place will do, keep our expenses in tow.
Nodding her head with a sweet little smile,
She said maybe so but it's hardly my style.

With a jerk of my head, I had to act quick.
That is, if I expected her decision to stick.
Pulling her along with a tug of my arm,
I made for McCheapers, trying not to alarm.

We ordered our meals of burgers and fries;
By choice, I believe, the extra large size.
Then what to my wondering eyes did appear
A bill that enraged and then brought a tear.

Mortgage our house, our Denver home.
Questions came quick; need I seek a loan?
McCheapers, my fanny; I cried in a shout.
Then stifled my cry, as people looked about.

Swallowing my pride and with artificial grin,
I smiled sweetly, took the bill on the chin.
You see 'twas double the price in the states.
With no offer of coupons, or a little rebate.

The moral of this story, beware of big signs.
Misleading the unwary, doing so by design.
In Lucerne before eating, carry a big stash,
Of junk food & goodies, or plenty of cash.

Well, you may think I'm exaggerating but if I'm guilty, it's not to any significant degree. I believe I did pay about double what I would have at McDonalds from whom they coined their name. At least the food was good, being comparable to that of their namesake. After satisfying our tummies, we walked around town a little, giving Celeste time to take a few pictures of buildings she deemed appealing.

I decided to portray one in figure 17-105, which was near the scene of their shopping. Then we headed back to the Chateau to unload and relax for a while. Later that day we also took the car into town to drive along the waterfront and see a little more of the city and surrounding area. At some point Celeste took a picture from the window of her room, which shows the courtyard of the Chateau. To add a little flavor to our residence of two nights, I chose to display it in figure 17-106. This should provide a better idea of the appearance of the chateau. That evening we chose to go back to the chateau's dining room to eat. After all, we knew the food was good, the atmosphere enjoyable and the prices

typical of Lucerne. After my afternoon's experience in McCheapers, I had no reason to look for something better or quibble about the price. I just put up and shut up.

DAY 14, AUGUST 13, 1986

Well, day fourteen would be the last driving leg of our trip. If the engine held out for one more day, we could kiss the old green machine goodbye and return it to the rental company. We had a considerable distance to cover over unknown mountain roads, so we got an early start for Munich. Our travel this day would take us back into Austria near Innsbruck, once more and then up through Oberammergau, Germany to Munich or actually Bad Aibling. As Celeste mentions in her diary, the trip was awesome in terms of beauty. The Swiss Alps are really beautiful. There is a breathtaking view virtually around every corner. I don't know the exact route we took across Switzerland but I do know we went into Austria south of Liechtenstein. We went through a lengthy tunnel, probably 25 miles or so, and climbed up over a mountain pass.

As we approached a short tunnel, a sign indicated we were approaching a Y in the highway. To the right one could go through another tunnel and to the left the road led up over the approaching summit. Tom was in the left lane when we passed a sign saying lane changes were now prohibited for the next so many kilometers. As I remember, we had decided to go through the tunnel. Tom and I had been discussing the route we wanted to take and the exact series of conversations now escape me. In any case, we didn't escape the Austrian police. As we came out of the short tunnel, Tom saw the Y and made a quick decision to go to the right, based on our conversation, I think. The traffic was rather light and he made the change without crowding anyone but we hadn't traveled a 100 yards until we had the Austrian Gestapo on our tail. Well, Tom pulled over and the cop carefully pointed out that he had violated the lane change prohibition and fined us 25 deutsche marks, I believe. We dutifully paid and were soon on our way. As I think back on the situation I kind of wish we had played dumb regarding the German language, a role I could play well, and see what followed. We might have gotten off through communication frustration.

Let me explain this devious thought by taking a little side trip here and relating an experience a Frenchman once told me in Houston. We often

had French visitors to our meetings in Houston and they usually took advantage of the trip by touring the surrounding area during their stay. In this particular case, two such visitors decided



Figure 17-105 Downtown Lucerne in the area where we mortgaged our house.

to drive over into Louisiana during the weekend. At some point a Texas State Patrolman stopped them for speeding. They played dumb and only spoke French while gesturing for emphasis. No matter what the cop said they answered in French even though they could both speak English. After about ten minutes the frustrated



Figure 17-106 Looking down on the Chateau courtyard from our rooms.

patrolman waved them on. They drove off and watched him shrug his shoulders as he climbed back in the patrol car. I guess the cop had decided it would be better to let them go than try to haul them into court for a fine. Playing dumb had paid off in that case. Would it in ours?

DAY 15, AUGUST 14, 1988

We had cruised on into Bad Aibling with no further complications to my memory and stayed at the Hotel Linder once again. The trip back was relatively uneventful. We made a stopover in Atlanta and spent a couple of days with

Valerie and Jared. At that time they lived northeast of Cumming in a nice little sub-division near Lake Lanier. I don't believe Valerie was yet teaching school but I could be wrong.

I have come across some photos that were probably taken during that stop. Tom has a



Figure 17-107 The three musketeers or is it mouseketeers, August 1986, Cumming GA.

missionary haircut but not the dress. He looks as though he is released from his duties, being thoroughly relaxed. Besides, Jared and Joseph look about the right age, i.e. 12 and 8. You'll find these photos in figures 17-107 and 17-108. I think we stayed a couple of days with Valerie and Jared but can't recollect what we did other than talk and enjoy each other's company. We probably had a picnic at Lake Lanier that being a favorite spot of theirs and mine as well. The



Figure 17-108 Right to left, Jared Jr, Esther, Joseph and I, August 1986 in Cumming GA.

lake is located on the upper reaches of the Chattahoochee River to the east of Cumming. Now a days, all our homes are on the eastern side of the lake with Valerie living near the north end while Celeste, Lethia and I are nearer the south end in side by side houses. I have shown a map outlining the lake in figure 17-109 to give

you an idea of the locations of local towns and the various homes of Obenchain/Garfield's, as well as the size of the lake. Actually, there is another small town by the name of Oakwood, which lays just to the west of exit 16. Valerie and Jared also had a home just east of exit 16 but it has nothing to do with my story. Similarly, Lethia and I had our first home just east of Flowery Branch and south of the point where the Atlanta Highway crosses 985. I will refer to it in a later chapter. Much of this is superfluous at this point, which isn't unusual for my dissertations on any subject, so deal with it my sweet posterity. Chalk it up as another unusual

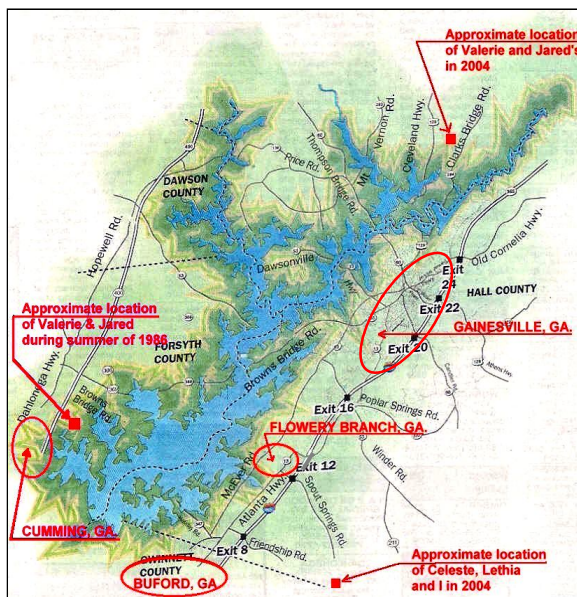


Figure 17-109 Lake Lanier map with towns and various family dwelling locations.

characteristic of that old man known as T.I.O., or sometimes the missing link in the Open – chain family.

Well, enough of my ramblings about Lake Lanier and the surrounding vicinity. We had a good time for a couple of days with the kids there but soon we were back in the air and landing at Stapleton Airport in Denver. Celeste didn't record the date, so I have to guess. It was probably the evening of August 16th or at the very least sometime in the month of August. You see, I can be somewhat precise, if I'm pinned down, that is. One nice thing about getting home was the completion of our kitchen remodeling. There was a bit of a mess, however, because cleaning up didn't seem to be included in the bid. We did so and soon Esther was reveling in her new kitchen with a double

oven, microwave, skylight and island on which the stove was located. We, various members of the family that is, enjoyed it for the next 7 years.

THE DENVER TEMPLE DEDICATION

The Denver Temple was completed in 1986 and was dedicated in October of that year. I was asked to usher for the dedication and the whole family was able to attend one dedicatory session. I later served in the temple in various capacities until I moved to Georgia in 1991. The Denver Temple was built along the lines of the Atlanta Temple with some improvements gained from experience, I suppose. An inscription on the front of the temple states, "The House of the Lord" with "Holiness to the Lord" inscribed directly beneath it. As with all temples, it faces the east, which is in harmony with the scriptures' statement that Christ will appear in the east at his second coming. The photo of the Denver temple in figure 17-110 was taken right after its dedication in October of 1986. I have found, during my service there, as well as in the Atlanta Temple, that it is indeed the Lord's House. The presence of the Holy Spirit can always be felt by all who enter therein according to their desire and effort to communicate with Him. My love for the temple increased dramatically during my service in Denver and has continued to do so throughout my service in Atlanta. In my opinion, one's love for such a sacred house is tied to their understanding of the higher ordinances, which are performed therein as well as the time and frequency they are privileged to worship there.

What can be more beautiful than sealing families together for time and all eternity and thus convey to our hearts the eternal nature of such families. Truly a testimony of the beautiful principles taught brings much peace and joy with strength to face the strife, tumult, confusion and wickedness, which abound around us in this world. Likewise it provides us with personal strength to face the trials and vicissitudes all human beings are called upon to face during this life. The sure testimony of the eternal nature of our existence and the awareness of God's love for all human beings is like a beacon or light at the end of a tunnel, which beckons us onward and upward despite the immediate trials and pain we may be experiencing during any particular moment of time. The possibility of gaining Eternal Life and living in the presence of God and our Savior, Jesus Christ, imbues us with strength to overcome such trials, facing

them with optimism and living with a desire to become like our Savior who atoned for our sins and suffered in our behalf, both in Gethsemane



Figure 17-110 The Denver Temple as it appeared right after dedication in 1986.

and on Calvary. Truly the privilege of serving in the Lord's House is a blessing beyond compare to all who are fortunate enough to do so.

A 2ND BACKPACK TRIP WITH TOM

Tom attended Ricks College (now known as BYU Idaho) in the fall of 1987. During the summer or early fall of that same year, we were able to work in a backpack trip to a beautiful

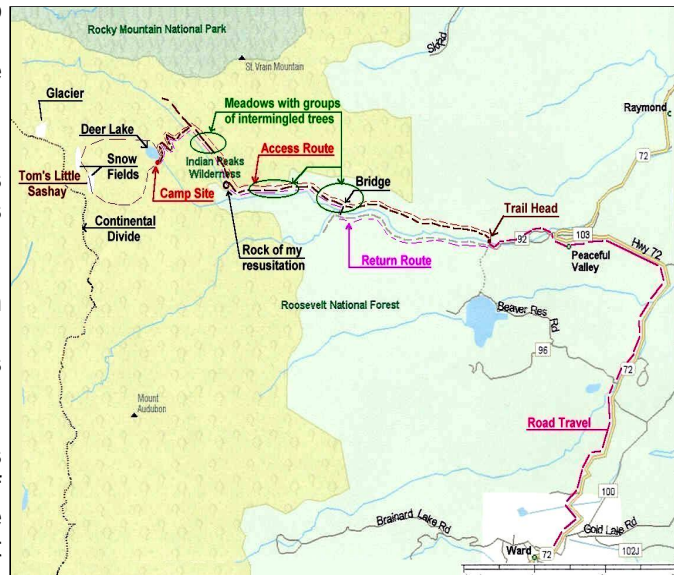


Figure 17- 111 Map illustrating the trail to Deer Lake & the surrounding country, including snowfields & Glaciers.

glacial lake located near the top of the continental divide to the northwest of Denver. We took CO 72 out of Arvada to Nederland and

Ward where the map (figure 17-111), related to the trip, picks up our travels. From the scale in the lower right corner, you can see we traveled about five miles to Peaceful Valley and then branched off on CO 92 to a campground and trailhead where we left the car.

We had roughly fifty-pound packs as we did in the trip I described in chapter sixteen. The only difference was my candy supply, which I deemed necessary to offset expected sugar lows during the hike. You see, I had been diagnosed as a diabetic in 1982, a year or so after the first hike. After beginning with oral medication, I was now on insulin and had already experienced sugar lows during my daily

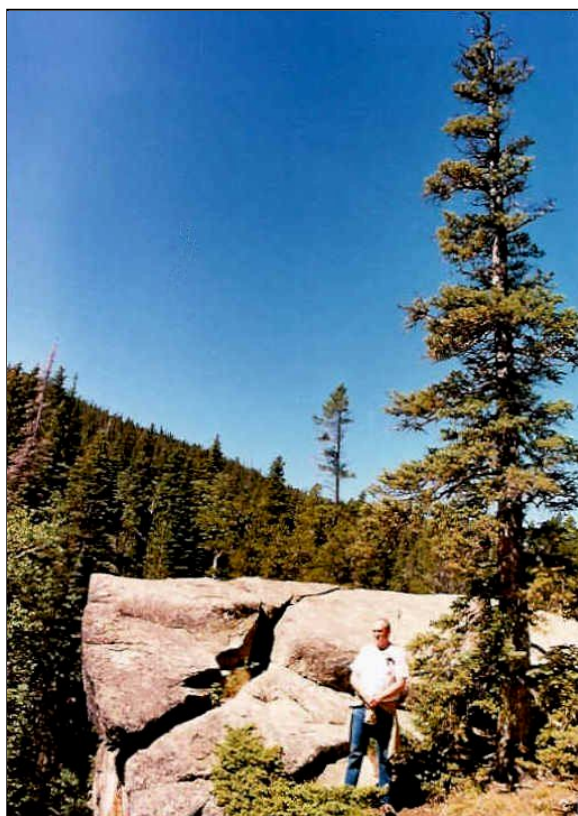


Figure 17-112 Dad taking a rest stop & enjoying the scenery while recuperating.

walks around Arvada. I had taken my condition seriously and normally ate little if any candy. I did keep a sack of small snickers bars at home and usually partook only when such a low occurred. I also carried a couple of the bars with me for emergencies. I liked snickers and figured if a low came on, I might as well enjoy the medication necessary to offset it. This day, however, I had taken a 3-pound sack of jellybeans along with a few snickers, figuring this

was an opportunity to enjoy another of my favorite candies. Snickers had to be minimized because of the chocolate coating. They would get messy from body heat as well as that of a warm summer day but jellybeans could handle the heat and provide a quick lift when needed. I

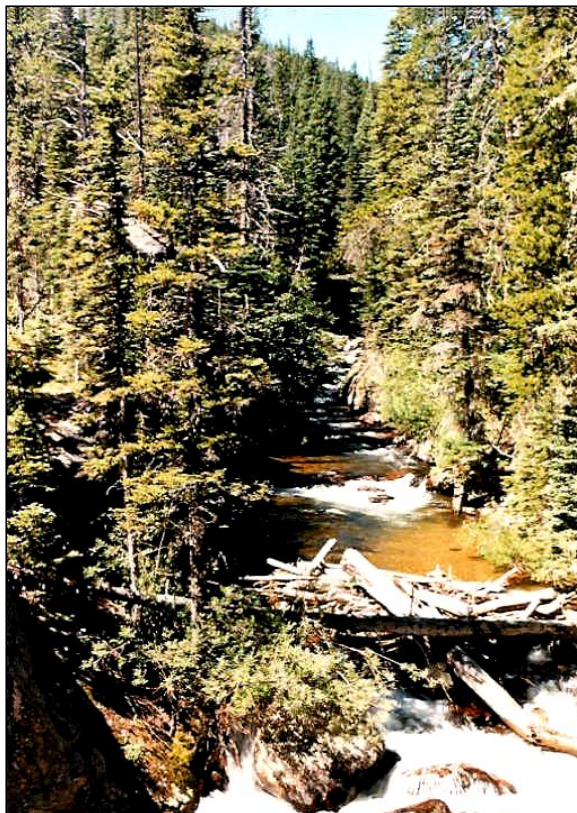


Figure 17-113 A photo taken from the top of rock in figure 17-112 looking upstream.

almost looked forward to the first low, which was bound to occur. Don't **snicker** at my logic even though it may have **bean jelly logic** to you. After all, I had a condition, which limited my opportunities for sweets and now I was in a situation where they would become a necessity and could reward myself, oh happy day.

We had gotten an early start from home, knowing it would be an eight or ten-mile hike into the lake. We arrived at the trailhead about 9 A.M. I believe, took a last minute inventory of our supplies and shouldered our packs before heading up the trail. Just to show you my logic had some basis, I had also cut my insulin dose that morning by a third. That should delay the first low and help me get through to lunch. It was a beautiful morning and we headed up the trail in high spirits.

Though the trail followed the creek, it lay up along the hillside and varied in distance from the stream anywhere from a few yards to a couple of hundred. In addition, while gaining overall elevation, we were constantly traversing side ridges and dropping into ravines draining into the main stream. Consequently, the trail was far from level or even a steady incline. The overall elevation change from car to camp would be in the vicinity of 4,000 feet, or from about 7,000 to 11,000 feet. The gradual climb combined with the up and down traverse of the trail in addition to the average elevation soon began to tell on this old man. We would stop and blow from time to time on the steeper pitches while the downward dips would also give us a little chance for leg recovery. We were probably an hour into the hike when I began to feel my first low coming on. Being quick to recognize the symptoms as well as looking forward to a treat, I popped a handful of jellybeans into my mouth. They seemed to do the trick and we continued on after a short rest. As time went on, the lows came more frequently and I began eating more jellybeans. By eleven or so, I was almost keeping a steady stream of jellybeans moving down my gullet. Each mouthful seemed to provide a little if not lasting measure of strength and helped me move along. Tom was very patient with me and simply rested with me each time I needed to stop. Of course, we both knew I would probably struggle on such a hike, having experienced my sugar lows occasionally on our daily walks in Arvada. Where popping a few jellybeans had begun as a pleasure, it soon became a necessity and then more like taking a dose of castor oil.

By the time we approached the bridge indicated on the map, I was losing my taste for jellybeans. We took a rather lengthy rest in some trees, the trail having dropped into a meadow at that point, and ate part of our lunch. Hopefully, a sandwich and chips would sustain my blood sugar at a higher level for a while. We moved on to the bridge and noted a jeep trail on the other side, which would enter into our return trip. The lunch helped a little and the trail leveled out or, I should say, kept more of a steady incline through a combination of meadows and trees. We arrived at the second fork in the stream about one or so, I would guess and took another rather lengthy rest to help me gain some strength. The photo of figure 17-112 was taken there. We could look down on the stream we were to follow from the rock I was on, probably a

distance of fifty feet or so. A photo of this view, looking up stream, is shown in figure 17-113. These two photos should help you gain an idea



Figure 17-114 The continental divide taken from the trail fork where we turned left on the last leg of our ascent to Deer Lake.

of the beauty of the country we were traversing and one reason that kept me going.

After a good rest and our photo session, we shouldered our packs once again and started up the trail. Although rest stops were rather frequent, we made pretty good time and soon arrived at a fork in the trail and a sign, which indicated that Deer Lake was to the left.



Figure 17-115 A view of the stream from the lake; taken from the trail on the ridge.

Looking up the valley we could see the continental divide as shown in figure 17-114. Fortunately, the distance was somewhat less to the left where Deer Lake lay nestled in a glacial cirque. We crossed our little stream and moved maybe fifty yards before the trail began its steep ascent to the lake. The lake was just over the ridge between the two branches of the creek, as shown on our map in figure 17-111. Though I had done pretty well on the rather easy incline through the meadows, a steep climb of roughly a thousand feet would surely tax me to the limit.

Once more we dropped our packs and stopped for a good blow and a little more food. I believe I

ate another sandwich here, which we had prepared for the day. Somewhere near this point, I shoved the last of the jellybeans down, which action had now become a chore. However, they did build the blood sugar level quicker but didn't sustain it. Finally, I gave Tom the signal to forge ahead. I had come this far and wasn't about to camp where I was. That might be a solution to what lay ahead but quitting wasn't in my book as long as I could move my aging legs. I would make this last steep climb even if Tom had to go ahead to prepare camp. Needless to say the climb was slow but to my surprise, steady. It probably took an hour and a half to make the last mile or so. We topped the ridge and then swung right, as the trail followed up the ridge crest. We could see down into the valley containing the lake drainage, which contained a pretty little stream. See figure 17-115. The incline lessened here but was somewhat steeper than in the meadows below. Even so, it was a welcome sight from the switchbacks we had just completed. Soon we came to a spot where we could see the lake off to our left.

As we walked along the ridge, it became apparent that the best camping would be on the far or west side just under the ridge marking the

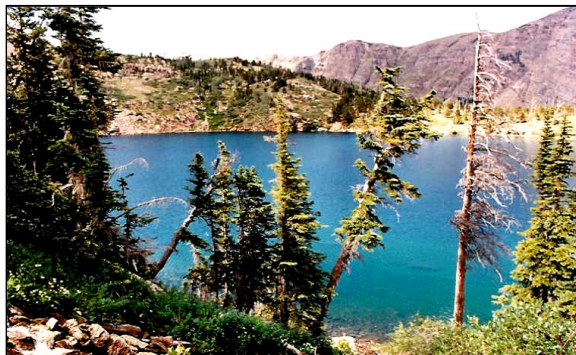


Figure 17-116 Deer Lake lying at about 11,000 feet, as seen from our campsite.

continental divide. We back tracked a ways and located a path leading across the glacial moraine, which produced the lake. Soon we were on the southeast corner of the lake in what appeared to be an ideal camping spot. There were a couple of good-sized trees, which would produce some shade as well as a low spot that should provide shelter from any wind. We dropped our packs and I let out a weary sigh of relief. I had completed an eight to ten mile hike, gained 4,000 feet of elevation, probably traversed another 4,000 feet considering the up

and down nature of the trail and consumed three pounds of jellybeans. I had a sour stomach to accompany my weariness (jellybean syndrome) but was otherwise no worse for the wear.

I suppose it was about 5:00 PM when we arrived at the lake. As I remember, we both lay down and snoozed for a while before preparing camp. We would have several more hours of daylight because of the elevation and time of year. Gathering firewood, preparing our tents and even supper would take very little time and we now had plenty of it. Actually, I didn't sleep to any extent. The ground was hard without a pad of some sort but I did soak up enough rest to allow me to carry out the necessary evening chores. When I sat up, I gazed out over the scenery below. What a magnificent picture it provided. Then I stood and viewed the lake to the west. It too provided a beautiful scene. I would take a picture in the morning when the sun would be to my back rather than staring into the camera lens. That photo taken the next day is presented in figure 17-116 for your benefit and approval. It's a beautiful sight, isn't it? I would also take a little hike around the lake and even fish a little if I felt like it. I was now the master of my next 36 hours if not my fate. Then we would face the hike back, which being down hill, should go much easier.

Soon Tom was awake and ready for supper as was I. We could do that first since our backpack meals were prepared over a little fire fed from canned fuel. I don't remember what we had with us in terms of food but it was typical backpack food obtained at local sport stores. Anything but jellybeans was okay with me. I was sick and tired of those miserable little beans and didn't want to see another, let alone eat any. Never has a food product fallen so fast in consumer ratings as those beans did in my list of favorite foods. At 8:00 AM they were right near the top. By 4:00 PM they rested at the bottom of my list, right after castor oil. In a relative sense, whatever we ate that night was a pleasure as well as adequate, even though it was comparable to a TV dinner.

After dinner we set up our individual tents, arranged our sleeping bags and collected a little firewood so we could be comfortable that evening. As the sun went down, we built a little fire sufficient to warm our backsides without attracting attention. This was fire season and campfires were only permitted in established fire pits. To be within the law, I established such a

pit by clearing the area around the fire and circling it with stones. I wasn't sure how visible our little fire would be to prying eyes nor was I confident that the pit would satisfy the forest service. Even so, we sat there discussing the day's experiences and planning for morning while enjoying the sunset. Colorado sunsets are often spectacular and this was no exception.

With old man sun behind the continental divide, the evening chill soon took over. Before long the stars were out, providing a panoramic canopy of twinkling lights. The moon was not yet up, increasing the contrast between sky and stars. In any case, such contrast away from city lights is so much greater that many faint stars become evident with brighter ones achieving even more brilliance. There is hardly any space where a twinkle of light can't be found. It's as though God is putting on a special show to replace the glitter and activity of the city. It makes one want to ponder the majesty of the universe as well as man's purpose therein. Surely there is a purpose behind such massive creations as well as to man's existence, one known only to God and those to whom He chooses to reveal it. One begins to realize just how puny man is and his dependence on God, the great Creator of all things, for his very existence. Surely the most significant task for man in this life is to strive to find out why he's here, did he exist before life somewhere and what does the future hold after death. Some reasonable answer to such questions may well bring comfort and purpose to this life and with it a sense of peace in knowing that God is in control of our final destinies. Temporal tasks, though having a measure of importance, pale in their significance when measured against God's purpose for man.

Well, our individual pondering and discussion didn't seem to add any new facts or even theories regarding the wonders of the universe, so we decided to call it a day. We said goodnight and crawled into our individual tents and sleeping bags to seek some well-deserved rest. Tomorrow should be less strenuous and provide opportunity to regain strength for the hike out the following day. Of course, that hike would be predominantly downhill and shouldn't tax my blood sugar level like this day's hike had. Thank goodness because I had no more jellybeans, I didn't want any more jellybeans, I

Thank goodness because I had no more jellybeans, I didn't want any more jellybeans, I even detested the thought of jellybeans and I probably wouldn't eat them even if I collapsed on the trail.

even detested the thought of jellybeans and I probably wouldn't eat them even if I collapsed on the trail. To this day, 20 years later, I have never had a desire for the little suckers again.

Morning comes early when you're camped on a mountaintop. Being on the east side of the divide, the morning rays from the sun struck our camp well before they disturbed residents in the valleys below. They roused me from a sound sleep, bringing awareness of sore muscles and a temporary questioning of the blessing of life. Preferring the stupor of sleep to consciousness, I rolled over and turned my back to the sun. I would ignore the gathering light for the time being and try to catch a few more winks. The morning chill caused me to pull the bag a little tighter around me, as I tried to pacify my grumbling muscles. I drifted off to sleep knowing Tom wasn't exactly an early riser. Even though he had weathered the previous day significantly better than I, he probably wouldn't stir for another couple of hours. In fact, that time statement may be on the generous side.

About seven thirty, I finally came to for good and became aware of the noises of forest creatures. Squirrels were chattering while birds twittered a call of reveille. They were busy with their morning chores and seemed to say; "Get with it, you sleepy head; get up, get out of bed. It's a beautiful morning and you're wasting your life away". I groaned a little, as I sat up, thinking the latter might be the better option. Finally, I pulled myself out of my sleeping bag and pulled on my cool jeans, not fashionable but cold cool. I continued my struggle in the limited space of my tent and pulled on my boots before crawling out into the invigorating mountain air. After stretching and walking a few steps nearer the lake, I decided those little critters were right. It was a beautiful morning and I was glad to be alive even though my muscles seemed to protest my every move. Having experienced that condition from time to time during preceding years, I knew a little activity would loosen them up. I walked down to the lakeshore and skipped a few rocks before returning to the tents to see if Tom was coming to. I was getting hungry.

I didn't have to worry about a fire because the air was warming up nicely and we would cook our meager fare over the fires of our backpack stoves. I kind of wanted a little company, so I

began singing some cheery songs such as Zippity Do Da, Zippity Aye, My Oh My What a Wonderful Day, in hopes they would wake Tom. Well, they did and soon he came crawling out of his tent with a questioning look in his eye and said. "Where did all the birds go"? Being somewhat startled by the comment, I stopped and listened. Sure enough, they had left to allow me to sing solo. Obviously, they didn't want to be identified with my efforts to provide a cheery morning. When I made a remark to that effect, Tom quipped, "Had you sung so low they couldn't hear, they might still be around to provide a morning concert, which I could have enjoyed in bed". Not being able to think of anything better to counter with, I simply said, "Be quiet and eat your breakfast", while the thought came to my mind, "intelligent beings simply don't set themselves up like that" and particularly in Tom's presence. Give Tom an opening and he was sure to take advantage of it and particularly so when said goat was his dear old dad. However, you had better watch out Tom, and start planning now for Spencer's remarks.

After a filling but less than satisfying breakfast, we decided to walk a ways around the lake. We got over to the rather sheer cliff, which is



Figure 17-117 Photo of the northwest lakeside and snow patches near the divide.

apparent in the photo of figure 17-117, and found our way blocked unless we wanted to swim or climb around the thing. We played around there for a while, skipping stones and admiring the deep clear blue water that turned almost black under the cliff. It was peaceful as well as beautiful and we took our time just enjoying the serenity of the occasion. After all, this is one of the reasons we took this project on. We then walked back to camp and after a while, ate a little lunch. Tom, having more energy than I decided to take a hike up near the

divide to see what he could see, kind of like the bear going over the mountain, I guess. Unlike the bear, he didn't see the other side of the mountain, as I remember but he did have a good time looking down on the lake and getting a little better view of the mountains laying below us to the east. His route is marked on the map of figure 17-111, I do believe. He circled to the south up a little draw, disappeared from sight behind the ridge and trees. After a while I became a little concerned for his safety, not knowing whether he might have slipped on a rocky hillside or hurt himself in some other way. Finally he reappeared near the top of the upper left snow patch shown in figure 17-117. I could tell he was trying to decide just what to do, cross on the snowy hillside or circle above the snow near the base of another cliff. Each posed its problems. Would it be the longer route with its climb or the slick snowy more direct route? Obviously, he decided the snowy route to be the best because he began slowly working his way out onto the snow. He went down a couple of times, sliding down the hill short distances and I began to wonder if he wouldn't end up in the lake. However, he managed to make it across and began working his way down the draw just behind the lakeside cliff that I spoke of earlier. He then circled the north side of the lake and came across the moraine responsible for the lake as we had the day before. As he went around the far side of the lake I meandered out on the moraine myself and gazed down the

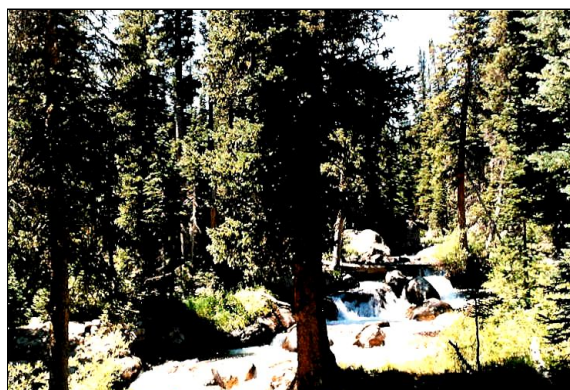


Figure 17-118 A beautiful mountain stream flowing into the south fork of the St. Vrain.

valley below while waiting for him. His whole sashay must have taken two to three hours and he was ready to relax a little when he returned.

Tom wasn't a fisherman and I wasn't in a fishing mood this particular trip. As I remember, we both had brought along a paperback book to

read should the occasion for such activity occur. It did and we did for the rest of the day. Reading along with soaking up the beauty of the environment around us kept us occupied until sunset when we enjoyed and I use the term somewhat sarcastically, a few more items from our backpack store. Our evening was somewhat more relaxed than the previous one, in that camp was ready except for a little more firewood. The weather was excellent with nary a drop of rain to discombobulate our trip or, in the King's English, confuse or discomfort us. I enjoyed the quietude of the occasion and tried not to think of the rigors that morning would bring even though the hike would be predominantly downhill.

Morning came and I was somewhat elated to realize that the soreness of my muscles was beginning to subside. The hike out might not be so bad after all. Soon we were packed and on our way. Getting down off the ridge was a bit tricky, in that the trail was steep in places and footing somewhat questionable. However, in a very short time we found ourselves back at the creek where I had psychologically prepared myself for the final assault on the lake two days before. It was a nice sized stream, which I have chosen to display in figure 17-118. After stopping for a picture or two, we headed on down country like lost dogs headed for home. We arrived at the bridge noted in figure 17-111 well before noon and rested for a while. I knew the trail down the north side of the St. Vrain was fraught with ups and downs, which might tax my questionable sugar level. I had no candy left and had to make it on my own, so I suggested we take the jeep road down the south side of the St. Vrain. The road looked pretty good at this point, being in a meadow with the only apparent obstacles consisting of ruts and a few rocks. Though maybe a little less scenic, it should be a little more level, which would lessen my chances of getting into trouble. Tom readily agreed, probably because he didn't want to make the decision of adding me to his backpack, leaving me or maybe going to get help.

After resting for a while, we took off down the road at a pretty good clip. Soon the meadow gave out and the road became very rocky. That is, the whole roadway was packed with boulders of varying sizes making the roadbed extremely uneven. Some stuck up so high a jeep couldn't clear them and would have to go around. Apparently, glaciers had strewn the valley with glacial till, which made up the soil of both valley

and hill. Figure 17-119 is a photo of the road and will give you an idea of what I'm talking about. At first the road didn't appear to pose

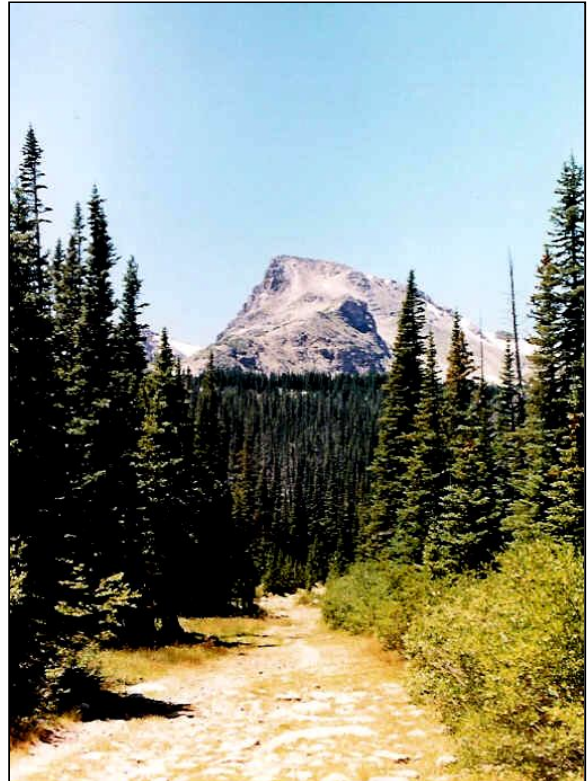


Figure 17-119 A view of the jeep road down the south side of the St. Vrain River.

much of a problem. We simply picked our way around the larger stones and walked across the others. Had the boulders been present for short stretches or even just half the way, I think all



Figure 17-120 Dad, all tuckered out, taking a badly needed rest for his aching feet.

would have been well but they continued all the way back to the car. They made footing somewhat precarious and the rock, as opposed to dirt, provided the equivalent of a concrete

floor. Those who have spent a day walking concrete floors will understand just what that does to one's feet and legs. Coupled with the uneven footing, the boulder-strewn surface soon had our feet aching and required us to stop at regular intervals to ease the throbbing. Whereas wind, i.e. breathing, and sugar lows had been my enemy going in, aching feet became my nemesis on the way out. Tom managed to catch me in one of my relaxed poses, as seen in figure 17-120. By mid-day I was bushed, once again but from aching feet rather than a lack of sweetness in the blood. Of course, any time I'm bushed, I tend to lack sweetness in general. If you question that statement, just ask Tom who had been the recipient of my shifting personality traits during the whole trip. He would probably enjoy enlightening you and even enlarging on the consequences of such shifts.

Needless to say, we made it back safely to the car and without any lasting consequences. If we hadn't, I wouldn't be writing this personal history but instead, would be pushing up daisies or more likely, wild flowers along the South St. Vrain. That might have been a blessing to my posterity, in that I didn't begin this project until sometime after that experience. However, here I am and you, my poor children, will have to bear the consequences of my success. We struggled into the middle afternoon before reaching the car, giving a sigh of relief when we finally came within eyesight of it. The trip back, though finished in somewhat less time, seemed just as long and taxing as the trip in. I think we both looked forward to our own beds and a carpet to walk on after arriving home. I look on this experience much like that of my air force career. I wouldn't trade it for many things in this life but I sure am glad it's over.

A VACATION TRIP TO VALERIE'S

During the summer of 1987 Esther and I decided to take another trip to Georgia and meet our new grandson, Jonathon. Jared and Valerie had adopted him at the age of five or maybe slightly before. By the time we arrived for the visit he was five and had been in the family for around six months. We have made so many trips to Georgia that it is a little hard to separate them in terms of activities and routes to and from. Usually we went across Kansas and Missouri before turning south through Illinois, Kentucky, Tennessee and finally into the Atlanta area. They had moved since our last trip and now

lived in a little house with a Flowery Branch address. I remember coming in on I-75 from the northwest and then going out I-85 to the northeast. We then turned up I-985 towards Gainesville to Flowery Branch. With a Flowery Branch address, I naturally got off at that exit and drove into the little town. After searching for Violet Street, on which their house was supposedly located, I finally gave up and went into a little grocery store. They couldn't help me and apparently hadn't heard of Violet Street.



Figure 17-121 The Great Smoky Mountains as seen from the pass in Newfound Gap.

Fortunately Valerie had a phone and was home. It turned out that Violet Street happened to be in the Flowery Branch postal exchange but both house and street were somewhat nearer to Oakwood. We had to go up to the Oakwood exit, turn the opposite direction from Oakwood and there we found it just a couple of blocks from the interstate but some five miles from Flowery Branch.

The little house they lived in only had two bedrooms along with a bath, kitchen and living room. It was just adequate for them but including us created a crowd. Even so, they insisted we stay with them. Our short time there gave us a little more family interaction and we got better acquainted with Johnny as well as Jared and Joseph. We didn't see them that often and didn't want them to look at us like strangers. As I remember, we slept in the boy's room and they slept in the living room. At that time Johnny was a handful. He had spent much of his five years alone and had received only token guidance from a hard-pressed single mother. We could tell that Valerie and Jared had a job on their hands. Many skills five year olds have acquired were still not part of Johnny's life. Having faith in their parental skills, however, we knew that he would come along and become a fine young man. Both he and

they were blessed by his arrival. This belief has become a reality in the years I have known Johnny. Though he has had his struggles, so have the other boys and he has yet to come into his own as of this writing but he's getting there.

On at least one little sashay on this trip we went up near the North Carolina border to a little town called Dillard and ate at a wonderful family style restaurant. They served a wide variety of southern foods to each party or group, placing serving dishes on the table. They would refill them as many times as we wanted, which insured a quelling of the appetite but was a detriment to reasonable eating. The foods were quite different from the New Orleans area but delicious, none-the-less. The price, which included drinks and dessert, was rather reasonable considering the amount and quality of food but is hardly worth the trip these days with a 76 year old appetite.

We probably stayed about a week with the kids, just long enough to enjoy the visit without getting on each other's nerves. About the following Monday, after the normal tearful goodbyes, we headed north into the Carolinas to visit the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. Not having been there before, we intended to tour the area before heading west to Denver.

THE RETURN TRIP

That morning we headed up 985 into North Carolina. I-985 turns into State 365 and US 23 north of Gainesville before merging with US 441 near Cornelia. The combination of these highways takes one essentially due north to Cherokee on the southern edge of the park. From there on the road is narrow and winding as it climbs over the Appalachians. Needless to say, the scenery is beautiful, which nullifies the negative effects of the road. Figure 17-121 provides a typical view of the Great Smoky Mountains from near the top of the pass. We took our time, stopping a few places along the way to get out and stretch, as well as get a better view. One such place was Clingmans Dome just south of the highway (441) and just after we entered Tennessee. It is the highest point in Tennessee at an elevation of 6643 feet and may well be the highest point in the eastern United States. Though I'm not sure of this, I know it exceeds Mount Washington in New Hampshire by some 400 feet. In any case the view from Clingmans Dome is beautiful but rather hazy. The air appears to be polluted by smoke. Whether that's the source of the name

"Great Smoky Mountains" or simply a manifestation of our modern pollution, I don't know. In any case, the air was smoky.

Soon after crossing into Tennessee, we dropped down on to the Pigeon River, a rather small but pretty little stream. Figure 17-122 provides a peek at stream and surrounding foliage. One thing we noticed during our trip was the delay of spring foliage as we moved northward from Louisiana through Georgia, the Carolinas and Tennessee. Where the colors of flowering

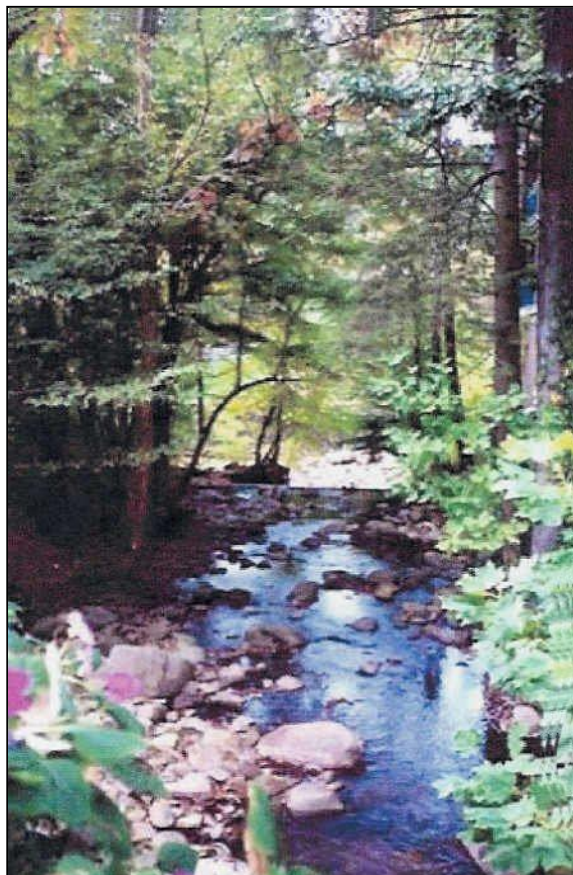


Figure 17-122 The Pigeon River as one descends from the Appalachian divide.

shrubs were profuse in Louisiana, we found only dogwoods, red buds and flowering pears blooming in Georgia. The azaleas were still asleep. Moving into the Carolinas, we noticed the dogwoods were just budding with the red buds and flowering pears only partially in bloom.

After having a sandwich in Gatlinburg, we decided to drop down to the south on Tennessee 73 to an old pioneer settlement called Cades Cove. The cove consisted of a large grassy valley or meadow surrounded by pioneer homes and an old church. The photo of

figure 17-123 provides an overall view of the valley while figure 17-124 displays a typical cabin. It is a beautiful little area with some interesting history of the early 19th century. Each cabin or building contained its own short history, describing its particular role in the valley.

From Cades Cove we drove on into Knoxville to spend the night before heading west to Denver. From that point on, there was little to see other



Figure 17-123 A view of Cades Cove and the surrounding Appalachians.

than typical interstate scenery, which becomes rather blah as one crosses the Great Plains. As after most such trips, we were happy to arrive home to our own beds and normal routine.

TOM BEGINS COLLEGE

Tom arrived home from his mission too late to begin school that fall. He worked through the winter and next summer as well as prepared for the ACT. In the fall of 1987, we took Tom to



Figure 17-124 A Cade's Cove cabin, typical of the pioneer settlement in that era.

Rexburg to enter college. Though he had struggled in high school, he did well on the ACT and had no trouble being accepted. He had

come home, a changed young man, finally ready to face the responsibilities of life. We had had a good talk about my expectations of him in terms of scholastic performance in college and as it turned out, he did very well. I don't remember too much about the little town of Rexburg but I do remember helping him move in to the little apartment he shared with some other guys. Luckily, it was on the ground floor and we didn't have to lug his things up two floors. Even if we had, it wouldn't have been too bad because he took about half of what the girls took to school. I remember having dinner in Rexburg and looking around the campus a little. It seems we may have gone on down to Idaho Falls and spent the night with Carl and Ginnie but I can't be sure. In any case, we didn't stay long before heading back to Denver. Boys are so much easier than girls to enroll in school. There's only half the stuff to move and they can help, which brings my contribution down to 25% of that which I lugged in at Provo. Couple that with a ground floor, as opposed to a 2nd or 3rd floor and one can easily understand the relief I felt that day.

WEDDING BELLS FOR TOM & JULIE

Tom did well in school, getting respectable grades and living on the agreed upon budget. I don't remember getting any emergency phone calls or letters pleading for additional funds. He even learned to balance his own checkbook and apparently didn't bounce any checks or at least, he didn't own up to such a problem. He had a knack for writing and elected to go into journalism. As I remember, he got a position on the school newspaper and wrote certain sections of it on a regular basis. At the end of the first year he seemed to have attracted the attention of a certain professor who recommended he attend Utah State for the summer to take some special course. Rather than having him come home to work, I agreed because he was doing well and seemed enthused over his major. Little did he or we know what lay ahead for all of us.

Tom enrolled in the desired summer course and everything seemed to be going fine. I believe he kept a room at Ricks and simply drove down to Logan a couple times a week. We had given him our Oldsmobile because we had purchased a Chevrolet four-door pickup for our own use. Esther was no longer driving, so a car was unnecessary. The pickup looked to the future. Esther and I planned to get a travel trailer to pull around the country. She wanted to visit Valerie

more often and see some sights along the way. With her failing health, I felt she would be more comfortable. We would also have the flexibility of choosing destinations without worrying about reservations. It seemed like a good plan but never came to fruition.

THE COURTSHIP

Getting back to Tom, everything would have been fine, had he kept his nose in the books. He would have completed the course and returned to Ricks for his sophomore year. Unfortunately for me, he had too much time off and began going to firesides and dances while in Logan. There he met a nice looking girl by the name of Julie Peterson.

They seemed to hit it off and, of course, she invited him out to the house for dinner. I suspect her folks were part of a devious plot aimed at snaring poor Tom because her dad offered him a place to sleep in his studio whenever he wanted to stay over. At first, Tom stayed in his own abode at Ricks but soon began wearing the tires off the Oldsmobile running back and forth between his Peterson motel and Ricks. Julie must have completely bewitched him because he was soon spending more time in Logan than at Ricks. That was okay, in that car expenses became less of a factor and after all, his motel was free as well. Needless to say the Peterson plan worked to perfection and by fall he approached me with plans for marriage. Julie had a degree in special education for children and probably a minor in trapping unwary young men or should that be reversed? I'll leave that to Julie to answer.

I suspect her folks were part of a devious plot aimed at snaring poor Tom because her dad offered him a place to sleep in his studio whenever he wanted to stay over.

Julie had a degree in special education for children and probably a minor in trapping unwary young men or should that be reversed? I'll leave that to Julie to answer.

In any case, she would continue to work and I agreed to continue the subsistence he had been getting until he finished school. With that he thought he could stay afloat. I suppose the big question was whether he could survive until their proposed marriage date in December. He was, indeed, smitten by the love bug. It reminded me of my own situation when I first caught the disease in the summer of 1950. I, at least, had a degree if not an income but he had neither, at this point. Even so, he, like I, was confident that things would work out and, of course, they did. At that point in time, the fall of 1988, I felt his malady would bring about a good dose of responsibility, which wasn't available to the

unwed set. As a result, he would probably pursue his studies with increased purpose. Of course, the road got bumpy from time to time but their marriage has withstood the test of time and they now have a beautiful family. Fortunately, neither he nor she shows any signs of recovering from the bite of that lovely little creature we call the "Love Bug".

PRELIMINARY EVENTS

The wedding date was set for the 17th of December. Tom would have completed his fall semester and would then transfer to Utah State to complete his studies. Esther was all aglow though maybe not to the degree that Tom was.

She was elated that her little 6'7" boy was about to get married and could hardly contain herself. They would be sealed in the Logan Temple and a reception would follow in the ward building that Julie attended. Esther would have an open house in Arvada. Since Julie was already working in Brigham City, they would live there and Tom would commute back and forth to Logan about twenty-five miles or so to the northeast. During the intervening months they managed to find a nice little unfurnished apartment and we, Esther and I, agreed to let him have some excess furniture that was in our basement. I feel sure the Petersons may have contributed a few things as well. In any case, they ended up with the essentials and then some, in fact, a whole lot more than Esther and I started married life with.

I think Valerie was almost as happy for Tom as was Esther. She had driven all the way to Denver from Georgia for his missionary departure and now she appeared on the scene with Joseph and Johnny. That's a tough trip, or at least can be, during December. Valerie, however, doesn't seem daunted by such things as winter weather, distance or traveling alone. Once she decides to do something she's like a runaway horse headed for the barn. Nothing detours her purpose and she struggles forward against whatever odds arise, to reach her objective. I don't remember her exact date of arrival but she had arrived by car early enough to follow us over to Brigham City with the U-Hall. I believe young Jared had stayed with his dad because I don't remember him

being part of the action and that young man had always made his presence known when in the vicinity.

As I remember, Tom's conclusion of the semester was in the middle of December and too close to the wedding date for him to come home to help with the move. Besides, in his condition, I'm sure he would have been useless. The venom of the love bug is known to render the mind somewhat confused while the muscles become weak and limp. Therefore, submitting to Esther's request that we, really I, take care of moving the household stuff to Brigham City, I procured a U-Haul trailer on the 14th of December. It was a good-sized trailer and I

Initially he would think how thoughtful we were being generous when in reality we were unloading stuff we didn't need and wanted to get rid of anyway.

wondered whether or not it would be too big. As it turned out, I was amazed at how much we got rid of. This was my chance to unload much of the junk in the basement and I could do so under the guise of being generous and kind hearted. Initially he would think how thoughtful we were when in reality we were unloading stuff we didn't need and wanted to get rid of anyway. In his confused state, it would take him at least 6 months to figure out what had happened. Of course, I didn't even give him a hint of my actual purpose since all parents appreciate a little show of gratitude from time to time. I felt it was well deserved for past support and would bask in the warmth of such feelings for the moment. Certainly parents seldom receive such recognition during their children's teen age years. I managed to procure the help of 4 missionaries in the ward and we completed the loading late the evening of the 14th. Lee Humrich, a family friend, showed up a little later and was a big help with some of the heavy items. Tom had requested an old desk that I had obtained from Schlumberger whose primary cost to me was a hernia. Even with the help of the missionaries, I believe it grew to a double hernia by the time the desk was on board the trailer. I closed the trailer doors about 9:00 PM with the feeling that Tom had won this round with his planned absence from the work scene but at least, we were ready for an early start the morning of the 15th of December. Unfortunately, I don't believe that that came about or at least as early as I would have liked. Getting six people,

including two women and two kids, ready doesn't really lend its hand to an early start. Kids don't want to get up, last minute packing is a problem and women, in general, seem to have more concerns to handle before the door is locked and one can start down the road. Even so, we were on our way by about 9:30 AM.

THE TRIP TO BRIGHAM CITY

The weather was cold but the roads were fine in the Denver area. Wanting to avoid the worst of the traffic, I headed north to Broomfield, then east a few miles to the interstate before turning north again on I-25. Even though I had a pickup with plenty of power, I took it rather easy all the way to the interstate because of the rather large U-Haul I was pulling. In addition to its weight, the whole rig was rather long and I wasn't the world's best at negotiating curves and traffic with such a handicap. Of course, that insinuates that I am in a normal vehicle, which might also be a little stretch of the imagination. Once on I-25, however, we moved along about 65 or 70 with Valerie bringing up the rear. As we approached Fort Collins, we made a dogleg left and headed

..... the whole rig was rather long and I wasn't the world's best at negotiating curves and traffic with such a handicap. Of course, that insinuates I am in a normal vehicle, which might require a little stretch of the imagination, as well.

up US 287 to Laramie where we would intersect interstate 80. Just north of Fort Collins we ran into snow packed roads, which continued all the way to the Wyoming border near the top of a rather low pass. Traction was reasonably good and we moved along at a decent, though somewhat slower speed. Even so, I engaged the four-wheel drive to ensure my control of the rig as much as possible. I then watched Valerie in the rear view mirror to see how she was handling the snow. She was coming right along and seemingly had no trouble.

Just north of the Wyoming line the road drops a couple of hundred feet to the plains south of Laramie. There, I put the truck back into the two-wheel drive mode and we picked up speed once again. The pavement had been blown clean of snow by the usual wind coming out of the west. The rig continued to handle well and by this time I had also gained a little confidence. After a rest stop in Laramie, we continued west on I-80 towards Rawlins. One normally fights

the wind in that area and this day was no different. It slowed us down again with its drag and constant buffeting. There were some slick spots on the road from drifting snow and the changing angle of the wind on curves made steering a little precarious. However, it wasn't until we passed Rawlins that the highway really became kind of treacherous. There (at Rawlins) we began encountering ice and I could feel the rig waver a little even though I had slowed down even more. I put the truck back into four-wheel drive, which seemed to improve the traction and thus handling to a remarkable degree. The sun had set before we passed Rawlins and it was now dark on the last leg of the day's trip into Rock Springs where we put up for the night.

The next morning, December 16th, we left Rock Springs about ten, I suppose. The roads improved between Rock Springs and Brigham City or at least, I don't remember fighting the rig as much. I believe we pulled into Brigham City

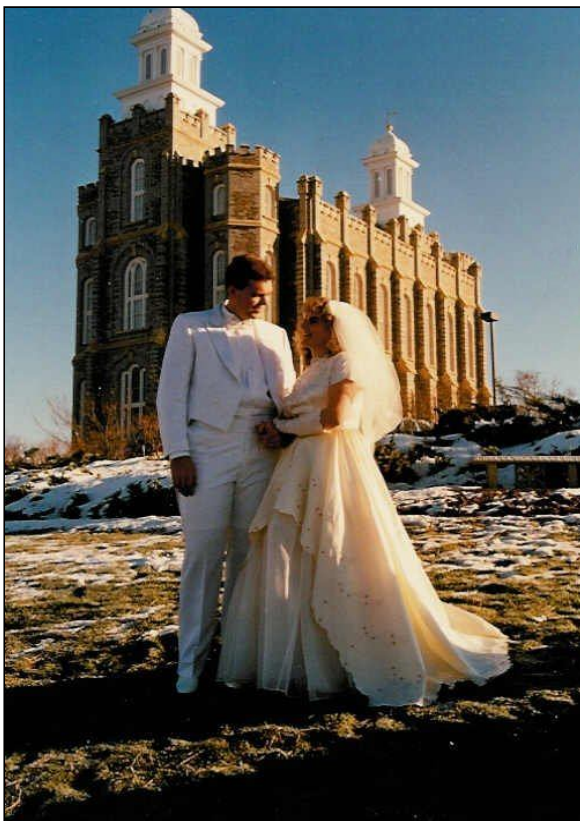


Figure 17-125 The bride and groom with the Logan Temple as a backdrop.

in the middle of the afternoon and finally pulled up to the apartment door. I was able to back the trailer to a point quite near to the door proper, which was entered from the driveway and we

were set to unload. It seems we lost a little time waiting on some help but unloading was somewhat easier than loading in Denver, all except the desk that is. Tom had managed to skip out once again using the excuse this time that Julie and he just had to attend the temple that night. I finally realized what a bright son I had. Having only one year of college, he had already earned a degree in the art of excuse making. Julie, my foot, he most certainly had put her up to it, though I doubt that he would admit it. It was getting dark and I remember getting my flashlight to provide a little help inside the trailer. At first, I couldn't find it and then remembered I had placed it on the trailer fender in Denver on the passenger's side. Immediately the thought came to mind, "nuts, the silly thing is probably somewhere just north of Arvada alongside the road". Even so, I went around to that other side of the trailer and what do you know, there it was frozen to the fender. Laying there in some moisture all night in Arvada had secured the thing, which had a square base, and it made the trip of roughly 800 miles without falling off.

WEDDING EVENTS BEFORE AND AFTER

Our motel was in Logan, the temple site and somewhat nearer the reception as well. I remember checking in a little late that evening and having to take an upstairs room. I wasn't sure just how well Esther could negotiate the stairs. This was two years after our trip to Europe and her condition had continued to deteriorate. Luckily she made it with the help of the stair rail and me. We had eaten prior to check in and relaxed for the rest of the evening before retiring.

I don't remember the exact time of the wedding but I would guess it was around 10:00 AM. It went off without a hitch, as one would expect, while Tom participated without an excuse. We had finally found an activity he wanted to be part of. Of course, I doubt whether he or Julie even heard the ceremony as they gazed at each other with moonstruck eyes and with little recognition of their surroundings. Soon they were outside posing for typical wedding photos. The photo of figure 17-125 illustrates the unusual condition of moonstruck eyes midst a sunny landscape but so it was all that day for the two of them.

After the photo session, I believe, we headed for the wedding brunch, which was to take place at a nice restaurant located on the highway between Logan and Brigham City. Jared's sister, Teddy and her husband, Bill Stewman,

had made the arrangements. Their son was the head chef there, as I remember, and really did a wonderful job for us. All Esther and I had to do was enjoy ourselves and of course, pay the bill. This was one time, however, that I felt I got my money's worth.

After the brunch we went out to the Peterson's house, which was located on the west side of the Logan valley. It was near a little town whose name I have forgotten. It appears it may have been Mendon from the map or some little town



Figure 17-126 Obenchain clan. Back- left to right Carl, Celeste, Valerie, dad and Jared jr. Middle – left to right – Ginnie, Johnny, Theresa Capener, Esther and Joseph. Front – the stars – Tom and Julie.

not shown on the map. We spent the afternoon there visiting before going to the reception, which was to be in their ward building. They had



Figure 17-127 Patch Peterson and his wife on the left and unnamed others.

a nice family and we felt right at home. The time passed quickly and soon they were leading us to the ward building. It was a renovated version of an old pioneer building built a hundred years or so before. The original building was built of

large stones, according to my memory, which might have come from a mountain stream or glacial fill. A large addition had maintained the same rustic appearance as the original with the complete interior being finished like a modern chapel. It was very nice.

The reception was held in the cultural hall, naturally, which was nicely decorated by the Petersons and friends. Carl and Ginnie had come down from Idaho Falls and Theresa had traveled up from the Salt Lake area. It was nice to have family there and we appreciated the effort they had made in our behalf. As I remember, we were surprised somewhat by Ginnie and Carl. Though all of the family had been invited we hadn't heard from them and didn't expect anyone from my family. Needless to say we were pleasantly surprised.

I'll include a few pictures at this point to introduce my readers to some of those in attendance. Figure 17-126 is a photo of the guests from the Obenchain side of the family whereas figure 17-127 depicts Julie, Tom and

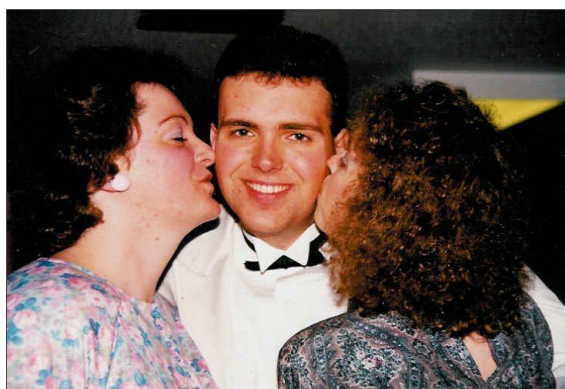


Figure 17-128 Thomas James being overwhelmed with his sisters' busses.

their respective parents. It is a little difficult to find the proper brightness and contrast for both photos because of the white glare of our stars. If I reduce the glare on them, everyone else fades into the darkness. If I bring the family out to view, Tom and Julie seem to become one white blob. My point is, don't criticize my photos please, or at least not out loud. From these we move on to figure 17-128, which shows two proud sisters hanging a couple of busses on their little brother. Tom still appears to be in a daze over the day's events. Notice the somewhat glazed eyes I spoke of earlier. He hadn't received this much attention since he was a little tyke. Next is a picture of Esther and Tom in figure 17-129. This is one of my favorite

photos. I don't believe any mother could have adored a son more than Esther did Tom. She was so proud of him and his accomplishments since his mission. Such emotion is certainly caught in this wonderful picture with her gazing upward at him. Of course, I think it's fair to say that few sons have ever thought more of their mothers than Tom did. It was definitely a mutual admiration society, which I believe is quite appropriate. Finally, in figure 17-129 I have to show a photo of one proud dad and his son, though I could hardly compete with Esther. I was indeed pleased with Tom's conduct since his mission. It appeared the time had come to finally let him go. We both looked forward to his success as an adult and father. Though he had three more years of college, we were convinced that he was equal to the task.

After the reception, we headed back to the motel. Having eaten little since the brunch, we were on the hungry side and decided to grab a bite to eat before retiring. It seems proper at this point to at least make mention of an event associated with that dinner, which could easily occur with any family. There was a hamburger joint next to the motel, a Burger King I believe. In any case, we sat around and talked after dinner while the boys, Joseph and Johnny, went into an associated play area. All went well until Johnny came back with only one shoe. He said the other was somewhere in the maze of balls that filled one play area. This being 1988, Johnny was going on 7 and Joseph was ten or so. Of course, Valerie told Johnny to go back and find it but he still returned in about 15 minutes with only one shoe. According to him, he had looked really good through all the balls. Next, Valerie assigned Joseph the task of finding the shoe because he was older and the shoes were new. At that point in his life, Joseph wasn't really noted for quickly finishing a task. If he didn't like it, he could draw it out for hours. Apparently, he thought going through the motions for untold hours was less painful than getting such a task over with. That night he was in the best of form. He obediently climbed in among the balls and began randomly moving them about in hope of stumbling across the shoe. Valerie kept giving him instructions, which had little effect on his obedient but unmotivated efforts. Realizing Valerie wouldn't give up on Johnny's only pair of shoes and that Joseph's chances of success were somewhat less than half of those one would find in a Las Vegas casino, I said, "Joseph, come on out of there. I'll

find the silly thing". Of course, that was exactly what Joseph's objective had been, i.e. to get out of the pit. He really wasn't interested in finding the shoe and came out at a speed rivaling any hundred-meter Olympic runner, proving he could



Figure 17-129 Esther & her one & only favorite son, Tom, expressing their love.

move rapidly if so motivated. I was dressed in slacks, a sport coat and tie and hardly looked the part of a kid frolicking among the balls. Even so, I methodically began in one corner and assured myself that the shoe wasn't there before moving balls into that area. I then worked my

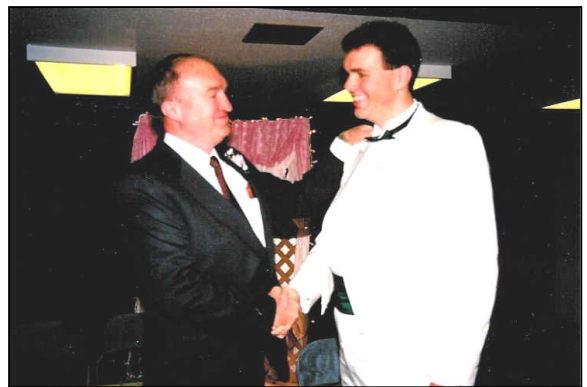


Figure 17-130 One very proud papa congratulating a son reaching manhood.

way across the pit little by little, being sure the shoe wasn't among any balls I moved into a previously examined area. Esther and Valerie got a big kick out of me rummaging through those hundreds of plastic balls and gave me some rather sarcastic words of encouragement from time to time. However, I knew if we left it up to the kids, it would be well past closing time before and if the shoe was found. Thus, I closed my ears to my cheering gallery. I must have covered 80% of the pit area when. "Voila" my organized effort paid off. I raised my hands and the shoe over my head and uttered a cry of

victory while my audience gave me a loud cheer. I crawled out with my prize in hand and watched as Johnny finally slipped it on. What a relief, finally, we could go back to the motel.

The next morning, Sunday, we went to church at the Peterson's ward, which wasn't far from Logan. Tom and Julie were long gone, of course and we had had a good visit with the Petersons the previous day. Consequently, we decided to be on our way back to Denver that afternoon. We still had an open house to get ready for when Tom and Julie showed up in Denver after their honeymoon. As I remember, we dropped Celeste off at the airport in Salt Lake so she could be home in time for work on Monday. Then we made a few miles and stayed the night in Rock Springs. Late Monday afternoon we arrived at home, somewhat bushed but otherwise, no worse for the wear.

The open house was scheduled for the 29th of December on the 38th anniversary of Esther's and my civil marriage. With Esther's physical condition in question and Celeste's job consuming her time, we had enlisted the help of

she was thinking of Esther. In any case, she did a wonderful job of making the occasion a little fancier than those typical for LDS weddings.



Figure 17-131 Debby Humrich singing "For All Eternity" to Esther & I on our 38th wedding anniversary at the open house.

The food was plentiful with the variety and choices being first class. She had had all of the food prepared by commercial food services and bakeries. I was thankful because Esther was able to enjoy the occasion without being worn out. Tom and Julie mingled with the guests rather than having a typical greeting line and the evening was truly enjoyable.

Because the open house was scheduled on our 38th anniversary, Valerie wanted to honor us as well, I suppose. Anyhow, she managed to get a young lady in our ward, Debbie Humrich, to sing a special song for Esther and I. We were seated side by side in two chairs, while Debbie stood behind us and sang "Through All Eternity". The photo displayed in figure 17-131 was taken during that particular event. Although we had good attendance, we had some food left over. A youth New Year's evening dance had been scheduled and we donated the remaining goodies to that event. They appreciated it and it simplified our cleanup. Tom and Julie headed home the next day to prepare for school and married life's rigors.

SUNDAY DRIVES

We had a habit of taking Sunday drives to enjoy the scenery and kind of unwind for the week.

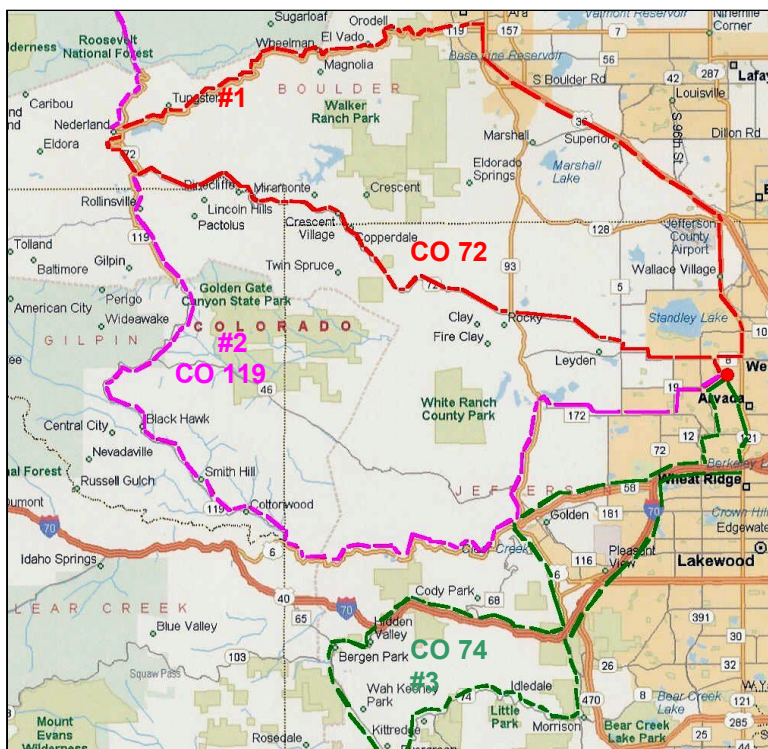


Figure 17-132 A Map detailing the routes of our various Sunday drives including some site locations.

a friend across the street in planning the open house. Actually, she volunteered her efforts because she enjoyed such things and I believe,

They weren't out of the ordinary but usually involved the foothills of the Front Range, which provided both scenery and solitude. Occasionally we would take a picnic with us or in a few cases stop at a roadside restaurant. The dogs loved to be part of it, especially if we picnicked because they then got a part of the menu. Besides, Pepper loved to bark at any animal that happened to be within sight along the road. Usually these were cows or horses but regardless of their heritage, he made sure they understood who was king of the roost.

Figure 17-132 illustrates three routes we took from time to time. Though the exact routes changed for the sake of variety, the three designated represent the basic paths we followed. Route #1 took us northwest from Arvada and up Coal Creek canyon on CO 72. At the junction with CO 119 we turned north to Nederland. Occasionally we would go north of Nederland to the general area where Tom and I backpacked into Deer Lake. Usually, that meant a picnic and a little time for the dogs to run. Other times we might buy a little junk food in Nederland or grab a sandwich before heading into Boulder on CO 119. From Boulder we took various routes back to Arvada and home. When using route #2, we took CO 72 out of Arvada as before but turned south on CO 119 and dropped down to US 6 via Black Hawk and Cottonwood. From there we would usually follow US 6 into Golden and back home. The drive down Clear Creek on US 6 was always beautiful. Route #3 took us out I-70 to Hidden Valley and then south to Evergreen. These and surrounding towns were bedroom communities for people working in Denver. Sometimes we traveled south to US 285 and then back to Denver. Other times we left Evergreen on CO 74, as shown, and traveled through Idledale and Morrison before heading home. As you can see, the variety of possible routes was almost endless and always made for a pleasant Sunday afternoon.

TOM & JULIE MOVE TO DENVER

Tom finished out the 1988 – 1989 school year at Utah State commuting between Brigham City and Logan. However, he had done a little investigating regarding job opportunities and decided that journalism wasn't the field he wanted to be in. Beginning salaries were poor for college graduates and opportunities for advancement weren't great. He and I talked about his strengths as well as his desire to write. I suggested he might want to investigate

technical writing, as a career, because job opportunities were better as were the salary structures and advancement opportunities in most companies. Sometime later he decided that that was the way for him to go but Utah State wasn't the place to complete his studies for such a career. It seemed the University of Colorado was well known for that field and he thought he might come back to Denver to complete his college. With that decision on his part, Esther and I suggested that they live in the basement at our house, which we had little use for at this point in our lives. They could stay there and take their meals with us until he completed college. Julie and he agreed and they moved back to Arvada during the summer of 1989 and he enrolled in the Denver branch of the University of Colorado. He was able to find employment with full benefits with a company whose name now escapes me. He worked full time and went to school part time, I believe, which required some extra time to complete his last two years. I believe he finally graduated in the spring of 1993.

A NEW GRANDCHILD ARRIVES

In the spring of 1989 Tom informed us that Julie was with child and the arrival date would be sometime in November. They were on cloud nine and of course, we were pleased as well. To my knowledge, other than morning sickness, Julie got along fine. Occasionally she had to run



Figure 17-133 Esther holding Beth in the living room sometime in early 1990.

for the john or some other convenient place to unload but didn't seem any worse for the wear. Beth arrived on schedule via Cesarean, which was a surprise but then became standard procedure for Julie. Fortunately, Tom's insurance covered the procedure then and later on as well. Of course, Beth became Esther's pride and joy as well as Julie and Tom's.

She was a special blessing for Esther who only lived for another five months after her birth. During that time, she loved to sit with her on the couch even though she had trouble holding her and tired easily. Figure 17-133 illustrates her love for little Beth and her joy in sharing those few precious months they had together. I, of course, stayed in Denver another year after Esther's death and had many opportunities to enjoy Beth. I remember posing with her at Sears for some photos at about six months. In fact I still have my copy of that 8x10 photo, which is a little large to include here. There were other opportunities around the house, however, with Celeste who always had her trusty camera close by. The photo of figure 17-134 is one she captured of Beth and me sometime in the summer of 1990, I would say. I wasn't too worried about my countenance because Beth's sweet little smile was the focal point of the picture. Hopefully, it will deflect any snide remarks from my posterity.

MOTHER PASSES AWAY

My mother had been diagnosed with colon cancer several years before her death. She had a colostomy and managed quite well for some

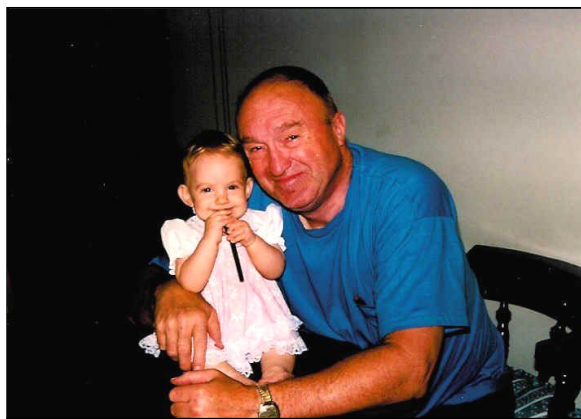


Figure 17-134 Beth and grandpa Tom in Denver sometime in the summer of 1990.

time. In the latter part of 1986 we were informed that the cancer had reappeared and was probably terminal in nature. Mom passed away the 16th day of February in 1987. I was able to get to Boise in time to see her and visit for a time before she passed away. I remember her being concerned and saying that she couldn't die yet because she had so much to do. She didn't elaborate on just what those things were, which seemed to be pressing on her mind but she was certain she had too much to do. I was grateful to have that moment with her.

That was our beloved mother, always busy, always on the go and usually for some good reason such as another person or family. I never heard her complain about getting old but she did talk about being the only one among her peers who was still alive. Thus, she had her lonely moments. I was thankful she managed to complete her life's story, which some one appropriately coined the title for as, "In the past Tents". The title, of course, referred to the time she and Madeleine lived in a tent in the yard of a friend in Gooding, I believe, prior to beginning a teaching career in Ketchum where she met dad. I think of her and dad often and consider how grateful I am, to have been part of a family where respect for one another was normal, where responsibility was taught, where love for each other was apparent through conduct and where all were encouraged to do their best in preparing for life. Truly, she and dad were great blessings for this young son who was shy and introverted and who needed encouragement early in life. They seemed to understand my needs and provided help and encouragement as necessary. I will always love them for sacrificing in behalf of their children and providing all they were capable of during the difficult times of the 30s. I look forward to seeing them in the future in a somewhat wiser state and to be able to thank them in a more appropriate manner.

FAMILY HISTORY

I suppose it was in Denver where I first took an interest in family history. I credit that spark of interest primarily to Valerie who has always been the family genealogist. In prior years after joining the Church, I simply couldn't see the point in tracing out my ancestors. Valerie; on the other hand, seemed to always have an interest and to this day uncovers more secrets of the past pertaining to Esther's or my family than anyone else does. My interest began around 1986 and has gradually grown these past 18 years through temple work and various family history experiences. Esther became involved to an extent but never understood the process like Valerie does. Valerie has cleared roadblocks that frustrated Esther and has opened up understanding of Obenchain lines, as well.

SLEUTHING THE SPENCER LINE

During the middle eighties, maybe while Tom was on his mission, Esther decided she wanted to visit an area in eastern Nebraska just a little northwest of Lincoln. I think it may have been around Valparaiso but I'm not sure of the town at

this point in life. She hoped to find some names of her ancestors in old cemeteries of the area. I believe Valerie was behind the whole plan. In any case, we took off from Arvada one Saturday morning, taking I-76 into southwestern Nebraska where it intersected I-80.

We were in the Oldsmobile cruising along in comfort when we came to the vicinity of Ogallala, a cattle town in western Nebraska. I believe we had just passed the Ogallala exit when a stench entered the car, which rivaled any I had ever experienced before in my life. That's saying quite a little because I grew up with two older brothers who weren't any more considerate than I was regarding things like smelly socks, general body odor and even the exhaust of backfiring bowels. Additionally, some of the oil fields I had been around had their share of socially unacceptable smells. Both Esther and Celeste almost gagged while I tried to keep the car under control amidst the eye watering, tear jerking atmosphere that we now found ourselves in. I immediately closed the outside vents to isolate ourselves but it was too late. As we struggled for breath, I spotted the source of the strangling fumes, a cattle yard just off the south side of the interstate. I yelled to the women folk who were writhing in agony and said, "Hold on for a few minutes until we get a couple of miles past that cattle pen and we'll air the car out". They had seen the penned cattle by that time and simply said; "Hurry, please". I put the pedal to the metal and the speedometer rose past the interstate number as the scenery flew by. After a couple of minutes I opened the vents again. As we smelled the entering air, which was now sweet in comparison, we all rolled down our windows to speed the process of odor elimination. Soon the atmosphere was back to normal and we settled down once again. In a sense, the experience was kind of a blessing, in that we had a new topic of conversation, which led to a feeling of gratefulness that we weren't residents of Ogallala. We learned later that Ogallala was the end of the trail of an annual cattle drive, which had obviously terminated quite recently. On our return trip, we considered an alternate route but considering the difficulty of finding a decent one, we opted to speed by with the windows and vents closed. The cattle were gone by then but whether the stench was, I don't know. We never

I yelled to the women folk who were writhing in agony and said, "Hold on for a few minutes until we get a couple miles past that cattle pen and we'll air the car out".

tempted fate by cracking our windows or even the vents. We were isolated from Ogallala air and kept it that way until we cut southwest on interstate 76 to Denver.

We arrived at a motel a little west of Lincoln where we would spend the night. It was close to the area of investigation and as I remember, we drove around a little after dinner to familiarize ourselves with the area. The next morning we located a couple of different graveyards in the vicinity of the town her ancestors had lived in. We parked in each and scoured the gravestone with no luck. For some reason, I believe we were hunting for members of Melinda Abigail Howell's family or maybe her mother's, Mary Ann Bates. In any case, we were unsuccessful. Esther tired rather easily and Celeste wasn't too

keen on tromping through the graveyards, which were full of weeds. I had a minimal interest in the project and when Esther had had enough, I was

ready to go home. I believe we made it back to Denver that day in spite of the time spent roaming among the dead. The trip back was uneventful because of the Ogallala precautions we instituted.

LOOKING IN ON JAMES W. OBENCHAIN

Sometime after Tom and Julie moved to Denver, probably the summer of 1990, we both got interested in finding out a little more about my great grandfather, James William and his saw mill. Earlier research had placed it in Pleasant Valley near Bellvue. We, in fact, had the actual map location of the homestead in terms of quarter section, section, township and range, which was given as the *NE4 of SE4 and S2 of SE4 and SE4 of SW4 of Section 24, T8N, R70W, Larimer County, Colorado*. Our problem lay in determining just where that was in the valley. We went into La Porte and found a fishing supply store, which kept a supply of topographic maps. After digging around for a while, we came across the one of interest, which included Pleasant Valley and the mill site. As we scanned the map, Tom suddenly yelled, "Look, there is Obenchain Draw". Sure enough, there it was marked on the map a few miles north of Pleasant Valley. I have included two maps as figures 17-135 and 17-141. The latter one defines the location of the draw and creek, while the first pinpoints the location of the homestead and mill site. For now, we'll concern

ourselves with the mill site. To be sure no one is left hanging regarding the location of La Porte, Colorado and Pleasant Valley. La Porte is just a few miles northwest of Fort Collins on US 287 and a little south of its junction with CO 14, while Pleasant Valley lays a couple of miles due west of La Porte.

With the map in hand, we headed to pleasant valley and Grandpa James William's homestead. Goat Hill shown in figure 17-135 provided a reference for pinpointing his acreage. However, it wasn't as easy to get to the site, as we imagined it would be. A dairy farm now included his designated acreage and blocked

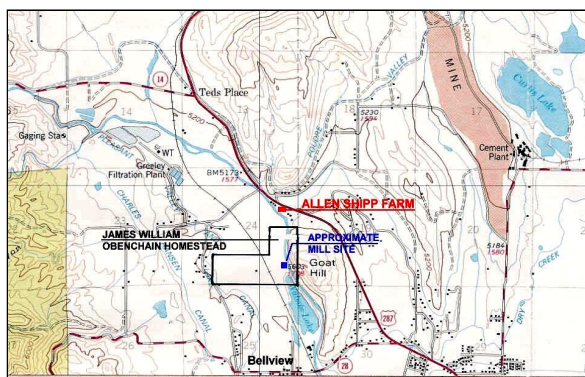


Figure 17-135 A map defining the location of James William's homestead & mill.

direct access. Fortunately, we were able to get very near the site if not exactly on it by way of a road into the lake and recreation site touching the southeast corner of his acreage. As I remember, there was a picnic table or two there



Figure 17-137 A closer view of Goat Hill as seen from the gate of the dairy farm.

and we had lunch in conjunction with taking a few pictures. The photos, which I'll describe in a little more detail, are designated as being figures 17-136, 17-137, 17-138, 17-139 and 17-140.

Notice the gray road that just cuts the southwest corner of his property. As we made our way along it, we came to a road leading into the dairy farm and turned towards Goat Hill. The photo of figure 17- 136 was taken from the main road just



Figure 17-136 A photo of Goat Hill as seen from the main gravel road to the northwest.

prior to turning into the dairy farm. It kind of puts the hill in perspective with Pleasant Valley. As we turned into the farm and made our way to the gate, we stopped and took the photo in figure 17-137. It provides a better idea of the size of the hill, which was just across the river from the mill property. Actually, it's part of a string of hogbacks that separate Pleasant Valley from the La Porte area. Bellvue lays to the south of the mill site nearer the southern edge of the valley.

We decided against going into the farm to gain access to the mill site because it wasn't apparent that we could achieve that. As a result, we headed back out to the main road to the

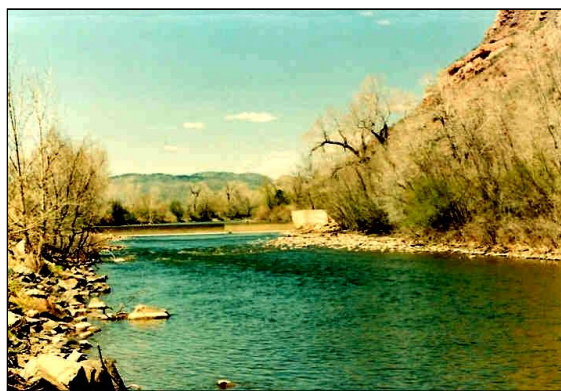


Figure 17-138 A photo of the Cache la Poudre River as seen from the mill site.

recreation site we had seen earlier. This time we went into the site to eat lunch and take some additional pictures. Figure 17-138 was taken from the bank of the Cache la Poudre River at

the north end of the recreation site. This would be the approximate location of the mill. However, the mill may have lain a couple of hundred yards further up river, it was hard to tell. There was no sign of any remains.

We took several more pictures of the surrounding area, trying to imagine just what it looked like to James William as he worked his mill. The photo of figure 17-139 is looking northwest from the approximate mill site towards the dairy farm. Notice the group of cows grazing contentedly in the pasture. Figure 17-140 is a view from the mill site looking due west at the



Figure 17-139 A view looking northwest from the mill site towards the dairy farm.

foothills of the Rockies. To the north, northwest, lie the course of the Cache la Poudre and the mouth of Obenchain Draw, which we'll visit in a bit. Due north of this point on the northeast bank of the Cache la Poudre laid the farm of Allen Shipp, Mary Shipp's father, who had



Figure 17-140 A view of the foothills of the Front Range looking due west.

followed behind James William and Mary from Kansas. I have placed the approximate location of his farmhouse in figure 17-135.

With the discovery of Obenchain Draw, Tom and I decided it would be fun to try to get close enough to get a view of it. It wasn't clear which would be the best way to get close to it because the map of figure 17-141 only showed a dirt road leading to the upper end of the draw and it might well be a four-wheel drive road. We decided to try to walk into the mouth of the draw via the reservoir shown to the southwest of it. There was a good road into the reservoir and it didn't

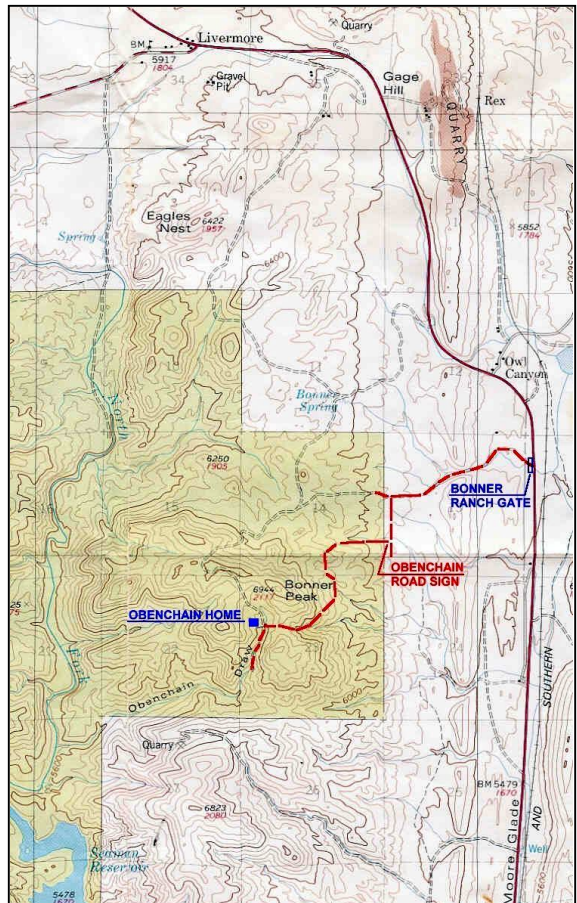


Figure 17-141 A map of the Obenchain Draw area and surrounding countryside.

appear to be more than a mile walk from the reservoir. We arrived at the road leading to the reservoir in just a few minutes and found a "No Trespassing" sign posted by the city of Fort Collins. There was a locked gate stopping us short of the reservoir and the distance would now be doubled, should we feel brave enough to break the law. Being law-abiding citizens or maybe chicken livered citizens, we elected to try from the north end as depicted by the red road. At the time we didn't know there were more roads than those shown on the map and I assumed we would have to go in over Bonner

Peak as illustrated by the dashed lines on the map. Well, nothing ventured, nothing gained. Besides, I had a four-wheel drive pickup, which should handle it without a problem, assuming that we could find the dad-burned thing.

We headed back to US 287 and then north past Ted's Place towards Livermore. Several miles

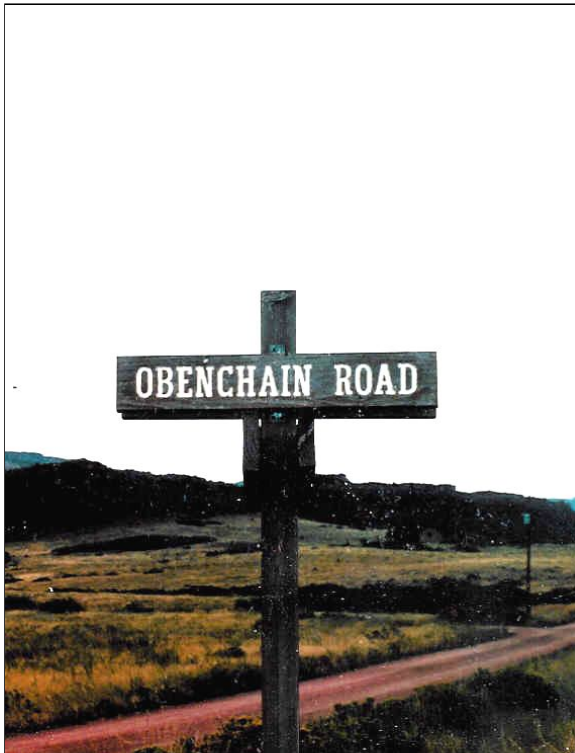


Figure 17-142 The Obenchain Road sign watching out over the empty countryside.

up the road, we came to a large gate with a sign labeling it as the "Bonner Peak Farm". There



Figure 17-143 A view of the Front Range to the west from the head of Obenchain Draw.

was, once again, a "No Trespassing" sign along with a bunch of mailboxes. One of them was

labeled as an Obenchain, which made trespassing a little more attractive. As we sat there talking about seeking out such individuals, a young man pulled up in a jeep and stopped to check his mail. We talked to him and he assured us it would be fine for us to drive on in and find these people. In fact he knew them as being nice people but he wasn't related to them. His last name escapes me, as do many other memories. He also gave us directions to Obenchain Road (not shown on the map) on which our kinfolk lived. We went in about a half-mile to a fork and hung a left, as directed. After a couple of hundred yards we came to Obenchain Road as depicted in figure 17-142, courtesy of Dave Obenchain who took the photo on a later visit. I have also shown the sign's location on the map of figure 17-141.

The trip into Obenchain Draw was uneventful and relatively fast, as the dirt road followed a contour of Bonner Peak around to the south side



Figure 17-144 Looking down on Obenchain creek from the hillside courtesy of Dave.

and then began a short climb over a little pass to the head of Obenchain Draw.

Just as we rounded the bend to drop into Obenchain Draw, we found the Obenchain house listed on the mailbox and as shown in figure 17-141. No one was home, so we left a

little note. However, we were never contacted by them and never got back to that area again. After driving down the right or north side of the draw for a ways, we returned to the top where the view was better. Even then we had to climb up the hillside to get a better view and secure the photos shown in figures 17-143 and 17-144. Actually, the latter one was also obtained by Dave and was somewhat better than any I had of the creek proper. He must have gotten well up on the south hillside overlooking the draw to get the shot he did. We probably spent an hour or so looking over the countryside before we decided to call it a day. When satisfied, we headed back to Denver, quite happy with our day's sojourn and the information we had uncovered.

They become real people in one's mind and in mine, at least, created a desire to know them better.

This particular episode along with the earlier trip to the Larimer county library did more for me in terms of becoming interested in genealogy or family history than anything else I had done. There is something about digging up such information, as we had, that draws one closer to his forebears. They become real people in one's mind and in mine, at least, created a desire to know them better. Wouldn't it have been interesting to have been able to talk to James William and Mary about their early days in Indiana, their stop in Kansas and their trip to Colorado? I believe we would gain a greater appreciation for them and the sacrifices they made as they moved west to establish a new life. I have no question in my mind about my being able to meet these progenitors of ours when I pass through the veil. They will welcome me and I will be able to thank them as well as learn about their life styles and experiences. I'm sure we were the greatest of friends in our pre-existent estate and will have a similar relationship when we meet again. Yes, our mortal existence is but a heart beat in time compared to the time we will spend before and after mortality. I have no doubt that Carl is now living in the presence of dad and mom and they are anxiously awaiting the arrival of the rest of us. Thus, as we mourn the passing of a loved one here in mortality, as we should but others welcome that individual, as he or she arrives on the other side of the veil. Truly our God has a wondrous plan for mankind, one which I intend to discuss in more detail in later chapters. My posterity will know my circumstances quite well and the various reasons for the courses I chose.

A FOUR WHEEL DRIVE ADVENTURE

Sometime after Tom and Julie had moved to Denver, we got another big snowstorm. It had to have occurred between the fall of 1989 and the spring of 1991 but the timing of this particular one escapes me. What I do remember is that the rather interesting experience we had with my four-wheel drive Chevy pickup. Though I don't have a photo characterizing the event, I do have one of the pickup during sunnier times in Georgia in the summer of 1991. It is found in figure 17-145 where my trusty pickup and I stand, side by side, like a pair of old friends. The photo was probably taken within 6 months of the incident after I had taken up temporary residence with Valerie and Jared.

Tom was working for a company in Lakewood, a western suburb of Denver. He and a friend named Tim, who lived near us in Arvada had been employed there for some time and rode together to and from work. As I remember, in

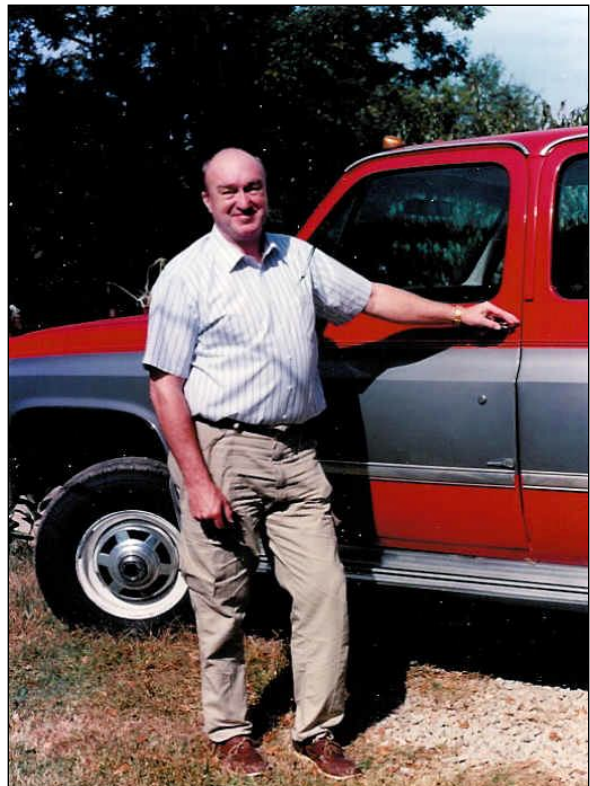


Figure 17-145 My Chevy pickup & I near the Garfield home in Buford, GA. In 1991.

the summer, Tom would occasionally bike both ways for exercise but not this day. It had begun snowing early in the morning before they went to

work but there was no problem getting there. Tim took his car, a rather low-slung coupe with little clearance and maybe even rear wheel drive. Whatever the case, by five PM they realized there was no way they could make it home in such a fair weather vehicle.

As I expected, I got a call requesting that I come and get them in my pickup and they would leave the car until later. Of course, I gladly agreed, having waited for an opportunity to really show off my mighty machine. Even then, I doubted that this particular trip would be a mission extraordinaire. After all, we had only received 12 to 18 inches and it would take some good-sized drifts to slow me down. Soon I was headed down Wadsworth for Lakewood and their office some 10 miles or so away. I sailed along with no problem other than avoiding the various cars struggling to reach their driver's destination. I suppose I was there by six PM. At least it was after dark that particular time of year.

As I pulled in to the office complex, I found the parking lot was a mess with drifted snow piled up around all the cars that were still there. Obviously others had decided against the drive because of better options. Tom and Tim climbed in and we headed back up Wadsworth. There was little traffic now with most people holed up somewhere out of the weather. Tim lived east of Wadsworth just off Sheridan, I believe. At any rate, we moved along easily until we came to the street leading to his

... "no way Jose, the fun is just beginning" even though his assessment of the drifts along his street was certainly accurate.

particular street and cul-de-sac. Little traffic had moved along this street and there were significant drifts. Even so, with my mighty machine in four-wheel drive, we moved along it with ease. As we approached Tim's side street, he suggested that he could walk the block or so to his house because the road would be badly drifted. I replied, "no way Jose, the fun is just beginning" even though his assessment of the drifts along his street was certainly accurate. I hung a left and bulldozed my way through the first big drift a few feet down the road. We continued on through two or three more of similar size, maybe four feet high, before coming to the cul-de-sac and wheeled right into his drive at the far end. After wishing us good luck and a quick goodbye, we backed out and headed home. Being pleased with the old Chevy's

performance, I stayed to the right of my incoming track and blasted a wider swath back along his street. With the Chevy's clearance and four-wheel drive, the drifts were hardly a challenge. I hung another left on the road coming in from Sheridan and took a short cut to the west towards Wadsworth. My confidence was high and I was sure we could conquer anything we might encounter. In fact, I hoped for a few more big drifts to kind of complete the trip. They would help us embellish our story when it was recited to the girls. Actually, the worst part of the trip was right along Tim's particular street and we found no difficulty negotiating our way back to the house. The truck had passed its first real test with flying colors and an otherwise miserable evening had become a joy ride for Tom and me.

ESTHER PASSES AWAY

I have mentioned Esther's gradual wasting away as the Parkinson's plus took its toll on her physical well-being. She had contracted the disease in the spring of 1983 to the best of our knowledge. Apparently the flu or some other virus, which she had come down with earlier, triggered it. At first she was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease and received the standard treatment of Dopamine. It didn't seem to help a lot and the neurologist treating her kept raising the amount she was taking. I was concerned with the side effects she was apparently experiencing and called Ted to discuss the situation. He suggested we go to the University of Colorado's research group located in Aurora. They were doing a lot of research with Parkinson's type diseases and would probably be our best shot. This we did and soon she was under the care of another neurologist at their hospital in Aurora.

After a thorough examination the neurologist said she had an un-named condition similar to Lou Gehrig's disease but somewhat different. She coined the term Parkinson's plus as a name or description. She told me in private that it would eventually be terminal and estimated 7 years as the life span after contracting it. There wasn't much we could do but make her life as comfortable as possible and her environment as pleasant as possible. This we did to the best of our ability. I don't remember if I shared the severity of her condition with the kids or not but I knew her demise and the loss of her companionship was but a matter of time. The return of Tom and Julie to Arvada was a

blessing to her and the birth of Beth made her last few months a joy.

One can see her health was failing in December of 1988 at the wedding in figure 17-125 and had declined further by the time Beth was born. She truly loved Beth, which is apparent in the photo of figure 17-133. These were days mixed with sorrow and joy for me, joy with the arrival of



Figure 17-146 Members of the Obenchain clan who were able to attend. Back R-L to R – Phil, Delight, yours truly, Valerie, Ted, Dan & Connie. Front R-L to R – Madeleine, Rose, Celeste, Carl, Ginnie & Cathy.

Beth and sorrow, at the knowledge that Esther's time was relatively short. I was so glad she got to see and love little Beth for the few short months prior to her death in April 1990. I'm convinced she knew the reality of her eventual death but by and large she was very positive



Figure 17-147 Members of the Spencer clan who were able to attend. L to R – Julia, Woodrow, Theresa, Earl, Eugene and his wife, John, Art and Ralph.

about life. Most of the last year she was in a wheel chair and required considerable help in simply taking care of herself. Being a very independent individual, she hated to ask others

to do things for her. She loved to hold Beth even though it tired her considerably. I think the general attitude around the house was quite positive because of her attitude. She would sometimes be down in the mouth, particularly after a visit to the clinic in Aurora but she didn't dwell on her difficulties. I think her condition weighed heavier on me because of the knowledge that the doctor had shared with me. However, my knowing that we would be together in the eternities to come made things somewhat easier. Even so, death of a loved one isn't easy as many can attest, regardless of our faith and knowledge of the "Plan of Salvation".

Esther was able to celebrate Celeste's birthday on April 11, 1990, which was a blessing for both of them. She passed away in her sleep the night of April 15, 1990. As one might surmise and even though I was expecting such an event, I was surprised and deeply hurt by its sudden occurrence. We had slept side by side that night, as always and I was unaware of any unusual problems. After I got up and shaved the next morning, I came back to bed to wake her. Getting no response, I immediately called 911. The emergency unit was there in minutes and spent some time trying to revive her but with no success. Not knowing exactly what time she died during the night, the official date of decease was April 16, 1990, the morning I discovered her. I include her obituary here for the record.

ESTHER'S OBITUARY

ESTHER M. OBENCHAIN, 60 of Arvada died April 16, 1990 in her home. Services were April 20th in the Arvada Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Burial was in Chapel Hill Cemetery. Mrs. Obenchain, a native of Glenns Ferry, Idaho, was a homemaker. She was a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Survivors include her husband, Thomas Obenchain of Arvada; a son Thomas J. Obenchain of Arvada; two daughters, Celeste Obenchain of Arvada and Valerie Garfield of Gainesville, Georgia; and four grandchildren. Contributions: Parkinson's Association of the Rockies, Medical Care and Research Foundation, 1420 Ogden St., Denver 80218.

The next few days were in turmoil as we prepared for Esther's funeral. We had decided our final resting places would be in the Denver area because of our children's locations. Though nothing seems permanent in this life, Celeste and Tom were likely to live in the area for the foreseeable future. Valerie, of course,

would continue to live in Georgia with Denver being somewhat more accessible than Boise. As one might expect, I had put off locating a burial site, as I do for many other things in life. As a result, the next few days were hectic as I tried to locate an appropriate cemetery. Someone suggested I check the newspaper for the sale of burial plots. This I did and found one in the Chapel Hill Cemetery. I contacted the couple involved, established a price and went to the cemetery to look over the site. It's a beautiful cemetery as cemeteries go and looked as peaceful as any I had seen. It was located in a nice neighborhood and seemed unlikely to suffer deterioration in the near future. I sealed the deal immediately. We made arrangements through the Church for the funeral and had a couple of Esther's close friends speak. All was now in order for us to go forward with the viewing on the 19th and the funeral on the 20th of April 1990.

Needless to say, I had informed the families in Boise and Glenns Ferry, etc. of her death, as well as Valerie. All of them flew in, arriving on the 19th, as I remember. I believe all of my siblings except June were able to make it and everyone of Esther's living siblings as well. I certainly appreciated their support and of course, the general upbeat atmosphere they seemed to generate. We spent the afternoon of the 19th simply sitting around in a typical Obenchain gabfest while snacking on the many foods provided. Church members had been very supportive, bringing in more than enough food to feed both Obenchains and Spencers. The gabfest helped immensely in lifting my spirit, which had taken a beating the last couple of days. Photos of those attending were taken, some of which I have included as figures 17-146 and 17-147.

That evening, we all went to the viewing and chatted with thoughtful friends of the family. Esther looked beautiful to me and so peaceful while lying there in the casket. I could feel her presence even though I knew she had returned to her Father in Heaven. Even though I'm not particularly emotional, I had difficulty controlling my feelings while thinking of the many long years we had spent together as husband and wife, almost 39 ½. Our marriage had been a good one. Though we didn't agree on everything, we learned to tolerate those differences and fully appreciate the many areas in which we found agreement. I don't believe either of us ever made a major decision without

reaching agreement with the other. Lesser differences or minor decisions made without agreement, we simply overlooked. I found joy in her happiness and even though I might not agree with a given act or purchase, her radiating pleasure compensated for any negative thoughts I might have. Truly, she blessed my life and I look forward to seeing her again after my work here is completed. I'm not in any hurry to make the trip, however, having found similar

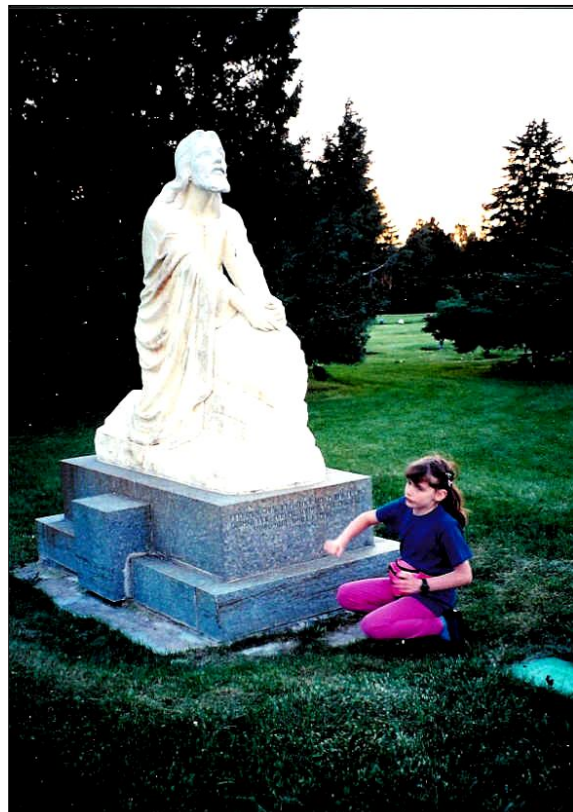


Figure 17-148 The Chapel Hills Cemetery statue of Christ & Beth near Esther's grave

joy in my present wife, namely Lethia, who now gives my existence purpose and helps fill my days with satisfaction and happiness. My blessings are twofold with these wonderful women whom I truly believe will find friendship as they co-exist in our eternal families. Any feelings of selfishness or jealousy will evaporate when we reach that celestial status our God has promised the faithful.

Saturday, April 20th, 1990, services were held for Esther at the Arvada ward building. Some of Esther's favorite hymns were sung, the eulogy was given by Julie, Tom's wife and Joyce Morehead spoke about her friendship with Esther during the years we lived in Arvada. The

service was very upbeat because of the testimony we all have of the eternal nature of our existence beginning with our pre-mortal life with our Heavenly Parents, continuing with our mortality and culminating in our existence as resurrected beings; each of us, of course, being rewarded according to our individual worthiness, as determined by God.

The families and several others then continued in the funeral procession, which wound through Denver to the Chapel Hill Cemetery located in Englewood, a part of the Denver metro area. Tom dedicated the grave in a short graveside service. The location was near the western gate

of Esther's as well as my final resting place to her right. They appear in the figures 17-149 and 17-150. These photos were undoubtedly taken just prior to Emmy's birth since Britta appears to be approaching one year old. Lethia will be buried on my right placing me between the two women I have loved in life and will continue to love through all eternity. Celeste will occupy the fourth plot just to Lethia's right, which plot was part of the package deal I made with the couple who sold me the plots. With the services complete, our company departed for home and we settled down to our usual life minus, of course Esther, our mother and my beloved companion of forty years.

MY FINAL YEAR IN ARVADA

After Esther's death, I stayed reasonably busy working for an environmental engineering firm called "Environmental Risk Insurance Co.", as well as serving in the temple and in my church calling as the Stake Name Extraction Coordinator. I had been working for the particular firm mentioned part time since 1987. They provided insurance for companies involved in the cleanup of hazardous materials such as asbestos and lead based paint. As a consultant, I was asked to study numerous papers on asbestos related diseases regarding the frequency of their occurrence as related to various levels of exposure. I also had to become conversant with an OSHA study entitled 29 CFR 1926.58. The OSHA study developed risk models, which predicted the risk of developing various diseases for various levels and durations of exposure. The shortest exposure, however, was one year whereas the insurance company needed models predicting risk for one to thirty days. My challenge was to adapt the OSHA models to this shorter time frame and justify their application to the same. These new models would then be used as a basis for establishing insurance rates for asbestos removal companies on a job-to-job basis, which were all less than 30 days. This would allow them to obtain financial backing from larger well-rated insurance firms.

My early days with the Environmental Risk Insurance Company were spent at their facility in Wheatridge, Colorado, just a few miles south of Arvada. Thus, little travel was involved and I would spend a couple of days a week in their offices wherein I was assigned a little cubicle. At first, I found the study of asbestos related diseases to be boring, to say the least. There



Figure 17-149 The headstone for Esther and my plots at Chapel Hills Cemetery.

of the graveyard in an area near a statue of Christ praying in the Garden of Gethsemane.

The statue is shown in figure 17-148 with Beth. Celeste took the photo some years later on one

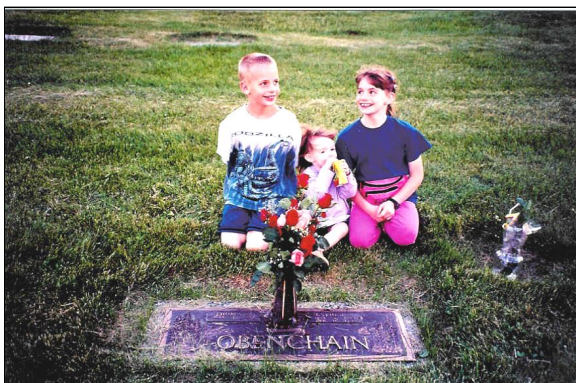


Figure 17-150 Spencer, Britta and Beth providing background for the headstone.

of her annual visits to the grave. Beth was going on five months old at the time of the funeral and appears to be more like ten years old in the photo. I have also included two additional photos of the dual headstone marking the grave

were all kinds of medical terms with which I had to become familiar and the review of the various studies was hardly fascinating. Even so, it occupied my time and as I became more familiar with this new field of work, I began to gain more interest. That was fortunate because such interest was the key to my developing a successful product. About a year later the company moved its offices to southeast Denver near the Tech Center and about a year after that moved on to a building they purchased within the Tech Center. These moves extended my commute and made the work somewhat less desirable. Even so, I stayed with them on a part time basis right up until my move to Georgia in May of 1991.

I completed the asbestos study about the time they moved their offices to the first location near the Tech Center. It proved to be well accepted, not only by them but also by the larger insurance companies who provided the major financial backing. This success gave my ego a nice boost, which helped soothe the hurt of the few reverses I had suffered during my last years with Schlumberger and which still plagued my mental state. A little later, I took on a similar project regarding poisoning from lead based paint contamination. There was less data available for this study and the models designed were somewhat less reliable. Even so, they were the best available and gave the company something on which they could base their insurance rates for cleanup of such sites. I have kept a copy of both studies and recently scanned them to refresh my memory of that work. I'll leave them for my posterity to fight over, not so much over who gets them as to who has to take them. Knowing my children quite well, I can assure my readers that anyone reading them will be bored out of their skulls. In reviewing them, I can't even see why I eventually gained an interest in the subjects. Oh well, the work helped pay the bills as well as occupy my time.

The last few years of my life in Denver probably constitute the low point of my psychological well being in life. If I ever bordered on depression during my life, this time period would have encompassed it. Beginning with my demotion in New Orleans in 1979, things seemed to go into a tailspin for me. I took a lesser job, which never provided the satisfaction I had experienced with earlier successes. The job became a means to an end, namely to provide an income until retirement. Though I wasn't really bored, neither was I deeply excited over

my work. Thus my last few years in the oil business weren't the most satisfying of my career. To add to that, shortly after moving to Denver I was diagnosed with both hypertension and diabetes. This coupled with Esther's sickness and later demise brought home the reality that I was getting old and would have to look for other sources of satisfaction. Along with my health problems, I lost a good deal of my retirement savings in some failed investments. An investment counselor, whom I trusted, misled me somewhat like a lamb being led to slaughter. That is, being inexperienced in such matters, I placed too much faith in his advice. Though I had diversified, I had invested too much in various real estate holdings, some of which went belly up in the real estate crash of the late eighties. I learned a good lesson from the experience but it was one more reversal that added to the tailspin of my life.

All these experiences had brought me to a point in life where I needed to change courses and occupy myself with something I considered worthwhile. Thus, I decided to serve a mission for the Church. My investigation into the matter, however, proved somewhat unsuccessful, in that they wouldn't send widowers on a mission, per se. It seems we can't be counted on to take proper physical care of ourselves. I don't know whether that's the correct reason or not but I do know it caused me to pursue a different course, namely to set up my own mission. After talking to Valerie and Jared, I decided to spend two years in Georgia working in the Atlanta Temple and getting to know my grandchildren somewhat better. They had never lived close to Esther and me, so this would be an opportunity to get better acquainted while doing something, which should give me a spiritual boost.

Just after my birthday in May of 1991 and 13 months after Esther's passing, I packed my bags and headed for Georgia to spend two years or so. I knew that if I volunteered to be a temple ordinance worker there, I would be accepted. What else was in my future, I didn't know but felt this move would bring a degree of satisfaction, which seemed unattainable in Denver.