

We kind of separated and spread out during our walk around town but frequently came together to compare notes. Valerie and Lethia stayed together a lot, because of their somewhat similar interests while Jared and I spent more time together. However, Jared was obsessed with



**Figure 19-165 Valerie hurrying along to another store to see what she can find.**

photography and I would often wander off as he looked for a particular shot. Figure 23-162 is the front of a store, which was definitely in the



**Figure 19-166 A colorful business front decorating a restaurant of our choice.**

business of selling religious items, while the photo of figure 19-163 provides a view of a couple of nice stores with a mountain backdrop.

A couple of times, Jared managed to get photos of the girls as they busily moved from store to store. I think they did more looking than buying. At least that's Lethia's modus operandi and I don't remember her loading up the car with goodies. However, they did buy a few things as the photo of figure 19-164 verifies. Jared caught her on the hunt in the photo of figure 19-165, which to me, looks like the side of the store

shown in figure 19-164. If so, Lethia either beat her in or followed some time later.

We had dinner in Oberammergau at least once and maybe twice. The first night we ate there, I feel sure and I believe we did also after our tour of the castles the next day. I remember the restaurant located in the building displayed in figure 19-166. Jared makes no reference to it, dinner I mean but I never forget an opportunity to eat. I may not remember what I ate or even



**Figure 19-167 A beautiful hotel which graced Oberammergau's business district.**

how much it cost but I will remember the incident, you can be sure.

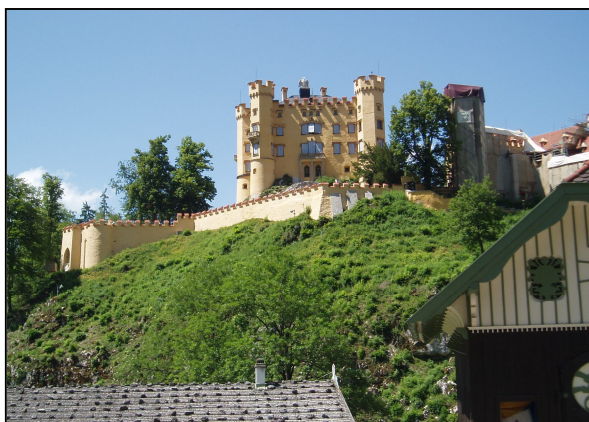
Well, I have about three more photos of the Oberammergau area I think are worth including and then we'll move on to our tour of the castles. Actually, I believe two will do it after Valerie's last shopping scene. So next in line is the photo of the restaurant in figure 19-166, which I have already described. After the restaurant, I will include a photo of a nice looking hotel located in the heart of Oberammergau. It would have been a nice place to stay but I suspect it was out of our price range even if there were rooms available. Besides, we really enjoyed the friendly reception we received from the lady in Ober Gau at the Gasthaus Idelweiß. She not only served a good breakfast with plenty of variety but the rooms were nice and the beds comfortable. One can't beat that when the price is right, even if he has Scottish ancestry. The hotel whose appearance impressed me is shown in the photo of Figure 19-167.

If it weren't for the tourist atmosphere that permeates Oberammergau, it would be a nice place to live. There aren't many places in this world as beautiful, which, of course, includes the surrounding countryside. However, if it weren't

for the tourists, I feel sure the little town wouldn't be thriving, as it appears to be. I guess one can't have their cake and eat it to, as my mother used to say as she repeated that old adage on a somewhat regular basis.

### NEUSCHWANSTEIN

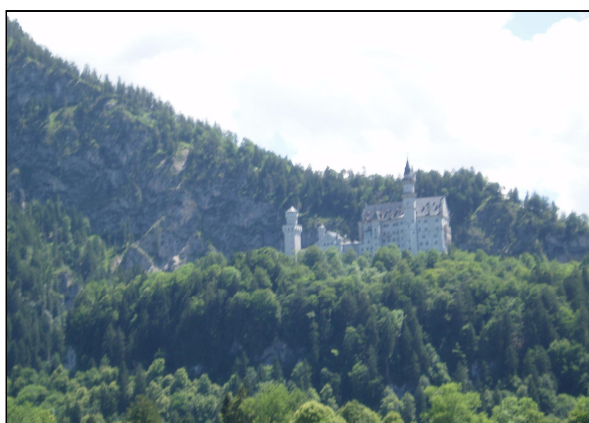
The morning after arriving in Ober Gau, we began a tour of King Ludwig's castles. I won't bore you with any more of his crazy antics or



**Figure 19-168 Castle Hohenschwangau as seen from the parking area.**

peculiarities because they were pretty well described in chapter 17. I will, however, briefly describe this particular trip, which was somewhat of a repeat of our 1986 trip, so as to include Lethia and my experiences this trip.

After breakfast, we headed directly to Ludwig's fairy tale castle, Neuschwanstein, to beat the crowd and minimize the wait that was sure to



**Figure 19-169 Castle Neuschwanstein as seen from the parking area.**

occur. We arrived at the parking lot just below the castle Ludwig was born and raised in. As mentioned in chapter 17, it is known as

Hohenschwangau and has quite a history in and of itself. One can look up on the hill opposite Hohenschwangau and see the spires of Neuschwanstein peeking above the trees. The whole area had changed from our first visit and was now much more commercial in nature. We now bought our tickets for the tour at a shop or sales booth at the bottom of the hill rather than at the castle, as in 1986. We also had the option of riding a bus to Neuschwanstein or the horse drawn buggies, the former of which was an add-on since 1986. You may remember Esther and Celeste rode in the buggies that first trip while Tom and I walked. Walking was still an option but it was a warm day and we elected to ride the air conditioned bus.

Jared snapped a few photos of both castles from the parking and tourist area, which I will include as figures 19-168 and 19-169. The older castle, Hohenschwangau, is now under renovation and appears as in 19-168. The renovation to date is



**Figure 19-170 The Alpsee as seen from a window of the Castle Neuschwanstein.**

obvious if you compare it with that in chapter 17. Our tickets for both bus and tour had designated times attached, so we decided to eat lunch while waiting. After lunch Jared drove us to the bus stop because of the heat and hill climb involved but had to park the van down near the restaurant and walk back to the bus stop. I know Lethia appreciated that and may have elected to forget the tour if he hadn't. As it turned out, she had a good hike ahead of her that neither she nor I were aware of.

At our designated time, we boarded the bus and relaxed as the driver made his way up the hill. I don't know what Lethia envisioned in terms of a hike from bus to the castle but I assumed it would be short. I knew where the horse drawn buggies stopped and I expected a shorter walk.



Well, so much for assumptions. Though I had been warned many times of such mental mistakes, I was once more entrapped. The bus parking area at the top was not only further away but also entailed a rather significant uphill climb. By the time we arrived at the castle gate, Lethia was pooped, so to speak and the rest of us weren't far behind. Though air conditioned, the buses had been a mistake because we passed the buggy lot about half way to the gate.

We had to wait a while once again, after arriving at the castle gate but soon we were on our way. The initial climb up to the level of the main castle living areas was formidable and we had to take it



**Figure 19-171 The Marienbrücke Bridge as seen from a castle window.**

slow. This was the same challenge Esther had in 1986 and the conquering of which she was so pleased with. However, Lethia made it just fine and soon we were viewing the various rooms. Photos of the castle interior were forbidden, as at Hohenzollern but one could take photos of scenic views outside. Jared, in his usual hunt for beautiful shots, managed several of which I will display two, namely the Alpsee or Alp lake in figure 19-170 and the bridge spanning the gorge in figure 19-171. A similar photo in chapter 17 reverses the scene and was taken from the bottom of the gorge with the castle in the

background. The reader will have to review chapter 17 to see it and various interior photos as well as additional striking exterior ones. We



**Figure 19-172 The Wieskirche as we approached it from the parking area.**

purchased the interior photos at that time because Celeste wasn't allowed to snap any on our trip, either.

As I remember, we toured the kitchen of Neuschwanstein before climbing up to the main living area whereas we had done that last in 1986. Having discussed its marvelous heating engineering for the castle at that time, as well as the cooking features, I will forgo any repeat. Besides, our tour guide wasn't near as good this time as the one we drew in 1986, at least in my



**Figure 19-173 A photo of the ceiling above the High Altar at the front of the Wieskirche.**

opinion. We saw the same sights but the explanation was lacking. Even so, the others seemed to enjoy the tour and the sights we saw were still eye popping. Also, the rooms of the living area were essentially on the same level, minimizing the physical effort required. I'm sure Lethia enjoyed that aspect of the tour but I



wonder if she thought it was worth the climb. From later comments she made, I would say no.

The tour probably took an hour or so, though I didn't time it, and before long we were outside and moving down to the bus stop. Though the



**Figure 19-174** The Wieskirche chapel area with the High Altar in the background.

walking distance between castle and bus remained the same; the downhill trek was much easier, to say the least. Lethia remarked to me, that had she known just what she was getting into; she would probably never have taken the tour. However, she did enjoy it and I believe, was happy to have had the experience, at least in hindsight.

#### THE WIESKIRCHE

From the Neuschwanstein area we headed north and then east along a road that went by the Wieskirche, a beautiful church discussed in chapter 17, as well. Once again, the reader can review that chapter for details. I'll only include a few photos taken by Jared, which one can compare to those professional ones therein.

Figure 19-172 displays the exterior of the church and provides a glimpse of the setting it resides in. Obviously, the cows don't care about those who worship there and, it seems, whoever does so engage doesn't mind the proximity of such

beasts either. The area isn't heavily populated or, at least, I only saw a few small towns around it and, I suspect, people travel a significant



**Figure 19-175** A view of the countryside around Schloss Linderhof in June of 2007.

distance for the services. There was a service in progress when we arrived but it dispersed



**Figure 19-176** Fountain during activity with the associated area as a backdrop.

soon thereafter, which allowed Jared to do the photographing he wanted to.

Figure 19-173 is a photo of the ceiling above the High Altar, which is situated at the front of the church or the opposite end of the entrance. I



didn't show that photo in chapter 17 and I suppose I didn't have one. He also got a nice picture of the chapel area, which is displayed in figure 19-174. The High Altar appears at the far end of that photo and it differs from a similar one in chapter 17 primarily by the presence of tourists enjoying the beautiful art work.

I was glad that Lethia was able to see the interior because I had told her about it, having experienced it with Valerie and Jared back in



**Figure 19-177** The fountain area from the front porch of Schloss Linderhof.

1978 or so. You may remember that Celeste, Esther and Tom were only able to see the



**Figure 19-178** Schloss Linderhof from a point near the front of the fountain area.

exterior because of the restoration process going on inside at the time.

#### SCHLOSS LINDERHOF

We probably spent a half to one hour at the Wieskirche before moving on to Schloss Linderhof. Even so, it was getting rather late and we had to hurry to get to Schloss Linderhof in time to take a tour. Once again, the main

photos of Schloss Linderhof are in chapter 17 and I will include only those, which seem to be of special interest here. They all cover exterior



**Figure 19-179** An individual of unknown identity enjoying one of the gardens.

views because, once again, no interior photos were allowed. Those in chapter 17 had to be purchased even then.

Figure 19-175 establishes the fact that we were there and though the foreground therein may be of questionable beauty, one must admit the background is beautiful. Just think of what it would have looked like if only "Yours Truly" was there. One of the overriding principles I have



**Figure 19-180** Valerie enjoying the aroma & beauty in another of the gardens.

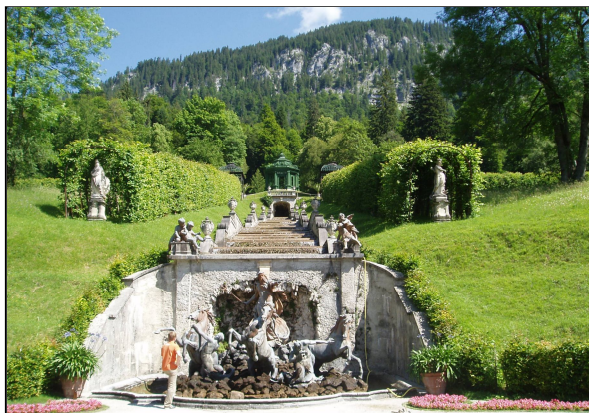
learned in life is to be thankful for what one has because things could be worse. Undoubtedly, it applies here.

As we waited for our time to tour the castles interior, Jared snapped a couple of photos of the fountain area. The first provides a view of the fountain during activity, figure 19-176, while the second, figure 19-177 provides a view while at rest. A third one, 19-178, is a view of the castle



from the fountain area. It also illustrates the kind of crowds we were experiencing that day.

After touring the interior of the castle, we spent some time admiring the various garden areas that surrounded it. The first or figure 19-179 lies



**Figure 19-181 The cascading waterfall, which could be seen from the King's bed.**

just to the east of the main building. The unknown individual probably didn't know they were included in the photo. For sure, they had no idea their picture would be included in this illustrious work but then, I didn't either. As one can see, the garden was immaculate in terms of order and grooming. The colors are also striking, at least in this old man's brain.

As I remember, the gardens in the castle's exterior lay almost exclusively to the east or to the right as one looks at the front of the main



**Figure 19-183 Enjoying lunch and a little relaxation at Ribe on Denmark's west coast.**

building. In figure 19-180, Valerie is enjoying the beauty of the setting. As one can see, the garden extends beyond the area in which Valerie was standing. Though I know we walked around the various gardens, I can't remember

now just what lay beyond. In the course of our meandering around, we saw the exterior of the Moorish Kiosk and the enclosure of the grotto lake but didn't go inside of either. I believe time was the limiting factor in those cases, although they may have been closed for the day, week or summer. We also went around to the back or north side of the castle to get a better look at the artificial waterfall that cascades down the hill when in operation. It provided comfort, I feel sure, to the tormented soul of poor King Ludwig as he lay in his bed trying to determine how to best serve his subjects. You may want to refer



**Figure 19-182 A cutting edge toilet seat design that scrubs the seat after each use.**

to the photo of his royal bedroom provided in figure 17-86 of chapter 17. The waterway, which provided the cascading falls, is displayed in the photo of figure 19-181. Though dry on both of my trips to the castle, it must have been a beautiful sight to satisfy his sovereign spirit.

From Schloss Linderhof, we returned to Ober Gau after eating dinner in Oberammergau. We would get an early start in the morning because our next stop would be in Rosengarten just to the northwest of Hamburg. Though I don't remember the distance involved, it was an all day trip with the route involving several autobahns. We skirted Munich and headed north by northwest avoiding the large cities in-so-far as possible. There are plenty of rest stops along the autobahns where one can eat, shower and take care of the pressures of Mother Nature, though they all cost money. Even so, all the facilities we encountered were clean, neat and well managed. Prices appeared to be similar to those one encountered in the cities and towns we had been in. Consequently, I expressed no amazement or associated grumbling, as we plied our way north.



To give the reader an idea of the cleanliness involved at one rest stop, I have displayed a photo Valerie took of a toilette or john, which she visited. It appears in figure 19-182. She was so enamored with the contraption that she came back out to get her camera. While she was photographing it, the German lady attendant came in, looked rather quizzically at her and I feel sure, wondered what was wrong with this lady. Surely there were more interesting things to photograph in Germany than a toilet seat. Since the contraption was in the ladies' room, I wasn't privileged to see it work but I understood Valerie to say the seat rotated as the dark



**Figure 19-184** We observed a typical street scene in Ribe as we toured the town.

contraption in the middle released suds to wash the seat and then, I guess, wiped it dry. She could give you a better description of the process, as well as the German lady's reaction.

In Rosengarten we stayed at a hotel called Cordes am Rosengarten. It was nice and had the typical German amenities. I don't remember doing or seeing anything out of the ordinary while there because of our late arrival and the time constraint. We spent a pleasant evening and went on our way after the usual German breakfast. We would be experiencing a Danish breakfast on the morrow.

### VISITING DENMARK

Valerie had a special desire to visit Denmark because Esther's mother had roots there. However, she only knew of the general location somewhere in northern Denmark. Jared also has roots there but my impression was that he didn't really know much about his ancestors or their area of origin. At any rate, Valerie had scheduled two days there counting our drive from Rosengarten to Aalborg near the northern

tip of Denmark. We stayed at the hotel Scheelsminde, which I would rate only average even by US standards. The first day or the day of our arrival, we drove around Aalborg a little and ate at a restaurant in the downtown area.



**Figure 19-186** A local church founded by one, Hans Tavsens whose statue is outside.

Aalborg was a good sized city but in my dimly lit memory, it seems the hotel was near the autobahn and the outskirts of town. However, Jared and/or Valerie might take issue with that bit of memory and I could hardly defend it.

The next morning, we began our tour of the area, which lay west and somewhat north of Aalborg. The Danish countryside is covered with wind generators even more so than that of



**Figure 19-185** Interesting civic building of ancient vintage but unknown purpose.

Germany. They definitely have the wind to drive them with no obstructions to hide behind. It reminded me of Wyoming except for its flatness and greenery. I'll only include a few photos that were taken that day because of space and my interest. This wasn't my particular desire but I did find the day interesting in that I really knew very little about Denmark.



**MAU, NORRE KONGERSLEV AND RIBE**

Jared had his photos categorized by the names of the communities we visited that day. We visited a village by the name of Mau and another



**Figure 19-187 Castle Spottrup Borg near the west coast of Denmark and "Yours truly".**

named Norre Kongerslev, each of which had no photos of interest in my opinion. We then stopped in a town called Ribe, which was fairly good sized. Besides driving around town, we had lunch there and visited a few interesting buildings. It seems lunch came early in our visit, either because of the timing or maybe we were just hungry. Anyhow, we stopped at a sidewalk café, ate and relaxed for a while as shown in figure 19-183.

After lunch we both drove and walked a little around the town, visiting a church, doing a little shopping and simply taking in the atmosphere of



**Figure 19-189 A storage area of the old castle similar to those of Von Niepberg.**

Danish life. Figure 19-184 illustrates a typical street scene, which we were treated to, while figure 19-185 is a building, which appears to be somewhat older than most. Similarly, the photo

of figure 19-186 portrays one of a couple of rather large churches.

**SPOTTRUP BORG**

We had come almost due west across Denmark as I recall and after visiting Ribe circled somewhat to the north before heading back east



**Figure 19-188 The inner courtyard of the Castle Spottrup Borg from a window.**

towards Aalborg. However, we did a lot of twisting and turning to follow various signs as well as the map. I couldn't be sure, at any one time, just what direction we were heading in. We came across an old Danish castle near the



**Figure 19-190 The Bishops' Hall where visiting dignitaries were entertained.**

western side of Denmark called Spottrup Borg. It had a small visitor's center and was billed as the oldest surviving castle in Denmark, if I'm not mistaken. I'm not sure how its construction compares to that of the present king in Copenhagen. Anyhow, they had a little story of its founder and allowed one to visit the inside for a fee, of course. Jared and I did so but the girls remained behind. It wasn't particularly interesting, in my opinion, but it did give one a



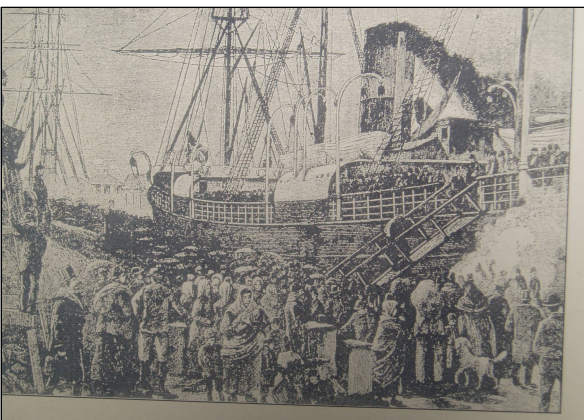
realistic idea of living conditions of that time and convinced me that I was blessed to spend mortality during the 20<sup>th</sup> century in the US.

Figure 19-187 is a photo of me entering the castle across the drawbridge. As we toured the castle, Jared photographed virtually every room



**Figure 19-191 Rebild visitors' center, honoring early Danish Immigrants to US**

but I'll only include those that seem interesting to me. As we climbed around the second story and came to the front of the castle, we could look down on the drawbridge as well as the courtyard. Figure 19-188 displays the latter. At some point on the ground floor, we visited a storage area as displayed in figure 19-189. I include that for comparison to those at Von Niepberg Castle in Schwaigern but not for any



**Figure 19-193 Danish emigrants preparing to sail for America with their new found faith.**

other particular interest. I guess I might close this out with a photo of the Bishop's Hall, the only really decent looking room in the castle besides the Bishop's Bedroom. The hall is displayed in figure 23-190. Apparently, the two of them are the only rooms refurbished now.

**REBILD**

Rebild is a small Danish town with a historical center and monument to the early Danish converts of the LDS Church. They came to the



**Figure 19-192 A Danish convert family with their grandmother leaving for America.**

United States and played an important part of the trek west from Nauvoo to the Great Basin country. The LDS Church established this



**Figure 19-194 A public building of some sort with a thatched roof in Rebild Denmark.**

historical center in commemoration of their struggles. These early converts not only struggled much in sailing to America but also experienced a great deal of suffering, I suppose,



in the migration to Utah. Figure 19-191 displays the Rebild visitors' center from which Valerie is just emerging.

A couple of statues were erected to these early pioneers, which depict thoughts and emotions they must have felt as they left their homeland, knowing they would probably never see relatives and friends in this life again. Such was their testimony of the restored gospel, which led to such a sacrifice. Figure 19-192 displays one such statue portraying a small family including a grandmother who is looking back at a land and people she would never see again. She was



**Figure 19-195 Ready to board the ferry.**

making a significant sacrifice in her devotion to the message of the restored gospel.

A drawing portraying a group of Danish converts preparing to sail for America gives one a sense of what such a journey entailed in terms of physical hardship. It is provided in the photo of figure 19-193. Surely such people were committed to freedom and the right to worship as they pleased or they would never have sacrificed so much for those beliefs. I think about our own ancestors as I look at that drawing. They too underwent great hardships for their beliefs and we here in the United States owe much to such commitment. I look forward to meeting them some time in the future.

As intimated earlier, their trials were just beginning when they set sail. Not only was the voyage difficult but they had yet equally if not more difficult times awaiting them. A photo portraying their crossing of the plains was also provided but is not shown. Some were involved in the handcart companies that made the trip west even more difficult. Some were caught in early winter snowstorms in Wyoming, causing excruciating physical and emotional hardships.

Before leaving the little community of Rebild, Jared photographed a couple of buildings that sported thatched roofs. The roofs were of interesting construction and apparently last for some time. One such building is shown in the photo of figure 19-194 and is apparently a public building of some sort. Notice the thickness of the thatched roofs, a necessary attribute, I would guess, for durability and to assure that moisture from the rain and snow doesn't seep through. Obviously, that type of roof is still used. In northern Denmark they still grow a good deal of thatch, some of which we saw during our tour.

### LEAVING FOR SWEDEN

Valerie had already obtained tickets for a ferry traveling between Fredrickshavn, Denmark and



**Figure 19-196 A lounge area on the ferry.**

Goteburg, Sweden. Fredrickshavn was just a few miles north of Aalborg on Denmark's east coast facing the Baltic Sea. All we had to do



**Figure 19-197 Dining area of the ferry with all kinds of foods to tickle one's palate.**

was get there on time and board. This we did and while waiting Jared snapped a photo of our ferry to be, which is displayed in figure 19-195.



We had to go into a terminal to exchange our prepaid tickets for boarding passes but other than that, there was no problem. Soon we were on our way.

The ferry was packed with all sorts of travelers and had great facilities for keeping passengers entertained and busy. We enjoyed a little lunch



**Figure 19-198** One might say that we were a wake the whole trip from Denmark.

while on board and spent the remaining time exploring the ship or looking at the long wake the boat was leaving. A couple of photos will provide the reader with an idea of the facilities provided for the traveler. Figure 19-196 is a photo of an area passengers could relax in, while figure 19-197 provides a view of the lunch



**Figure 19-200** The port area of the city of Goteburg Sweden on the Baltic Sea.

room facilities. In addition, figure 19-198 gives credibility to the boat's wake as we traveled across the Baltic. One didn't have much trouble establishing the path we had followed. I would guess the actual trip across the Baltic took a couple of hours but I really didn't time it and if I had, I wouldn't remember it. Such an admission

prevents a need for correction later by those with younger minds and a greater interest in the details of the trip.

Soon we were pulling into the Swedish port of Goteburg, located on the west coast of Sweden. Jared photographed several interesting buildings and ships as we entered port but I am already including too many photos. Consequently, I'll only include one of the city, which borders the port area and one of a little building of some sort out in the bay surrounded by water. What its purpose was, I could only imagine. The photo of the quaint little building I just spoke of is displayed in figure 19-199, while the port area of Goteburg is shown in figure 19-200. In spite of the ferry being full to capacity, or so it seemed,



**Figure 19-199** An interesting house in the waters near the port of Goteburg Sweden.

we weren't delayed too long before disembarking into Goteburg. We were bound for Linkoping, some 6 hours away, I believe, and didn't waste any time driving around. We simply found our way to the highway leading to the east and were on our way. We would stay 3 nights in Linkoping as we toured the area our Isaacson progenitors lived in and, of course, visited the capital of Stockholm, time permitting.

We stayed in a hotel in Linkoping whose name I don't remember but that doesn't matter. It was simply a place to sleep and eat breakfast while we visited the area, as described in the previous paragraph. I do remember it was in the process of being updated or improved because our rooms required us to wind through a maze of construction materials with each exit or entrance. However, the rooms were okay and the breakfast was excellent, even by German standards. We explored the immediate area on foot that evening and ate dinner a few blocks away. The dinner was only marginal, in my



opinion and was certainly overshadowed by the breakfasts the hotel served each morning.

#### VISITING THE ISAACSON STOMPING GROUNDS

I was unfamiliar with the names of the towns mother's ancestors came from but Valerie seemed to know something of them. She,



**Figure 19-201 A view of the countryside, which is typical to the Ortomtå area.**

having been interested in genealogy for years, had discussed mother's progenitors with her to some degree. She seemed to know that the little town, which Grandpa Isaacson came from



**Figure 19-203 A view of Ortomtå as we approached it along the road leading in.**

was Ortomtå, a village east of Linköping. Consequently, we set out for that area the next morning, the 24<sup>th</sup> of June.

#### VISITING ORTOMTÅ

Over the years, mother had often spoken of the beautiful Swedish countryside with its farms several times in my presence. I really couldn't dispute that statement with our experience to date and we gained a little more appreciation for her remarks that day. Jared snapped a nice

shot of a typical farm as we drew near to Ortomtå, which is displayed in figure 19-201. Soon our navigation by map was confirmed by a sign, as displayed in figure 19-202. Just a



**Figure 19-202 Typical Ortomtå countryside with a sign confirming our destination.**

couple more miles and we would experience the reality of some of mother's other comments regarding her beloved Sweden.

Ortomtå was smaller than I had envisioned but it was, indeed a beautiful little village with a good sized church and only a couple of small businesses, as I remember. I can only assume



**Figure 19-204 The graveyard associated with the only church in town.**

the citizens living there did business in Linköping or some other nearby community. We could drive through the village in about a minute, I believe. It was quiet and I really don't remember any people moving around but Valerie, being younger, sharper and more involved in family history may dispute that. Of course, if she does I will fall back on my standard excuse, the escape clause "as I remember" or at least some form of it. Our entry into town is displayed in



figure 19-203 and verifies, to a degree, the preceding statements.

We stopped at the only large building in town, i.e. the church. I suppose the denomination was



**Figure 19-205 My mother's father and his siblings, born & reared in the Ortomtå area.**

Lutheran but can't say for sure, having long forgotten such details. Aren't I a great source of information regarding the subject at hand? In



**Figure 19-207 The church in Bjorsatter.**

any case we walked through the cemetery to see whether we could find any Isaacson gravestones. It wasn't very large and didn't take too much time. Figure 19-204 is a photo of the graveyard entrance. We were unsuccessful in

our search, which made me wonder if our information was correct. It's too bad we couldn't contact any of the distant relatives mother spoke regarding her trip here but we knew nothing



**Figure 19-206 A view of Bjorsatter as we entered town on the main drag.**

more than that Mother's father, Albin grew up here. I believe his full name was John Albin but the only photo I have of him identifies him as Albin. I have included that photo in figure 19-205 to make our visit and my remarks a little more personal, so I suppose. Overall our visit to Ortomtå was short lived and we headed for Bjorsatter, the village where mother's grandmother grew up, according to Valerie.

#### BJORSATTER

Bjorsatter was somewhat to the north of Ortomtå I believe, although I'm not sure my directional instincts were working properly. It was a village of about the same size as Ortomtå. Jared and



**Figure 19-208 A typical Swedish home in Bjorsatter and surrounding villages.**

or Valerie snapped a few pictures of the area, 4 of which I will include. Figure 19-206 is a photo of the village, as we entered it. The local church appeared to be the same denomination as that in Ortomtå and, in fact, was very similar in



appearance. It is displayed in figure 19-207. The photo of figure 19-208 displays an attractive Swedish home in Bjorsatter. One can almost feel the relaxed atmosphere of the village by imagining one's residence is that of the photo. It appeared to be typical of the little village but a little better kept. Once again we spent little time in town because its size and limited attractions.

**GOTA CANAL AND LOCKS**

We had a little time left for the day and decided to visit the Gota Canal, which stretches across



**Figure 19-209 A lake which may or may not be connected with the Gota Canal**

the country. There are some big lakes in Sweden, some of which are connected by the Gota Canal. People apparently take vacations on the canal in small boats and, I suppose, enjoying the various lakes they enter from time to time. As we made our way to the canal, we



**Figure 19-211 A typical boat used by those who choose to travel the Gota Canal.**

came across various bodies of water, which may or may not have been associated with the canal. One attractive lake Jared snapped a photo of is displayed in figure 19-209, which indicates much

of the land is still covered with forest. Over all Sweden is beautiful because of its green landscape. We saw no areas suggesting an arid climate or drought conditions of any kind. Basically, our path of travel was through farmlands and simple green countryside.

The area where we stopped to view the actual canal was open with few trees in the vicinity. Several people were there visiting, I suppose, because of a canal lock. The elevation was



**Figure 19-210 A lock on the Gota Canal that has been filled to raise a boat one level.**

increasing to the west and required a lock to lift the boats to a higher level as they made their journey across the landscape. A view of the lock just filled is shown in figure 19-210 while a



**Figure 19-212 Valerie in the white shirt trying to decide her next move.**

photo of a typical boat used to negotiate the canal is displayed in figure 19-211.

After visiting the Gota Canal we headed back to Linkoping to get a little dinner. I believe we stopped at a fast food joint, McDonalds probably, because of our previous night's experience. Having a little time still on our



hands after fueling our bodies, we visited what I term as Old town Linköping, which was near the autobahn or whatever they call it in Sweden. I'm sure Jared took several photos while there but I don't find them among my cache. It's just as well anyway because I forgot everything I learned, if I did learn anything, that is.

#### VISITING STOCKHOLM

Because we had completed our touring in the Linköping area in less time than anticipated, we



**Figure 19-213** A river that runs through Stockholm with an interesting building.

decided we wanted to visit Stockholm and see the palace, at least. The drive took us a couple



**Figure 19-215** The incoming castle guard preparing for relief of those on duty.

of hours I believe and it seemed like almost the same amount of time to find a parking place. That's a bit of an exaggeration but such wasn't

easy to find in the vicinity of the castle. I think we did a little general touring in the car first to kind of get an idea of what Stockholm was like. Had I known at the time I was going to write about this, I would have made notes or maybe should have made notes. What-ever the case, I primarily remember the big city congestion and the frustration of trying to find some points of interest. After locating the castle area, we finally



**Figure 19-214** The Swedish castle in active use as seen from the plaza in front of it.

parked some distance from it and any restaurant. We walked around the city in the immediate vicinity and grabbed a little food to keep us going. Prices were high and I wasn't



**Figure 19-216** The castle courtyard as seen from the courtyard entrance.

real impressed with what we got but that's me again looking for a bargain. The photo of figure 19-212 Shows Valerie flitting around trying to find some mementoes, I guess.

During our drive, we criss-crossed a river and saw several interesting buildings of which I have one photo of all those Jared took. Figure 19-213 displays the river and a building of interest on



the other side, which none of us knew anything about. We had done no historical research on Stockholm and were in the dark as to what to look for other than the castle, which I'll now concentrate on.

We spent the bulk of our time at the castle and watched the changing of the castle guard. The photo of figure 19-214 was taken from the plaza



**Figure 19-217 The courtyard entrance guard**

in front of the castle. Notice the outgoing castle guard in the photo's center as they come down the steps from the castle entrance. Also, to the photo's extreme left are some broad steps leading up to a side entrance of the castle. We walked up the steps to view the city a little better but entry into the castle from that point was denied. One had to go up the steps previously mentioned to gain entrance to the castle courtyard to view the changing of the guard, etc. if they so desired. Figure 19-215 is a close up of the incoming castle guard preparing for relief duty. Figure 19-216 is a view of the castle courtyard from its entrance. That entrance was just beyond the steps, which the castle guard is climbing in figure 19-215. We, of course, climbed the steps to the courtyard entrance. There we found a guard standing stiffly at attention whose photo is shown in figure 19-217. We entered the courtyard and watched the completion of the changing of the guard. We walked over to the castle entrance where

another guard was posted. Valerie and Jared decided to tour the castle, which tour would take place in a little while. Lethia and I had about as



**Figure 19-218 The Malmo Castle with its associated drawbridge and moat.**

much castle digested in our innards as we could take. Consequently we begged off and told them we would meet them near the parked car.



**Figure 23-219 Now there's a rifle, I mean those just to my left in the photo.**

There we could sit and relax a little. Of course, no photos were allowed inside the castle, so you will have to use your imagination or talk to Jared and Valerie about what they saw.



**MALMO SWEDEN**

I can't speak for the rest of the group but I was bushed when we finally headed back to Linköping for a night's rest and preparation to



**Figure 19-220** The armor worn by the King of Sweden when going into battle.

head south to Malmo, our last stop in Sweden. I believe we ate somewhere along the way at a McDonalds to save time and money. It may have been in Linköping, who knows?

We were up at the usual time in the morning and ate our last free breakfast at the hotel. As always, it was good with all the variety one could ask for and all one could eat. I certainly can't criticize the breakfasts we ate anywhere along the way. Some had more variety than others but all were good and sufficient. Our day would be easy this June 26<sup>th</sup> because the drive was short to the southern tip of Sweden. In Malmo we could drive across a bridge to Denmark and Copenhagen where we would also spend a day.

The drive to Malmo was through beautiful country but generally flat. I preferred the scenery of Germany in general to that of Sweden and especially that of Bavaria. Germany is not only green but has more hills and, in Bavaria, the Alps often provide a backdrop, which is usually beyond compare.

We arrived early, around lunch time I believe, checked into our hotel, the Rica, ate and relaxed for a while but not necessarily in that order. Jared was full of energy and wanted to visit a local castle but ended up going himself, as I remember. I don't remember going with him and the photos seem unfamiliar to me. However, I have included one view of the castle in the photo



**Figure 19-221** A display illustrating the armor worn by horses going into battle.

of figure 19-218 just to let my posterity know I was there. One has to admit, it certainly isn't very exciting to look at after seeing the castles we were treated to in Germany.

Later that day Jared talked me into visiting the King's Armory and armor collection located in



**Figure 19-222** Some medieval swords that were on display in the King's Armory.

the vicinity of the castle, I believe. I not only remember some of the many guns and armor pieces that were displayed therein but I also remember running in the rain to get there. This later statement is verified by my illustrious photo in figure 19-219. That's not sweat you see, even though, to get there, I wore the jacket that I'm

holding in my hand. It did little good but dripped pretty dry during the visit of about an hour.

I could fill up pages with the photos I received from Jared but my only point is that I was there and enjoyed the visit. It wasn't part of our planned itinerary nor would I probably have



**Figure 19-223 An interesting building in down town Copenhagen near the plaza.**

visited it without Jared's selling effort. However, considering the cost, getting wet that is, the visit was well worthwhile. I will insert a couple more photos I found of particular interest. In that of figure 19-220, we see the King's armor while figure 19-221 displays the armor his or any other battle horse, I suppose, would be decked out in. The actual armor shown in both photos could be replicas of that actually worn by the king or maybe the actual armor he was to wear if the



**Figure 19-224 A typical view of several down town Copenhagen areas and canals.**

occasion arose. From my ancient history classes at Boise High, I remember that Sweden was militarily aggressive under some kings of the middle ages or there about. At one time they ruled much of what is now western Russia,

as well as Finland, Latvia, Estonia and parts of Poland and Germany, I presume. Some of you real history buffs could do a better job of describing the actual territory they ruled.

Having displayed the battle dress of man and beast, It seems appropriate to add a few medieval swords, some of the tools of their trade. These are displayed in figure 23-222. Of course, we have all seen knights with their lances jousting on horseback or swinging some



**Figure 19-225 Old Dad doing his best to impersonate the mighty Leif Eriksson.**

sort of battle axe amongst the poor footmen. Even grosser than the battle axe, was that doohickey made from chains and iron balls with sharp steel points protruding from their surfaces. They surely gave the recipient a headache if he was unlucky enough to receive a blow to the head or body. I don't remember these later items being displayed but Jared could tell you for sure, he being a connoisseur of such devices. He really enjoys visiting museums with these kinds of collections. I suspect he would have a collection of his own if time, space and money were no problem. He now has sufficient land for such a building but that's about it.

We returned to the hotel after our visit to the armory and found the girls relaxing in the rooms I do believe. I vaguely remember walking



around the city square near the hotel but where we dined that night comes up blank. Either it wasn't very good or it cost too much. What else could cause me to suppress my memory of such an important occasion?

### VISITING COPENHAGEN

Copenhagen lies just across the strait separating Sweden from Denmark on an island called E Sjælland. The bridge spanning the



**Figure 19-226** A view of the castle complex, as we entered the courtyard gate.

strait is fairly long but I was surprised to see the two countries were so close together. I would have to guess the distance is no more than 20



**Figure 19-227** Preparing to change the castle guards in Copenhagen.

miles. Anyhow, after breakfast at the hotel Rica in Sweden, we headed for Copenhagen and our hotel there, which was called Quality Hotel Airport Dan. Whether it's owned by the same people who run our Quality Inns in the US, I wouldn't know. It was situated on the east side of Copenhagen and after checking in we headed for downtown Copenhagen.

Valerie had set up a tour by bus in Copenhagen, knowing that we would miss much if we attempted a tour on our own. We had to meet the tour at the square in front of the Rathaus in the center of Copenhagen. Jared, being an excellent navigator had us there in plenty of time for the tour. It was a rainy day and we had to park on the opposite side of the square from where the tour departed. We got kind of wet crossing the square because traffic lights held us up as did the congestion of people. However, the rain was intermittent, so we moved from shelter to shelter. We found a Burger King, I believe, near the bus departure point where we were able to dry out a little and get something to eat while we waited. I will have to be selective about the photos I include and will only show one in this general area, which I particularly like. It's probably a hotel but, in any case, gives one



**Figure 19-228** The Christ, standing behind the altar in Copenhagen's oldest church.

an idea of the architecture involved. It is displayed in figure 19-223.

Finally, we climbed aboard the tour bus, which moved around the city with the driver describing various sights. Jared got some nice shots from the bus as it slowly moved through the city but I will only show one in figure 19-224 because of space, once again. After touring the city for a

while, we ended up at the King's Castle where the bus parked in a lot across the street from the entrance.

There was a gift shop near the lot that everyone visited, it seemed, and we became part of the



**Figure 19-229 Peter, the head of the early church, who held the priesthood keys.**

crowd therein. Accepting the adage, “When in Rome, do as the Romans do”, I tried to get Lethia to buy me a nice Norseman’s hat as illustrated in figure 19-225 so I could better fit into the crowd. She said it looked nice and brought out my more masculine characteristics but she refused because my fierce countenance might scare some of the tourists and besides, it hid my curly hair. After considering her somewhat emphatic statement, I gave up the idea.

After tiring of the gift shop, we followed the crowd over to the castle located across the street. One entered the gate to the courtyard, which was surrounded by various buildings making up the castle complex. Figure 19-226 provides a view of what we saw. I guess the only real show was the changing of the castle guard, somewhat like that in Stockholm. Jared snapped a few pictures of that activity, of which I included one in figure 19-227. Soon, the call to return to the bus was issued and we trotted back to the lot to climb aboard.

After leaving the castle, it began raining pretty heavily; making us glad we were back in a sheltered environment. The bus driver then took us by the oldest church in Copenhagen where Thorvaldsen, Denmark’s master sculptor, must have attended. At any rate, his famous Christus statue stands at the head or behind the alter area. A replica of that famous statue stands in the temple visitors’ center in Salt Lake in a setting, which emphasizes his many creations, as described in the New Testament. Seeing the original was probably the main reason we, or at least I, had for wanting to make the tour. We were further rewarded by the presence of all of the original 12 apostles except Judas Iscariot with Paul added to total 12. They were lined up as six on either side of the chapel. My only



**Figure 19-230 James, the brother of John, who the Saviour surnamed Boanerges.**

regret was the short time we had in the church, which was dictated by the tour guide.

Jared snapped pictures of the Christus and all the apostles. Once again, I will limit the number of photos displayed because of space. First, the Christus is seen in figure 19-228. The message I see depicted in this beautiful work is the Savior of all mankind reaching out to all who will come unto him, accepting his marvelous atonement by striving to walk in his footsteps and thus take upon them a portion of his sacred nature.

Peter, having been given the keys of the kingdom by Christ was the chief apostle and



thus the president of the church after Christ's ascension. As mentioned previously, it is through Peter's authority, granted by the Saviour, that the Catholic Church claims the authority of the Pope. Peter's statue by Thorvaldsen is displayed in figure 19-229.

With the limited space I have, I will also include the photos of James and John to complete the three that witnessed the transfiguration of Christ, as described in Matthew 17:2. They composed the presidency of the early church after the



**Figure 19-231 John the Beloved who was also known as John the Revelator.**

Saviour ascended into heaven following his 40 day ministry with the twelve. James and John were surnamed Boanerges by Christ meaning the sons of thunder. What exactly led our Saviour to such a name, I really don't know but it may have been their strong personalities. They are illustrated in figures 19-230 and 19-231 respectively. Thorvaldsen portrayed the image, I feel sure, of each individual that he acquired from the scriptures. That of "John the Revelator" seems rather straight forward but in my mind at least, the other two might require an explanation from the sculptor himself.

I decided to include Thorvaldsen's depiction of Paul as well because of the many epistles he wrote to the newly formed units he had great responsibility in establishing. As can be seen from the epistles, it was difficult to keep the various churches on the path he described as being set by Christ. I have always admired Paul

because of his dedication to Christ, once he was converted. No danger seemed to dissuade him as he went about the Mediterranean world preaching the gospel to both gentile and Jew.



**Figure 19-232 Thorvaldsen's Paul. In my mind, he appears resolute as Paul was.**

His effort came not through faith in and of itself but through knowledge he had gained through his vision with the Saviour on his way to



**Figure 19-233 Leaving Copenhagen and heading for Frankfurt as the sign attests.**

Damascus. Our Saviour knew of Paul's strong commitment and dedication to the truth as he knew it and called him to a special work, which required great personal sacrifice. Nothing less than such a vision of the Saviour would



apparently convert this strong willed individual. I believe Thorvaldsen captured that image in his beautiful statue of Paul in figure 19-232. Thorvaldsen's masterpieces are indeed a blessing to the Christian world and especially the one of Christ. I wish we could have spent more time there to enjoy the spirit of his work.

After finishing the tour we relaxed in the Burger King once again. In fact, I believe that was the site of our dinner that evening, which though not an epicurean delight, was filling and priced to fit our pocket books. Thereafter we returned to our



**Figure 19-234 A view of the luncheon crowd enjoying both food and conversation.**

hotel, the Quality Inn Airport, and got a good night's rest before leaving for Frankfurt, Germany the next day. As mentioned earlier, the hotel was on the east side of Copenhagen or Kobenhavn as the Danes spell it. Figure 19-233 attests to that fact, the photo of which either Valerie or Jared snapped as we headed down the autobahn or the Danish version of it.

I believe the trip to Frankfurt took the best part of the day because I don't remember doing anything of interest in Frankfurt that evening. If we had done anything, I feel sure Jared would have photographs to verify it. Valerie had programmed an extra day in the trip to allow for possible problems but everything had gone smoothly or at least there had been no real delays of any kind. Consequently, Valerie decided to visit Astrid and Bubi Kiess who lived in Pforzheim, about a hundred miles south of Frankfurt in the Stuttgart vicinity. She had struck a special friendship with Astrid, so it seemed, and Astrid had invited us to Pforzheim to spend a day with her family and with Gunter Staub and his wife, her parents. We could make the roundtrip in one day quite easily and decided to visit with them before heading back to the

states. My only concern was an inability to speak German because none of them were really fluent in English. However, I had enjoyed visiting with them at the reunion with Astrid's help and with Günter to a degree through his



**Figure 19-235 Neighborhood in which the home of Astrid's parents was located.**

limited English. They had been especially kind in going out of their way to buy a little gift, a booklet, to remember them by.

#### OUR PFORZHEIM EXPERIENCE

I remember a little confusion on the autobahn as we tried to make an exit to Pforzheim but we arrived pretty much on schedule. Astrid met us at a predetermined site she and Valerie had set up via their cell phones. She gave us a little tour



**Figure 19-236 A photo of Günter and his wife's home as seen from the backyard.**

of Pforzheim including the Jewelry Museum, which we spent an hour or so in. I picked up a booklet somewhere, maybe there, which listed the museum in German as being "Das Schmuckmuseum ein Kleinod in der Goldstadt. As best as I can tell from my English-German dictionary, the phrase would translate as "The

Jewelry Museum a Treasure in the Gold City". In that booklet were photos of some of the jewelry pieces we were treated to. The tour was extremely interesting considering the difficulty at least three of us had in understanding the various displays.

After touring the museum, Astrid took us to a nice restaurant a ways from the business district. There we had lunch with her and her family consisting of Bubi, her husband and Dannielle and Christian, her daughter and son. The name, Bubi, in German means Bobby in English. I wondered about the name until its meaning was explained later. The lunch was excellent including both food and service. Jared did most of the conversing with Bubi, while the rest of us settled for conversation with Astrid. Like Bubi, the children spoke little English but were especially well mannered. I would guess that Dannielle was around 14 and Christian about 12. The restaurant personnel spoke only German as I recall but were very efficient and kind to their American visitors. I got the impression that lunch had been previously arranged and that Bubi and Astrid were regular patrons. The photo of figure 19-234 shows all of us and had to be taken by the waiters.

After lunch, Astrid guided us to her parent's residence in a suburb, which, in my mind, was in the northwest area of Pforzheim. Of course, I could easily be wrong on that assessment but I'm not sure the others in our group would be any more accurate. Jared did the driving and might be clearer on their location. It was a relatively short drive winding through a residential area of Pforzheim. Figure 19-235 is a photo of the immediate neighborhood of the Staub home. A view of Günter and his wife's home as taken from the back yard is provided in the photo of figure 19-236. As you can see, we are all gathering for a group picture on the back patio, which I'll say more about later. The photo as used here is meant to illustrate the home only, not our lovely countenances.

We were warmly welcomed by her parents to their beautiful home. Though average in size by US standards, it was well kept and nicely furnished with many beautiful paintings decorating the walls. It seemed typical for the neighborhood and we only saw the living room and dining room areas. From figure 19-236, one can see that it is a two story home, which seemed to be the norm for the area. We found out, as the afternoon wore on, that Mrs. Staub

was the artist who created most, if not all, of the paintings that graced the walls of both living and dining rooms. She was obviously very talented in that department.

I'm not sure exactly what time we arrived at Astrid's parents' home but I would guess that it was in the latter part of the afternoon. After



**Figure 19-237 Dinner in the home of Günter Staub and his wife with Günter, his wife, Valerie & Lethia on the left and Astrid, Dannielle & Bubi on the right. Old dad is at the end with Jared taking the pictures.**

chatting for a while in the living room, we were ushered into the dining room where a lovely dinner awaited us. The photo of figure 19-237



**Figure 19-238 A group photo taken on their back patio. Shown from left to right, Bubi, Astrid, Günter, Lethia, yours truly, Mrs. Staub, Christian and Dannielle.**

portrays the group except for Jared and Christian. I suspect Christian is hidden in between Astrid and Bubi. The dinner was excellent and the conversation enjoyable. Somehow, the language barrier was broken, at least to an extent and the Staub's were



outstanding hosts. Afterwards, they brought out desserts for us to choose from. This appears to be a standard German custom.

While enjoying the dessert, Günter spoke of his WWII experiences. He was about my age but



**Figure 19-239 Astrid, Dannielle and Christian with their pet horse.**

maybe a year older. It seems he was captured by the US Army and held prisoner at a facility nearby, which contained a piano. Upon learning that Günter could play the piano, he was called upon to entertain the troops nightly with his piano playing. He also described how well they treated him and that German soldiers in general made an effort to be captured by the Americans



**Figure 19-240 The Kiess home, which was located in a horse stable community.**

because their treatment of prisoners was well known. He also described the fire-bombing of Pforzheim rather late in the war, which they all felt was unnecessary. According to them, there was nothing of strategic importance in Pforzheim. It may have been a secondary target described with poor intelligence and the planes diverted from their primary target for some

reason. The town was completely destroyed and modern Pforzheim is a beautiful new city. Before concluding our dinner he played the piano as seen in the front right of figure 19-237. He is an excellent pianist, at least from my limited knowledge of the art. He also is apparently a successful lawyer. Though he only mentioned working for the German government in regard to Palestinian affairs, he gave me his business card, which describes him as Dr. jur. Günter Staub Rechtsanwalt. I found it interesting that he was still working at the age of 80 or so.

After our rather lengthy dinner, we accompanied them to their back patio for another group picture. It is displayed in figure 19-238. The dog Mrs. Staub is holding reminded me of Henry, Celeste's spoiled pooch. German families treat their dogs about like we do but, as explained in chapter 17 they are carefully trained and are allowed in restaurants. Such training would be the exception in the US except for the various dogs assisting the handicapped. While in the back yard, Mrs. Staub described a lizard she kept, which had been a pet for a number of years now. I have long forgotten his exact family description, though some of the others may remember. He made his home in their flower garden. She took us there and picked the little fella up to demonstrate his friendliness. She also fed him on a daily basis just like the family dog.

Around six, I suppose, Astrid took us by their home, which was located in a small community in the countryside a little ways away from Pforzheim. They had a horse and were part of a community that had a common stable. We toured the stable area and were introduced to their pet horse, which is shown in figure 19-239. They were in the process of restoring the old home they had purchased, which was close to the stable area. She didn't invite us in because of the repairs going on, I suppose. In any case the home is shown in figure 19-240. Bubi had come home a little ahead of us and was working on some part of the house's exterior. We spoke to him before leaving for Pforzheim. Astrid accompanied us because of the back roads involved, I suppose but also wanted to show us a typical shopping mall in Pforzheim. It didn't extend over a large area as ours do in the US but consisted of several floors with numerous shops on each. In principle it was no different than ours and involved the same types of crowds. Lethia and I were rather bushed by now

and though we appreciated her efforts in our behalf, we were ready to call it a night. Valerie purchased a bunch of German chocolate that was on sale at a reduced price with the intention of spoiling her kids and grandkids. Astrid stuck with us the whole time and finally said goodbye as we went to the cars to head for Frankfurt. It had been a tiring day for this old man but definitely enjoyable and interesting. I would like to return, if possible, in 2010 because I hope to be able to communicate in German a little by then and could better understand them all as well as extend our appreciation for their hospitality. That remains to be seen, however, in that health, our financial situation and even the world situation could nullify such a trip.

We returned to our hotel in Frankfurt, which was near the airport or Flughafen to take on a well deserved rest, in my opinion. We had a 9:45 departure time and were scheduled to arrive home at 1:45. We had no problems, arrived on time and took MARTA back to our cars near the Perimeter Mall. The trip had been a special experience but home, as usual was better.

#### A GERMAN NEWSPAPER ARTICLE

As promised, I will insert the complete text of the German newspaper article as translated by Tom. He cautioned me about its correctness but it sounds fine to me. Though I talked about including the German version or the actual article earlier, I have decided not to. Who among us, other than Tom, know any German at all? Thus, the space would be wasted. Anyone wanting a copy can contact me or whoever is looking out for my affairs in the future and we will be glad to send them a copy.



Some of them had a long journey and others a short one. From Atlanta to Sulzfeld came the Abendschöns and the Obenchains for a visit in their home city of Schwaigern – here in front of the Gasthaus Lamm.

#### THE ABENDSCHÖNS AND THE OBENCHAINS

By *Ulrike Maushake*

*Abendschön – A name that catches your ear. A name to talk about. People instinctively connect it with peace, kindness, and soft light. “I married my husband because he had such*

*a beautiful name,” said Sabina Abendschön. “It is a name with an obligation. Someone named Abendschön can not be evil.”*

*The name appears for the first time in Schwaigern church records with Wendel Abendschön, who was born in Schwaigern in 1570 and was the forefather of a family of craftsmen and farmers. “My grandfather was a cooper (barrel maker) in Grafen Neipperg, “said Günter Abendschön, who with his mother, his wife, Sabina, and his four children are the only people named Abendschoen in Schwaigern.*

*Most Abendschöns live in the Kraichgau region (Eppingen) and the Rheinland plain. And then there are the descendants of the family that moved to America and later branched out under the name of Obenchain.*

*The initiative to get the Abendschön family together came out of America. Members of the family in faraway Germany were found and contacted via the internet, and so celebrated the Abendschöns and Obenchains a large family reunion this past Sunday in Schwaigern. Approximately 90 guests and one dog attended. The youngest member of the family is four weeks old. And with his nearly 80 years, Tom Obenchain was one of the oldest.*

*This guest of honor from Atlanta is a direct descendant of one Samuel Abendschön, who with his wife and sons Christian and Reinhold made the long and dangerous journey to America in 1749. He may have also taken a young daughter as well. In all Samuel Abendschön had paid 1,000 Marks to be able to make the journey. “He*

*must have indentured himself,” said Emil Abendschön of Sulzfeld. “1,000 Marks – that was a lot of money for the time.”*

*He doesn’t know exactly why the family emigrated. “Perhaps it was because during the Realteilung (Land Partitioning) the living*



*situation of farmers sons was becoming worse and worse.”*

*Tom Obenchain had plenty to tell about how it went later for the family in America, as he and his daughter Valerie have been busy with intensive family history research. The Obenchains settled in the area of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, or in any case they started there and throughout the generations became prosperous and respected saw mill owners and paper producers.*

*Tom Obenchain, the amiable, composed patriarch, shared throughout the evening some of the family’s history in America telling of an Obenchain who fought for American independence and was rewarded with a piece of land, and of an Obenchain who along with his wife and children were massacred by Indians on the banks of the Ohio River. He told of Obenchains who traveled in the great trek west. He told of a grandfather who fought for the northern states during the American Civil War and of his cousin who was wounded during the Second World War by Rommel’s solders. When asked how he felt being an American Obenchain in the middle of the German Abendschöns he said with tears in his eyes, “Like the lost son.”*

*A saying of Goethe circulated during the celebration: “Children should receive two things from their parents: roots and wings.” This time the Obenchains used their wings to return to their roots.*