

photos he took at that time even though included here as part of our rainy day. He also got a nice photo of the Tauber River Bridge, which lays on the original road into the city. It was shown from a different perspective in chapter 17. He may have taken this photo from the wall, based on the appearance of its relative elevation. We drove down along the road on Thursday evening, I believe, and took in the adjacent scenery. We also stopped by the building to satisfy our curiosity but left just as curious.

Late Thursday afternoon, we were treated to a parade called the Wanderlung, which celebrated



Figure 19-80 The Wanderlung moving along the Schmiedgasse in Rothenburg.

early German migration through the area. Jared had several nice pictures of different portions of the parade but I'll include just a couple to illustrate its early chronology in German history.



Figure 19-81 Wanderlung participants relaxing in Rothenburg's town square.

Figure 19-80 captures the main body of the parade while figure 19-81 shows some elements of the group relaxing in the town plaza later. The parade also featured people on saddle

horses as well as various other types of wagons. Men and women were also marching alone or behind the wagons. Exactly what they were



Figure 19-82 Three musketeers relaxing on our hotel patio after a day of excitement.

supposed to represent, I never found out other than the toil required by a long day's march.

Late that afternoon, prior to dinner, we relaxed on the patio of our hotel, which was located just outside the rear entrance. It was cool and quiet;



Figure 19-83 Rothenburg Rathaus or town hall basking in the early morning sun.

which fit our needs at the time. A little later, we went to dinner at a restaurant near the town square, as I remember. It had been an enjoyable but somewhat exhausting day for us.

The next morning, Jared bounded out of bed early to get a few morning photos of the town's buildings. One, I particularly liked, was of the Rothenburg Rathaus or town hall, which faced the town square. It is displayed in figure 19-83. It is really quite an impressive building with typical German architecture. Notice the windows decorating the roof in a finely lined pattern, which I presume, means room with their

occupants or materials must lay behind them. The lower left corner of the building can be detected in figure 19-81 as well, which kind of orients the building relative to the square.

Another interesting building of a governmental nature, I suppose, is shown in figure 19-84,



Figure 19-84 Unusual building defining one end of the Rothenburg town square.

which defines the north end of the square, if my orientation is correct. It is interesting in that automated characters depicting Rothenburg's



Figure 19-85 Lethia & I enjoying a little lunch in an outdoor café in Rothenburg.

mayor of former times and a General Tilley, who commanded a Catholic army, appear every hour on the hour to remind the populace of a historic treaty between the two. It seems the army had been sent to the town to enforce the Catholic view regarding religion during the religious wars that engulfed Europe in the 16th century. General Tilley threatened to destroy the town, burn it I believe, while the mayor pleaded for its preservation. An agreement was reached wherein General Tilley agreed to save the town if the mayor could drink a container of beer,

about a gallon in size, without stopping. One might call it the birth of the term “chugalug”. It seems the mayor succeeded and the town was saved. I have no doubt that he was re-elected



Figure 19-86 The Spitalbastei being examined by a recognized military expert.

with the motto “eat, drink and be merry, for the town has been saved”. Anyhow, the mechanical depiction mentioned earlier involved the two

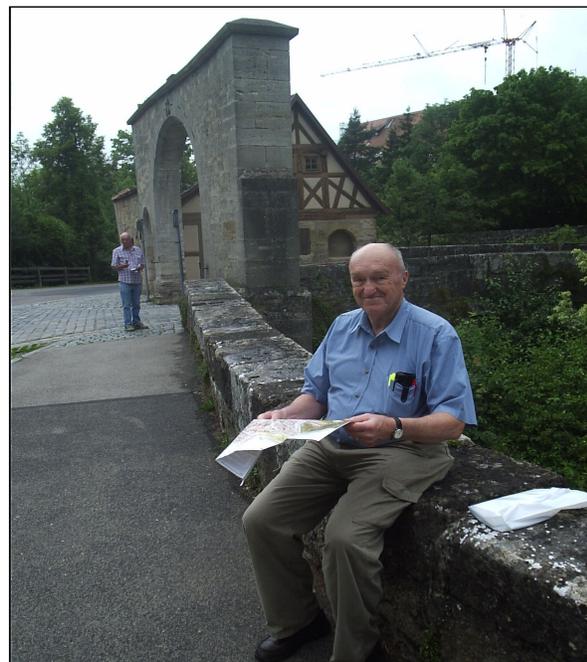


Figure 19-87 The renowned military authority making a careful comparison of Spitalbastei realities to specifications.

windows on either side of the clock. On the left, General Tilley appears with his threat in hand and on the right the mayor appears with his stein of beer. The mayor lifts the stein and quaffs the beer without hesitation, proving once again his impeccable qualifications for political office.

It seems we spent the morning of Friday the 16th in Rothenburg before heading south to Heilbronn to meet the Abendschöns. The distance was short and though I don't remember the exact time we left, I'm confident it was after lunch. You see, Lethia and I ate lunch at a little outdoor café, as shown in figure 23-85, and as you know by now, I seldom make mistakes regarding any kind of meal.

To further attest to some of my other less obvious talents, I have illustrated my



Figure 19-88 The “Kriminal Museum”, which was located right behind our hotel.

examination of the Spitalbastei defenses with a couple of photos in figures 19-86 and 19-87. One of my qualifications for such work was my



Figure 19-89 The old dunking chair for witches, which made it to New England.

age, which some say closely resembles that of the Spitalbastei. As I explained in chapter 17, the Spitalbastei was the original hospital for Rothenburg and initially lay outside the city. The philosophy for such an arrangement lay in the old adage “’Tis better to contaminate an enemy than sicken one’s friend”. Of course, many

considered that adage as somewhat less than compassionate and, at some point in history, the

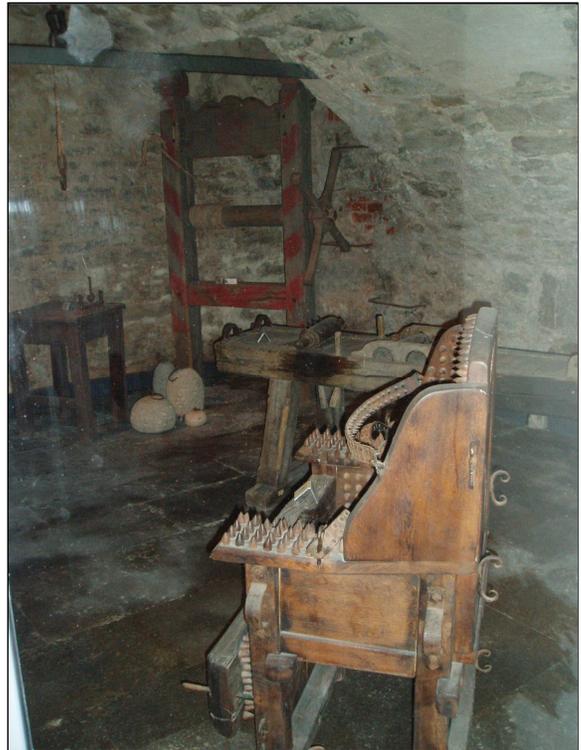


Figure 19-90 A torture chair to which the offender would be strapped for a time.

“do-gooders” of Rothenburg convinced the town fathers to extend the walls of the city to include the hospital. Consequently, the Spitalbastei was



Figure 19-91 Various kinds of masks used to embarrass the unruly of society.

born and eventually became an integral part of the city’s defenses.

However, to illustrate the fact that the “do-gooders” of that day didn’t get the upper hand in Rothenburg with the inclusion of the hospital

within its walls, I will finalize our visit with a few views of just how the city fathers handled criminal matters. You see there was a criminal museum in Rothenburg from which these photos snapped by Jared originated. They are contained in figures 19-89, 19-90 and 19-91.

I can see how these might be used today to control the less cooperative of society. The



Figure 19-92 A typical scene in Heilbronn on a city street near our hotel.

masks of embarrassment might be used for using inappropriate political speech. Yes sir, you make a politically unacceptable remark



Figure 19-93 The "Motley Eight" or group we toured with on Saturday the 16th.

against someone of another faith or ethnicity and you spend a week wearing a pig's mask. Now, the chair would surely have some application in schools. In my day, one who disrupted the class sat in the corner. With this device we could make such a punishment really uncomfortable. Then there's the dunking chair. Single offenders might get one dunk while multiple offenders got several. Boy, one dunk would have dampened my spirit sufficiently,

while my brother Dan would have required several to deflate his extroverted personality. Well, I guess we have made a few gains in treatment of social misfits but I sometimes wonder just where we are headed.

THE ABENDSCHÖN VISIT

HEILBRONN

We were unable to get hotel reservations in Schwaigern and had to settle for the Ringhotel in Heilbronn, about 10 miles to the east. We headed out of Rothenburg for Heilbronn in the early afternoon of Friday the 16th. I don't remember any particular difficulty in finding the hotel. We had to put up with some one-way streets but that was all. Soon we were settled down at the Ringhotel, which was very nice. We spent a little time that evening watching people involved in various forms of exercise from biking to simply walking. The Germans and I believe, most Europeans, lead a more active life style than the average American. First of all, their communities are more densely populated, which leads to buses and walking, as well as biking to and from work. Exercise seems to be a way of life, like it was in the US years ago. The photo in figure 19-92 depicts such activity.

The next morning we had a great but normal continental breakfast before meeting our hosts for the next couple of days. We had a little time to kill and went over to a plaza about a block away while waiting on Emil and his entourage. That is where the photo of figure 19-92 was taken. As we headed back to the hotel we met Emil outside the entrance with Sylvia, his wife, and Christel Kraut and her husband, Eberhard. We have one photo of the eight of us taken later but which I will insert here for introductory purposes as figure 19-93. From left to right we have Emil Abendschön, Christel Kraut, Jared, Yours truly, Lethia, Eberhard Kraut and Sylvia Abendschön. It seems to me that Emil spoke about as much English as I did German. As a result, Jared did most of the talking with him. Christel, on the other hand, is an English teacher and spoke as well or better than the four of us. It didn't appear that Eberhard spoke English very well either but he may just have been a little more reserved. Sylvia also spoke very little English. I suspect Emil brought the Krauts along because of Christel's expertise in English because she wasn't one of my original contacts. In any case, she was a life saver and constantly helped me with translations. Later, as you shall see, she translated for me at the

reunion. I have since received her agreement to help me learn German via e-mail but my effort has been less than sterling in nature.

Emil had a big day programmed for us. His job apparently involved arranging various events for the company he worked for and he did a masterful job for us. Even when I learn German, which I will, I won't be able to express my appreciation for his effort in making our visit both enjoyable and memorable. I feel I owe him much. What a great guy he is.

A SHORT STOP IN SCHWAIGERN

Because of the size of the van Valerie had rented, we decided to all ride in it and eliminate the problem of tracking a second car. It sat the eight of us quite comfortably without the baggage. First he stopped at Schwaigern to show us a couple of old Abendschön homesteads. One was a house still being lived in, which is shown in figure 19-94. If I remember



Figure 19-95 Parking area in front of this house is where our Abendschön ancestors' home was, i.e. Wolfgang Phillip's home.

right, his ancestors had lived in that house. Just a few blocks away he stopped at a parking lot in front of a multiple resident home where he said the original Wolfgang Phillip Abendschön home had been located as far as back 1500 and before, if I understood him correctly. The photo of figure 19-95 displays this scene. This tour of Schwaigern was short, being only an introductory tour and a more inclusive one was planned for the next day.

THE NIEPBERG CASTLE TOUR

The Von Niepberg family ruled the little town of Schwaigern back in the days when our ancestors left the area. They built a castle a few miles away where they lived and from which

they governed, apparently. They were of Austrian heritage and received their commission to rule from Austrian royalty according to Emil.



Figure 19-94 Abendschön house where Emil's ancestors lived over 200 years ago.

Each adult male was expected to provide two days labor for the Niepbergs each week to maintain the properties and care for the fields. This was essentially a method of taxation and quite probably constituted the main reason for the emigration of our forefathers to America. Other reasons probably included religion and the



Figure 19-96 The Niepberg Castle in the distance as we arrived from Schwaigern.

lack of land for expanding family members. Indications of the Niepberg's importance were still around including the Lutheran Church, which will be described later.

We could see the Niepberg Castle in the distance as we approached it by a narrow road. This view is provided in figure 19-96. It wasn't very impressive, to say the least, but it did represent an important part of the history of the region. It had been in disrepair for a number of years but was now gradually being refurbished

under a new owner. The owner, as well as a caretaker and several residents of the property now lived there.

We entered the property through a narrow archway, which is seen in figure 19-97. The



Figure 19-97 The entryway to the Von Niepberg Castle located near Schwaigern.

ancient nature of the walls, roadway and buildings is apparent in the photo. Emil



Figure 19-99 A partially refurbished area of the castle with apartment dwellers.

contacted the caretaker who then conducted the tour of the facility. They are both shown in the photo of figure 19-98. I mentioned other

residents besides the caretaker and owner. The property was being renovated and designed for apartments for residents of the area. The



Figure 19-98 Emil and the caretaker who acted as our tour guide of the property.

process was ongoing with some areas yet to be renovated and others being occupied. One such section is shown in figure 19-99.

The owner's residence was set apart from the apartment area as was the caretaker's. Both,



Figure 19-100 The Von Niepberg Castle owner's residence located on the property.

though renovated, still maintained the old German architecture, which was typical of that time, I guess. The former's residence is shown in figure 19-100. I suspect the owner was relatively wealthy, though we never saw or heard of him the whole time. His residence is rather average looking on the outside but I suspect it is very beautiful on the inside.

Now, let's look at a few remnants of the old castle that quite probably existed when our forefather Samuel Heinrich immigrated to America with his four children, Christianus, Maria Barbara, Reinhold and Maria Elizabeth.

These are shown in figures 19-101, 19-102 and 19-103. They will give you a feel for the original construction and its deterioration over the years.

In addition I have included a photo of an old storage cellar that may have changed little in



Figure 19-101 An old courtyard wall, which undoubtedly has a few stories to tell.

intervening years as well as a renovated cellar area I'll discuss later. The old courtyard wall of figure 19-101 shows signs of at least one



Figure 19-102 A building of apparently original construction or at least well dated.

modification over the years. Is it possible that one of our ancestors helped build the wall or modify it in later years? It may not be probable but it certainly is possible. Like many things in this life, we will have to wait for the hereafter, if we are set on obtaining an answer.

Figure 19-102 is a photo of an old if not original building on the property. One can note the stone slabs used for steps as well as the deteriorated door and window frames. I doubt that the iron railing is original but who knows considering the importance of the Von Niepberg family. Iron was certainly used for many things

and wealth often produced unusual articles. The Von Niepberg wish was the serf's command.

The castle had considerable means of underground storage, which like root cellars of



Figure 19-103 An old underground storage area comparable to pioneer root cellars.

pioneer days in America, delayed food spoilage before the days of refrigeration or even ice boxes. I've had a little experience with both, including eating the types of vegetables that



Figure 19-104 Refurbished underground storage area, which illustrates their size.

kept well under those conditions, namely parsnips and rutabagas, as well as carrots, potatoes and such. They were our staples as we grew up in the thirties. Fast foods were burnt toast or maybe a slice of bread with peanut butter and jelly. We also had plenty of lentil and split pea soup whose ingredients kept well under available conditions. I now hear such foods have all the good stuff we are supposed to be ingesting, like fiber and various anti-oxidants. What we ate with little choice in those days are now the power foods in terms of health, as proven through science. What a case for

proving the old adage “Ignorance is bliss”. Maybe that’s why I’m such a happy go lucky guy. What do you think?

After that little side trip, let’s get back to the root cellars again. One in its deteriorated state is



Figure 19-105 An old section of the stable area, which is yet to be refurbished.

shown in figure 19-103 while the renovated one I spoke of is shown in figure 19-104. The latter one is now used for those loud musical concerts, which seems to be a proper place. My ears hurt

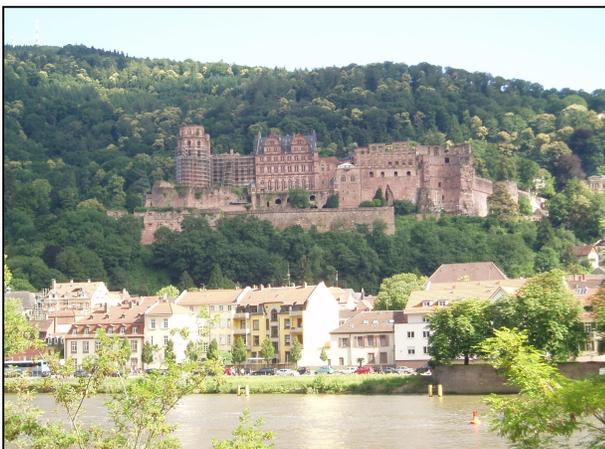


Figure 19-106 The town of Heidelberg with the Heidelberg Castle as a backdrop.

just to think of being trapped down there with all such racket. Besides, with the volume they use, an earthquake or at least a cave in is a likely occurrence. Obviously, I’m not a fan of such musical terror.

There’s little left but the stables to show you in photo form. With the main transportation power source being genuine horses, not just horse power, large stables were the order of the day. The stables proper appear to be half of the castle buildings with only about half of them

renovated for apartment occupancy. I’ll toss in one photo of the un-renovated type for the readers’ appreciation and edification, which is in figure 19-105.

VISITING HEIDELBURG

The next tour that Emil had set up for us was that of Heidelberg and the associated castle.



Figure 19-107 The Heidelberg Bridge over the Rhine River leading into the city.

This might have been a drive of between 30 and 50 miles. Being only a passenger, I can only estimate from the time involved but I suspect it



Figure 19-108 The City Gate leading into Heidelberg on the north side of the Rhine.

was closer to 50. We had to park the van outside of town, in fact, across the River Rhine, as I recall. From the parking lot, we had a nice

view of the town of Heidelberg as well as the castle on a hill behind it. Jared's photo of the two is displayed in figure 19-106. The bridge leading into town was just a short distance from the parking lot. It was a beautiful structure and was full of tourists crossing back and forth. The bridge appears in figure 19-107.

As you can see from the photo, the bridge is rather lengthy and took several minutes to walk



Figure 19-109 Walking down the long narrow street leading to the city square.

across. As we approached the other side, Jared snapped a picture of the town gate, as seen in figure 19-108. It was a little unusual and deserved the recognition of a photo, or so I thought. Lethia and I are clearly visible or at least Lethia is. I believe that is Eberhard Kraut behind me who obscures my rather stalwart frame. His wife, Christel was also wearing a red top, as you will see in a later photo but I don't see her in the picture nor do I see Valerie. I suppose both were back with Jared or maybe further ahead with Emil and Sylvia.

After passing through the gate, we had a rather long walk down a narrow street leading to the town plaza. Figure 19-109 captured this scene. Lethia and I are on the right while Sylvia and Christel are on the left. At the very end of the street, you can see a building, which was a very

nice hotel that had quite a history to it. Like many other things that impressed me at the time, however, knowledge of these historical



Figure 19-110 Valerie & Sylvia appear to be bringing up the rear with me just slightly ahead. Lethia must be obscured by Valerie.

events have long since disappeared. The city church, which I suppose was of Lutheran denomination, was on the left just before you

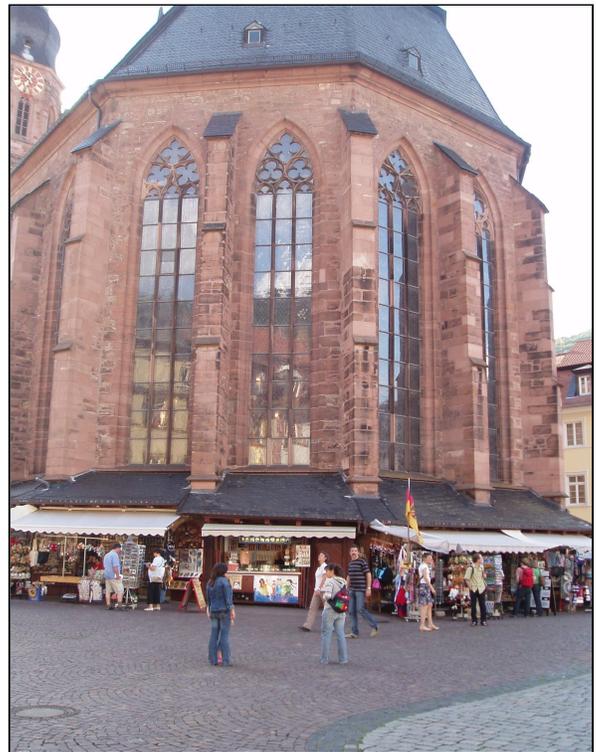


Figure 19-111 The Heidelberg Church.

entered the plaza from the end of the long narrow street previously described. The photo of figure 19-110 displays some of us as we were about to enter the square and the truly observant can see the church on the left casting

its long shadow across the plaza. Figure 19-111 is a photo of that church with its architecture being similar to all of the other churches we visited while in Germany.

At some point in our tour of Heidelberg, our professional guide, whom I'm sure Emil hired,



Figure 19-112 Eberhard and Christel sitting opposite of Lethia and I at the table.

suggested that we take a break before going to the castle because that would be the most strenuous part of the tour. None of us objected and we back-tracked to a little café with several tables and chairs outside on the sidewalk. I was sitting across from Christel though not visible in figure 19-112. It was pleasant and the people passing by simply detoured around the serving area, which was typical of all of those cafés. Soon we were enjoying a choice of several



Figure 19-113 The Heidelberg Rathaus, which faced the town plaza on one side.

beautiful German desserts. I looked for one with less sugar and finally settled on pie, which wasn't too sweet, although sweeter than I. I have never been accused of having a sugary personality as my family will attest to. Lethia

and I sat with Christel and Eberhard because, you'll remember, she was fluent in English. Eberhard didn't say much but I don't know whether it was a lack of English speaking ability or simply a quiet attitude. Lethia and I conversed primarily with Christel because of her ability and, of course, she helped me pick an appropriate dessert.

Soon our guide, who was an English woman, said it was time to go if we wanted to take the cog railroad up to the castle. We could also ride it down if necessary but she recommended walking down a path so as to see the area better and experience the path used by those that dwelled in the castle during the middle ages. She had chosen to live here in Heidelberg several years ago and, I suppose, was now a German citizen. She was a very good tour guide who spoke clearly and obviously knew the



Figure 19-114 The Heidelberg Castle as seen from the Heidelberg town plaza.

history of Heidelberg and the castle. From a tour standpoint, this was definitely the high point of the visit. The two other tours (one yet to come) were fine but could in no way measure up to this lady's ability. We had to make a decision regarding our return from the castle before we left Heidelberg because tickets for the railway were required. After a little discussion, Lethia chose to walk down. I was somewhat concerned because she was having a difficult time then, more so than today even.

The Rathaus faced the square and is displayed in figure 19-113. The photo of figure 19-110 was actually taken as we headed for the railroad but I chose to insert it earlier to fit my story better. The photo of figure 19-114 was taken looking up from the town plaza just before we went to the train station. If you look closely, you can see that the castle still needs repair from the

ravages of time and war as well, I believe. The photo provides an idea of the elevation differences and the reason we rode the cog railway up. The ride to the castle was fun and quick. The railroad was somewhat more modern than the one Esther, the kids and I rode in Switzerland and before we knew it we were getting off at the castle. There was a short walk involved before we entered the castle courtyard and the tour guide was constantly reciting various historical events to fit the scenery. We weren't allowed to take pictures while at the castle because, I suppose, they wanted to sell their own. Had we been able to, you can be sure I would have plenty as provided by Jared, our official photographer.

The tour of the building was interesting but probably not so much as the one of Neuschwanstein in Bavaria. I probably should



Figure 19-115 The Schwaigern Lutheran Church where we attended services.

have bought a little memorabilia to jog my memory at a later date, namely, right now. We departed from the castle out through what appeared to be a rear door or maybe an escape exit, who knows? The path down to Heidelberg, which, I believe, was the original road to and from the castle, was paved with cobblestones. We probably should have anticipated such a surface but really didn't know the origin of the path or road before hand. I suppose the distance was around a mile, maybe a little less

but the cobblestone surface was the big problem. They made the hiker's footing unsure and pressured his or her ankles as one's foot tilted with the rounded surfaces. About half way down, I began to avoid the individual cobblestones as much as possible and walked along the side of the path as much as possible. Lethia eventually took off her shoes so as to have a surer footing and suffered the associated agony of sore feet from the rocks. Boy, were we glad to get back to Heidelberg. Had Lethia known the condition of the path, she would have



Figure 19-116 The courtyard of the restaurant in which the reunion was held.

ridden the train down and I would have accompanied her. Our feet were certainly sore, as were our ankles and we were dog tired.

It was dark by the time we left Heidelberg and we made our way back to Schwaigern and Heilbronn via the same road as before. At Emil's suggestion, we decided to stop and eat dinner at a café he was familiar with, which was about half way back to our hotel. The proprietor and waiters only spoke German but with a little help we managed to get dinner. I believe I ended up with Wiener schnitzel, which became a standby during the trip. It was always good, always available and we knew what we were getting. We then headed back to Heilbronn where Emil picked up his car. It had been a tough day and we were mighty tired; so we headed for bed almost immediately. Tomorrow was Sunday and we would meet Emil and Sylvia in Schwaigern for church and for the major reunion, which would have about 100 people of various names but of Abendschön descent.

THE ABENDSCHÖN SUNDAY REUNION

Morning came right on schedule, German time that is, and we awoke refreshed and ready for

the big day. Emil's tours of yesterday were definitely a hit and we expected this day's activities to be so, as well. After a very nice German breakfast, we headed for Schwaigern, a distance of roughly 10 miles. We drove up to the church and parked in a nearby lot.

At the time, there were few people around the church proper but a good sized group was gathering across the street in a courtyard next to



Figure 19-117 The restaurant where we had lunch and a later gathered for dessert.

what proved to be out reunion facilities. Emil may have pointed the facility out the previous day but if so, it didn't stick with me. Consequently, I and I suppose, Lethia, Valerie



Figure 19-118 More Abendschöns in the room's back whom I didn't meet personally.

and Jared didn't know whether they were part of the Abendschön group or not. The Lutheran Church is displayed in figure 19-115 and the gathering I mentioned in figure 19-116.

It wasn't very long after we arrived that the church services began. Emil and Sylvia came over as we exited the car and told us we should start gathering at the church. I don't remember

meeting anyone prior to the services other than Eberhard and Christel but we may have met Sabina and Günter Abendschön at that point. Sabina was the other person who responded to



Figure 19-118 A group of Abendschöns on the room's right to whom I spoke a little.

my original letter. You'll hear more about them later. In any case, we began to enter the church and, as it turned out, our party constituted the majority of the attendees that morning. We had heard the previous day, from our Heidelberg tour guide I believe, that few Germans attended church because the priests' sermons were of no value to the individual. They spoke of things having little or no application to a person's



Figure 19-119 More Abendschöns with whom I would like have to visited but didn't.

everyday life. Of course, the service was in German and we understood virtually nothing but it was interesting.

This was the very church in which our ancestors worshipped prior to coming to America and was essentially finished in its present form by 1504. Consequently, we may have been sitting where our forefathers sat as they listened to the

sermon being given. Though I have no attachment to the Lutheran Church, per se, the experience was warming and made me feel just a little closer to both Reinhold and Wolfgang. On the right side of the chapel, as one faced the front, were figures of the Von Niepbergs molded into the wall or maybe carved into it. This was one more piece of evidence of their importance in Schwaigern in the 15th century. In general, the interior of the church was similar to all of the churches we entered during our trip.

When the services were finished, we stepped outside the entryway where we received a small refreshment, as I remember, and also a small



Figure 19-120 Sylvia Abendschön and a new grand baby with her son to the right.

stone. There was a basket of stones from which people were taking one; so Lethia followed suit and brought one home with her. I'm not sure



Figure 19-122 More Abendschöns whom I didn't personally meet.

what the significance of the stone was because we couldn't ask, in German that is. It may have been a symbol for Christ as the rock of our salvation or something but the reader's guess is

as good as mine. No one in our crowd elaborated and we didn't ask.

The luncheon gathering was held on the second floor of the building shown in figure 19-117. A



Figure 19-121 Christel and Eberhard Kraut with more of the Abendschön family.

rather steep stairway led from the front entrance to the second floor facility. Therein was a rather large room, which seated the complete group without any severe crowding. There was also a small room towards the front, kind of a staging area, from which the meals were served. I don't



Figure 19-123 Another group of senior Abendschöns seated at the room's front.

recall what we had for lunch but I didn't have much trouble eating it, a talent I developed at an early age and which has been a bit of a curse as my metabolism slows down and my activity level drops off. Jared and Valerie ate at a different table than Lethia and I. Unfortunately, those kinfolk eating at ours spoke very little English and conversation was a bit of a problem. Specifically, Günter Staub and his wife as well as Astrid Kiess, their daughter, and her two children were at our table. Also, I believe both

Friedrieke Krüger and Thomas, her husband, were there but they came to the table later.

Friedrieke had visited with Ginger Riley and her husband from Dallas some years before. She was particularly interested in genealogy and gave a good deal of information about her family



Figure 19-124 Friedrieke Krüger with her husband Thomas & little girl Lea. The next table is Lethia's, mine & others.

background. Astrid spoke a little English and conversed with us quite a bit. Also Günter Staub spoke to us quite a bit. He was about my age and also spoke a little English but his wife, whose first name I don't recall, apparently spoke no English at all, even though she wanted to converse with us. She was a very nice lady and we visited Günter and her in their home in



Figure 19-125 The other end of the table in figure 19-124 with the Krügers.

Pforzheim after returning from Sweden but I'll talk more about that later.

Now, I am including several photos of the various people attending the luncheon, for the record's sake if nothing else. I couldn't visit with most of them because of the language problem

but they deserve to have their photos included. My main regret regarding the reunion was my inability to converse with all that were there. It was even a struggle with those to whom I did speak because of their limited English, except of course, Christel Kraut, the English teacher. Had I been a little more courageous, I might have made a greater effort, not knowing who spoke



Figure 19-126 Lea Krüger, Friedrieke Thomas's daughter; the star of the reunion.

some English or how much. I learned later that Thomas Krüger spoke English rather well and there may have been others, had I been more



Figure 19-127 Sabina & Günter Abendschön & the four wandering minstrels.

daring. They may well have been a little shy as well because they didn't venture towards me.

In figure 19-124, notice the lady to the left of Friedrieke who also appears in figure 23-125 with several others not shown in figure 23-124. I guess Jared recognized that he missed some people and took a second photo. I know we wanted photos of everyone. Also, in figure 23-124, let me refer to Lethia's and my table. To the left of me is Günter Staub with his wife at the

left end of the table. Across from Günter is their daughter Astrid with Valerie by her side. Astrid took a liking to Valerie and invited us all to visit them in Pforzheim, as mentioned earlier, but we'll save the discussion of the visit for that particular event, which took place our last day in Germany.

I couldn't find Sabina Abendschön and her husband Günter in any of the photos of the various tables but fortunately, we do have a good one of the two of them along with the Garfields and the Obenchains. Remember, Sabina was one of the two people who answered my original letter, which I appreciated very much. She was a very cheerful individual as indicated in the photo, which appears in figure 19-127. It was taken later by the newspaper reporter whom I have yet to talk about. Both Sabina and Günter spoke very little English and consequently I was unable to visit with them as much as I would have liked. Notice that Günter looks very much like an Obenchain because of his hair style. In fact, when we were standing together, some of the Abendschöns remarked; "Look, they look just like each other, bald heads and all. There is no question that they are related." Well, that established our pedigree if there was any doubt in one's mind. Maybe he ties into our ancestor Samuel Heinrich's brother in family history. We didn't discuss our genealogy with him or with Sabina.

Let me finish the reunion get-to-gather with a couple of posed photos taken at the back of the room, after lunch was finished. Figure 19-128 displays Valerie and Jared along with Emil and Sylvia Abendschön, while figure 19-129 is of Lethia and I with Christel and Eberhard Kraut.

Just prior to taking the preceding photos, I was asked to make a few remarks to the group as a whole. I didn't know how many of the people present spoke or even understood English. Consequently, in doing so, I asked Christel to translate my remarks into German, as I spoke, so all would understand. This she did and I suppose I spoke 15 or 20 minutes. I recounted what little I knew about Reinhold and his family coming to America in 1749 aboard the good ship Fane. I explained how one son Christianus eventually settled in North Carolina while our forefather Reinhold settled in Pennsylvania. I continued, explaining that his son Phillip moved to Virginia and how some of his succeeding posterity went to Indiana, then Iowa and Kansas, eventually settling in Colorado. I talked a little

about the sawmill great Grandpa James William had and how he eventually ended up in Idaho where I grew up. They seemed very interested and were certainly attentive. The translation process went well and though I can't say exactly what Christel told them, I suspect it followed my story line as close as possible. Little did I know there was a German newspaper reporter in the audience taking in every word. She apparently wrote for a paper in the Schwaigern area. After I



Figure 19-128 Emil and Sylvia Abendschön with Valerie and Jared.

finished, she approached me and asked several questions in perfect English. She wanted to write an article for her local paper regarding the reunion and indicated she would be glad to send me a copy. I don't remember all that we talked about but the conversation was enjoyable and the realization that I would eventually get a copy of the article made it infinitely worthwhile. I will



Figure 19-129 Christel and Eberhard Kraut with Lethia & me after the luncheon.

include the complete article at the end of this chapter for the reader's edification. I might even include the original German version so you can

critique Tom's translation, if you feel so inclined. I had to accept it for what it was purported to be.

She wanted to get a few photos of our group as well as those instrumental in setting up the reunion, so we retired to the outside. There she took the photo appearing in figure 19-130 of the complete group. She also took the photo of figure 19-127 with Sabina and Günter Abendschön. I'm not sure just why she didn't take one with Emil and Sylvia because he did all



Figure 19-130 A group photo outside the building in the adjoining courtyard.

of the work but I'm grateful for that with Sabina and Günter, it being the only one I have of them, at least separate from the group as a whole. I



Figure 19-131 A Schwaigern house of historical importance.

never found out whether she, the reporter, came to the reunion on her own or whether Emil had a hand in it. He arranged everything else so perfectly, I suspect he contacted the paper as well. Now let's move on to figure 19-130.

In figure 19-130, Emil can be picked out on the extreme right with me on the extreme left. Next to Emil are Sabina and Günter again. In the

center I see Friedrieke and Thomas with little Lea. The two children to the left of Friedrieke are Astrid's children and I believe the lady



Figure 19-132 Another historical house.

bending over between them is Astrid. Just to the left of the boy and the individual in the black shirt, is Mrs. Staub, Astrid's mother.

After the reporter finished with us, Emil brought in a tour guide, a German lady who spoke only German. Consequently, her discussion of various Schwaigern historical remnants fell on



Figure 19-133 The best preserved portion of the old city wall surrounding it.

deaf ears, among us foreigners. Actually, that's not quite true because Jared understood a little of what was going on and I had a nice young man, whose name I wish I could remember, who volunteered to translate for me. Thus, we wandered along behind the group where he explained things somewhat. At first, he translated while in earshot of the guide but she didn't like it and let him know it. She was really caught up in her own interests and seemed to care little for what we Americans learned. That incident took place in the church, which she had

us revisit. After learning our lesson, we held back where she couldn't hear us.

I'm going to use a couple of photos from her tour, as well as some from the Internet, which I obtained earlier for a little talk I gave at an earlier family reunion. Together they should give the reader a good idea of the Schwaigern historical sights

Figures 19-131 and 19-132 are simply old buildings of historical importance. I don't remember the particular reasons, if I ever knew



Figure 19-134 Emil and I standing in the shade and viewing the old city wall.

but they do provide an idea of the older architecture existing in Schwaigern. The photo of figure 19-133 illustrates the best preserved section of the old city wall. I'm not sure why I'm in it or why I have such a frown on my face as I peer around towards the camera. I must have been tired or still fuming over the tour guide's chastisement. Anyhow, it proves I was there.

As we moved along the wall, we came to a nice building, which utilized part of the wall in its structure, as seen in figure 19-134. If the tour guide explained why, I missed it. Maybe I wasn't with my translator at that time.

From this area we moved on to the Hexenturm or witches' tower. Figure 19-135 illustrates our approach to it with the group. It seems that a gal was guilty of being a witch if a few towns'

people suspected her. Such a woman was basically forced to admit her guilt and had little way out as I understand it. I don't know how



Figure 19-135 The Abendschön group approaching the Hexenturm on Sunday.

severe the New England carryover of this antiquated law was but obviously, our early settlers operated under similar distorted ideas.



Figure 19-136 The inside of the Hexenturm.

It's hard to see how civilized people could be so ignorant and biased as well as cruel. I guess we have advanced a little in our administration of civil rights since that time but could we ever return? Who knows, as our political views swing to the left and we forget individual rights?

Figure 19-136 provides a view of the inside of the Hexenturm. There was nothing but a dirt floor that I could see. The wall was high enough that it is doubtful a woman could climb out even



Figure 19-137 The Storchen Nest, which is a beautiful example of early architecture.

if she had the opportunity. As I understand it, the “suspected witch” was kept in the Hexenturm until her trial after which she received her



Figure 19-138 Schwaigern in the distance. The wine country of Württemberg.

punishment if found guilty. I would imagine the same types of devices were used in Schwaigern as were used in Rothenburg to capture the

witch. She was considered dangerous and could possibly cast a spell upon those who apprehended her if they touched her.

As it turned out, the restaurant where we had our reunion was also a historical building according to the Internet information. It was known as the Gasthaus or guest house. The photo of figure 19-117 is better than the Internet picture, so the reader can take a quick peek at it. Another building I thought was interesting was the Storchen Nest or Stork’s Nest. I obtained a photo from the Internet and have displayed it as figure 19-137.

I’ll close out our Schwaigern visit with two photos. The first is simply a photo of the town of Schwaigern from a distance, which gives the



Figure 19-139 A typical grape vineyard in the area situated around Schwaigern.

reader an idea of its relatively small size. It is displayed in figure 19-138. The second is a grape vineyard and is displayed in figure 19-139. The Schwaigern area is the wine capital of Germany, apparently and it seems appropriate to honor that particular economic activity.

A VISIT TO TITSEEE

Late Sunday afternoon we bid goodbye to all those we had formed lasting friendships with as well as the group as a whole. In my own view, I will never be able to thank Emil enough for his tremendous work in setting up the reunion. We felt as close to these European members of our family as we did to those more immediate members or descendants of James and Lydia. It had become quite evident to me that these individuals who had gone out of their way to welcome strangers from the US in such a friendly manner were, indeed, long lost cousins, due to our forefather’s departure from Europe. I thought, as we drove out of Schwaigern, just

how terrible WW War II was with relatives fighting relatives. I began to understand more clearly how war of any kind is just as terrible because, on a broader scale, we are all sons and daughters of a loving heavenly father. Surely we lived in peace in the pre-mortal existence in the presence of our heavenly parents. Now we struggle for such a condition because of individual weaknesses and the influence of that enemy of all righteousness, even Satan. Truly, the visit of the last two days had been an eye-opener as well as a most wonderful experience. I left Schwaigern with a sincere wish for God's blessings on all those we had been privileged to meet and converse with.

HOHENZOLLERN CASTLE

I reviewed our experience at Hohenzollern Castle in 1986 with considerable detail in chapter 17 and will try to be brief here, although



Figure 19-141 The front gate of the castle with Lethia and me on our way in.

that's difficult for me. I'll mainly cover the changes that I became aware of and include a few pertinent photos. Having explained the earlier experience to Valerie and Jared, they were eager to see it and Jared particularly so. Jared took a beautiful photo of the castle in silhouette from the plain below the hill on which it sits. It appears in figure 19-140.

When we arrived at the base of the hill, much to my surprise, a road now led up to the castle.

You may remember from chapter 17 that Tom and I had to hike up to the castle while Esther and Celeste waited down below. This change



Figure 19-140 The Hohenzollern Castle sitting on a hill overlooking the adjacent countryside.

was great because we could all visit the castle now. We drove up the hill and stopped in a parking lot near the front making a long walk unnecessary. There was a little desk or table just outside the front gate where people could buy the necessary tickets to enter the grounds. Lethia and I purchased our tickets and headed for the gate as illustrated in the photo of figure 19-141. Soon the four of us were headed into

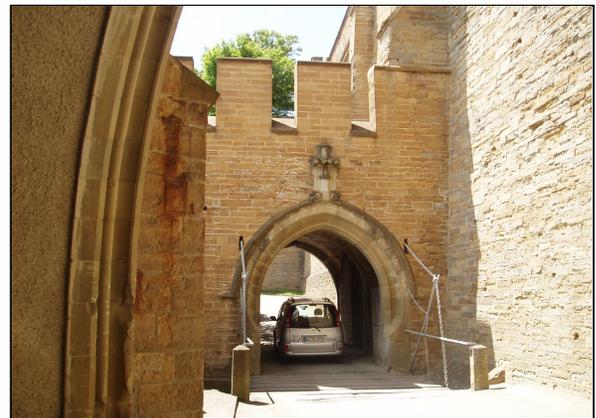


Figure 19-142 The second gate on the road up to the castle with its drawbridge.

the grounds. We hadn't gone far before we found ourselves approaching a second gate and drawbridge. I guess this was like a second line of defense in the middle ages. Whatever its purpose, the gate and drawbridge are displayed in figure 19-142 along with a car leaving the castle. Only a privileged few, castle staff and family members were allowed to drive up to the courtyard where they could park.

After passing through the second gate, there was a rather long and tortuous walk for the underprivileged up a path or road leading to the castle courtyard. The road led through a tunnel, as well as simply traversing a hill of considerable size. Even so, before long we had the courtyard entrance in view, as seen in figure 19-143 and



Figure 19-143 We finally had the courtyard in our sights as we struggled up the hill.

eventually entered the same. There we were treated to a stone paved area of a size similar to that of the Heidelberg castle. We relaxed near the entrance to rest our weary bodies before moving into the yard proper. Our initial view of the courtyard is displayed in figure 19-144. As we relaxed in the little grassy area just



Figure 19-145 A view of the surrounding countryside from near our relaxation spot.

described, we had a beautiful view of the surrounding countryside as displayed in the example of figure 19-145.

Jared captured several different views of the various features of the castle, its exterior as well as a few more shots of the surrounding countryside. One of the more panoramic views

of the countryside lying around the castle hill is that shown in figure 19-146.

As one would suspect, the courtyard was lined with little shops selling various types of curios for



Figure 19-144 Looking into the castle courtyard from our spot of relaxation.

the inquiring tourists. They included everything from T-shirts through images and pencils to photos and information regarding the castle.



Figure 19-146 A panoramic view of the countryside surrounding the castle.

Fortunately, Lethia had little desire to procure such things and I had already purchased the information and photos I thought pertinent on the

previous trip. Thus, we proved to be less than profitable visitors of the complex.

We spent the first part of our visit in examining the exterior features of the castle as well as the many different facilities it included. As we circled the grounds we were somewhat enamored with the various towers and associated parapets. Likewise, the castle



Figure 19-147 In typical tourist fashion, Valerie examines the church's exterior.

church or cathedral like building caught our attention. Though the church wasn't really a cathedral, having no cathedra or bishop as far as I know, it none-the-less reminded one of the larger buildings of that type that we saw during the trip. Figure 19-147 displays the church with Valerie looking on and, I suppose, admiring its beauty. Unfortunately, we couldn't or at least didn't go inside and see the interior but judging from the exterior, I could probably describe it because of the several others we had visited.

After examining the exterior of the castle to our heart's content, we decided to tour the interior for an extra fee. Those of my readers who had the distinct pleasure of engaging this somewhat demented Scottish personality will certainly understand the enormity of such a singular expenditure in my eyes. Even so, I sacrificed for the good of the whole, which trait is also out of

character for me and we purchased the necessary tickets. Figure 19-148 is a photo of the castle entrance through which we entered.



Figure 19-148 Our point of entry; as we toured the interior of the castle.

As we made our entrance, we were reminded of the policy of no photographing of the castle's interior. This policy, I feel sure, was designed to stimulate business in the shops around the castle's courtyard. It may well have been the source of our present group of politicians' policy for stimulating the economy and I, like those receiving stimulant funds, simply withheld my few bucks to spend the way I would anyway. It appears they, the politicians, think that government spending motivates the producers of this economy to buy now and pay later through excessive taxation. We might also phrase that as stimulating the non-producers to purchase goods with their free bounty and thus motivate the producers to produce more while donating the funds for purchase of their goods through taxation. Oh, the wisdom of our budding socialistic economy. I'll bet you, the readers, are still trying to figure out just how I, the story teller, moved to socialism from the Hohenzollern Castle. Actually, it's just one of my many talents, which I choose to display in this marvelous work of mine. It is meant to wake the reader up from time to time as he or she

dozes off due to the rhythmic repetition of my marvelous ability in telling stories. I learned that as a kid, you know, for self protection.

Now back to the photo of the castle entrance. I can't recall the complete layout of the interior but I vaguely remember moving along an entryway from the doors themselves into a small room, which I think contained the Hohenzollern Coat of Arms painted on the wall. From there we moved into a big reception room designed, I believe, for entertainment of the royal guests. Jared, quite conveniently, forgot the aforementioned policy of no photographing, before they quickly reminded

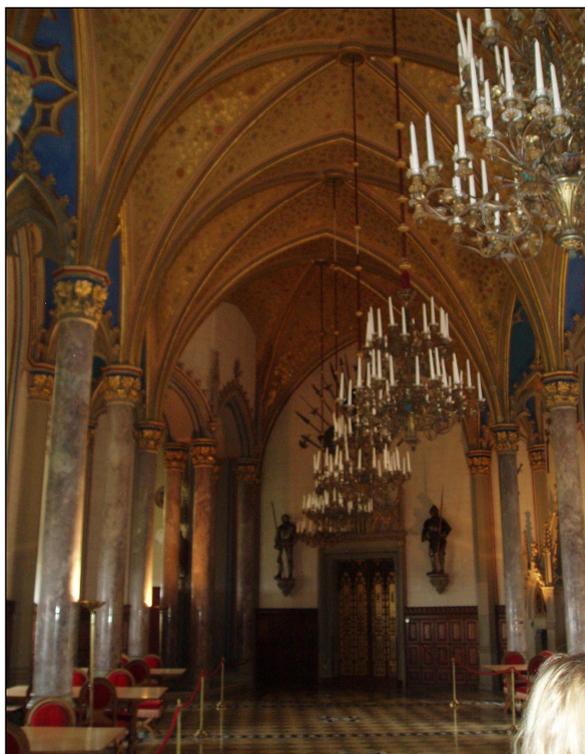


Figure 19-149 The great reception hall for entertainment of visiting royal guests.

the group, once again for those who couldn't read or hear or chose to simply ignore that, which had been clearly communicated. Of course, I am quite grateful for his action, even though it was in violation of said policy, because he produced the photo of figure 19-149, picturing the great hall previously mentioned. Notice the candelabras stretching along the room. Obviously, these were meant to preserve the original atmosphere because the castle had been rebuilt several times including this more modern recent version after the advent of electricity. The tour guide explained a little history of the Hohenzollern family and its origin

in the Prussian aristocracy, I believe, as well as that of some of the artifacts gracing the rooms.

From this great entertainment hall, we moved through several other rooms of smaller size, which obviously made little impression on the interior mass residing in this aging cranium. The castle tour was okay but not great, which fit the nominal price we paid. It was rather short and much of the castle was left outside the tour area because, I suppose, some of the family either lived there currently or used the facilities when they were visiting the castle.

I thought to myself, "What a great place to hold an Abendschön reunion". The great hall would accommodate the group that regularly meets in Idaho every two years as well as our German cousins, whom I am confident, would fit in fine with us American misfits. We all probably stem from Samuel Heinrich's generation but, of course, those who stayed in Europe didn't



Figure 19-150 The three Hohenzollern musketeers contemplating our next move.

undergo the trauma of the American west. As our ancestors, down through James and Lydia, trudged along the frontier environment, certain traumatic experiences they had to have undergone, explains the warped personalities and misfit sociological characteristics we all so enjoy in each other.

As a result, they might wonder about our antics a little but I'm confident we would have a great time together. Of course, the cost of procuring the facilities from the Hohenzollern family might tax our resources a little but I'm confident some of our more affluent members wouldn't mind donating the necessary funds. After all, such forced donations would fit in well with the socialist agenda our politicians are now



Figure 19-151 Titisee hotel, Gasthaus Sonnenmatte, was in a beautiful setting.

pursuing. By the way, I would volunteer to light the candles if someone like Dan would agree to put them out at the reunion's conclusion.

Well, after coming out in the German sunshine and back to reality, I agreed with the others that we should move on to Titisee where our accommodations would be for the night. This



Figure 19-153 Lethia & me enjoying a leisurely breakfast at our Gasthaus.

momentous decision was made in the castle's courtyard, as you can see from figure 19-150. It is similar in nature and importance to that decision made with Japan on the Battleship Missouri after WW II, though some may say

such a statement is fabricated. However, its source alone should lend some credence to the claim. Consequently, we returned to our van, climbed in and headed for Titisee.

ON TO TITISEE

Our hotel reservations in Titisee were different than those we had for our previous trip. The



Figure 19-152 Another view of the area immediately around our hotel.

hotel facilities Valerie managed to get were at the Gasthaus Sonnenmatte, which was located



Figure 19-154 A family's private worship center, which is typical in the Black Forest.

in an area away from our 1986 stay. They were nice, however but we had little time to enjoy a fabulous meal like our previous trip. We arrived

quite late, having spent a little too much time at the Hohenzollern Castle but what the heck, it was worth it.

We arrived in the Titisee area after dark and had some difficulty finding our hotel. Also, we were all tired and crashed immediately after grabbing a bite to eat. I don't remember anything about the meal, so it must have been a ho-hum one but it sufficed. I do remember having a good breakfast the next morning, which like all breakfasts, came with the price of the room. The Gasthaus was located in a beautiful little



Figure 19-155 Our bed and breakfast hotel, the Idelweiss, located in Ober Gau

area. We drove around a little to enjoy it before departing for Oberammergau, our next stop. Figure 19-151 displays our gasthaus as well as an idea of the beautiful countryside. The photo



Figure 19-156 A view looking down the street from our hotel the Gasthaus Idelweiß.

of figure 19-152 adds to my testimony of figure 19-151 while figure 19-153 testifies of my appetite, which always revs up at the sight of a German breakfast. This scene of figure 19-152 was near our hotel but off to one side. The little

town of Titisee was also nearby but we only stopped there for gas, as I remember and departed for Oberammergau. On the way out of the area we came across a little private church apparently owned by a farmer on whose land it was located. Whether it is now used much, I have no idea but it seemed in good repair. Europeans in general, it seems, aren't interested in the religious side of life, though I can't speak for that specific farmer or any other individual.

ON TO OBERAMMERGAU

Esther, Celeste, Tom and I had really enjoyed Oberammergau and the many depictions of fairy tales on the houses as well as the overall architecture of the town. Consequently, I wanted Lethia to see it, as well. Both Jared and Valerie were also game for it. They had been there while in the service, I believe and we went through the area when I toured with them in the early 80s. Even so, we saw much more with the time we had than we did when Esther, Celeste, Tom and I visited after his mission. We would visit many of the same sights and consequently, I'll insert fewer photos than otherwise because many similar ones appear in chapter 17.

We had the whole day Monday, June 17th to get to our hotel in Ober Gau, located a little south of Oberammergau, our real objective. Valerie had to take a bed and breakfast there because none were available in Oberammergau. It turned out fine because Ober Gau and our gasthaus, the Gasthaus Idelweiss were beautiful as well as comfortable and we had no misgivings of any kind. The lady running our gasthaus was probably in her sixties, as I remember, and was very pleasant. Jared spoke with her quite a lot and obviously did well enough with his German that she seemed to enjoy it. A photo of our gasthaus is shown in figure 23-155. Notice our van parked next to it. What a blessing that big van had turned out to be. It provided all of the room we needed for baggage and the four of us. If it had any drawbacks, it was fuel consumption and the negotiation of the narrow streets in Rothenberg. To give you a little better idea of the surrounding area, I'm including the photo of figure 23-156, a view looking down the street in front of the Gasthaus Idelweiss. Notice the letter β at the end of the word Idelweiß. It represents the double ss I have been using earlier and is commonly used in German grammar. Since it is also found in the name of the gasthaus, it seemed appropriate to use it a little and provide the uninitiated with an explanation.

THE TOWN OF OBERAMMERGAU

We returned to Oberammergau from Ober Gau to spend the late afternoon and evening after we checked in at the Gasthaus Idelweiß. Lethia and Valerie wanted to spend some time just



Figure 19-157 Oberammergau's main street in the business district is wide.

wandering around, looking at the sights and, of course, doing a little shopping. It is a unique town, even by German standards and one can enjoy visiting it time and time again. Jared took numerous photos, as usual, some of which I will



Figure 19-159 The Rotkappchen Haus, depicting "Little Red Riding Hood" scenes.

include in this little dissertation. In general, his photos appear better than those we got in 1986, which may be due to today's technology. Jared may take issue with that statement.

After entering Oberammergau, we decided to tour the city a little for familiarity purposes and then walk around the business district. The streets were considerably wider than those of Rothenberg, although they varied considerably. In some places the buildings crowded the space available for streets and sidewalks. In others,

there seemed to be plenty of room. I suspect a good deal of modernization had taken place because this was definitely a tourist town. First of all, it is in a beautiful area and can attract



Figure 19-158 A more typical street in the Oberammergau's business district.

people for relaxation purposes. It may also benefit from the skiers and other winter sports events but the big event, it appears, is the passion play.

Each year they memorialize the week leading up to the crucifixion of Christ through a dramatic representation of the scenes connected with his passion and crucifixion. Passion Sunday, the fifth Sunday of Lent as I understand it,



Figure 19-160 A sidewalk café where we stopped to eat and rest our weary bones.

concludes the week. The passion play attracts people from all over Europe and maybe America as well. Anyhow, the business community has taken advantage of the occasion and many stores sell various figurines, which pertain to that week, depicting, I suppose, various events contained therein. I mention this because of some following photos.

I'll begin our tour with two street scenes, which typify those we experienced throughout the day. They are illustrated shown in figures 19-157 and 19-158. The latter one is more typical but the main street, which actually has some other name, winds through the heart of the business



Figure 19-161 A beautifully decorated store in the Oberammergau business area.

district and narrows somewhat after entering the residential area. As we continued around the city in our van, we came across the Rotkappchen Haus, as seen in figure 19-159. We also saw and photographed this particular home in 1986 but I decided to repeat it. It's an



Figure 19-163 Two nice businesses with a little plaza and a mountain backdrop.

excellent picture taken from a little different angle than the one in chapter 17. It reminds one of the "Crooked Little House" we saw in Rothenberg. I believe the latter story of the two originated in Rothenberg but I have no idea of the origin of "Little Red riding Hood". If it happens to be Oberammergau, I can understand the existence of this house therein but if not, the reason for such decoration is a

mystery to me. Maybe it adds to the quaint flavor tourists like about the town, including me.

After our motor tour of the city, we parked the van and spent quite a bit of time just walking



Figure 19-162 The beautiful storefront of a business in the sale of religious items.

around. We had lunch or maybe an early dinner at a sidewalk café as shown in figure 23-160. I don't remember the timing but I do remember



Figure 19-164 Valerie and Lethia exiting a store and apparently heading for another.

the incident, naturally. It was interspersed with much of our sight-seeing, which led to the comment in the figure's caption.

Now, let's move on to some of the store fronts we encountered in our sashay around the business district. One of the larger and fancier store fronts is shown in figure 19-161. I'm not sure what all their various types of articles were; nor can I interpret the symbolic drawings on the front. Though they may have sold some items, pertaining to religious worship, they wouldn't have been their main line, as with several other stores we saw.