
CHAPTER NINETEEN

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TWO DELIGHTFUL VACATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Quite possibly, I should have stopped writing while I was ahead or maybe I should say, not so far behind. The reader will have to be the judge as he or she continues their journey through Grandpa's marvelous exploits of life. How-some-ever, I have a couple of relatively recent trips to write about and who knows what else I might add by the time I finish with them. If you are lucky the included material will just be a winding down process for the mental stress you have already been subjected to. One might look at this chapter as being similar to the cooling off exercises an athlete goes through after engaging in a heavy workout.

Two years ago we took our first and only cruise, as of today, out of Seattle to Juneau, Alaska and back. The material included from it will be mostly pictures with just a twist of comments, or should I say twisted comments, to add a little bite to the taste. One might liken them to a dash of lemon to enhance the flavor. Because such a cruise isn't out of the ordinary now a days and many there are that have taken them, I will try to limit the same to explanatory comments.

The second and more interesting trip, in my opinion, was the trip to Germany where we were the fortunate recipients of a wonderful family reunion with the Abendschöns. It was hosted by Emil Abendschön who did a fantastic job while making us feel at home. Such a feeling will never be forgotten because it made the reality of our familial relations readily apparent. What a delightful time we visitors from America had.

THE ALASKAN CRUISE

Valerie, as well as the rest of my children knew of my interest in such a cruise. I had talked about it while Esther was still among us and described my desire to drive the Alaskan

highway, as well. The vacation of a lifetime, in my fondest dreams, was to take a ferry to Alaska, which would transport my vehicle and still provide an opportunity to visit and sightsee along the way. With that accomplished on the way up, my fellow travelers and I would drive the Alaskan highway back, taking our good old time, while camping along the way. Esther and I with all three children had only tasted the beauty of Canada on our trip in 1968 as described in chapter 13. I wanted more and the beauty I had experienced kept calling me back, beckoning me to return and bask in the quiet solitude one can



Figure 19-1 LaQuinta Inn in downtown Seattle.

find only in nature's beautiful expanse. Esther and I, unfortunately, were unable to make that trip, even though I feel sure she would have been willing. First it was time and later health issues that seemed to prevent it.

Lethia and I, being able to make a trip in 1997, ameliorated my long held desire to a degree, as described in chapter 18. It didn't, however, assuage my desire to see the Alaskan-Canadian coast line, which I had only experienced through

photos. It did satisfy my desire to drive the Alaskan highway to a degree, however, even though we covered a somewhat different area. Consequently, Valerie's offer to pay for both Lethia and me for such a cruise was quickly accepted. I only had to worry about associated expenses such as hotels, mementos, side-trips and air fare. She even threw in a buddy pass, or whatever it's called, for the plane fare, leaving me one round trip ticket to Seattle to get us to the port of embarkation. How could I turn down such a deal? It was like offering a fix to some dope addict, except the expected reward differed significantly. To say I was thrilled would be the understatement of the year.

We headed for Seattle on May 25th of 2006 to arrive in time for our departure on the 26th. I relied on Jared and Valerie to do any involved photographing because I had learned over the years that Jared was a guru in such activity. He believed anything that didn't resist should be photographed and that which did; should be convinced of the error of its ways. Thus, all that came into view was fair game. Of course, the digital camera made such an ailment practical, if not desirable and I must admit; all photography I now include deserves a heartfelt thanks to that sleuth of Mother Nature.

I would hardly be fair if I didn't also render a heartfelt thanks to Celeste who assembled the photos taken in a beautiful album she titled "Cruise Alaska". As I understand it, she was so engaged during the cruise proper, having made arrangements with Valerie and Jared to receive daily photos via the airwaves. Additionally, she penned nice comments in the album, which jogged this old atrophied brain regarding dates and names of places that I might well have forgotten if they weren't available. At the very least it made this writing much easier for me to accomplish. So, you see, I deserve no credit for what the reader finds herein but only blame for any psychological damage I may be about inflict upon you with my presentation.

HEADING FOR SEATTLE

If my arithmetic is correct, we headed out via Delta airline on Thursday the 25th and arrived in Seattle for an overnight stay. I thought of contacting Madeleine but failed to do so because of late arrival and hurried motel and supper arrangements. If that seems like a poor excuse, I apologize and hope such lack of feeling of mine will not deter any of our Seattle kinfolk from enjoying this chapter.

As evidence of our stay in Seattle, I include photos of the LaQuinta Inn and the space needle as figures 19-1 and 19-2. Other photos of downtown Seattle would be of little interest



Figure 19-2 The Seattle Space Needle

and I'll drop them even though Celeste included some to remind us of the various sights we encountered that night. I believe most of the photos were taken the next morning since our

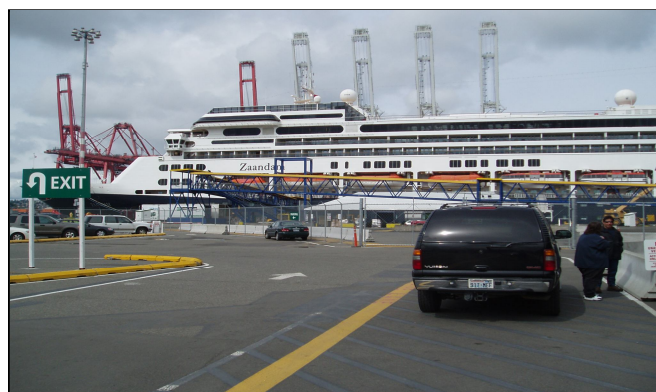


Figure 19-3 The Zaandam, our cruise ship.

late arrival, along with dinner, placed photography on a low priority that evening.

AT THE PORT

Friday morning, the 26th, we headed for the pier. It took two taxis because of our luggage. We had arrived at the LaQuinta, as I remember, in an airport van, which held our party plus. The taxis simply didn't have room for the four of us including luggage. We had given both drivers,

who spoke poor English, the name of the pier we had been directed to. One took Valerie and Jared to the proper door and waiting area. They arrived first even though we were ahead of them. Our driver dropped us off at the wrong waiting area and when Valerie didn't arrive behind us, we got on the cell. Though I'm not much for cell phones, they turned out to be very handy and soon we were also at the proper waiting area. Of course, we knew we were close before working things out because there, in front of us was the Zaandam, our designated cruise ship. Figure 19-3 depicts our view of it as we arrived at the pier. Soon we were checked in and boarded the ship. We snapped a photo of Jared and Valerie and they in turn, one of Lethia and me, figures 19-4 and 19-5 respectively.

From the ship's deck, Jared got a nice photo of the Seattle skyline, which looks about like any other big city. It is portrayed in figure 23-6.



Figure 19-5 Lethia and I made it too.

There was a cruise ship tied up directly behind us as seen in figure 19-5, as well as numerous cargo ships in the process of loading and unloading. Though interesting, they hardly deserve the space required and the reader will have to imagine the same or rely on his or her own past excursions.

We found our staterooms with no problem, which is kind of remarkable for an old coot like me. Of course, I had Lethia along to guide me. Gee whiz, that's one of the reasons I married her. As it turned out, Valerie and Jared's room was quite some distance from ours but it made little difference because we were seldom in them. There were no windows; so any scenic viewing required us to be on deck or in one of the lounges. Our staterooms were strictly for sleeping and getting ready for the day's events. In fact, after finding our rooms, we went back to

the deck to look around while waiting on our baggage. The photos of figures 19-4, 19-5 and 19-6 were taken before departure from Seattle.

Before we left port, we were required to sit through a safety lecture complete with a



Figure 19-4 They made it on board.

discussion of life boat assignments, life jacket instructions and the means of boarding the craft should a situation demand it. At the time we didn't know the crafts would be used at Sitka to take us to the wharf. Of course, boarding the same was really a snap but had to be done from a lower deck than that which we were on. Other safety instructions were also given but I don't recollect them and I doubt the reader has any interest anyway. So, let's move on to more interesting things. Evidence of this instruction is shown in figure 19-7. If you look closely, you



Figure 19-6 Seattle skyline from the Zaandam.

can see Jared in the center left, I believe. Lethia and I were apparently lost in the crowd and Valerie was obviously the shutter gal. I

remember Lethia and I were separated from Val and Jared because we were assigned different life boats. Boat assignments were made by deck and area thereon. We were quite a ways from them as mentioned earlier.

ON BOARD THE ZAANDAM

Our pier of departure was near the south end of Puget Sound and one can readily see we had quite a ways to travel through crowded waters



Figure 19-7 We get lifeboat instruction.

before really getting out to sea. Thus, our departure proceeded slowly while passengers viewed the activity from the deck. As indicated earlier, the photo of figure 19-6 was taken before we left, as was 19-7 I do believe. As we proceeded up the sound, we viewed the surrounding countryside of which the photo of figure 19-8 is a sample. It was a nice day and



Figure 19-8 Puget Sound and its shoreline.

the water was calm allowing us to meander around the deck as we pleased.

The itinerary called for an all night trip to Juneau, our first stop, after getting out of port, Puget Sound that is, rather late in the day. We

would be at sea moving up the Pacific coast a considerable distance off shore. Even so, one could easily see the lights of the various towns twinkling in the darkness off to our right as we moved northward. Other than that, all I was aware of as I strolled around the deck was a stiff breeze, numerous white caps and the trail left behind the ship from its wake. Consequently, we spent our evening looking over the amenities of the ship and enjoying those that we were most attracted to.

There was a beautiful organ in an area I believe was called "The Atrium", which seems fitting in that it was about in the center of the ship. The organ was supposedly 3 stories high and was truly beautiful to observe. They played it nightly, at least, and maybe more frequently. One could sit there and simply enjoy the music, which we did from time to time. The organ is pictured in the photo of figure 19-9.

There were several restaurants on board of which a passenger could select his choice. We



Figure 19-9 Ship's organ in the Atrium.

had to book dinner in advance, as I remember, but that was no problem. Lunch and breakfast were eaten in the main dining area, which was a buffet of sorts. The choice of food was enormous and it was definitely of the best quality. One could eat to their hearts content at each meal or even in between if you so desired. Though I didn't make more than the necessary three trips to eat each day, I must admit that I was guilty of eating significantly more than normal. I wasn't really worried about the weight problem, since it has been minimal during my life but I did have to check my blood sugar level frequently to be sure it was within acceptable limits. Of course, I had plenty of insulin along and could shoot myself as frequently as necessary.

EVENINGS AT THE ROTTERDAM

Most evenings we ate in the Rotterdam Dining Room. It required semi-formal dress, which we easily accommodated. One dining room that served a nice steak, let's call it the "Steakhouse", required formal dress. We ate there once to take advantage of the steak but preferred the Rotterdam because of the enjoyable atmosphere. The Steakhouse was quiet and one could have a relaxing dinner, which was nice but the Rotterdam had a host of activities going on each evening and kept one in a cheery mood. We may have eaten in the main dining area a couple of evenings too because we spent 6 evenings on the ship. I can easily account for three but the remaining ones are a bit of a blur.

The first night we ate at the Rotterdam, Lethia and I were separated far from Jared and Valerie. This occurred because of the stateroom assignments, which they used as a guide. Of course, as soon as we mentioned the fact we were traveling together, they quickly corrected the situation and there was no more confusion the rest of the trip. We'll begin with our reception at the Rotterdam and our initial seating, which Celeste has labeled as table 156. After all, who am I to argue, I was only there in body with my mind caught up in the fun we were having. She got her info from Valerie and I



Figure 19-11 A view of the Rotterdam's interior.

learned long ago not to argue with a woman, especially my wife. Also, that's a good number.

As we approached the entrance to the Rotterdam, we were greeted with a dinner bell or call to action as pictured in figure 10. In the entryway were some cleansing tissues and a selection of appetizers. This made the short wait in line a nice experience. Certainly it wasn't

what I had experienced in the service or anywhere else for that matter. As one worked their way to the head of the line, they were



Figure 19-10 Our call to dinner at the Rotterdam and an evening of fun.

quickly escorted to their assigned table. That's where we got separated the first night. Menus were quickly passed out, which gave one a choice of main dishes as well as salads, drink and dessert. Though the waiters had several tables they were responsible for, they were always checking to see if there was any need for a refill of rolls, drink or questions to answer. The dinners were most pleasant, to say the least.

I'll begin with a photo of the interior of the Rotterdam, which you will find it in figure 23-11. Although it's difficult to tell from the photo, guests sat around the edges where they had a view of the surrounding landscape or should I say ocean? As I remember, some were also seated in the center section, although that could have been reserved for the chefs and waiters. Regardless, the atmosphere was outstanding.

FORMAL NIGHT

The Rotterdam had an evening they termed formal night, though somewhat semi-formal. That was probably the first night, so I'll begin with a couple of photos Jared furnished of that evening with the bulk of them from Chef's Night or maybe party night. In figure 19-12 you'll find

Jared and Valerie in a happy mood while that of Lethia and I appear to be a little dour in figure 19-13. I look a little tight and one might surmise that Lethia is having problems with her escort but I can assure you the strongest drink I had was water spiked with lemon. I guess Jared caught us in an off mood though we were having a good time, current expressions excepted.

The second night or at least another night was called Chef's Night as I already mentioned. That was really a fun night. One didn't have to imbibe to enjoy one's self, although some of those around us may have had a little more fun.



Figure 19-13 Lethia and I making the best of it that first night at dinner.

Actually, there was no rowdiness that I observed at dinner or anywhere else on the ship, even though drinks were served for those who wanted them anywhere and anytime. It was hardly a party cruise, like some I have heard of, because, I suppose, most passengers were older and really not the partying type. I guess they liked a drink but kept themselves in personal control.

CHEFS NIGHT

I can't really remember the specifics that went on during chef's night. I just remember having a wonderful time. I know rigor mortis hasn't yet set in nor was it present on the cruise; so, I suppose my problem is one of rigor mania by which I mean a stiffening of the brain or mental acuity. I'm quite confident the latter term's definition exists only in my mind but it does emphasize my plight in trying to remember all that I laughed about that night. Between Jared and Valerie, the waiters and/or chefs as well as Lethia and me, there was hardly a moment of silence. Anyone who really knows Lethia or me realizes such chatter with its associated laughter

is not typical of our laid back personalities. Maybe the series of photos I include will better describe the night's levity. They may also make



Figure 19-12 Valerie and Jared in a relaxed mood that first night at dinner.

my comment of not imbibing questionable, as you consider my facial expressions therein. Though I can't regulate your opinions, you'll just have to take my word for it if you expect to be in harmony with our festivities of the evening.

Figure 19-14 provides a peek at the evening's introduction, which we were about to enjoy. It seemed that surprises awaited us at every turn, which brought laughter and clapping on a continuing basis. Figure 19-15 provides credibility for my participation therein while figure



Figure 19-14 An Introduction to the night's festivities in which we were brilliantly entertained.

19-16 indicated Lethia was having her moments of enjoyment as well. I now include Valerie and Jared's photo in figure 19-17 to emphasize the frivolous state they found their selves in.

One might even remark that Jared appears to be imbibing along with old grandpa while Valerie closes her eyes to the whole scene and simply imagines that which brings out a smile. If one concludes that Jared and I were drunk with enjoyment that same individual would have to also conclude that our dear spouses approved



Figure 19-15 Now, I dare you to tell me that I don't appreciate a good time.

of our actions and had just discovered a side to our personalities they had never imagined present before.

Trying to minimize my remarks appears to be a bit of a problem but you pay no never mind because I'm simply trying to be sure you



Figure 19-16 Lethia wondering if they will call on her to join in entertaining group.

interpret the photos' messages completely and properly. For instance, in figure 19-15 you'll notice my enjoyment of whatever is going on far exceeds the glassy-eyed stare, which is apparent to the truly observant individual. Consequently, I counsel you, the reader, once again, to read the photos slowly and accurately

to be sure you understand the message contained therein.

Now, let's move on to the photo of figure 19-16. One can readily see the excitement in Lethia's



Figure 19-17 Jared is enjoying the show & Valerie enjoys his subdued nature.

face. It appears to me that she wants to get up there and sing or dance or maybe twirl the baton. You know, she did that, twirl the baton that is, as a young girl in high school. However, I haven't caught her so engaged around the



Figure 19-18 One of our chefs belting out his or her part in the musical program.

house and question if that is really behind her excitement. I leave that up to her. As far as I'm concerned in that photo, it's difficult to say just what I might be thinking behind that semi-confident smirk. Of course, I have practiced that particular demeanor for many years, having found that it is a marvelous way to cover up insecurity and a host of other problems. So; I leave it to the reader to discern just what that particular expression means. Good luck and by the way, I remind you once again that imbibing wasn't the problem.

Now, consider figure 23-17. Therein we find Jared thoroughly enjoying whatever is going on. Compare that to my smirk of the previous photo. It's obvious that I'm glad that I'm not up there trying to carry out whatever form of



Figure 23-19 Evidence that the four of us weren't the only ones at the party with dunce hats.

entertainment that is involved while Jared, I feel sure, is wondering just how he can incorporate the fun he's observing into one of his opportunities to be on stage. I believe Valerie's quiet smile is brought on by relief that Jared isn't applying his extroverted nature to the evening's entertainment. Of course, both he and she may



Figure 23-20 One of the chefs: going about her duty of serving the passengers.

deny that that is what is going on but having been associated with the pair for some time, I feel sure that I'm right.

You'll notice the chef's hats that the four of us are wearing and might wonder whether they are hold-overs from our grade school days wherein we had been relegated to the corner with a dunce hat. No, it wasn't because we all refused to take part in the performance being given. I

rather believe it was to get us to laugh at our neighbor whom we could see while being totally unaware of what we looked like personally but I'm not sure because all of the passengers at this gala affair were so attired.

Figure 23-18 is simply one of the many chefs participating in the performance. Since Jared took the photo, I can't say just what inspired him but I suspect it had something to do with her femininity. He of course, would deny any such ulterior motives were brought into play but I know what goes on through the younger minds of society and feel he is quite typical.

Figure 23-19 was included to simply vindicate our attire, which was displayed in the photos of figures 23-16 and 23-17. I didn't want any of my posterity to think my conduct would be such that the ship's captain would demand we alone should be so dressed. After all, you might be inclined to think such attire was somehow linked to the smirk or glassy stare you find in so many of my photos.

Let's move on to figure 23-20, which portrays my kind of girl. Oops, I hope Lethia doesn't read this. Notice those long slim legs and that captivating smile as she walks down the aisle in such a confident manner. Man, she can serve me dinner anytime she wants too. Unfortunately, I can't afford too many dinners of this caliber, so I'll just place her photo in my autobiography. By the way, if I remember right, our chef was a male who prepared the food just fine but lacked some of the endearing qualities that go with the fairer sex. Of course, with Lethia by my side, it made little difference to me who the chef was as long as he brought food.

AFTER DINNER ACTIVITIES

We always went to the early dinner, since we had a choice. That was more on my stomach's schedule and I didn't hear any complaints from the others. There was a choice of entertainment to choose from each evening, some of which were also available during the day. I'll take a few minutes to discuss them.

THE THEATRES

One afternoon and maybe more, they had live performances in a small auditorium, which held several hundred people, I suppose. We only attended one such activity, which was fun but not as much, in my opinion, as the activities at the Rotterdam. I am surprised Jared didn't include a photo of some scene in the play we

saw. We also attended the ship's movie theatre another evening, in which "Pirates of the Caribbean" or some such title was playing. Jared ate it up, or so it seemed but I found it a little bit of a bore. Aside from a questionable plot, the acting was mediocre at best in this movie critic's opinion. Besides that, the seats were poor, to say the least and disturbances were frequent. On the positive side, the movie was free always a plus in my view.

MUSICAL ENTERTAINMENT

We spent two or three evenings at the "Piano Bar" where we imbibed several soft drinks. I don't think we were counted as especially desirable patrons but they didn't ask us to leave either. We thoroughly enjoyed the piano entertainment, which was provided by a Philippine gentleman whose name was Romeo. He could play all of the oldies, my style of music, by heart and never broke out a piece of sheet music or a book that I saw. We would sit there for a couple of hours just listening and relaxing. It was a great way to finish up the evening. So as not to overstay our welcome at the bar, we also spent some time in another area where classical music was involved. There a couple of young ladies played assorted violin pieces, which we found enjoyable. I have included



Figure 19-22 The Classical Strings from Romania, beautiful girls and music.

photos of both musicians in figures 19-21 and 19-22 respectively. Couple their performances with the Piano Bar and one had the makings of an evening of truly relaxing music, which we enjoyed several times the various evenings we spent on board. Other than dinner, this was my favorite shipboard experience, which, I suppose, is rather typical for an old man. As I age, even dinner has less appeal.

THE MAIN LOUNGE

Though there were several lounges on the ship, the main lounge, as I call it, was by far the largest. Numerous people frequented it but there was always plenty of room. One side was lined with windows and a person could sit there and enjoy the scenery, which was much more



Figure 19-21 Romeo and his piano performing at the "Piano Bar" one evening.

preferable to sitting in one's room to do the same. We could read, view the sea, simply relax or snooze as I did from time to time. The Classical Strings were situated at one end of the lounge for the evening performances. I have included a photo of the general lounge area in figure 19-23 and one of Lethia and I relaxing in figure 19-24 or should I say dreaming about who



Figure 19-23 Main lounge, our relaxation area, while listening to the Classical Strings.

knows what. Figure 19-25 is the last place of note; it being the ship's library. Lethia and Valerie poked around in it, I believe but I didn't take the time. To my knowledge neither did

Jared. He and I had other things to do, such as sleeping for me and running topside to photograph the ocean for him. Actually, so you won't think I was too lazy, I did walk the deck each day about four times. That was about the equivalent of a mile I figured. Well, I guess I have pretty well covered the ship's facilities and our major experiences thereon; so let's move on to our first stop, namely Juneau, Alaska.

OUR STOP IN JUNEAU

Though I have covered events that occurred before and after our stop in Juneau, all occurred at times I simply can't pinpoint and I decided to lump them together. The ship had spent the first night moving towards that capital city of Alaska and we approached Juneau some time the next morning. With the morning sun breaking through some clouds, at times, we were treated to some beautiful scenery as we made our way from the open sea through the various channels among the islands that protected that city from the open ocean. The morning light was obscured most of the time by a rather heavy cloud cover but the few moments of sunlit landscape we were treated to, provided beautiful green vistas. I have included one such moment captured by Jared and his trusty camera in figure 19-26. As you can see, a beautiful little stream courses its way down a green hillside. One can only surmise its source as being the distant ice fields displayed in the background. As the reader can guess, such scenes thrill me.



Figure 19-25 The ship's library, which we didn't take time to use or at least I didn't.

There are other scenes obscured by the lack of sunlight, which I won't bother to include. I prefer the sunny good times like most folks I know.

This seems like a good place to insert, one more time, a comment of my father's, which he made

years ago and which I also remember inserting earlier in this momentous though questionable work, namely; *"I feel closer to God when I'm out in the mountains than at any other time"*. Though that doesn't exactly describe my



Figure 19-24 Lethia and I enjoying an exciting conversation in the main lounge.

feelings today, it touched me deeply years ago and even today, I still identify with it.

I'll probably minimize the photos of Juneau because of the space they demand, even though they are worth a thousand words and in



Figure 19-26 A scene along the islands' channel route, as we moved into Juneau.

my case, probably 2000. I will include a sufficient number to describe our activities and give the reader a view of Alaska's capital city. We begin with a dock scene wherein we had just disembarked and were talking over how we should spend our port time. There were several flyers and posters available which gave people

like us a rather wide choice for that limited time. In figure 19-27 the reader can see Valerie, Lethia and I discussing our quandary while Jared goes about his photography. As you can see, though Juneau is the capital, it has a small town appearance and atmosphere.

There was a tram close by that took the traveler up on Mt. Roberts, which would provide a view of the town and the harbor. There were also flights available, which would take one over some of the back country and, I believe, even



Figure 19-27 The girls and I mulling over the situation and our next move.

land on a glacier to allow the traveler to examine the glacial ice up close. From our previous Canadian trip, Lethia and I realized such an experience, other than the flight, would be of little interest to us. The flight, of course, would



Figure 19-29 A view of the Juneau and its harbor with the Zaandam sitting at anchor.

have been fun but the cost was such that the others agreed and we headed for the Mt. Roberts lift as a second choice. At least we could see the Juneau area from above.

Soon after buying our lift tickets, we were headed up some 1800 feet to the station at the top. As we found out later but were hardly surprised, there was a gift shop waiting for us with all kinds of goodies for the traveler to buy.



Figure 19-28 A photo of a car headed down from Mt. Roberts as we headed up.

As we coursed our way to the top, Jared took several photos of which I display two in figures 19-28 and 19-29. Figure 19-28 is simply a photo of a car traveling back down to give the reader an idea of our transportation device. The latter photo displays Juneau and its harbor with our cruise ship lying at anchor, hardly breath-taking.

In addition to the gift shop, there were several trails meandering along the mountainside from the shop. We all spent a good deal of time in the shop where I bought a nice light jacket for a

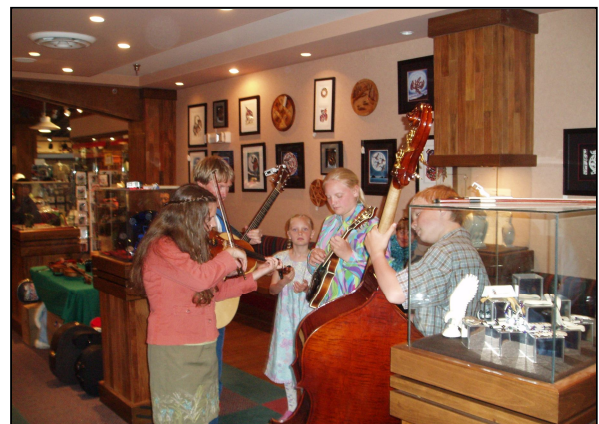


Figure 19-30 A local musical group that played for the tourists atop Mt. Roberts.

price somewhat less than I would have paid in Georgia. Jared also bought me a "Bush Pilot's" hat, which I suppose he thought would improve my image. I still have it, almost untouched, in my closet and my image remains the same. It's

not that I don't like it because it is a very nice hat and I appreciate his gesture but there are few bushes around my house and I'm still looking for a suitable plane to fly. If and when I find one Jared, I'll definitely take off around my house and look for some bushes to swoop down on.

The gift shop had a musical group, as pictured in figure 19-31, which was quite entertaining. They didn't ask me to sing, however, and I soon got tired of it and began to explore the building a



Figure 19-31 A view from Mt. Roberts looking south along our entry route.

little. Before long, I found my objective, namely the John, and took a moment to relieve the pressure I had been experiencing. Soon, my fellow travelers were following suit but used their own designated facilities, of course.

With the building well explored, Jared and I decided to meander along the trails and see



Figure 19-33 A view of Mendenhall Glacier as seen from the visitor's center.

what we could see, kind of like the bear that went over the mountain. It was worth the effort because the scenery was beautiful in spite of a cloudy day. I have included a couple more

shots Jared took to give the reader an idea of what we enjoyed. They are displayed in figures 19-32 and 19-33. We got in our daily walk before returning to the visitor's center, which



Figure 19-32 A Mt. Roberts view looking north in the direction of our departure.

added to the value of our efforts. After returning to the center, we found the girls still immersed in examining the various items available. Even so, our purchases were modest and probably contributed little to the shops profit for the day.



Figure 19-34 A glacial stream draining out of Mendenhall Glacier.

Such purchases certainly wouldn't provide the stimulus our great leaders are looking for today.

Around noon, I would guess, we headed down the mountain on the tram once again. Being on the hungry side, we purchased some drinks and a couple of hotdogs or something similar. We still had the afternoon to kill and decided to go to Mendenhall Glacier, which was advertised in one of the visitor's guides. A tour bus left on a regular basis from a loading area just a couple of hundred yards from the dock. The price was nominal in my somewhat Scottish view and we

loaded on after just a short wait. The distance to the glacier was also short, maybe ten miles or so, and we arrived at a visitor's center located at the foot of the glacier shortly thereafter. Therein was a display showing the gradual recession of the glacier in recent decades (Al Gore must have been there), which we examined for a while. I remember several other items of interest around but the time required to review them was relatively short.

Soon we were outside looking uphill at the glacier as displayed in figure 19-33. The incline was small and gradual, as was the distance and



Figure 19-35 The visitor's Center as seen from the foot of Mendenhall Glacier.

we all headed in that direction. Jared and I took off on a little side trip to, once more, see what we could see. That old bear's example had

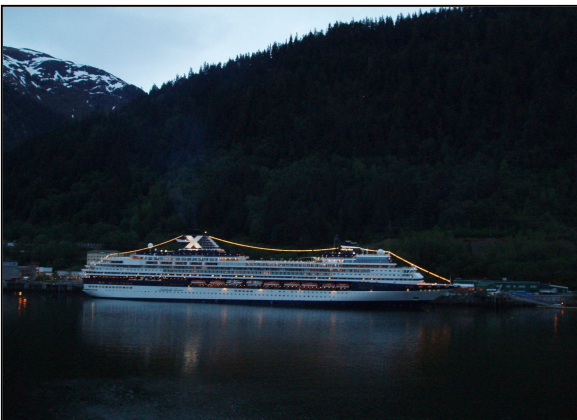


Figure 19-37 A cruise ship of the Celebrity Line at anchor in the Juneau harbor.

provided the necessary energy and motivated our desire to explore. Along the way Jared took a photo of the glacial stream draining from the glacier, which is shown in figure 23-34. Before long we were at the foot of the glacier, which

was hardly exciting, even to an old glaciologist like me. As we looked back at the visitor's center, the scene was somewhat more inviting.



Figure 19-36 The Zaandam patiently waiting for the tourists to climb back on.

Jared, once again, provided a photo of what we observed, figure 19-35, and we headed back to its beckoning call. Shortly thereafter, we were headed back to Juneau again. Before long, we were back at the dock, having had our fill of sights within our time limit and cash stash.

Dusk was gathering as we boarded the Zaandam, figure 19-36, for the next leg of our journey. It had been an enjoyable day but we were a little on the tired side as well as ready for the variety of foods available to we tourists.

There were now two additional cruise ships lying at anchor in the harbor. One was of the



Figure 19-38 Another cruise ship of an unknown line lying at anchor at Juneau.

Celebrity Line and the other unknown to this old man. They were rather pretty in the gathering twilight; so Jared photographed both. They are shown in figures 19-37 and 19-38. We went inside and freshened up before heading for

dinner at the Rotterdam, once again. The ship was now headed northward, I believe, for Glacier Bay where we hoped to see some little more interesting glaciers with their associated calving activity. In examining one of the photographs, I found a bridge spanning the channel to the north of our dock. Since I don't know if it is high enough to allow the ship to pass under, I must admit we could have headed back south the way we came in. If so, the trip to Glacier Bay was somewhat longer but made little difference, since our travel thereto was during the ensuing night.

I'm confident we spent the evening listening to Romeo and the Classical Strings in the main lounge area. Having spent a relaxing evening, I'm sure we slept well that night, turning in about



Figure 19-39 An artful creation which greeted us as we returned to our cabins.

11:00 PM. Each night, as we returned to our rooms, we were greeted by some artful creation made out of towels and either hanging in the entryway or laying on the beds. I treat you to one such creation to give you an idea of each evening's greeting as shown in figure 19-39.

After a restful night, we met Valerie and Jared for breakfast, a typical routine, and enjoyed the seascape with its distant background of forested Islands. Breakfast was usually a lengthy affair because of the many choices available. By now,

however, we had the routine down pretty good and only paused long enough to make some new choice for variety's sake. The biggest danger in such a foray was the accumulation of too much food. Having been raised in a family of nine children during the 1930s, I had been

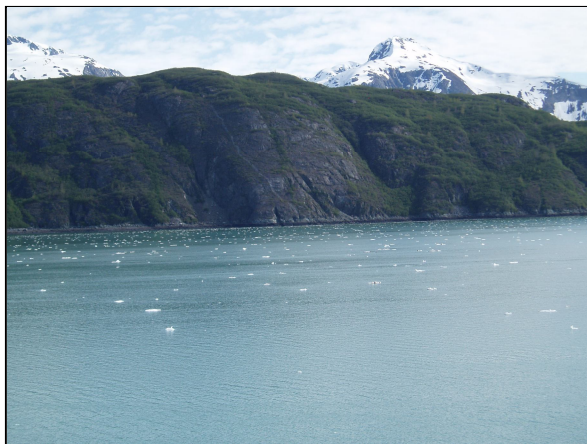


Figure 19-40 Glacier Bay and adjacent land, taken near the bay's south end, I presume.

taught to clean my plate because there were people and especially children in China who had to go without. That was a rather standard remark of our dear mother and I believe, it was



Figure 19-41 Glacier country far to the north in this particular photo of Glacier Bay.

designed to make one feel guilty. Whatever the case, I usually cleaned my plate and still do today, purely out of habit. Thus, in my case, I didn't want to overload my tray as I made my way through the line.

GLACIER BAY

After breakfast, we went out on the deck and found the ship entering Glacier Bay. A few photos of the surrounding land will give the reader who hasn't had the pleasure of such a

trip an idea of the surrounding beauty. The first, in figure 19-40, was taken towards the south end of the bay, well before we came to the glaciers. One can get a pretty good idea of the water temperature by simply noticing the plethora of small floating pieces of ice. How would you like to take a dip in water of that temperature? Even the Polar Bear Club members might hesitate.

We moved northward through the morning hours, as I remember, arriving at the north end around noon. We spent some time there as the



Figure 19-42 Glacial Bay as we neared our destination at its north extremity.

ship idled in the water near a couple of different glaciers. The deck was crowded with passengers, shooting pictures like clay pigeons at a skeet shoot contest. The day was sunny and bright, fortunately, but was still chilly with a



Figure 19-44 The mountains wherein the glaciers formed many moons ago.

slight breeze blowing in off the glacier, I suppose. Wherever it was coming from, it had been given a cold farewell. In turn, it was giving us the cold shoulder as it welcomed us to Glacier Bay. I'll now provide a few of the many

photos Jared captured, which describe the surrounding beauty much better than I can.

Let me begin with a photo of the north end of the bay, which was taken from quite a distance, maybe as we were leaving, judging from the ship rail at the bottom. It is displayed in figure 19-41. A companion photo, which was taken



Figure 19-43 The main glacier right at the head of Glacier Bay.

somewhat closer to the glacial area, is shown in figure 19-42. Those mountains are beautiful but I'm glad I was on the boat rather than on them. Just a little later we found ourselves right in front of the main glacier of the bay. It was named in



Figure 19-45 A shot of the bay, which displays rather greenish waters.

the literature but I failed to keep any of the brochures and will have to plead ignorance in that area. This is one we watched calve from time to time but no real large pieces broke off. It is shown in figure 19-43.

The ship idled around the north end of the bay for quite some time; giving the camera geeks plenty of opportunities to photograph to their heart's content. Thank heavens my son-in-law

belongs to that group or I would be without pictures and the reader would have to mentally reproduce the scenery based on my description. Wow, I wonder what they would come up with. Whatever it was, I'm sure I would get the blame and would probably deserve it. I'll close this part of the trip out with just a few more pictures and will try to minimize my comments. Figure 19-44 is a close-up of one of the main mountain peaks we saw in figure 19-42, which was plenty close for me. Notice the individual on deck is dressed in some kind of parka. Though sunny, it definitely wasn't shirt sleeve weather. Jared had several more nice photos of the glaciers and the mountains but I'll let one more suffice before moving on to those of Sitka, our next stop. The one of interest here is in figure 19-45 in which the water of the bay is quite greenish as compared to several others. A few other shots displayed the same colors but I don't know why unless it was the lighting or something. I doubt that some kind of sea life contributed to it but who knows? Certainly I don't.

A DAY IN SITKA

We headed south in Glacier Bay late in the afternoon and it was getting dark by the time we



Figure 19-46 A view of one of the breakwaters with approaching landing craft.

cleared its rather lengthy extent. Consequently, we spent another evening over a nice meal and relaxing in the main lounge again. We, of course, enjoyed Romeo and the Classical Strings again but also spent time in other areas. One evening Jared and I went to the show, which I have already mentioned. Another time we all went to the auditorium to see a live performance by the ship's help from various categories, which was also mentioned. The reason for the repeat is my inability to remember just where they fit in. As usual, we retired

around 11:00 PM, I suspect and when awakened were approaching the Sitka inlet, which protects it from the ravages of the Pacific storms, I would guess. Even so, the dock area was further protected by break-waters that were obviously man-made.

About the time we started up the inlet to Sitka, we were informed that we would be boarding lifeboats to dock in Sitka. The docking area was too shallow for a large ship and as we later



Figure 19-47 A view from the deck of the Zaandam as we assembled for landing.

observed, was designed strictly for smaller craft. Figure 19-46 pictures a typical part of a break-water; while 19-47 displays the scene we observed about the time we prepared to begin our lifeboat experience. Another view, which



Figure 19-48 An island scene from the Lido deck while in the Sitka inlet.

Jared captured about that time, displays the ship's swimming pool on the Lido deck with the islands of the Sitka inlet or channel in the background. I especially liked this photo with its background because of the island view. I

remember admiring them, (the islands), as we moved slowly up the channel to Sitka. As I remember, there were islands all along the waterway dotting the ship channel.

Lethia and I had been assigned lifeboat number 12 the first day of the cruise, which was

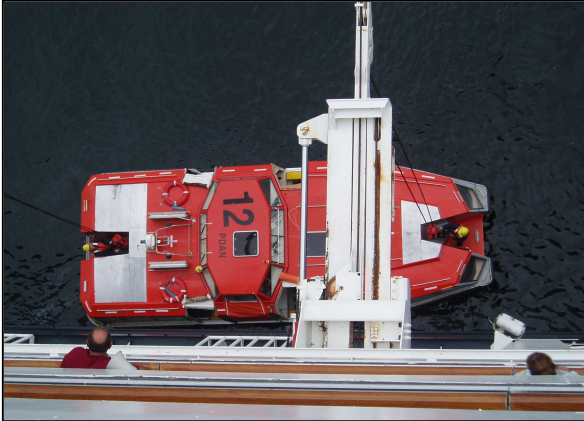


Figure 19-49 Lifeboat number 12 being prepared for landing at Sitka.

assigned by room number. Jared managed to capture a shot of it from the deck as it was being lowered to the water for landing at Sitka. I don't believe people took their assigned boats into Sitka but rather waited in line for the first



Figure 19-51 Fishing boats, I suspect, tied up and waiting for some work.

opportunity. I couldn't say whether we landed with boat number 12 or not but there it is. Next we see a view from the interior of our landing craft, figure 19-50, which displays another boat leaving the dock area as we were pulling in. The lady on the left of the picture appears to be Lethia, which means we all traveled on the same craft regardless of room assignments. I feel sure Jared was at the camera controls and I can only assume Valerie and I were on board.

As we neared the docks in Sitka, the primary livelihood of its citizens became apparent to even the most unobservant city dweller as illustrated in figure 19-51. The boat masts were clearly displayed against the mountain background like deciduous trees in an Alaskan



Figure 19-50 Lethia gazes out a window of our landing craft as we neared the dock.

winter scene. Obviously, the salmon or other fish varieties weren't running this time of year. Before long, we were unloading at our assigned dock and observed a pontoon plane taxiing out for takeoff. I suppose being a bush pilot may be



Figure 19-52 A fishing boat and a plane in the background taxiing out for takeoff.

the second biggest business in Sitka but I didn't ask. We witnessed several such scenes during our short stay near the docks.

We, of course, toured Sitka on foot with little worry about being over-taxed even at our age. The town isn't really a metropolis but it had the essentials and a very friendly atmosphere. What else could one ask for? In reality, that's my kind of town. Big cities may be interesting to visit but day to day living is much more

congenial in small towns, in my opinion. Notice, I often include the escape clause “in my opinion”, which some might be prone to remark; “I thought so!” Be that as it may, however, I once again remind the reader that this is my book and I get to say what I want. Never before have I had such a forum before me.

Next comes a few photos of down town Sitka as Jared observed it, which should add a little flavor



Figure 19-53 The Sitka city circle or gathering place of tourists like us.

to my otherwise questionable remarks. Figure 19-53 pictures the center of the town, I suppose.



Figure 19-55 A lonely totem pole sitting in a small park near the town center.

We might refer to it as the city circle rather than the town square.

Not far from the city circle was an Old Russian church built, I believe, prior to 1867 when the territory was purchased from Russia for a paltry

\$7,200,000. The purchase, if I remember my history correctly, was referred to as Seward’s ice box or folly. Hey, I just checked Webster and



Figure 19-54 An Old Russian church built sometime prior to 1867.

what do you know, I was right, at least on the folly part. Wow, what a memory. You yunguns need to respect what I say because, as you just saw, I could be right. The church is shown in figure 19-54. However, you should know it isn’t really tilted to the right, as the photo implies. Even so, it fits well with my story because, by now, the reader is well aware of my remarks being tilted to facilitate whatever story I’m trying to relate to my limited audience.

As I remember, my escape clause you know, we bought some junk food to quiet our tummies as we walked around town enjoying the sights and made time for the girls to do a little shopping in the many curio shops. I don’t remember them buying a lot except Valerie being sure she had at least one memento from Alaska for each grandchild and their parents. What a thoughtful daughter I have. Obviously, the genes came from her mother as I seldom am afflicted with such a Christ like impulse. Somewhere along the walk we visited a little park with a totem pole heralding its location. The latter is displayed in figure 19-55 with some kind of office complex behind it.

Near the park or maybe within its confines, there was a small building on which a poster announced a tribal program put on at various

times for those visiting Sitka. I would never have remembered the name but fortunately, Celeste came to the rescue; she having printed both the photo and the tribal name in the little album she prepared for Lethia and me. Assuming she is correct, the program was put on by members of the Tlinget tribe. One photo of the program is displayed in figure 19-56 for your review. She obviously got the information from Valerie or Jared via the Internet, as she assembled the album during our trip I found out later. Besides being kind and intelligent, like her sister but unlike her father; she, none-the-less, isn't psychic, at least to my knowledge.

That last comment of mine sparked a flash of inspiration in this 80 plus year old brain. I suddenly realized with both of the girls growing up in our household under the tutelage of a kind



Figure 19-56 A snapshot of a scene in a program put on by the local Indian tribe.

and considerate mother, I had no need to develop such sublime qualities. After all, Esther needed a recipient to render her finer qualities for and in behalf of; while I was glad to assume the role of the needy one and never saw any personal need for such attributes. Ah yes, there's always a way to explain one's lack of the finer personal attributes; while shifting the blame to an innocent bystander. Gosh, that's a necessary political attribute. I wonder how I would have fit in among that crowd. I might have gained more notoriety, like Pelosi.

The day in Sitka was an enjoyable one as was the whole trip. We were told to be back at the docks at some appointed time in the late afternoon for our return to the Zaandam. This we did and figure 19-57 displays our ship in the distance as we returned to it via one of the landing craft.

As I remember, It was late evening as we headed down the inlet to sea. Figure 19-58



Figure 19-57 the Zaandam lays in the distance as we left the Sitka docks.

illustrates Jared' parting glance at the Sitka area as we left.

AN EVENING STOP AT VICTORIA

We headed south for home on the evening of May 30th according to Celeste's excellent chronology. We arrived at Victoria, Canada the afternoon of June 1st, which meant almost 24 hours en route from Sitka. Though I don't remember our exact departure time from Sitka or our exact arrival time in Victoria, I can make an estimate of 24 hours with reasonable accuracy, at least for a politician. Jared and Valerie got off the ship at Victoria and may have had dinner there. I really don't know what they did; maybe just walked around to see the sights. Lethia and I stayed aboard the Zaandam, having



Figure 19-58 A departing view of the Sitka area and inlet as our ship headed out to sea.

little interest in a big city, and ate on the boat. We spent the evening relaxing. Figures 19-59 and 19-60 document our stop in Victoria that

evening. Both are rather dark and any detail is difficult to make out but they do verify the stop. The first photo, 19-59 is obviously a late evening scene of the dock and associated city lights. I believe the individual's figure seen in 19-60 is Valerie but I can't make her out for sure. It was raining, as I remember, which added to Lethia's and my decision and required Valerie to obtain an umbrella for protection as seen in the photo.

We were scheduled to dock at our departure point about 6 AM, as I remember. We had to leave our baggage outside our cabin doors that evening to be picked up and assembled for

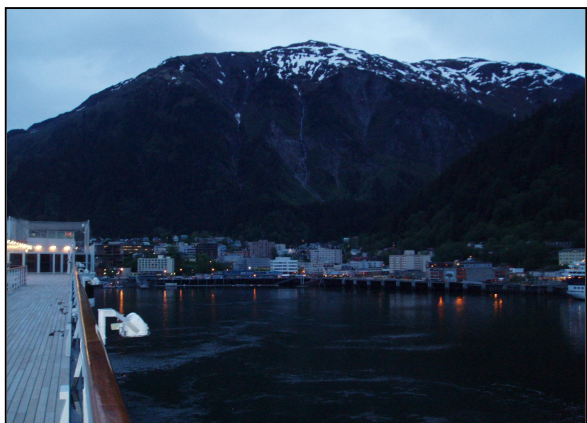


Figure 19-59 The Victoria, Canada dock as Jared and Valerie prepared to disembark.

unloading. For some reason, unknown to me, Valerie packed Jared's suitcase. Being very meticulous as well as thoughtful, she carefully



Figure 19-60 Valerie, I presume, standing at the door waiting for Jared.

packed everything that wasn't being worn at the time. I guess Jared was relaxing without his shoes and, wouldn't you know, Valerie packed them and carefully placed the suitcase outside the cabin door as instructed. When morning

came and Jared began to look for his shoes, it suddenly dawned on Valerie where they were. The suitcase was long gone and consequently Jared disembarked in a shoeless but not a clueless state. As you might suspect, getting his shoes out as soon as he located the suitcase was the first order of business. It wasn't bad to disembark in that state but he wasn't about to make the return flight stocking footed.

Well, the excitement was over now. We stayed at a hotel near the airport because we had an early flight. The rest of the trip was uneventful and soon we were back in Atlanta fighting traffic to get home.

A EUROPEAN FAMILY HISTORY TRIP

Less than a year after our Alaskan cruise, Valerie approached me with the idea of going to Europe to visit some of the areas where our ancestors came from, namely Schwaigern, Germany, northern Denmark and Sweden. It sounded interesting, to say the least, but I was hardly in shape to finance such a trip. Valerie seemed prepared for such a remark and began to explain how she could help Lethia and me with the finances. In spite of my hidden Scottish genes, I'm not one to accept any more financial aid than necessary and her initial remarks fell on deaf ears. However, she isn't easily dissuaded and over a small time frame kept after me to consider such a trip. She insisted she could handle the air fares with the assistance of her accumulated sky miles and would also rent the necessary van for travel throughout Europe. That left Lethia and me with hotel fees, food and memento expenses, which was well within my ability to handle. Thus, we agreed and she began to make the necessary plans. We had all updated our passports with the Alaskan trip and Valerie set about making hotel and air travel reservations, which left little for Lethia and me to do other than make personal preparations.

I might add, at this point, that Valerie's main purpose for such a trip was to gain personal familiarity with the areas of our ancestor's origins so as to be able to write about them more effectively. One of her personal history dreams, I believe, is to write an Obenchain-Isaacson history with more than just names of people and their areas of residence. She wants to be able to include remarks, which would help the reader to better appreciate their life styles, daily trials and maybe some of the unusual experiences they had, if such can be found. I know, from personal experience, that reading

about James William's saw mill in Colorado and the conditions of the times, including travel across the great plains, helped me grow closer to him and his family. As I ran across such discussion in the Larimer County History we found in the county courthouse, his experiences became more real in my mind and he and his wife Mary Shipp were now more than just names in a book. Through my understanding of the restored gospel, I now know I will meet him and Mary on the other side and I look forward to discussing some of those experiences, as well as others they might have had, in more detail. Consequently, Valerie's efforts will be well worth while and knowing her, as I do, the work will be extremely interesting, edifying and well done.

Having been to Germany a few times in my business life, I had looked for the name Abendschön in various phonebooks before. Though I had run across the name therein, I didn't have the courage to call any of them because of my lack of speaking German. I mentioned this to my son Tom in Colorado Springs and remarked that I would like to take the time to look one or more up and see if we couldn't talk about our common ancestry. He remarked; "Why don't you write them some letters ahead of time and then you will know who to visit"? I retorted; "Write who? I don't know any of them, let alone their addresses". That's a dumb thing to say to someone who is up to date in computer savvy and Internet capability. He came back with; "I'll get the addresses and you write the letter". Having no comeback for that, I simply said; "Okay". About a week later, I get a list of roughly 100 Abendschöns via e-mail. I pick 10 that appeared to live in the Schwaigern area, wrote a suitable introductory letter, which Tom translated and sent copies to each of the ten in both English and German. I then sat back and waited for results.

A couple of weeks later, I got an e-mail from Sabina Abendschön who lives in Schwaigern. She is very kind and welcomed such a visit. A few days later, I get a second e-mail from Emil Abendschön, living near Schwaigern. He also welcomed us and said he had about 40 others that would like to meet us. Well, that did it and we decided to spend two full days with them, which Valerie worked into the hotel schedule. About a week later I got a second e-mail from Emil who commented that about 60 people were now involved from their side for the meeting. Needless to say, we were all excited about the get-together. Jared brushed up on his German

while the rest of us thought about our dependence on his abilities and the English abilities of our German hosts.

With the above in mind, we began our trip on June 13, 2007, which should have been a Wednesday if my calculations are correct. As



Figure 19-61 Three of us preparing to board MARTA while Valerie wields camera.

you can see from the photo of figure 19-61, we were all smiles as we prepared to board MARTA. I suppose our reserved countenances



Figure 19-62 The right engine of our 767 as viewed by Jared somewhere in flight.

were due to the realization that we had to lug all of that baggage on board the train. We had elected to leave our cars in the MARTA lot and ride the train into the air terminal at Hartsfield-Jackson. This would minimize baggage handling, make parking easier and reduce parking fees. My Scottish genes had kicked in and I didn't complain about MARTA challenges.

We arrived with plenty of time to spare at the air terminal. The flight was scheduled to leave at 4:30 PM and arrive at Frankfurt at 07:45. That schedule figured the loss of time change of 6 hours and roughly 10 hours flying time, assuming all stayed on schedule. We had no problems on departure and soon found ourselves on schedule flying on a northeasterly arc towards our destination. The photo of figure 19-62 provides the evidence. The seats would have been comfortable for a shorter flight but kept us somewhat cramped for the 10 hours involved. It would have been easier if we could have walked around more but serving carts and passengers heading for the John kept the aisles rather busy and minimized the opportunities.

We arrived in Frankfurt right on schedule, around 8:30 I believe. After getting our



Figure 19-63 Valerie piloting and grandpa navigating somewhere on the autobahn.

baggage, we headed for an ATM machine to get the day's necessary currency in Euros. Next, we found the car rental area and picked up our traveling van, a Mercedes. We would travel in style. Valerie picked it because of the room involved. Our baggage and the four of us just fit in nicely for traveling. Had she left it to me, we would have been traveling in a 4 cylinder Volkswagen with baggage tied on to the roof and any other available space. I would have probably had to get out and push on any significant hills. However, Valerie's generosity was appreciated and we traveled in comfort.

Jared's limited experience with the German language was a godsend in getting out of Frankfurt onto the autobahn heading for Rothenburg, our first stop. I believe he did the actual driving from Frankfurt to Rothenburg and the photo of figure 23-63 was taken somewhere else at a later time. We were all rather bushed

after the flight and anxious to get to our destination, the hotel Garni-Diller in Rothenburg. There we could relax, maybe even sleep a little before dinner and an evening tour of that city.



Figure 19-64 Typical German countryside along the autobahn south of Frankfurt.

Before describing Rothenburg, however, I'll include a couple of photos of the German countryside, which may or may not have been taken as we cruised south along the autobahn. They are shown in figures 19-64 and 19-65. In figure 19-64, notice the farm house with the field and forest. I understand virtually all Germans live in the cities and those who farm simply go to their farms from the city to carry out their necessary activities. The wind turbines for electricity generation in figure 19-65 are very common throughout Germany, Denmark and Sweden, as far as we experienced. I never did find out whether they waved in German, Danish



Figure 19-65 Wind turbines waving hello as we passed them on the autobahn.

or Swedish but I always waved back in English. The response was the same in all cases, a very relaxed motion of the blades as they made their way around in that monotonous circle. We

learned that life went on at a somewhat slower pace than in the US, at least in the smaller towns. The speed of the turbine arms seemed to mimic the activity of the people, which I would have no trouble adapting to.

ROTHENBURG

As we entered Rothenburg, we found the full size Mercedes was a little large to negotiate the



Figure 19-66 The front and main entrance to the hotel Garni-Diller or Diller Schneeballentraum.

narrow streets therein. Never-the-less, Jared did a masterful job in eventually getting us to our hotel, which appears in figure 19-66. The street, clearly visible in the photo, illustrates the typical width we encountered and the cars parked on the sidewalks, a typical practice.

As I remember, there's my escape clause again, we checked in without any trouble because the desk attendant spoke some English. That may have been a requirement for that position, at least from this Amerikaner's viewpoint. Jared moved the Mercedes back to the lot behind the building for both parking and unloading. Our rooms were on the second floor and we had to lug the suitcases up the stairs. I guess they didn't build elevators back in the middle ages. In any case, while doing so, I found I had advanced somewhat beyond middle age but still managed to get Lethia's and my belongings in the room. That effort, coupled with a lack of sleep, prompted me to answer the beckoning call of the room's bed. I knew we had time for that short nap I spoke of earlier. Soon, I was sawing logs and an hour or so later, had to make the difficult decision of sleeping longer or eating dinner. Finally, my need for sustenance won the battle. I got up and the four of us headed out to find a place to eat.

We talked to the desk attendant about a nice place for dinner and followed his directions to a restaurant just a couple of blocks away. I forget the name but you kids with good eye sight might read the name on the side of the building (figure 19-67). If you do and I'm not still around, send me a spiritual e-mail. I would like to know just in case I get back there someday. I don't know whether spirits eat or not but it would be just my luck for the answer to be in the negative. Anyway, we had a good meal and got a forerunner of our trip's eating experiences. The building you can just see the corner of, is an ancient church built around 12 or 13 hundred I do believe. I also remember stepping inside to view the interior but it was typical of others we saw later with little I care to describe. From the church, it was bedie-by, as I remember. Jared may have done a little reconnoitering though I'm not sure. He wasn't one to waste any time just sitting around. He was always on the go, eating, observing, photographing or sleeping if there was time but all had a purpose in his view.

DAY TWO IN ROTHENBURG

We awoke on Thursday, the 15th, definitely refreshed and ready to do some serious sight-seeing. After all, that was the purpose of this stop. We had a wonderful breakfast, which



Figure 19-67 The German restaurant where we enjoyed our first German meal.

proved to be one of many that followed. There were plenty of choices to select from, cereal, breads, meats, cheeses, jams, fruits, etc. to boiled eggs. If one went hungry, it was his or her own fault. You can be sure "yours truly"

didn't go hungry. My only competition was Jared. If I let him beat me to one of my favorite items, I might go without.

We started our day by wandering up to the town square, which is pictured in figure 19-68. This appeared to be the center of town with streets



Figure 19-68 The Rothenburg Town Square, a continuing beehive of activity.

radiating out in every direction. On the street leading to the square from our hotel, there was a little bakery and candy shop that got the girls' attention. I have displayed it in figure 19-69 for the reader's benefit. The narrow streets are



Figure 19-69 The bakery & candy shop that tempted us each time we left the hotel.

evident once again and the quaint nature of the shop with its goodies is also revealed. Though I'll try not to bore the reader with the many photos I have available, I will include those that seem special and minimize duplication of those

provided of the same town in chapter 17, if you can remember back that far.

As mentioned in chapter 17, we only spent part of a day in Rothenburg on that trip and really didn't get to see a lot of the town. On this trip



Figure 19-70 Lethia, Valerie and me thinking about our next strategic move.

we intended to see as much as possible. The photo of figure 19-70 displays three of us in the act of trying to make up our minds about what to do next. Time was of the essence as was our



Figure 19-71 The Marion Apothecke and main street as seen from the town square.

ability to provide the necessary physical effort. One can't be too careful at my age, so I'm told.

The three of us were standing on a main street leading away from the square, to the east I believe. A nice photo of the equivalent street leading to the west is displayed in figure 23-71. I include it because of the neat buildings and the Marion drug store or Apothecke in particular. I find the architecture extremely interesting.

Lethia and Valerie wanted to see the "Little Crooked House", as described in the old nursery

rhyme, which was located in Rothenburg. I included a couple of photos in the earlier chapter but want to add one here, which amplifies the crooked nature of the house. It is shown in figure 19-72. Notice, the left side of the photo is aligned with a building and a tower in the background, which verifies their vertical position. Now, look at the crooked house and how it leans to the left. I don't know that all the items of the poem that were referred to as crooked were, in fact, but it appears the house was factual.

A second photo is included in figure 19-73 with the house in the background and the four of us



Figure 19-72 The "Little Crooked House" of nursery rhyme prominence.

with our little crooked smiles in the foreground. Another tourist, I assume, was kind enough to make the offer of being the shutter bug while we



Figure 19-74 Store fronts & their varied flower boxes along the Schmiedgasse.

all posed in our touristic attire. Could it have been our crooked little wiles rather than our little crooked smiles that gained his attention?

The various activities I describe, may or may not, have occurred in the order I relate them but

who cares, they did occur. As lunch time approached, we wandered back in the vicinity of the town square where most of the restaurants



Figure 19-73 The fabulous four" at the "Little Crooked House" in Rothenburg.

were located. The girls kept wandering into little curio shops that dotted the town while Jared and I looked for historical things to visit. Around



Figure 19-75 Look at how I've grown since I was a kid and I don't mean in girth.

noon, it began to rain and we headed into a nearby café to eat and wait the storm out. After lunch we decided to wander down the street called Schmiedgasse which led to the Siebersturm. I believe those terms could be

translated as Schmied street and Sieber tower respectively. This was a mistake on Jared's and my part because it was lined with little shops of various sorts. We spent a good deal of time in several different shops and even bought a few things. As one would expect, prices were on the high side and particularly so when one translated Euros into dollars. The exchange rate at the time was around \$1.40 per Euro. That's good for those ancestors we left behind but not so good for those of us whose ancestors took the advice to "Go west young man". I realize; that advice came later but my stories aren't in proper sequence either.

As we wandered from shop to shop, we couldn't help but admire the colorful buildings with their

meant my feet but I'm not sure of today's meaning, probably girth. Take your choice.

Jared and I decided to walk down to the Siebersturm and satisfy our bear-like curiosity



Figure 23-76 Dad caught in the rain with the girls shopping in the stores.

while the girls did their thing. We got caught in the rain, as figure 19-76 verifies, and had to take cover from time to time. That's me hiding under the awning. The Siebersturm, in the distance,



Figure 19-77 The inside of the town wall with a view of the Rödertor in the distance.

flowers decorating the windows in various ways. Figure 19-74 is one nice view that Jared



Figure 19-79 A view of the Tauber River bridge, as taken from the wall, I believe.



Figure 19-78 A view of the outside face of the wall as seen from near the Siebersturm

captured with his trusty automatic, his digital camera that is, while 19-75 portrays none other than "Big Tom". When I was young, that term

was a tower guarding that particular gate at one time but the town expanded outside the wall and additional walls were built. Jared got some nice photos of the wall of which I will show 2 or 3 of them so as to negate the need for a description.

Jared made an early morning foray around the town on Friday, I believe, the day we left for the Schwaigern area. Figures 19-77 and 19-78 are