

PREFACE

I traveled to Europe in the spring of 1989 with friend Eric Villafranca. During the two-week, four countries vacation I jotted details into tiny notebooks that easily fit in my pocket. I also collected an assortment of brochures and maps for use then and later, when it came time to write of the excursion. By far, the most data was stored in my mind, along with opinions and philosophies that, for me, were integral parts of the experience. All were stowed away in bags or mental file cabinets, to be aired again when the winds of memory blew.

Eric and I were in a Europe soon to radically change. Within that same year the Berlin Wall fell, placing a fatal rift in the Iron Curtain, and the two Germanies began a slow process of reuniting since their separation as a result of World War II. Communism was on the wane elsewhere, too, as the Communist Party was losing its grip on the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, which would collapse into the original, disparate states. Communist China was also shaken and nearly capitulated to the 1989 democratic movement only to prevail with an iron will and violent fist. The Bamboo Curtain did not fall.

While the world as we knew it altered in a revolutionary sweep, inspired and even led by Pope John Paul II, I wrote the first draft of this journal. Each read through shook more memories loose, calling for their inclusion in the final version. I also conducted research into aspects of our European experience giving them more depth, greater dimension. References, too, were made to family history, wherever that history intersected with the odyssey.

The final product of this memoir is a collection of details regarding places seen, people met and things done, bolstered by historic reference and occasional, personal philosophy and opinion. It creates a link connecting what was then to what is now, with inferences as to what may become.

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**CHUCK PAIGE'S 1989 EUROPEAN VACATION
WITH ERIC VILLAFRANCA**

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THE ADVENTURE BEGINS --

SATURDAY, MAY 20

It took some preparation on my part before the European trip could get off the ground, so to speak. There was obtaining a passport on the one hand. Then came procuring a visa from the French consulate in Beverly Hills. The former was as simple as having a miniature, passport-size picture taken, filling out appropriate forms at a special post office in Pasadena, then waiting and watching the mail. The latter was somewhat more time consuming. After all it was 1989, bi-centennial of the French Revolution. When I arrived at the consulate there was a line of applicants snaking a block down the street. Finally, after about two hours, I had visa in hand.

I had traveled to several Asian countries while in the Navy. As part of the U.S. Navy, I wasn't required to deal with the inter-country paperwork and red tape. This experience of collecting my "papers" was new to me. Eric, on the other hand, had been dealing with this kind of rigmarole for many years, the zenith being his becoming a United States citizen.¹ Eric already had a passport and was street-wise to international travel through frequent Asian excursions. Of course he, too, was required to obtain a French visa. As to traveling in Europe, Eric and I were starting out with the same experience, none.

Eric collected me in Pasadena at 10:00 o'clock A.M. We went to his house near East Los Angeles, where he finished readying for the trip. Then a friend, Mike Roy, chauffeured us to the Los Angeles International Airport (LAX).

On a sad note, en route it was announced over the car radio that Gilda Radner—comedienne, actress, wife of comedian actor Gene Wilder and former regular on the TV show *Saturday Night Live*—had just died of cancer.

Traffic was sporadically heavy, and arrival wasn't until 12:30 o'clock P.M. Then it was time to stand in line, check our baggage (one piece checked each) and obtain boarding passes. Having some time to kill (the plane wouldn't leave until mid-afternoon) we partook of a light snack in one of the airport's restaurants. (Light in content, not in expense.) A Lakers basketball game was being shown on a snack bar television, so we watched for awhile.

Eventually, Eric and I entered the boarding area, first having to pass through the typical airport x-ray/inspection station. Eric triggered the alarm (a tradition to be replayed at every inspection station we passed through for the next two weeks) and had to unload his rings, watch, wallet, etc. Directly in front of us, upon leaving the inspection station, was a Bank of America money exchange branch. We each exchanged \$100 for Pounds Sterling. Between the Bank's

¹ I have known Eric for many years and was a witness during his citizenship proceedings, attesting to his longevity in the United States.

service charge and the very disadvantageous rate of \$1.67 U.S. for each English £1, we ended up with a mere pittance.

It was then on to the boarding area, where there was another wait before boarding KLM Royal Dutch Airlines Flight 747 around 2:30 o'clock P.M. I was a tad disturbed to see a fellow passenger reading a new book, outlawed by Islamic leaders, entitled *Satanic Verses*. The book starts out with passengers falling through the air, after their passenger jetliner explodes at high altitude. Such a thing could be taken as a bad omen just before an eleven-hour flight.

The plane was finally allowed to leave at 3:45. Once we were in the air, service by the crew of stewards and stewardesses was excellent. Throughout the flight they would sporadically bring us beverages (all of which were complementary, even those alcoholic) and, less frequently but sufficiently, food.

An hour into flight we were served a tasty beef and noodle meal that included shrimp and bean sprout salad, French roll, and peach chiffon pudding with a peach slice in the center. (Assorted preparations of beef with noodles/macaroni, and a variety of chiffon puddings, seemed to be a standard for the KLM line. Most primary meals we had on board to and from Europe had these elements.)

I usually drank red wine with my in-flight meals, countering the alcoholic effects with one or two cups of coffee immediately thereafter. I may have overdone the coffee a trifle, since I didn't sleep at all during the flight to Amsterdam, Holland. (Truth be told, I seldom sleep on airplanes. In a way it's too bad. I would be better rested at the other end if only I could and did. Yet, on the positive side, I do enjoy the many experiences of flying.)

Two hours into flight we watched the first movie, "Her Alibi," starring Tom Sellick and Paulina Porizkova. Five hours into flight we saw "Twins," with Arnold Schwarzenegger and Danny DeVito as the twins. Both films were fun. Even better, I hadn't previously seen either. We spent the remaining time sipping beverages and/or thinking about the countries and adventures to come.

Meantime, we flew over Salt Lake City, Canada, and Greenland's city of Godthaad. Because we had started late, instead of flying over Iceland to reach Amsterdam we detoured over Scotland, passing over Glasgow and Newcastle. The sun set on us around 7:00 o'clock P.M. PST (Pacific Standard Time) and dawned about two hours later. That was therefor the shortest night I had ever experienced. (We were hot on the sun's trail when returning to California. Though it took the regular eleven hours, that flight only cost us two hours of our day.)

Scotland fascinated me as I watched the lay of the land from the perspective and elevation of 30,000 feet. The stretch between Glasgow and Newcastle was very dark, even black, with occasional burnt-gold fields. These fields tended not to be square, seldom even rectangular. Instead, they were a wide assortment of odd shapes. Fields varied greatly from the patterns I was used to seeing in the United States. As it turned out, they also differed from the norm in the European countries we visited. (Perhaps the individuality of the fields illustrates the tendency of Scots to be almost fanatically individualistic. A more realistic probability is that Scotland's rugged, hilly terrain does not lend itself to square, evenly-patterned fields.)

Part of my lineage was rooted in Scotland, not far from Glasgow. The McNab, Wilson and Duncan clans were part of that heritage, mostly from the Renfrewshire area around Paisley and Row. Some members of my Wilson and Duncan clans emigrated to America (Philadelphia, still the nation's capitol) around the turn of the nineteenth century. Alexander Wilson, the brother

--The Adventure Begins--

of ancestor Mary (Wilson) Duncan, became a published ornithologist and member of the American Philosophical Society.

ENGLAND

SUNDAY, MAY 21

We stopped just long enough at Amsterdam's Schiphol International Airport to change planes. Between Schiphol and Heathrow airports we sat beside a young woman by the name of Sam (Samantha), originally from a town on the southwest coast of Devon. She was on her way home after seven months of working at a hostel in Australia and two weeks of visiting friends at San Juan Capistrano, California. We had a long conversation, during which it came out that her father had a business selling expensive, cheaply-made souvenirs to tourists who happened into their town.

Though an interesting person to talk with in her own right, Sam's character showed a flaw when she made several off-hand, negative, racial comments about dark-skinned immigrants to her country. These remarks especially offended Eric, since he is a dark-complexioned Filipino. She was neither embarrassed nor circumspect in her racial observations.

Sam was from the area (Devonshire) that produced another branch of my lineage, the Blysse family. The Blysses became members of the Puritan movement and thus suffered greatly, along with many others, due to politically-focussed religious persecution against the sect. They finally fled the violent conspiracy executed by England's King Charles I and his men, landing in Massachusetts during the years 1635-36. The family changed its name to Bliss in the process. One martyred ancestor, Jonathan, died in prison shortly before his son, Thomas, brought my branch of the family to Braintree, Massachusetts, in 1636.

We arrived at London's Heathrow International Airport at 1:30 o'clock P.M. GMT (Greenwich Mean Time). When approaching to land, the pilot announced that we were flying past Windsor Castle just to our left. Most of us took a look-see. Windsor Castle was truly beautiful in a rugged, Medieval sort of way. Near it snaked the River Thames. I couldn't believe that the Monarch of Great Britain lived (at least occasionally) in a castle located along the landing path of jumbo jets. (A few days later, when Eric and I were at the castle on a tour, the planes coming in were deafening. Our tour guide had to wait for the din to subside.)

After landing and going through the passport checkpoint we made our way to the luggage area. It was there we encountered our first troublesome incident. Our luggage hadn't arrived with us. We were now required to fill out missing luggage forms for the baggage control attendants. Meanwhile, the attendants assured us there was a good chance that our luggage would come in on the 2:30 o'clock P.M. flight from Amsterdam, and that we should wait. Otherwise, we would need to leave them our address in London for notification when the missing parcels arrived. Eric and I decided to find a hotel near the airport in the eventuality that the 2:30 flight didn't have our things. We went to the airport's tourist information booth and made reservations at a nearby hotel. About an hour later the baggage and we were reunited.

By now I had been up for twenty-four hours and was about ready to drop. We collected our truant possessions and caught a taxi to the Ariel Hotel. I didn't expect trouble to come from our cabby, but it did. We went to the first in a long line of taxis. When we got in I said "The Ariel Hotel." At this announcement, the driver became agitated that we should trouble him, and make him lose his place in line, for such a short distance. He suggested we take a hotel bus. Practically speaking, Eric and I were tired and had been through a lot with the baggage situation. The last thing either of us wanted was to go searching for busses at a strange airport.

The cabby finally gave up and took us where we wanted to go. On the way he showed us the neighborhood, some of which, I noticed, we passed more than once. By the time we finally traversed the "short" distance, our cab bill total was high. The driver was more than a bit taken aback when I paid him the overblown fare and thanked him for the "tour." I could see the humor in the whole episode so even tipped him for the entertainment.

At last we entered our room at 4:00 o'clock P.M.² I immediately collapsed into bed and took a four hour nap. Eric did likewise. Then I got up, showered, put on clean clothes, and the two of us walked to a little village just up the street. At a take-out restaurant run by Indians we bought steak and kidney pies (about the same size as pot pies) and chips (French fries). At another store we bought a bottle of mineral water, the first of many purchased during the vacation. We took the results of our foraging back to the room and ate while watching news on the telly. That was about it for this spilt-over first day.

One of the first things I noticed after arrival in this country was that everything appeared to be built on a smaller scale than I was used to in the United States. Cars were compact. Brothers Grimm fairy tale houses and apartment buildings tended to be small and narrow, streets narrow, shops cramped, etc.

Something else I noticed was a sign at the bus stop near the hotel, similar to those I would find all around London, which proclaimed "Bus Stop Request." It wasn't just "Bus Stop." (Was it mere politeness, or was it nothing taken for granted?)

MONDAY, MAY 22

We were up by 8:00 o'clock A.M., checked out of the hotel, and returned to Heathrow Airport, this time via bus. We made reservations through the tourist information center for a hotel room close to the center of London. While there we also decided to book passage on Air France to Paris and Rome - London to Paris May 25th and Paris to Rome May 29. This would give us three full days in each locale separated by one transition day for the flight and all things attendant, i.e., preparation for flight, flight, finding a hotel, becoming oriented in, and adjusting to, each new locale, etceteras.

Each time we landed in a new city/country we found a hotel as first priority. In London and Amsterdam, making hotel reservations was easy thanks to a visitor center hotel reservations desk located at the airport. Where we landed in Paris and Rome, however, the visitor centers did not provide that service. Finding the tourist hotel reservation desk in those cities required taking a bus into town.

Once our future plans were solidified, and we had bought tickets for the next two legs of our journey, we each bought a one day "TRAVELCARD" at the London Transport desk. This would allow us one day's access to any bus or Underground (what New Yorkers would call a subway) during off peak hours (all day Saturdays, Sundays, Holidays, and after 9:30 o'clock A.M. Monday through Friday). Cost: £2.30 or \$3.84. We initiated the card by taking the Underground from the air terminal into London, with Marble Arch as our destination.

² Ariel Hotel; room #134; £48 per night/2, or \$40 each; erratic light in hallway; address: Bath Road, Hayes, Middlesex, UB3 5AJ Tel. 01-7592552; Telex. 21777; Fax. No. 01 564 9265

Taking the Underground turned out to be a mistake for every reason except experience. We were required to transfer three times to different Underground routes. Each transfer meant carrying our luggage up or down long flights of stairs. The Airbus, a double-decker that traveled to and from Heathrow Airport from downtown London, would have used the same TRAVELCARD and taken us right to Marble Arch, with stops en route at other hotels, of course. (We learned our lesson and would take the Airbus to Heathrow later in the week for our flight to Paris.)

The Underground began underground and soon swooped to the surface for awhile, occasionally resubmerging and surfacing again. We could see much of London's outskirts during the trip, though I became a little dismayed by the train's violent sway side-to-side. The transfers were made successfully thanks to Underground line map murals in each train car. Eventually we lugged our luggage to the surface for the final time. We exited onto Oxford Street across from Marble Arch, one of London's many monuments, located at the northeast corner of Hyde Park.

As we faced Oxford Street from the Underground's exit, to our right was a McDonald's hamburger establishment. To our left was a Colonel Sanders chicken place. Just like home. Our hotel was a couple of blocks away, so we passed the Colonel's and headed east. It was a left turn onto Portman, then one block and a right turn onto one-block-long Granville Place. Immediately before us stood the picturesque, Edwardian-style Savoy Court Hotel.³ We would stay here the remaining three nights in England.

Our first room at the Savoy was stuffy and had a single window facing an ugly, multi-storied, dirty red-brick building across a narrow alley. Protruding from our neighbor structure were two large and noisy air conditioners. The next day, the disturbance they created all night inspired sleepless Eric to request we be given a different room. Management complied, and we moved to one off the front of the building. We now had two airy windows overlooking the narrow street out front. Though of a different kind, there was still plenty of noise from the traffic and other carryings-on occurring on Granville Place and on Oxford Street a block away.

Night noise never bothered me. Whenever my head hit the pillow I was asleep. Eric wasn't so lucky. He complained that he didn't get a single good night's sleep throughout the vacation. There were a few nights when he resorted in taking sleeping pills, but they only helped marginally and always left him with a "morning after" hangover.

The second room was cooler, airier and larger, but the floor in the hallway groaned and squeaked whenever anyone passed over them. This would have been a good time to tell of English ghost stories about headless Anne Boleyn and such. The only building I was in during the vacation having floor boards that sounded as bad (or worse) was the Louis XII wing of the Chateau de Blois in France.

The second order of business, once we were established in our room, was to get acquainted with the area. I had bought an excellent map book of London and surrounding areas from the bookstore at the Ariel Hotel. Armed with this guide we set off on an expedition. Since we were just a mile and a half from Buckingham Palace, we decided to make that our first walking goal.

³ Savoy Court Hotel; room #206 (changed to #221); squeaky floors; £45 per night/2 = \$38.00 each; address: 19 Granville Place, London W1H 0EH; Telephone: 01-408 0130; Telex: 8955515

WALKABOUT LONDON #1

We had a little lunch on Oxford Street at an awful place, with worse food, libelously called "American Burger." It was then south by way of Park Lane, a street following the extreme east border of Hyde Park and the extreme west border of Mayfair District, London's most expensive and exclusive area. A few blocks and we passed the Grosvenor Hotel, which was being guarded by several bobbies⁴. The taxi curb was blocked off by orange cones and was also guarded by bobbies. Apparently some dignitaries or royalty were staying there, as the condition remained the same until Wednesday.

Eric said the crowds of people on the streets reminded him of New York City. Traffic was moderately heavy, though that day it flowed almost effortlessly. In comparison with drivers of motorized vehicles, pedestrians were conspicuously second class citizens. Pedestrians went out of their way in deferring to their "betters" when crossing streets. Wherever possible, subways (underground walkways) were provided to reduce the number of pedestrian/vehicular confrontations. Some subways were complex, maze-like tunnels exiting onto sidewalks of numerous intersecting streets. Some of the more complex subways were beneath Hyde Park Corner, a little traffic island park at the lower east extremity of Hyde Park. The surface area was home to an assortment of statuary, and an Arch, dedicated to the Duke of Wellington of Waterloo fame. Roads converging into Hyde Park Corner turnaround were Knightsbridge, Park Lane, Grosvenor Place, Constitution Hill, and Piccadilly. When we finally wended our way through the maze of intersecting subways and reached Constitution Hill, we found it was a mere half-mile walk up that road to the front of Buckingham Palace.

When walking east down Constitution Hill Road toward the palace, on our left was Green Park -- acres of beautiful, tree-lined lawns with numerous adjustable wooden, cloth-seated lawn chairs standing about. At first I figured the chairs were provided *gratis* by the city. I later discovered, when I sat in one, that a user was to pay a 35p (35 pence or \$.58) rental. Collectors kept watch for new sitters then came around to extract the fee.

To our right were the walled and private 40-acre Buckingham Gardens. Straight ahead, peeking through the trees as we approached, was the golden top ornament of the Queen Victoria Memorial standing in a traffic turnaround directly in front of the Palace. Although the 600-room Buckingham Palace was now the official residence of Her Majesty the Queen, Victoria was the first Sovereign to live there. As Buckingham House, built in 1703, the edifice was purchased by King George III in 1762 and later remodeled and altered by John Nash for King George IV.

There were a few bobbies standing along the fence that separated the palace and grounds from the sidewalk and street. On each of the three gates allowing restricted entrance to the compound was an ornate royal emblem. Two of these were beautifully kept, shiny and well-polished. The third was left darkly tarnished and unattended. Within the confined area, across the parade ground and on each side of the palace entrance, stood two royal guardsmen holding rifles. They wore traditional red uniforms with black boots and tall, black fur hats. Standing rigidly at post, their only protection from the elements were small guard stations or booths. Though the

⁴ The term "bobby" is an informal designation for a London police officer which dates back to Sir Robert Peel, the man who set up the Metropolitan Police system of London in 1828.

booths might protect guards from direct sun and rain, they helped little against the 90 heat and high humidity lavished this day.

To me, the palace wasn't particularly ornate or impressive, though it was definitely large. In my opinion the primary reason it was used as a royal residence was it's proximity to Legal London. From the palace one could see the clock tower housing the bell called Big Ben in the distance just above the treetops of Green Park.

Windsor Castle, twenty miles from Legal London, was the Queen's favorite place of residence. She frequently stayed there as her weekend retreat. However, the Queen didn't own either Buckingham Palace or Windsor Castle. They belonged to the state, and their use went with the Crown. The same was true of the Crown Jewels housed in the Tower of London.

Eric claimed that he saw Her Majesty leave the palace grounds in an old-styled, black, chauffeur-driven English version of a limousine on that first day. I was around the corner taking a picture through the fence and missed it. If it was the Queen, she may have been going to Windsor Castle. The Royal Pennant, signifying the Queen in Residence, was flying above Round Tower when we toured Windsor the following day. However, I doubt that it was her in that lone car. It's unlikely the Queen of England and Great Britain would be tooling around London in a single automobile. Normally she only travels *entourage*.

A little after 3:00 o'clock P.M. we left the palace area and returned up Park Lane to a spot along Hyde Park near Marble Arch, where several tour busses were lined up. We booked a tour with the London Sightseeing Tours LTD and climbed to the open top deck of a double-decker bus. The following is a list of places seen during our whirlwind jaunt through London:

- o Marble Arch, designed by John Nash based on the Arch of Constantine in Rome. Originally built in front of Buckingham Palace in 1828, it was moved to the northeast corner of Hyde Park in 1851.
- o A little west of Marble Arch was the place for public executions from 1196 to 1783. Tyburn Tree, the first permanent gallows, was built here in 1571. With English efficiency it could hang 21 people simultaneously.
- o Mayfair District-- luxury quarter
- o American Embassy
- o Eisenhower's wartime headquarters
- o Barclay Square
- o The Queen Mother's Palace near Piccadilly Circus
- o Several of London's forty theatres
- o A small section of China Town
- o Trafalgar Square, with its monument to Admiral Nelson, under permanent siege by hordes of pigeons
- o National Gallery
- o #10 Downing Street -- Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's official residence complete with bobby standing guard

- o 1000-year-old Westminster Abbey, where most royal marriages are performed and where numerous English royalty are buried; includes a few commoners such as Charles Dickens, Sir Isaac Newton, Rudyard Kipling, David Livingstone (I presume), and the Unknown Soldier
- o Palace of Whitehall, a one-half-mile-long building wherein resides the Houses of Parliament and where stands the clock tower of its famous bell, Big Ben
- o St. Paul's Cathedral, where Charles and Diana were married, (Diana was not allowed to enter through the front door until the day she married Charles and become royalty)
- o Home of Jane Seymour, 6th wife of Henry VIII
- o BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) corporate headquarters
- o On each street entering Legal London, at the border stands the statue of a dragon (symbol of London). When entering Legal London the Queen must stop at the dragon and ask the Mayor of London for permission to enter. In most instances permission has been granted.⁵
- o U.S. war memorial for the 23 U.S. soldiers killed on British soil during World War II
- o Stark and terribly austere Bank of London, where England's gold reserves are kept
- o New London Bridge (since the old one is in Arizona), and nearby H.M.S. Belfast of World War II fame anchored in the River Thames
- o London Dungeon beneath London Bridge (now a horror museum showing Medieval torture equipment/techniques)
- o The Monument, a tall column near London Bridge commemorating the 1666 Great Fire of London that began in nearby Pudding Lane
- o Tower Bridge (far more picturesque than London Bridge)
- o Tower of London, of which the oldest part, or White Tower, was built on a slight rise called Tower Hill by Gundolf, bishop of Rochester, for William the Conqueror around same time Windsor Castle was built. Both castles were used to keep invaders out and to keep Londoners under control. The 21-tower complex was built upon the ruins of ancient Roman fortifications. The Record or Wakefield Tower now holds the royal regalia, i.e., royal symbols and emblems such as crowns and scepters. Standing guard over the regalia and crown jewels are the Yeomen of the Guard, otherwise known as Beefeaters, still wearing uniforms designed during the Tudor period.
- o Cleopatra's Needle (on Thames Embankment), a 68 ft, 6 in., 80-ton, 3,000-year-old obelisk of red Syene granite from Egypt. (Cleopatra's Needles are a pair of obelisks originally erected at Heliopolis about 1475 B.C. by Thutmose III, King of Egypt. The "Needles" were later removed by the Romans to Alexandria about 14 B.C. In 1819 they were presented to the governments of Great Britain and the United States by the Egyptian ruler Ismail I. The larger Needle, being 69 ft. tall, weighing 200 tons, and supported by

⁵ London was celebrating the 800th anniversary of the political position "Mayor of London" -- 1189-1989.

four bronze crabs, went to the United States, where in 1880 it was erected in New York City's Central Park. This one came to London in 1878.)

- o The Albert Tavern, not far from Whitehall, named in honor of Queen Victoria's husband. Frequented by Parliamentarians, a bell in the pub rings to alert them when a vote is to be taken in Parliament.
- o Westminster Chapel, where Billy Graham likes to preach when in London
- o Enormous Victoria Station, once called "Gateway to the Continent"
- o King's Road, built by order of Charles I to speed the route to his castle
- o Dorchester Hotel, former Playboy Club and home away from home for movie stars (chief among them Richard Burton) and assorted royalty
- o The church whose steeple inspired a baker to design the tiered look which is now traditionally used for wedding cakes
- o Westminster Cathedral
- o St. Martin-in-the-field Church

The tour bus sped through London and surrounding areas without lighting long enough for us to get out and explore. It was sort of a *Reader's Digest* run through London, complete with tour guide rapidly spouting an unending fountain of information.

Afterward, Eric and I walked around awhile more before having dinner not far from the hotel. Our appetites sated, we again hoofed it, this time mostly down Oxford Street. We discovered in a side alley a small, quaint restaurant called "The Widow Applebaum's Deli & Bagel Academy." We decided to come back the next morning for the Widow's £2 breakfast of eggs, bacon, tomatoes, baked beans and toast.

TUESDAY, MAY 23

The next morning we got a late start. Eric had taken a sleeping pill the night before, and it knocked him out until almost 10:00 o'clock A.M. Once we were in motion, the first order of business for me was to exchange \$s into £s. I did this at the National Westminster Bank PLC on Oxford Street. Then we moseyed over to Widow Applebaum's for the £2 breakfast.

The basic breakfast price seemed reasonable. We soon discovered, however, that we'd be paying a premium for coffee, i.e., 70p (\$1.17) per cup without free refills.

This was to be the case throughout our stay in Europe. Some places charged twice the regular amount if you also wanted thick cream. To aggravate matters, sometimes the cups were of the small size typical for Turkish coffee. Admittedly, some brews were so strong that a second cup wasn't necessary -- even advisable. It wasn't until Paris, Rome and Amsterdam that a continental breakfast was included with our room. Then coffee was free and quantities unlimited during this one meal per day, if one happened to arrive for breakfast during the prescribed time.

The "inexpensive," £2 breakfast quickly turned into nearly £8 (\$13), once a few cups of coffee were consumed. However, on the bright side, the tables and chairs were located in the sunny alley busy with pedestrian traffic. The atmosphere was nice, and the food wasn't bad, either.

After breakfast we continued down this same alley, a narrow street with very little vehicular traffic. It was lined with numerous shops, restaurants, and other places of business accessible mainly by foot traffic. We kept to a southerly direction, taking alleys and other narrow streets through the Mayfair District, maneuvering towards Piccadilly Street and, ultimately, Buckingham Palace for the Changing of the Guards

En route we passed near the American Embassy and Roosevelt Memorial located at Grosvenor Square. We passed by Harrod's department store -- equivalent to J. L. Hudson's in Detroit or Marshall Field's Department Store in Chicago, if not larger (and prices more expensive) -- and saw numerous other interesting sights and people. We crossed Piccadilly Street to reach Green Park, then cut south diagonally across the Park to reach the palace.

It was after 11:00 o'clock A.M. when we arrived, and the Changing of the Guards was to begin in half an hour. Eric went looking for a good vantage point. Meanwhile, I walked over to the Royal Westminster Hotel nearby on Bressenden Place to book an afternoon tour of Windsor Castle and Hampton Court. When I returned, the guards had just marched in by way of The Mall and Birdcage Walk and were already within the fenced grounds.

The ritual Changing of the Guards has not altered in 150 years. Usually, when seen on television, an equestrian unit is shown. However, it can be conducted by the Grenadier Guards, the Coldstream Guards, the Welsh, Irish or Scottish Guards. I gathered by the royal red jerseys, kilts, bagpipes and such that today's event was being performed by the Scottish Guards.

The bobbies in charge of crowd control rode the only horses present. They were strict in regulating pedestrians near the three open gates. Also among their duties was stopping vehicular traffic long enough for the Guards to march in, and later, to march out of the compound. Otherwise, the bobbies were unobtrusive and unimposing.

The bobbies Eric and I saw during our stay in London were small, demur and polite people of both sexes. We figured that was why bobbies traveled in groups, sort of like the Keystone Cops of yesteryear.

The Changing of the Guards was conducted within the fenced confines of the Palace grounds. A tune was played with bagpipes, then another was played using other, more conventional wind instruments. There was some marching in ranks, with a few additional subtleties thrown in -- much of which was symbolic, I am sure.

To the extreme left of the parade grounds, within the fence and behind two Guards toting on their backs cloth-covered, portable military radios, was a group of people that may have included dignitaries and their families. They received a special salute from a solitary Guardsman, who marched the length of the grounds to a spot in front of the group delineated by a painted line. Here, the Guardsman stopped, lifted his sword in salute, lowered it, did an "about-face," and marched back across the grounds whence he came.

The ceremony lasted about twenty-five minutes in 90 heat. Then the two radio Guardsmen marched out of the grounds and up Constitution Hill Road. Shortly thereafter the

mounted bobbies stopped traffic before the Palace, and the remaining Guards marched past the Victoria Memorial and down The Mall, with bagpipes screaming in farewell. It was a nice ceremony, though I was a tad disappointed that: (1) the Guards hadn't been equestrian; (2) the ceremony had been held behind tall, iron fences that made picture-taking difficult. (A month later on TV news back in the States I saw a much larger crowd, as Englishers and tourists gathered there to honor the Queen's birthday.)

While the Guards marched away, Eric and I headed down Buckingham Palace Road to the Royal Westminster to catch the Golden Tours bus at half past noon. We waited until nearly 1:00 o'clock P.M. before learning that London traffic was horrendously heavy due to a one-day, display-of-power strike by Underground workers. The strike shut down the whole Underground rail system, forcing everybody who normally commuted that way to find alternate means, i.e., drive, or try and squeeze onto a bus that was probably overcrowded under the most normal circumstances.⁶ This predicament was bogging London traffic to a crawl, throwing Golden Tours' schedule to the four winds.

After we were finally picked up, the tour bus still had to stop at other hotels for additional tour goers. The whole process seemed to take forever. All the while our tour guide, a distinguished-looking gentleman in his mid-fifties, kept apologizing for the delay and for the bus not having air conditioning.

Previous to hearing about the strike I hadn't noticed any problem with traffic. Eric and I had steered clear of busy streets and had confined our walk to smaller ones. Also, we hadn't been in town long enough to compare current traffic with the normal flow. Now that we were caught in the morass, the adverse situation became apparent. Yet our bus driver was an expert at handling the bulky rig in constrained circumstances. He wheeled that thing around as if it were the size of a Volkswagen bug and the only vehicle on the road. No situation or maneuver was impossible for him to manage. He finally collected the last of the goers, and we began the slow process of heading west out of London on the twenty-mile drive to Windsor Castle.⁷

The further out of town we proceeded the less congested the roads became. At one point, as we were heading down Bayswater Road (what Oxford Street becomes when you travel far enough in a westerly direction), the tour guide announced that right behind us, in a green Maserati convertible, was the Duchess of Kent⁸ Shortly thereafter I saw her as she passed.

⁶ For more about London's commuter busses, see Footnote#14.

⁷ London and Paris (and to some extent, Rome) are famous for building huge and often beautiful monuments and memorials in the middle of major traffic intersections, creating what are called "turnarounds." These turnarounds are like traffic whirlpools, sucking vehicles in via the numerous feeding streets and exhausting vehicles out through the same streets. What goes on within the workings of these obstacle courses is something to behold, especially during heavy traffic, and any driver who can successfully maneuver through them repeatedly is, in my humble opinion, a match for almost any obstacle course known to Man.

⁸ The duchy of Kent includes Devonshire and the white cliffs of Dover among its holdings. Nowadays, its duke and duchess are best known internationally for their participation in opening London's annual Wimbledon tennis tournament and presenting the trophy at conclusion. They are on the Queen's "Civil List" and are paid annually for their appearances at the event. The current duchess happens to be a descendent of Oliver Cromwell, the commoner who sparked a much-needed civil war and lopped off the head of England's King Charles I.

The Duchess was the only royalty I knowingly saw during our stay in England. Later, I became saturated with "things royal" and the immense concentration of thought, power, and especially money everybody seemed to be pouring in that direction. I became distinctly anti-royalty in sentiment. The following are a few things our tour guide told us as we made our way through snarled roads:

- o Queen Elizabeth II is of the House of Windsor. The House of Hanover until World War I, the royal family's Germanic name was changed to Windsor in placation of the English people's anti-German sentiments. Denuded of all real governmental power, Elizabeth reigns supreme only over her family and economic interests. However, the latter is staggering. She is the richest woman in the world and fifth richest person in the world. (Those were the statistics in 1989. Where the fabulously wealthy rank in monetary standing with each other must change frequently, if not daily).
- o Rather than pay the English government an annual income tax [1989], Her Majesty tenders to Parliament £20 million. Then she submits to Parliament her "Civil List" of servants and royal personages who work, at least in part, for the country. Finally, Parliament gives several million Pounds Sterling back to the Queen for the purpose of paying those listed. Included on the list, besides staff, are royalty who regularly attend public functions or do so as alternates when called upon. Even members of the Queen's immediate family are included. The Queen's name is not on the list.
- o The Queen's personal treasure, i.e., jewels, valuable things of antiquity (including tables and chairs of gold and/or silver, King Henry VIII's armor, etc.), not including real property, houses and the like, is worth about \$600 million U.S. money. She has around \$4 billion in the bank.

QEII's total worth is probably incalculable. She owns part of London and several areas outside that city not to mention palaces, assorted estates, rental and commercial units, and horses (the keeping of horses being an abiding passion). So much of England's wealth flows into her pockets, or those of her family and other royalty, that this fact will probably result in further reductions in the part the Monarchy plays in British life. Personally, I hope it also leads to some kind of redistribution of the royal wealth.

It was mentioned that over 90% of the land in England is owned by 1% of the population. This drain of wealth must be damaging to the morale, if not the economy, of a once-wealthy country now shrunk almost to its pre-imperial size. Perhaps this drain is why, economically, Great Britain is barely afloat. Most importantly, people need to have their minds freed from concerns of what the Queen is having for breakfast, or where she'll be visiting today. Unfortunately,

⁹ QEII owns a horse breeding estate in Kentucky.

"England" and "Royalty" have become so interwoven internationally that the world's mind cannot easily separated one from the other.

Stories of English royalty, specifically things scandalous, are imported here to a point where Americans are increasingly more "English" in deference to royalty. Through contagious fascination, kindled feverishly by tabloids and TV yellow journalism, Americans are becoming "hooked" on that very institution whose implacable influence they once fought a revolution to expel from their country. We can probably also thank fairy tales, romance novels and Disney Productions for keeping alive the persistent allure of those "to the manor born."

In some countries royalty exists not as an end-all but simply as a respected (and not fabulously wealthy) institution. In Holland, for example, Queen Beatrix is a Constitutional Monarch who takes part in government ceremonies and occasionally makes public appearances. The people of Holland do not hang on her, or her family's, every word or movement. She is merely a well respected novelty and reminder of the good ol' days. That is all a twentieth-century monarchy should be.

We passed by the famous Eton Boy's School, the most expensive boy's school in the world, before arriving at the small castle village. We drove through the village to a large parking lot designated for busses, departed the bus and followed our tour guide towards the tourist entrance of the Windsor Castle complex. It was now about 3:00 o'clock P.M. We had until 4:15 o'clock to view the castle and grounds accessible to the public. Then we were to return for the continuing journey, including a stop at Hampton Court Palace.

A small, recently-built tower stood in the center of a plaza surrounded on three sides by shops selling snacks and souvenirs. A circular stairway wound its way upwards around the outside of the tower and emptied onto a covered ramp leading to the next layer of shops, restaurants, and the castle, itself. (An elevator within the replica-size tower was for those unable to climb.)

A railroad spur lay along the ramp's immediate right as one walked toward the ramp's far end and the castle. The Queen has her own train, and this is where it picks up and drops off royal and other important personages.

There were more shops and restaurants, plus numerous royal exhibits including Queen Mary's Doll House, once we exited the ramp onto land again. We followed a pedestrian road between buildings in what used to be castle stables, or mews, until coming out into a sunny expanse. From here, higher on the rise one could see Windsor Castle in all its ancient and present glory.¹⁰

Our tour of the State Apartments concluded, and having been duly overawed (as might be expected after being exposed to so much of historical note and immense value and antiquity in but a short span of time), Eric and I wandered over to a nearby fast food restaurant. A McDonald's was one of the tourist businesses established in the mewsstructures. There, we ate expensive

¹⁰ For a description of our castle tour, see Appendix A. Read works by William Shakespeare, and Winston Churchill's four-book series A History of the English Speaking Peoples for fascinating and informative accounts of Royalty and their Courts who lived there.

hamburgers and French fries. (Oops! In England fries are called chips. To misquote Shakespeare, "McDonald's fries, by any other name, taste the same.")

Now it was time to head back to the tour bus, so we window-shopped our way. However, prices were "out the roof" even more so than in London. The articles stayed in their windows.

We arrived at the bus on time, but it took another twenty minutes or so before everybody had returned. Meantime, the bus was truly an oven. Finally we began to roll, and air at last moved through the coach. Soon we passed through Runnymede and saw a memorial on the site where King John signed the Articles of the Barons. This was the document that initiated a process of evolved manuscripts eventually to become known as Magna Carta. Nearby was a piece of property deeded to the United States of America by Great Britain in memory of President John F. Kennedy. It held a memorial to JFK and his attempted version of Camelot

We were not allowed to go inside Hampton Court Palace. It was still being used in various capacities. A stone plaque below one large, second story window at the rear of the palace had carved into it the initials "ER" (Elizabeth Regina) and the year "1568." This window was from the suite of rooms used by Queen Elizabeth I when in residence at Hampton Court.

Some time before, fire had badly damaged part of the structure that the dual Monarchs, William and Mary, had commissioned rebuilt to their specifications. Scaffolding was still erected along the damaged outer wall. Yet the majestic, red brick and stone facade of the original structure that Cardinal Thomas Wolsey had commissioned to be built was breathtaking. Likewise, its 44 acres of yards and gardens.

Of all the castles and palaces I had seen, this one captured my fancy above all others, even Windsor. The tour guide took us around the circumference of the 1,000-room palace. In the process we were treated to a view of constantly and lovingly manicured yards shaded by conical-trimmed trees, colored with flower gardens, and festooned with an occasional, spraying fountain. As counterbalance to the beautiful-yet-stifling, tightly managed formal style, behind a fence to one side was a stretch of yard allowed to grow wild.

During our walk we also saw a grape vine, its trunk the size of a large tree. The young vine was a gift to the Hampton Court occupants of the time and had been planted in the 1600s. We were told it still produces a profusion of grapes that are extraordinarily delicious. For obvious, practical reasons we weren't allowed into the palace's famous, bush-lined labyrinth

The guide pointed out the numerous chimney pots standing tall on the palace's roof. Each had a pattern design different from all the rest. At one time, when sumptuary laws were especially virulent, the number and variety of chimney pots were ways of subtly displaying ones wealth.

The tour guide told many interesting tid-bits about the royalty who once lived at Hampton Court. It is said that King Henry VIII was so awed when he saw the palace that he asked Wolsey why he had built such a magnificent edifice. Cardinal Wolsey, thinking fast and knowing his favor with the king was waning, said something to the effect "why, for you, Your Majesty." And that was how it came to be royal property.

Though no walls surround Hampton Court, it has been a favorite residence of many English Monarchs. Besides its beauty and sense of warmth, Hampton Court is near London, making it a quick journey from one to the other. It was King Charles I's favorite.

Charles I had quite a history with my early family, since it was he and his policies against Puritans and Parliament that forced my Blyss ancestors out of

England in the 1600s. Some Blyse family members got in the way during Charles' desperate attempt at reestablishing Absolute Monarchy and were thus trod underfoot. After years of persecution, imprisonment, torture and financial devastation, only escape to the Colonies kept them from complete ruin, possibly even annihilation. There was no escape to the Colonies for King Charles, however, when Oliver Cromwell foiled his plans and took his head shortly thereafter.

Now Hampton Court is residence for destitute royalty and widows of high ranking British officers By Invitation Only. We also got a glimpse at the ancient royal tennis court located on the second floor of one wing. It was designed for a different kind of tennis, where the ball can be hit along a sloping wall to ones opponent besides across the net -- a kind of tennis and racquetball mixture. A game was in progress while we were there.

Time came for us to leave on the long return to London. The day had been fraught with history. Substance, clarity and sometimes correction had been added to many things only read or heard about before, and discoveries were made. When we finally arrived at the Savoy close to 8:00 o'clock P.M., Eric and I walked over to Kentucky Fried Chicken near Marble Arch and let the Colonel provide our dinner.

WEDNESDAY, MAY 24

We were up early today and out of the hotel by 8:30 o'clock A.M. We made our way east down Oxford Street, with my stopping again at the National Westminster Bank for a \$to-£ exchange. Next we revisited the Widow Applebaum's establishment on South Molton Street. Besides coffee, Eric had the £2 breakfast and I had a piece of apple pie.

WALKABOUT LONDON #2

After breakfast it was back to Oxford Street, where we continued east towards Legal London in the direction of the British Museum. Although the distance was less than a mile and a half, it took us awhile to arrive. We did a bit of window and other shopping along the way. We finally reached the intersection where Oxford Street becomes New Oxford. Here we turned left up Tottenham Court Road one block and right onto Great Russell Street. We followed this a few blocks until reaching the museum¹ entrance.

The facade to the museum was magnificent in its high-columned, classical Greek style. In the front courtyard were several rows of benches facing the building. Many visitors rested on these benches or on the steps leading up to the entrance. Others stood in waiting areas while their tour groups slowly reassembled as stragglers exited the museum.

¹¹ There were fabulous museums in all the cities we toured. However, due to our constricted time schedule for each city, we early decided to leave them for other European visits and to spend our valuable time exploring each city, enjoying each unique ambience.

Upon entering the foyer we noticed an immediate temperature and humidity drop. Right off the foyer, was the entrance to the British Library portion¹². The remainder of the building was devoted to the museum's other artifacts.

Eric and I each headed our own way. My first priority was seeing the library portion, where I made a beeline for the glass-enclosed documents comprising the Magna Carta sequence. On display were the original "Articles of the Barons," two "Exemplifications," and the Papal Bull accepting England and King John into vassalage.¹³

¹² Although books, maps, papers and the like have always been on display in one section of the British Museum, the British Library was not formally created until an Act of Parliament in 1972.

The British Museum grew, as its artifacts and library sections vied for space in a building bulging at the seams. It was finally decided that a new building should be built exclusively for use by the library, to house the printed material already in the British Museum and consolidate it with the overflow currently stored in other locations.

A site for the British Library building was purchased at St. Pancras in 1975, and construction was begun in 1982. Completion is scheduled for 1993, at which time there will be four basement storage floors to hold most of the collection plus eight floors above ground. There will be about 1,300 reader seats, a staff of 650, a computer controlled, electric trolley mechanical handling system, and an automatic book request system serving all reader and staff areas.

¹³ King John was a son of Henry Plantagenet (Henry II of England) and Eleanor of Aquitaine, and a brother of Richard the Lion Hearted. He was a grandson of Empress Matilda (widow of Henry V, Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire, daughter of Henry I of England and granddaughter of William the Conqueror).

Matilda, or Maud, had fought Stephen of Blois (England's King Stephen) in civil war for twenty years before succession to the English throne was granted to Matilda's descendants through the 1153 Treaty of Wallingford. Stephen, also a grandchild of William the Conqueror, was from the French House and County of Blois.

It was from Blois (pronounced BI'wa) that my Blyse ancestry emigrated to England early in the Second Millennium A.D. The name "Blyse" was itself a derivative of Blois, and the Blyse/Bliss family to this day claims both the Coat of Arms and Crest of the House of Blois.

John was the last and the least of Henry and Eleanor's five sons, yet he eventually succeeded to the throne. He was hated by his people, treacherous, and felt no constraints on his own will over them. He taxed mercilessly and made grievous inroads into whatever liberties to which the people and nobility felt they were entitled. At one point he made the Pope angry enough to Excommunicate the entire country. Excommunicated, John was exposed to all his enemies. Anyone having malicious intent against the person of John or the continuance of his reign would receive the papal blessing.

Forced under duress to see the error of his ways, John signed the "Articles of the Barons" at Runnymede. The document was reproduced and sent to numerous places of high authority. However, the copies were not exact, so they became known as Exemplifications."

When John once again began to plot against the barons, and ignored the terms of the "Articles," the barons prepared to finally rid themselves of the Royal Pest. It was then John pulled a brilliant feat that left his enemies standing slack-mouthed and impotent. In a cunning and surprising move, John offered himself and his entire country in vassalage to the Pope. The Pope eagerly accepted and immediately lifted Excommunication from his spiritual, and now also temporal, subjects. The Pope became John's protector, and England began to pay an annual "rent" for use of the country. Ironically, this "vassalage" was later a primary motivator for Henry VIII to break off from the Church in Rome and set up the Church of England, with himself the head. Consequently, England became of major importance to Protestantism by providing philosophy, precedent and support.)

Nearby was the original, handwritten manuscript to the religious and musical masterpiece "Handel's Messiah" plus more than one Gutenberg Bible. The list of all the books, manuscripts, maps, etc., would fill books. Suffice it to say there were many documents of historic and aesthetic import in those rooms.

From the library portion I entered the remainder of the museum and was further filled with wonder at the international history stored within. Every square foot seemed to house one or more priceless artifact from some long gone era and civilization: pottery to jewelry to clocks, watches and other time pieces of all sizes and descriptions, to utilitarian and non-utilitarian works of art including sculpture, statuary, paintings and the like, to mummies and sarcophagi *ad infinitum*.

The last important item I saw, just before leaving, and one which I took great enjoyment in actually touching, was the Rosetta Stone. This flat, black, basalt "tablet" was discovered by Napoleon Bonaparte's men in Rashid near the town of Rosetta, located in the Delta region of Egypt, where the Nile flows into the Mediterranean. The stone contains a decree, passed by the priests of Egypt assembled at Memphis about 196 B.C., honoring Ptolemy V. Epiphanes. The eulogy was inscribed in Egyptian hieroglyphics and then rewritten in demotic characters (simplified form of Egyptian hieratic writing) and Greek on the same slate. Using the Rosetta Stone, the meanings of Egyptian hieroglyphics could finally begin to be translated. The history of Egypt has been unravelling ever since.

After leaving the museum, the next few hours were spent on a walking tour of the Soho and St. James districts, with some highlights including a look-see at Leicester Square, Trafalgar Square and Piccadilly Circus. Certain areas of Trafalgar Square were literally covered with pigeons. Little children were having a wonderful time feeding the ravenous creatures, while a practical-minded feed vendor had his large umbrella launched against the inevitable aftermath. Piccadilly Circus was interesting enough, though construction was going on at the Circus, itself, so there wasn't that much to see. One thing obvious was that the Circus, which was basically nothing more than a traffic island, with access being allowed via underground subways, was a popular place to just "hang out." We also saw a famous store called "Lillywhites."

By late afternoon we found ourselves back at Green Park, where we each rented a 35p chair and rested a spell, while clouds gathered overhead. It was interesting to watch the people. Only a few sat in the rented chairs. Most sat either on the grass or on blankets. Many of those we saw looked like office workers as to how they were dressed, i.e., for the men -- suit and tie with or without coat. The women wore mainly office-style blouses and skirts. A majority appeared to be younger than Eric and I. But I suppose the older one gets the more people seem to be younger.¹⁴

During the reign of John's son, Henry III, the "Articles" were rewritten into the document now commonly known as the Magna Carta. Thus continued the curbing of royal power, small at first, which has contributed much to the tremendous freedom the world enjoys today.

¹⁴ Since I am on the topic of office workers, London was quite the place ~~not~~ to be trying to catch a bus between 3:00 and 5:00 o'clock P.M. London virtually emptied out in the late afternoon, which meant a whole lot of people had to be moved out to other areas, i.e., suburbs, etc. During this time period, Monday through Friday, one would see queues of workers, some lines stretching a city block, waiting for busses. One also would see a fleet of busses arriving empty then departing London filled to the max. This process of emptying the city appeared to be quite an operation. One might even call it a chronic reenactment of

We stayed for about forty-five minutes to enjoy the scenery but decided to start back when a light rain began. The return route was west on Piccadilly to Park Lane and then north. En route we passed a "Hard Rock Cafe," and Eric asked to have his picture taken in front using his camera. (We found at least one Hard Rock Cafe in each country we visited.)

The closer we came to the hotel, the more frequent the rain drops. Just as we arrived at the front door of the Savoy Court the clouds burst, and the next couple of hours in London were, to say the least, wet. Weather being the way it was, after the rain let up we spent the remainder of the evening exploring the neighborhood near the hotel.

Dinner was at a local restaurant called "Garfunkel's" (which turned out to be an expensive, English version of a typical American Denny's restaurant) before calling it a day.

Dunkirk (the French coastal evacuation of World WarII fame). This was how it was when transport workers were *not* on strike.

FRANCE THURSDAY, MAY 25

Today was the day we would say goodbye to England and hello France. We were up around 7:00 o'clock A.M. and packed. Then we took our last walk down Oxford Street, during which we each bought coffee and sweet rolls from a sidewalk vendor for breakfast. We also shopped a little, and I stopped again at the National Westminster Bank, this time to purchase francs.¹⁵ The exchange fee was expensive, however, because I first had to buy Pounds Sterling and then convert these to francs. The exchange rate at that time was 6.8 francs per U.S. dollar. I didn't like entering a country without having some of their money immediately on hand. Usually this philosophy proved to be a good one.

Eric and I checked out of the hotel and carried our luggage to a bus stop on the south side of Oxford Street, where an Airbus to Heathrow Airport stopped every 15-20 minutes. The nearly-one-hour-long ride to the airport was interesting in itself, although much of the route was the same as that taken when our tour went to Windsor Castle. At the airport we checked our baggage and made our way to the waiting area. We were now entering the phase of our odyssey which had most concerned me—the entering of a country where English was not regularly spoken and often not known by inhabitants. I had heard many comments by people who had been to France, or who knew people that had, and they all agreed on one thing: the attitude of the average Frenchman towards Americans and Englishmen is not good. Cooperation should not be expected and thus should be especially appreciated when received. Some natives who know English might still refuse to use it when approached by an inquiry-bearing American or Englishman. I hadn't noticed a lot of cooperation in England, so I was increasingly anxious as to how it might be in France.

The waiting area provided an immediate exposure to the situation of everybody speaking French. In the Air France waiting room, less on the plane to Paris, announcements made over the public address systems were first in French and then English. However, we would gradually be weaned of this convenience. We would find it advisable to rely more on forms of communication other than speech, although Eric's French/English dictionary would provide us with an invaluable communications resource. Also, the detailed maps of Paris we would obtain at the visitors' information center would help to limit the number of times we would have to ask directions!⁶

My anxiety as to how things might go in France was countered by the sheer excitement of going. This was the year of France's bicentennial. Since France was part of my heritage, it was no small pleasure to be there to help celebrate their independence from aristocratic tyranny. No longer being a Frenchman, however, there were numerous practical matters to consider. One of these was where we would be staying in Paris.

Air France Flight 813 arrived at Charles DeGaulle International Airport just north of Paris. We were met upon entering the baggage pick-up area by a banner reading "Welcome Americans." Although this would be the only overt sign of welcome, it made me feel better and more at ease.

¹⁵ I left my camera on one visit to this bank. I didn't realize it was missing until about four blocks later. Then it was a run at full tilt back to the bank, where the clerks were keeping it safe for me.

¹⁶ I had purchased French language instructional tapes a month or so before we left for Europe. I was hoping to get a good enough grasp of the language to communicate basic needs in French. A small aptitude for learning foreign tongues soon became evident, however. In the end I decided it would be better to disturb the French natives by using English than to offend and horrify them by abusing their beautiful language.

We retrieved our luggage and looked for a Visitors' Information booth to make hotel reservations like we had at Heathrow.

At such an information booth we discovered that we would have to go into Paris for hotel reservations. Thus we were directed to the visitors' center, or Office du Tourisme, at 127 Avenue des Champs Elysees near the Arc de Triomphe. We would take the Air France bus to Air France's Paris ticketing office. Then it was a walk of a few blocks to the Office du Tourisme.

I didn't like the idea of arriving downtown Paris without a pre-arranged place to stay. Yet that's likely to happen, and should be expected, when one travels impromptu. Hoping for the best, we boarded the bus and were off to the city which, at the turn of the twentieth century, was regarded as the greatest fortress in the world.¹⁷

The bus trip to Paris was interesting, though the sky was hazy. We were treated to a view of the northern border area of Paris, with all its apartments and other buildings. For much of the latter portion of the journey I could see the top of the Eiffel Tower (Tour Eiffel) in the hazy distance.¹⁸ We had arrived at the airport late in the afternoon. By the time we reached the bus's terminus, near the Arc de Triomphe, it was around 6:00 o'clock P.M.

The Arc, located in northwest Paris, was impressive in an outdated, neoclassic sort of way. Begun in 1806 by Napoleon I, it was completed in 1836 at a cost of \$2 million. The Arc stands 160 feet tall, is 146 feet wide and is adorned with bas-reliefs representing victories of Napoleon through colossal allegorical groups representing the Departure, War, Victory and Peace. Instead of spending a lot of time appreciating the arch, though, we were intent on getting to the Office du Tourisme and finding a place to set up shop, so to speak. Napoleon, forgive us.

The bus let us off at the Air France ticketing office. From there we made our way around the Arc de Triomphe (which sits on a traffic island in the middle of one of those famous turnarounds I talked about in Footnote #7). Of course, the Avenue des Champs Elysees was on the opposite side of the turnaround, so we would be given the opportunity to cross Avenue Carnot, Avenue MacMahon, Avenue Hoche, and Avenue de Friedland. (Had we gone the other way around we would have crossed Avenue de la Grande Armee¹⁹, Avenue Foch, Avenue Victor Hugo²⁰, Avenue Kleber, Avenue D'Iena and Avenue Marceau.) Then it was about a block down Champs Elysees before we arrived at our destination.

Avenue des Champs Elysees is a wide, airy street bordered on both sides by trees, stores, and by sunny restaurants, where a person can spend the day and evening sitting, sipping, and watching. We passed just such a restaurant on our way to the Office du Tourisme. The patrons

¹⁷ At one time the city was surrounded by a wall built in 1841-4 by order of Louis Philippe. The wall, having a glacis and moat 48 feet wide and protected by 94 bastions, was pierced by 57 "portes" or gates. After the War of 1870, several outlying fortresses encircled an area of 400 miles around Paris.

¹⁸ The bus entered through the Porte de la Chapelle. Then it traveled some distance down the freeway system that now encircles Paris over the ground once used for the city's main fortress wall (a wall which, it would seem from history, never repelled serious invaders). The area to our right, as the bus headed west, was considered the Peripherique Exterieur. To our left, into which we would soon be embarking, was the Peripherique Interieur, or Paris.

¹⁹ Further west on Avenue de la Grande Armee the street name changed to Avenue Charles de Gaulle, as it made its way to the location in the Peripherique Exterieur called "La Defense" across an upswing of the Seine River.

²⁰ Victor Hugo is quite the French national hero. There are streets, parks, and statues in his honor all over France. Example: in Blois, just north of the Chateau, is Place Victor Hugo.

looked so cool and collected as we huffed and puffed and perspired by. Then we finally arrived to find that several other visitors to France had beaten us to the draw, again so to speak. There was a line inside the office which extended to just outside the door.

All too soon it was past 7:00 o'clock P.M., and we still hadn't reached the front of the line. As 7:30 o'clock drew near, the people in line grew frantic, since the office would be closing soon. For those unable to obtain a room for the night, their immediate fate would be uncertain. One of the Tourisme people making phone calls to the different hotels inquiring about room availability announced that visitors not obtaining a room would have to leave the city for the night.

Near the end the only rooms available were for three or more people. Not far behind us in line were two British army fellows on their way back to England from Ceylon. Seeing that a group effort was called for, we threw in our lots together. During the final throes before the office closed the four of us accepted a room for three. Perhaps through negotiations with the hotel manager we could get another bed, even a cot, included.

Greatly relieved by our last-minute success in getting a room, we caught two taxis to our temporary home, the Hotel Magenta at 48 Bd de Magenta (Boulevard de Magenta). The Hotel Magenta was on the northeast side of Paris just south of Gare de l'Est (Station of the East -- train station and Metro (Underground) terminal location). The taxi ride took awhile, and it seemed that we were traveling quite a distance. However, rush hour traffic was hectic, and that made for slow going.

The taxi cost Eric and me 40 francs. The same distance cost Martin Pickford and Richard Carlion 45 francs. The extra five francs was probably a surcharge for being Britishers in France. Martin and Richard weren't pleased by the difference.

Just as we were approaching the hotel entrance with our baggage to check in, Eric's and my taxi driver tapped me on the shoulder and presented my wallet. I had left it in the cab. I will always appreciate his honesty. At the time I thanked him profusely and gave an extra tip.

Hotel Magenta was in a very old building. It wouldn't have surprised me to learn it was constructed during Napoleonic times. Now the four of us were assembled to descend upon the unsuspecting hotel manager. He was an elderly Frenchman with white hair and a good-natured, mustachioed smile. He spoke less English than we spoke French. Yet when he finally realized that we were changing the terms from a 260-franc (\$38) room for three to a 320-franc (\$47) room for four, he was all too happy to oblige. Unknown to us was the fact that the room we would be sharing was on the fifth floor, and there was no elevator. Fifth floor meant five flights of stairs, since the manager was on the ground floor, and the next floor up was the first.

We climbed stairs that seemed endless. The wheels fashioned into the bottom of my large, heavy, gray Samsonite® suitcase didn't help me now. By the time we reached the top my heart felt like it was going to burst from its rib cage. Martin and Richard were worse off than Eric and I. They had several pieces of luggage and had to make more than one trip. Their being ten or more years younger than us, and in better physical condition, didn't prevent them from gasping for air and collapsing in exhaustion at the end of their task.

By the way, Martin and Richard were close to seven feet tall and built like Nordic invaders of old. I felt like a midget in their presence, with my five-foot-eleven-inch frame. The sensation of feeling "small" was new to me and came as an uncomfortable surprise. They were a foot-and-a-half taller than Eric.

Once we were moved in I made a "Coke®" run to a nearby bar, where I discovered that Coca-Colas® each sold for the equivalent of three U.S. dollars. (The cheapest Coke® I ever

found in France cost the equivalent of one U.S. dollar per bottle). Ouch! And they were only 6 ounce bottles. Ouch again!

Price notwithstanding, I bought a few bottles and trudged them up to the room, where their contents disappeared almost immediately. Then we settled down to unpacking, using the facilities and getting acquainted. Eventually, Martin and Richard left to see the Pigalle, the area of Paris both famous and infamous for its forms of entertainment. There, among establishments normally found in red light districts, one could find the Comedie de Paris, the Bal du Moulin Rouge and other places of artistic and theatrical endeavor.

Eric and I would make our debut at the Pigalle in a couple of days. (Our Pigalle adventure starts on Page #39). For now we contented ourselves with taking a walk to buy some dinner, get acquainted with the neighborhood, and see where our hotel fit in the scheme of things. Nearby we saw a beautiful and busy building with "Gare de l'Est" imprinted in large letters above the entrance. Initially we had no idea of its purpose. Upon entering we discovered it was a large train station.

It had been dark awhile before we returned to the room for the last time that day. We toted bottled water and snacks to keep in the room.

What the room lacked in size and convenience it more than made up for in charm and inexpensiveness. The four of us paid \$11 each the first two nights, Eric and I \$19 each the second two nights. The building encircled a tiny courtyard, and the hallway leading to our room curved accordingly.

Once we entered the apartment's main door we were still in a hallway that continued to curve. The WC/toilette/bathroom was on the left just before reaching the access doorway to the actual room. Apparently, at one time the bathroom had been off the general access hallway and not included as a private facility for just one room.

The bathroom was spacious, though much of the space seemed wasted. For bathing it had a tub with a hand-held shower device that ejected water under low pressure. There wasn't a shower curtain, so the room's blue-tile floor was usually wet. There was also a stool, and a French window in a corner near the sink.

The main room had four beds, one in each corner. Martin staked claim to the bed next to the entrance, and Richard took the one by the French window on their side of the room. Eric got the bed near the other French window on our side, and I got what was left. There was a small bureau and a small writing desk among the furnishings -- the former between Eric's and my beds against the far side of the room and the latter between the two French windows. The tall windows shed welcome light and allowed mild breezes into the room. They also allowed a view of several other rooms which clustered around an opening that dropped to a cluttered courtyard below.²¹

The room was dominated by a huge, wooden armoire situated between Richard's and Martin's side near the door, and our side. It was against the opposite wall from the windows. Though functional for storage, the armoire didn't leave much space for moving about. In other

²¹ That night, and every night, we could hear a myriad of sounds emanating from the rooms around this opening. Since Paris is renown for its night life, many of the sounds persisted into the early morning hours. Laughter, talking, music, etc., wafted through the night air, as did light from the sixth floor landing (yes, there was a sixth floor). One evening we heard an oriental man teaching French to an oriental woman until well after midnight. A little boy speaking French kept piping in.

words, we were cramped the few times all four of us were in at the same time. Still, the room definitely had charm. Eric and I would later decide to remain even after our temporary roommates had left for London.

FRIDAY, MAY 26

Today we got a rather late start, what with one thing and another (mostly we got up late in recuperation from the hectic day before). While we are still sleeping, it might be a good time to talk a little about France in general and Paris in particular.

EARLY HISTORY OF FRANCE

The territory now known as France first appeared in history with the establishment, in 600 B.C., of the Phoenician colony of Massilia (now Marseille) along France's coastal area on the Mediterranean Sea. The Phoenicians called the natives of the surrounding territory Keltoi (Greek: "Celts").

The Celtic-speaking peoples of Western Europe called their domain Gaeltachd ("the land of the Gauls"). Some Gauls migrated easterly into the Alps and northern Italy, thus extending their perimeter and influence. Their contact with Italy resulted in frequent skirmishes with the Romans until Gaius Julius Cæsar defeated them to conclude an eight-year war. Subsequently, the Gallic territory became a Roman province and remained so for hundreds of years.

Roman rule brought stability, which disintegrated along with Roman power in the fourth and fifth centuries A.D. As the Gallic territory's Roman military integrity diminished, the area began to experience intensified invasions by outsiders. Among these were the Teutonic tribes, Visigoths, Burgundians, Franks, Angles, Saxons and Jutes. Even Attila the Hun made incursions into the territory. Attila was defeated, however, at Châlons-sur-Marne, a town less than 200 miles east of Paris. The task was accomplished through combined military forces led by a dwindling, yet still existing, Roman army.

Shortly after the Hun expulsion, the Franks ascended to power and dominated the other tribes. The Merovingian dynasty of Frankish kings lasted until after Charles Martel pushed the Muslims (Moors) back into the Iberian peninsula in 732 A.D. Then the scepter passed to the Carolingian line.

The House of Carolingians soon made a fatal decision to cede large tracts of land to Rollo the Dane, leader of invading Norsemen who couldn't be budged, anyway. This ploy by Charles the Simple was to stop the invasion of marauding Vikings by creating a sort of back flow. Through turning some powerful Vikings into landed and titled subjects, King Charles hoped they would help stem future Norse encroachments to protect their own vested interests.

There was another aspect of giving land and power that Charles may or may not have pondered. Soon as the land was ceded, the Norsemen began plotting with and against each other to devour it. This gave the Franks some breathing space, while the Norsemen fought amongst themselves like dogs fighting over a meaty bone.

One of the early factions to leave the pack and carry away a chunk for itself was led by Thibaut I (a.k.a. Theobald) the Old. Called Thibaut the Cheat by his detractors, Thibaut I was founder of the House of Blois after seizing the County of Blois from the provinces ceded to Rollo. The power of the succeeding Counts of Blois was immense, and they held onto the

original land for centuries. They added more properties and influence through conquest, familial alliances and marriage.

The descendants of the rightful holder, Rollo the Dane, didn't give up without a fight. Yet eventually, in time for the invasion of England by Rollo's descendant William the Conqueror, the families were allied. (For more on the history of Blois, see the section named "Tales from the Viscounty of Blois," starting Page #32.)

Wise though the move to buy allegiance and unmock the Norse invasion may have seemed to Charles or to history, the old nobility didn't agree. After all, the original landholders of the ceded area, such as the original Counts of Blois, were now removed from their estates and titles. They took the scepter from the Carolingians and gave it to Hugh Capet, Duke de France, founder of the Capetian dynasty.

Although Capet was now king of France, he didn't have control of much territory until two occurrences helped diminish the constant threat by the Norsemen and nobility who kept him in check. The two occurrences were: 1) the Norman invasion of England in 1066 by Rollo's descendant William II, Duke de Normandy, which diverted the Norsemen's attention away from France and toward establishing a stronghold in England; and 2) the first Crusade, which cost its leaders their lives and/or their fortunes.²² These twists of fate gave Hugh Capet and his descendants opportunity to unite the country under a strong, Frankish rule, which in turn promoted establishment of a national identity.

MORE ABOUT PARIS

As to the advent of Paris into historic record we can thank Gaius Julius Cæsar and his Commentaries. He described a village by the name of Lutetia as a collection of mud huts composing the chief settlement of the Parisii, a Gallic tribe conquered by the Romans. The name of Lutetia changed to Parisii or Paris in the fourth century A.D., and in the sixth century was chosen by Clovis to be the seat of government.

In the tenth century Paris became the residence of Hugh Capet and thus the capital of the French monarchy. Under Capetian rule, Paris, which had fallen into disrepair and otherwise suffered under frequent invasions by the Norsemen, began to repair and grow, doubling in size and population by the end of the next two centuries. During the Middle Ages Paris was divided into three distinct parts, La Cité on the islands, the Ville on the right bank of the Seine, and the Latin Quarter, or University, on the left bank. (The reference point for determining "right" and "left" banks is the spot, facing the city, where the Seine enters in the southeast. Hotel Magenta is located in the Ville. La Cathedral de Notre Dame is on La Cité, and the Eiffel Tower is in the Latin Quarter or left bank.)²³

²² William II, Duke de Normandy, otherwise known as "William the Conqueror," became William I of England. Edward the Confessor was a cousin of William's and a house guest for many years while the Danes ruled England. Edward later became King of England, and after his death in 1066 William II invaded England and seized the throne. (William had to fight for his very existence in Normandy after his father, Robert II, died in 1035. While King of England William had to war against his own son Robert to retain Normandy.)

²³ Paris is located on a small, level plain called the Paris basin about 200 feet above sea level and is surrounded by low hills. The Seine River enters the city from the southeast, bows up through the city's center, then leaves from the southwest only to once again swerve upward to follow the city's western-most

WALKABOUT PARIS

Eric and I are up now. We didn't leave the room until about 10:30 o'clock A.M., which meant we missed the continental breakfast served at the hotel²⁴ Thus, we climbed down from our tower and wandered out into the street on this mild-though-slightly-overcast day. Breakfast at a nearby sidewalk café consisted of a croissant, a small loaf of French bread and very strong coffee.

Continuing southeast on Bd de Magenta we soon hit the Place de la Republique where the statue of a woman holding high a sprig or branch dominates the e'toile²⁵ We then proceeded southeast on Bd du Temple, which changed to Bd. Beaumarchais before reaching Place de la Bastille. Here, a tall column lifted a golden angel high into the air over the spot once dominated by the dark and evil Prison de la Bastille long since demolished. Far below the angel, the outline of the Bastille's perimeter was traced on the e'toile and street using a different colored pavement brick. Nearby I purchased some francs at the Paris-Bastille branch of the Banque de France.

From the Place de la Bastille we traveled west by southwest down Henry IV to the beautiful Seine (pro. "Sane") River, with its numerous ponts (bridges).²⁶ We crossed the Pont de Sully to reach the Ile Saint Louis. We then walked northwest through the center of the island down Rue Saint Louis, enjoying the ancient buildings (mostly houses/apartments, stores and restaurants), narrow streets, and undoubtedly French ambiance.

Next we crossed the Pont Saint Louis to reach the Ile de la Cité, walking up Rue du Cloitre Notre Dame that runs along the northern wall of the Cathedral de Notre Dame. I especially enjoyed the back end of the Cathedral, with its strong yet lacy flying buttresses and quiet, green yards, colorful flowers and spouting fountain. However, most of the tourists and tourist busses were located near the Cathedral's front.

We soon were in line for a climb to the Cathedral's roof via the north tower. In line were tourists from America, Deutschland, Britain, France, Italy, and some oriental countries. The climb cost us each about 20 francs (a little over \$3). Then it practically cost us our lives climbing up, and up, and up . . . The narrow stairs, made from stone now deeply grooved from centuries of scuffing pilgrims, ascended steeply in a circular direction between dark stone walls. The only light illuminating the stairway came from occasional and very small windows. At one point two ladies met us as they were heading down. Unbelievably, they were able to squeeze past us. No room to pass was the reason they weren't supposed to exit that way.

We finally made it as far as the stairs would take us. Then it was out onto a platform which spanned the entire width of the Cathedral's facade. There to meet us, besides a number of dawdling, chattering tourists snapping away with cameras, both still and video, were numerous

boundary until finally swerving west, where it continues on its oxbow way. Analyzing the material of its foundation, the Paris basin must once have been a lake.

²⁴ The breakfast wasn't included in the room rate. Partaking of it would have cost an additional 40 francs (about \$6).

²⁵ E'toile is a place where several streets meet. The root meaning is "star."

²⁶ The Seine is similar to the Thames in the way it oxbows through the city. Their widths are also similar. One difference--the Seine has higher retaining walls than does the Thames.

ugly, grinning, ferocious-looking gargoyles. Those stone monsters had probably put a shiver and inspiration for religious devotion into the souls of many tourist predecessors.

Evil gargoyles notwithstanding, the view of Paris from this height was magnificent, even though the air was heavy with visibility impairing moisture. Around us could be seen, for a limited distance, a sampling of Parisian architectural beauty. There appeared to be one or more palace per city block, although logic dictates that many of those buildings were strictly utilitarian.

Included in the panorama of edifices were a few other churches, on the left and right banks of the Seine, each also having beautiful flying buttresses. At the other end of the Ile de la Cité stood the Palais de Justice, or Conciergerie, which looked splendid enough to have been the Palais du Louvre.

It finally came time for us to leave our observation post. We sortied (exited) down the south tower, which had a similar complement of stairs as the north tower. (This time we didn't meet anybody going the wrong direction). Reaching bottom we went to the fountained park across the street in front of the Cathedral and sat for a short spell, enjoying the view of the Cathedral, surrounding area, and the interactions between tourists from all races and walks of life.

Then nature began to call. Eric and I both heard it. So we looked around until finding where an underground toilette facility was located at one corner of the park. Entering, we discovered it was one of those restrooms where you had to pay for the privilege of its use. For women it was just one price. But for men there were two prices, a lower one if you only had to use a urinal, and a higher price if you needed to sit on a loo, or stool. At least sitting allowed for privacy behind closed booth doors. However, standing required being in plain view of the ticket taker (which just happened to be a woman) and anyone else who happened to be in line, with only a small barrier indifferently assisting one's privacy. Although it didn't deter me from making a public spectacle of myself I'm sure many other men opted for the booth doors at any cost.

Nature having been satisfied, however rudely, we walked back over to the Cathedral for a look at its interior. It was dark and smoky inside. A small amount of diffused light filtered through ancient and beautiful stained glass windows. There were some low-profile lights sprinkled around, especially near the high vaulted ceiling. Also shedding illumination, though mostly smoke, were banks of lit candles located in different areas of the main chamber. For 10 francs one could buy a candle, light it, and insert it on a stand to burn itself out along with many others of its ilk. Nearly everybody bought and lit a candle, including myself. What a surprise! Oh well, when in Paris, do as the Parisians (and tourists) do.

I enjoyed the Cathedral interior. There were sculptures, statues, paintings and other works of art in abundance. Besides the Looky-Lew's such as myself, there were many devout who may have been on religious pilgrimage. My own enjoyment was strictly lay. The titanic yet graceful lines of the Cathedral's structure, to me, were profound examples of what people can do when truly inspired, no matter what the source. (Though the inspiration of God seems always to produce the best and most pronounced results, history proves over and over that Man should be more circumspect in determining the means to those results.)²⁷

²⁷ This little speech is not a reference as to how or why the Cathedral de Notre Dame was built. Talking of our visit has simply triggered some of my personal philosophy.

Where the gothic-style Cathedral de Notre Dame now stands once stood the temple of Jupiter Ceraunus. In 375 A.D. a Christian church was erected, and by the sixth century there were two churches on the locale. In about 1160 A.D. Bishop Maurice de Sully resolved to replace both old churches with one edifice grand enough to represent the capital of the kingdom. Work was begun in 1163, and various stages of the cathedral's development were finished over the next hundred years. King Henry II of England was buried before the high altar in 1189, and from 1182 to the present its chapels have carried out France's most important ceremonies of church and state.

We finally tore ourselves away and crossed back to the Ville, where we walked along the riverbank in a northwesterly direction. We did a little shopping at outside booths that followed the river's path, and at one of these I bought some coasters depicting the Cathedral. Then we crossed over to the left bank again for a ways until once again crossing to the Ville, this time via the Pont des Arts. As we crossed, before us loomed the extreme right portion of the Palais du Louvre.

By the time we reached the Louvre during the day's exploration I was becoming jaded as to french architecture. Too much grandness on too magnificent a scale. Thus, at the time I wasn't as impressed by La Louvre as I probably should have been. My tolerance level for grandeur was being pushed to the limit. However, the structure, which continued on down the Quai du Louvre (name of the street passing in front) for some distance, was *fabulous*.

Just before one reached the Jardin des Tuileries (Garden of the Tuileries), at the palace's extreme left end, was the entrance to the palace grounds called the Place du Carrousel²⁸. A short distance in was the courtyard, in the center of which was a newly-constructed glass pyramid. The tall, transparent pyramidal structure was a portal through which one entered to travel down a flight of stairs. Thus was how one entered the famous Louvre Museum. Unfortunately, there was a very long line. Eric and I decided a tour of the museum would have to await another day, since our time in France was precious.

At the entrance to the Jardin des Tuileries was a ticket booth, and within the jardin was an exposition to commemorate the 200th anniversary of the French Revolution. We could see men and women dressed in eighteenth-century garb walking about and attending booths along the concourse. Although the exposition was already open to the public, it was still under construction in preparation for the deluge of summer tourists and the planned events marking the world televised, July 14 Bastille Day celebration.

Bordering the extreme western end of the jardin, and located at the southeastern terminus of the Avenue des Champs Elysees, was the Place de la Concorde. In the center of the Place de la Concorde was the Luxor obelisk, brought to Paris from Luxor, Egypt, in 1836.²⁹ It was on this spot that the infamous revolutionary guillotine was located. Among its victims were Louis XVI,

²⁸ Where the Jardin des Tuileries now stretches for some distance there was once another beautiful palace called the Palais des Tuileries. It was connected to the Palais du Louvre by way of a picture gallery. The Palais des Tuileries was burned in 1871 by the Communards, who were trying to burn the entire complex. Yet the only portion of the Louvre destroyed was the library. The remainder of its treasures of art and antiquity were spared. Subsequently, the ruins of the Tuileries were removed and the Jardin des Tuileries sculpted to replace it.

²⁹ The entire 76 foot height of the Luxor obelisk is covered in hieroglyphics.

Marie Antoinette and a host of aristocrats; also Philippe Egalité, Danton and Robespierre, surprised casualties of a growing anarchy.

We crossed back to the left bank via the Pont Royal, continuing northwesterly along the Seine via the Quai d'Orsay until arriving at the renowned Musée D'Orsay where a special exhibition of Monet's paintings was being held.³⁰ After spending some time there we kept following the Quai as it passed the Assemblée Nationale and the beautiful parks of the Esplanade des Invalides (which is right across the Seine from the Grand and the Petit Palais des Beaux-Arts both exquisite structures built for the Exposition of 1900).³¹

For some time the upper reaches of the Eiffel Tower had been visible, and attaining the Tower was our ultimate walking goal. From there we would take busses back to our hotel, stopping first at the Office du Tourisme to pick up another map. My first map had blown into heavy traffic and was swallowed up.

We finally arrived at the Eiffel Tower, just beyond the Esplanade des Invalides, late in the afternoon. We entered the Parc du Champ de Mars midway between the Eiffel Tower, where the tree-lined park ends at the Seine, and the Ecole Militaire, at the park's southeastern extreme.³²

For a while we just sat on a bench to rest, enjoy the view and take pictures. Eventually we made our way to the Tower, where we remained for nearly an hour. The Tower structure awed me in the same way as had the flying buttresses of the Medieval churches we had been seeing all day. Despite the Tower's extraordinary strength, it looked delicate, and, to reuse an adjective, lacy. Unfortunately, when I went to take the series of elevators necessary to reach the tower's upper-most accessible area, I found the line to purchase tickets long, as was the line to actually take the first elevator. Between the long lines, the high expense, the very limited visibility the day was offering, and the lateness and darkening condition, I abandoned the thought of ascending the tower. As to walking up -- no comment!³³

We eventually caught a bus on Avenue de Suffren, a street that extends along the southwestern border of the Parc du Champ de Mars. After stopping at the Office du Tourisme and collecting a few maps, we walked across the Avenue de Champs Elysees and caught a #30 bus. This took us all the way to the Gare de l'Est and within a few blocks of our hotel.

While waiting for the bus at the edge of Place Charles DeGaulle E'toile, in the center of which is the Arc de Triomphe, I was nearly run over by a tiny police car speeding across the tree-studded, park-like area between the street and the main sidewalk. Apparently the Sûreté found this route quicker than fighting traffic in the e'toile. I heard the siren but couldn't see the police car until it was literally almost upon me.

³⁰ Museum D'Orsay.

³¹ At the southern end of the Esplanade des Invalides is the Hôtel des Invalides, founded in 1670 for disabled soldiers.

³² The Ecole Militaire was founded in 1752 and had been used as barracks for infantry and cavalry. The classically beautiful building is now occupied by the Ecole Supérieure de Guerre. The crypt of this church holds the sarcophagus, hewn from a huge block of Russian granite, containing the remains of the nearly unconquered Napoleon I.

³³ The 984-foot-high Tower was built by Alexandre Gustave Eiffel for the Paris Exposition of 1889. Prior to this he had designed the inner support structure for Frédéric-Auguste Bartholdi's 88-ton "Liberty," to be given as a gift from the French people to the American people. A miniature, 76-foot-tall statue based on Bartholdi's "Liberty" now stands in front of the Eiffel Tower on Île des Cygnes, an islet in the Seine.

The bus route took us across northern Paris and right through the heart of the Pigalle district. In fact, we went past the Bal du Moulin Rouge on Boulevard de Clichy. The area looked interesting, so we determined to return at least one night during our stay. Not tonight! Once back at the Gare de l'Est, we stopped at a Chinese restaurant near the station for dinner. Returning to the hotel at 9:15 P.M., we turned in early. Tomorrow we would leave the city for a look-see at the town of Blois, gateway to the Chateau region.

SATURDAY, MAY 27

We were up at a decent hour. Richard Carlion, originally from Wales, and Martin Pickford from York, England, were up even earlier to prepare for the last leg of their journey home. While they packed we discussed a few things such as the British Security Forces in Ireland (Richard had served as a member and thought the British military presence was a big mistake, only adding fuel to the trouble), and the late Richard Burton (who was of Welch origin).

The four of us hadn't done anything together as a group, but we had some interesting discussions, including those mentioned above. One especially engaging fat came out during a chat concerning Richard Carlion's surname as it relates to an Arthurian legend. A Welch Arthurian legend says the mortally wounded King Arthur was taken to Castle Carlyon prior to being spirited off to the island of Avalon, and that Carlyon had been one of his favorite residences. In return for the tidbit, I bemused Richard by telling that a friend of mine in California claims to be King Arthur reincarnate.³⁴ Soon the two soldiers departed to catch a taxi for Charles DeGaulle International Airport.

We were not happy to have Richard and Martin leave. Still, I was quick to grab the bed next to the other french window once they had vacated. Then Eric and I moseyed down to the first floor dining room, where we had the house breakfast of small loaves of french bread, an assortment of jams, and hot, strong coffee with thick, sweet cream.

Our stomachs satisfied, we left the hotel revelling in the beautiful, sunny day that greeted us. We headed northwest on Boulevard de Magenta to just past St. Martin's church, then northeast on Rue du Faubourg to Gare de l'Est. As we were making the turn onto Du Faubourg we noticed some men hosing down the sidewalk on our side using pressurized water. The hoses were attached to a tanker truck moving down the street at slow pace. It was immediately apparent that the men were not mindful of pedestrians sent scurrying to escape the blasts, so we thought it prudent to walk up the other side of the street. (In London you also want to stay clear of street sweepers. They suddenly attack street and sidewalk with disregard and brooms bulldozing before them.)

All train stations being equal, we figured to catch a train at Gare de l'Est for Blois. But no, it wasn't going to be that simple.³⁵ When we finally found someone who spoke enough English to explain, we discovered that all trains to Blois would leave from Gare D'Austerlitz

³⁴ Upon returning stateside I told the reincarnate friend about this discussion. He knew of Castle Carlyon through his hobby of researching into Arthurian stories (and perhaps through other, "inside" sources?).

³⁵ Paris does not have train tracks marring the beauty of its interior, though it has a great (and invisible) underground Metro system. To eliminate ugly tracks trekking through, several train stations were set up around the city's perimeter.

almost due south of us and on the left bank. Fortunately, there was a Metro terminal below Gare de l'Est, so we were soon on our way to the southern terminal.

At D'Austerlitz we surfaced and left the Metro terminal building, then walked a distance equivalent to a city block to the adjoining train station. It was again a matter of finding someone who spoke English to assist with our travel arrangements.

As good luck would have it, a man behind us in the ticket line overheard our dialogue on the question of how to make it understood that we wanted round trip tickets. We were frantically looking through Eric's French language dictionary when the fellow spoke up and said to use the word "retour."

The way the tickets worked, passengers were free to depart on any train stopping at their destination. We soon noticed that most trains leaving this station would be going to Blois. It was simply a matter of choosing the train departing the soonest. For us this was train #4011, departing Gate #8 for the hour-and-a-half trip at around noon, in about forty-five minutes. Meanwhile, we walked around and bought a few snacks from human vendors in the area³⁶ The station wasn't busy for a Saturday.

We entered a second-class car in plenty of time to find seats to our liking, Eric and I sitting near windows on opposite sides of the car. Then we were off on a new adventure, one which would take us nearly one hundred miles from Paris. Just before the train pulled out, an American couple sat down near me.

The seats were arranged perpendicular to the sides of the train, with every other one facing forward, and the others facing back. The husband sat next to the window facing me, and the wife sat next to me. I now played a game I found enjoyable (and not uncommon among Englishmen and Americans traveling in France). I did not let on that I was also an American, or that I understood their conversation. For all intents and purposes, I was a Frenchman.

The husband, apparently suspicious of my nationality, watched me as I looked at the passing countryside. Even while talking to his wife he watched me as if to catch some glimmer of understanding. Occasionally I couldn't help but smile a little, but all the time I watched out the window.

The wife, though demonstrating almost no accent, was originally from France. Her sister and brother-in-law would be meeting them at Tours where they lived. The husband was concerned about time tables and connections and things, and generally seemed anxious about travelling in a different country.

Meantime I watched the pastoral countryside go by, mostly open, flat fields with low, rolling hills and occasional groupings of trees, scenery not unlike that of Ohio or southern Michigan. At one point, I believe it was after we had left Orleans, the wife pointed out a nuclear generating plant located at a distance from the opposite side of the train. The husband caught me looking at the facility in response, so this confirmed his suspicions and marked the end of my ruse.

About twenty minutes before the train arrived in Blois I spoke up and asked the husband if they were from Chicago. He looked shocked and said they were from Indiana near Chicago. He asked how I knew, and I said it was his accent. Now the three of us began talking about travel in France and life in America, etc.

³⁶ During our European travels I noticed a lack of food/drink vending machines. One of the few I saw, a defunct, soft drink bottle vendor in the lobby of the Hotel Magenta, was ancient and probably hadn't worked in decades.

When Eric and I got up to leave at Blois the wife told me to be sure and see the Chateau. I looked back briefly and said something to the effect that I surely would, since my ancestors used to own it. I knew this would give them both something to talk and wonder about for years to come when telling of their French adventures.

TALES FROM THE VISCOUNTY OF BLOIS

Blois was first mentioned in historic record by Georgius Florentius (538-594), later known as Gregory of Tours, the celebrated ecclesiastic who wrote Historae Francorum Libri Decem or Ten Books of Frankish History, the first attempt at French history. Who knows how many centuries Blois had existed before then. As of the turn of the twentieth century the city was still supplied with water via a Roman aqueduct cut into solid rock.

The County of Blois existed well before the advent of Thibaut I and his House of Blois. Prior to the Viking onslaught the Counts of Blois were descendants of Dagobert II, greatest of the Merovingian Kings, King of Austrasia 623-34 and sole King of the Franks 632-39. Then the County became part of the lands given by Charles the Simple, King of the Franks, to Hrólfr, known as the Ganger, or Walker (a Norse chieftain and son of the Norwegian Ragnvald Morejarl), who had already taken possession of the area by force. Through the Peace of Clair-en-Epte about 911 A.D, Hro'lfr, known to history as Rollo the Dane, was granted Rouen and the adjacent territory.

One of Rollo's followers was Gelb, said to be a prince of Northmen, whose son Thibaut I the Old seized Blois from Rollo's heirs in about 940 A.D. and established himself as its Count. Though technically vassals of the newly-established Capetian Dynasty, and related to it through inter-marriage, the Counts of Blois were sometimes allies and other times enemies of the Frankish kings.

Ever expanding their territories at the expense of their neighbors, the Counts also continued to enhance their political prowess. When the County of Champagne was acquired by Eudes II, Count of Blois, they became an intimate part of the household of the Kings of the Franks. The Seneschal of France (steward of the royal household) was by tradition a member of the Count of Champagne's family, and this tradition didn't die out until about 1190 A.D.

With the joining of Blois and Champagne the King was nearly surrounded. Territory the King could control directly was a relatively small area around Paris called Ile de France. Yet the great Counties comprising most of France contained extensive land tracts.

After Robert II, Duke de Normandy, died, two of the most powerful Counts in France, Count Thibaut II of Blois and Godfrey Martel, Count de Anjou, unsuccessfully allied their forces with those of the French King Henry I to remove young William II as Robert's heir. Then Thibaut was slain by Godfrey Martel near Tours in 1043 A.D.

Thibaut's brother Stephen, Count of Champagne, Blois, Chartres and Touraine, now allied himself with William II. Stephen married William's daughter Adela and became part of the "Conqueror's" invasion of England in 1066. Stephen and Adela had the following offspring before Stephen died in 1101 A.D. while on Crusade:

1. Son Thibaut III received the County of Blois and was 3rd Count Palatine of Champagne. Upon his death in 1151:

-The Palatine of Champagne and Brie went to his first-born son, Henry, and eventually to the King of France, Philip IV, through Philip's marriage to Henry's great-granddaughter, Johanna.

-The Counties of Blois and Chartres went to second-born son Thibaut IV, whose daughter became Countess of Blois after his death about 1190 A.D. She married Gautier, Lord of Avesnes, in Hainault, leaving an only daughter, Mary, who married Hugh de Châtillon, Count de St. Paul, around 1230 A.D. Thus Blois passed to the House of Châtillon, and in 1397 was acquired by Louis de France, Duke d'Orleans.

2. Son Stephen, Count of Boulogne,³⁷ Mortaign, and King of England from 1135-1154.
3. Son Humbert, Count of Vertus.
4. Son Henry, Bishop of Vicester and, later, Winchester.
5. Daughter Maud, who married Richard de Abrineis, Earl of Chester, with whom she died in a shipwreck.

Ironically, at the very height of their power under Thibaut IV, the descendants of Thibaut I were plummeting toward the end of political power. One of the last great acts performed by the House of Blois was to build the chateau which, today, is said to rank among the finest in the Loire Valley.

Over the years, and especially during the 16th and 17th centuries when Blois was like a second capital of France. The old chateau was extensively remodeled, and its overall size expanded, until all that remained of the original structure was the main hall, where the States-General met upon occasion, and the Tower of Foix.

From long association with courtiers and noblemen brought about by the town finding royal favor, the people of Blois became known for their use of the French language. Although the French language had its basis in Roman "lingua vulgaris," or the low form of Latin spoken by the common people of Rome, this dialect was greatly modified by the French people over the centuries. The dialects north and south of the Loire River evolved separately and ultimately resulted in two separate and distinct languages. In the long run, however, the French dialect north of the Loire won out over the other, since the seat of government was located there.

In the 14th and 15th centuries, around the time of the Hundred Years War between England and France, French nationalism was inspired and growing, spurred by the conflict and by the aspirations and visions of Joan of Arc. In line with this nationalism the dialect as spoken in the royal court was becoming accepted as the national standard, a trend which Francis I (1494-1547), King of France, cemented when he created the Ordinance of Villers-Colleêts declaring that French, as spoken in Ile de France, especially Paris, was the official language throughout the kingdom.

It was about this time that a group of French poets known as the Pléïde, the most famous members of which were French authors/poets Joachim du Bellay and Pierre de Ronsard, declared

³⁷ Stephen became Count of Boulogne through his marriage to Maud, the daughter of Eustace (Count of Boulogne) and Mary (daughter of Malcolm III, King of Scotland and his Queen Margaret, heiress of the Saxon Royal line).

that French was the proper language for prose and poetry.³⁸ They conceded that the country's use of the language required improvement, which they believed should be brought about by modeling French writings on masterpieces from Greek and Latin literature. The Pléide expressed their principles through Du Bellay's book Defense et Illustration de la Langue Francaise or Defense and Illustration of the French Language, published around 1549.

By the 17th century the French language had developed into its present form. During the reign of Louis XIV (1643-1715) it reached the highest point of importance in its history. French had evolved into the international language of Europe, especially for diplomats and scientists. French-language teachers of Blois were in much demand during that era. One such teacher, Claude Mauger, had a French school in London called "little Blois."

* * * * *

WALKABOUT BLOIS

Eric and I exited the train at Gare Routiere in Blois, where we found the usual station tourist shop. There I purchased a city map and a number of postcards depicting the chateau and the town in general. We left the station on a day that couldn't have been more picture-perfect. No clouds, the sun was brilliant and the temperature warm but comfortable. With the chateau looming in the distance we began our trek down Avenue Jean Laigret towards the city.

Gare Routiere is northwest of downtown Blois. Avenue Jean Laigret begins at the station going due east. Then it crooks to the southeast and heads directly for the chateau, which stands in the center of the business district. The chateau is about five city blocks north of "La Loire Fleuve" (the Loire River). It rests on a hill above the city, though houses and commercial buildings have encroached to where, in some places, it is difficult to tell where the chateaulaves off and the town begins. Just north of the chateau, across the Place de Victor Hugo, is Saint Vincent de Paul Church. A short distance south, between the chateau and the Loire, is the 12th-13th century Saint Nicolas Church.

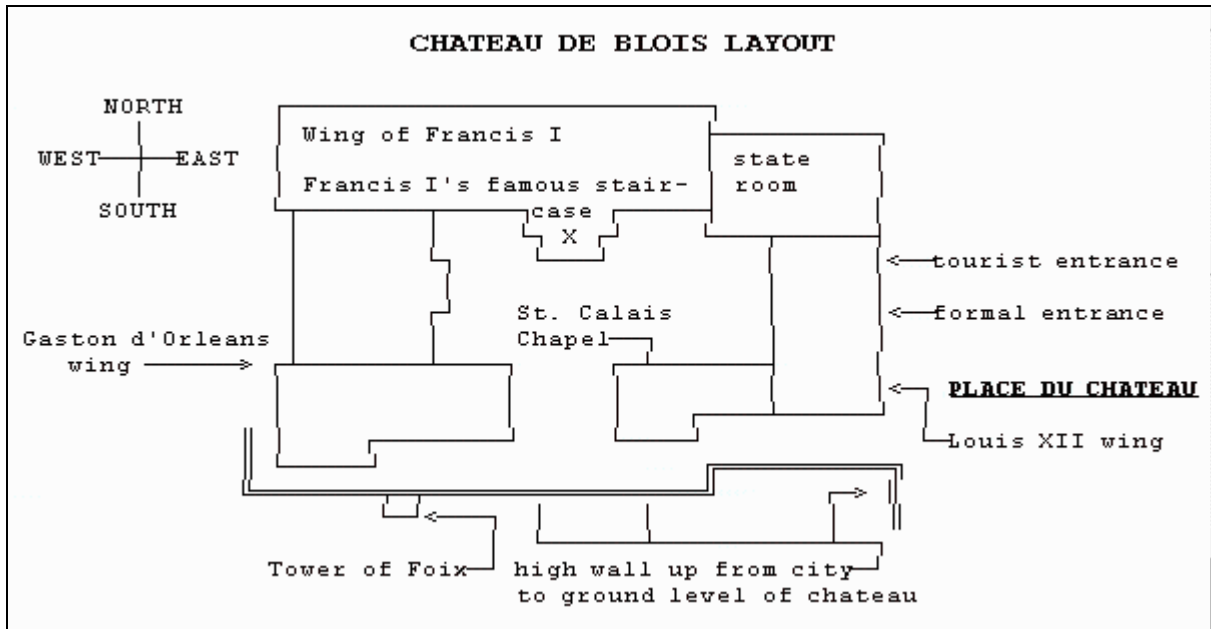
Eric and I were hungry, since it was after 1:30 o'clock P.M., and the snacks eaten in Paris hadn't satisfied us for long. Before continuing on to the chateau we headed east across Place Victor Hugo to Rue Porte Cote and walked a short distance down this street before making a right down Rue du Commerce traveling southeast. We ate lunch at a little pastry and sandwich shop called Tout Chaud before going west on Rue St. Martin a short distance to the Escalier St. Martin.

The Escalier St. Martin was a long, steep, stone stairway that took us in a northwesterly direction up to the Place du Chateau. At the other end of this combination park and parking lot stood the eastern face of the chateau's Louis XII wing.³⁹

³⁸ Pierre de Ronsard was employed by the Dukes de Orleans much of his career, near the end of which he became court poet for Charles IX, King of France, around 1572. During this era the kings of France spent much of their time at Blois. De Ronsard was a master in poetic imagination and in the technique of language and meter, being called the prince of poets by his contemporaries. He called Blois "the city of kings."

³⁹ The Place du Chateau was basically a large parking lot for autos and tour busses, yet it also had many scenic vantage points on the southern and eastern sides for gazing out over Blois and the Loire.

We crossed the Place du Chateau, and I posed for a picture below an equestrian statue of Louis XII. The statue rested in a niche over a large, wooden door into the courtyard not intended for use by tourists. The door we were allowed to enter was a short distance to the right of this formal entrance. Further still to our right as we entered, though I didn't know it at the time, was the large, 13th century state room originally built by the Counts of Blois and making up the northeast corner of the chateau. It, along with the Tower of Foix located just south of the Gaston d' Orleans (or west) wing are the only chateau remnants left of that era. Most everything else was contributed by its d'Orleans owners.



Upon entering we found ourselves in a book/souvenir shop. There were numerous postcards with different pictures of the chateau and other Loire Valley chateaux. There were also books about the chateau and related topics, but they were all in French, and this fact nearly broke my heart. Eric elected to wait behind in the bookstore.

I paid the 20 francs for a tour and entered the courtyard. A fellow came up and asked my nationality. When he learned I was American he said that the English-speaking tour guide was on the second floor of the central wing (Francis I wing). The tour had already begun.⁴⁰

⁴⁰ A Cinematic Glimpse of the Chateau deBlois

A movie was made in 1950 starring DavidNiven in which he rescues some deserving French aristocrats from the scourge of the revolution. The movie is known by at least three different titles*The Elusive Pimpernel*, *The Fighting Pimpernel*, and *The Scarlet Pimpernel*.

Approximately seventeen minutes into the movie a horde of armed peasants approaches a chateau through its manicured gardens. The chateau you see in the distance is not the one aBlois. Then an attacker knocks a bust from its pedestal and looks up.

For the next four minutes all action takes place at Chateau de Blois, mostly in the Francis I wing and its famous spiral staircase. It ends when the horde exits from the Louis XII wing, recognizable by the equestrian statue over the door.

I thanked the fellow and walked across the large, sunny, dirt courtyard to the octagonal Francis I staircase. I then took great relish in climbing the worn, stone steps of the open staircase that rises as part of, and is extended from, center-front of the Francis I wing. I could hear a French-accented, female voice speaking English as I entered the second floor. I followed it into a room that turned out to have been Catherine de' Medici's tile-floored cabine (bedroom).⁴¹

Marie, the tour guide, was talking about the bed being exactly the way it was when the room was Catherine's bedroom, and the large, wooden trunk beside the bed had been hers. I noticed the tile floor and the beautiful wallpaper, the paper having come from a much later time period. Next we walked into a small room just off Catherine's bedroom. Here we were shown a number of secret compartments built into the wall paneling that Catherine used to store valuables, secret documents, perhaps her arsenal of poisons, etc. Marie explained this was the only room in the Francis I wing that had not been redecorated since Catherine's death. She pointed out the intricate, hand carved wooden wall coverings/panels.

As we walked through the part of the chateau accessible to tourists I noticed how spacious the rooms were and homey the atmosphere seemed. Large fireplaces were in each room. There wasn't so much ceiling space as to make the rooms cavernous. Also, plenty of light streamed in from the many windows.

Then we were on the third floor, where we entered the spacious antechamber, again with a large fireplace, next to the bedroom formerly belonging to Henry III. On the walls in this room, and in Henry's room, were paintings contemporary with, and depicting, the assassinations of Henry I de Lorraine, 3rd Duke de Guise, and his brother, the Cardinal of Lorraine.⁴²

ASSASSINATIONS EXPLAINED

The events which resulted in the assassination of the de Guise brothers in December, 1588, basically grew out of political aberration and chaos spawned by the Reformation movement. The Reformation, itself, was a direct bi-product of the Renaissance and a freeing-up of thinking and questioning processes. Reformation took place throughout Europe, not always successfully, over the dead bodies of both Catholics and the new breed, Protestants.

Therefore, and since Christendom had found a place of political power in the city of Rome, popes had called up crusades against "heretics" and "heretical groups." Thus far they had always been able to stamp out such unacceptable movements. Then came Martin Luther (1483-1546), a German who published ninety-five theses that ignited an ecclesiastical powder keg called the Reformation.

Initially, Luther was simply complaining about the selling of indulgences by the church, papal remissions of the penalties of sin. He was particularly upset with an indulgence proclaimed by Pope Leo X in 1515, which had been taken up and exploited by Albert, Archbishop of Mainz, through his agent, a monk by the name of Johann Tetzel. The monk had been empowered to travel through Germany "peddling" remissions of sins.

Being an all-powerful institution, the Church in Rome wasn't interested in internal reformation. Numerous attempts had been made in the past to alter some of the Church's extravagant, unfair, or biased practices and to improve the low moral standards of many of its

⁴¹ See Appendix B entitled "Catherine deMedici"

⁴² See Appendix C entitled "The House of Guise"

clergy. Yet the Church remained resistive, raining down damnation and repressions upon would-be reformers through devices like The Inquisition in Rome, founded in 1230 A.D. So it was that Pope Leo X rained down excommunication upon Martin Luther, when the latter refused to recant his quarrel and rescind his theses.

It was during the reign of Francis I (1494-1547), King of France (1515-47), that the Reformation was planted, found fertile soil, grew and spread. In France it was Jacques Lefèvre d'Étaples, a French humanist, who brought the Reformation to Meaux, near Paris, around 1523. As church and state repressions against d'Étaples and his growing number of followers intensified, many French Protestants fled the country to Switzerland and other areas that were becoming receptive to the new ideas.

One such fugitive was John Calvin, born Jean Chauvin or Caulvin (1509-64), a French theologian and religious reformer who preached Reformation doctrines in Paris before having to take refuge in Switzerland in 1536. Calvin wrote Institutes of the Christian Religion in 1536, which greatly affected the course of the Reformation. His rigid standards of moral conduct, which appeared in a number of publications after he settled in Geneva, were as strict as the conduct of the "libertines" was slack and immoral.

In the beginning, Francis I was too busy with his own administration to become overly concerned with his country's Protestant movement. His sister, Margaret of Navarre⁴³, counseled him to be tolerant. Thus he went about his business, enjoying the many expressions of Renaissance, which he had become exposed to during his war in Italy against the new pope, Leo X.⁴⁴

Francis I was swayed against the Protestant political group, or Huguenots, later in his reign, because he wouldn't tolerate their sometimes-violent demonstrations. The repressions that Francis I began were continued by his son, Henry II, King of France.

Set diametrically opposed to the Huguenots was the House of Guise, from Lorraine, which would settle for nothing less than the complete eradication of the Huguenots and their ideas. In the middle was the ruling family of France, the house of Valois, with little religious conviction other than what would further political ends.

Events flowed over the years almost as if two gods were warring each other. Events were reminiscent of the days when the Greek gods were said to play Olympian games with human pawns. One day the Huguenots would be on top, and the next day the Catholic League, or Holy League, would be on top. At no time were the last of the Valois kings on top. They were mere puppets of one side or the other, or of the strong-willed, calculating Queen Mother, Catherine de' Medici.

When Henry III, last of the Valois kings of France, summoned Henry de Guise to his cabinet and to his death in December, 1588, it was a last-ditch effort to protect his crown from

⁴³ Navarre was a small country in the Pyrenees mountains between Spain and France. Margaret's son would become France's King Henry IV.

⁴⁴ Like Pope Leo X, Francis I patronized some of the great artists of his time. In 1516, the year after he began building his wing of the Chateau of Blois, he brought to France Leonardo da Vinci (1452-1519), Florentine artist, sculptor, architect, engineer and scientist. Prior to this, and as of 1513, Leonardo had been at the court of the new pope, Leo X. Called the "universal man," in the science Leonardo was centuries ahead of his peers, and some of his theories and scientific work could not be understood until science had progressed into the 20th century. Leonardo died at Amboise, 34 kilometers (21 miles) southwest of Blois.

the hands of de Guise, who had effectively isolated him from the love and respect of his people and support of the nobility. De Guise had been collecting the real power of the realm and had some small claim to the throne of France by lineage. He very well might have taken the crown at some politically-opportune time. (See below for details of the assassinations.)

Henry III fell to an assassin in 1589 after having reestablished Henry of Navarre as his successor. Henry of Navarre, or Henry IV, King of France, also fell to an assassin in 1610, leaving his son Louis XIII to the regency of his wife, Maria de' Medici. Maria was so strong willed and so devious (though, historians say, stupid) that Louis XIII imprisoned her at Blois, from where she eventually escaped. As to Protestantism as a political entity in France, it was stamped out in 1628 with the taking of La Rochelle, the last Huguenot stronghold.

* * * * *

Back to the tour, Marie began telling of the de Guise assassinations while standing in front of a large fireplace in the spacious anteroom. She showed how de Guise, who had been chatting with other officials and nobles that had also come for a meeting of the States-General, was summoned to the king's room by a guard. De Guise followed the guard and entered the room unsuspecting, when suddenly the guard he was following turned on him with sword drawn. Then, from behind curtains poured more than forty other soldiers.

Despite tremendous odds, de Guise fought valiantly, having had much practice in a lifetime of wars and battles. Before he fell mortally wounded, he had made several of the soldiers meet their Maker. All the while, Henry III was hiding behind a curtained doorway on the opposite side of the room.

When Henry saw that de Guise was dying, he ran from his seclusion and announced the fact joyously to the surprised nobility in the anteroom. The Cardinal of Lorraine was at that moment arrested, to be killed soon after. The nobility, many of whom had longed to see de Guise as king, were now quite tractable, leaderless and surrounded by newly-blooded soldiers. in this room that the States-General of France was convoked in 1576 and again in 1588. I, for one, found it fascinating that a structure could be privy to so much history and yet still look so strong and permanent (and ready for more?).⁴⁵

After

Marie dismissed the tour at this point, and we all wandered off. I walked through the Louis XII museum/picture gallery in the Louis XII wing, where the floor boards groaned and creaked alarmingly. Finally, it came time to say farewell to the manse and exit back into narrow, crowded streets reminiscent of the Middle Ages.⁴⁶

I wanted to send a Blois postcard to Mom, who was celebrating her 81st birthday today. Eric knew that French tobacco stores normally sold stamps, so we found a store with a "Tobac" sign out front. I purchased a postcard stamp and sent the card off after searching some time for a mail box. We soon discovered that mail boxes in France were painted yellow.

Eric and I then made our way to the Rond (Round) Point de la Resistance and to the Pont (bridge) Jacques Gabriel nearby. We didn't cross over to the part of Blois overflowing onto the other side of the Loire River, however. The Loire was wide at this point, though it didn't appear

⁴⁵ The chateau was for a time abandoned. In 1810 it was given to the town for use as barracks. However, after 1845 it was restored by architect Félix Duban.

⁴⁶ Blois is a popular tourist spot and the usual starting place for tours to the chateaux districts of Chambord, Cheverny and Chaumont.

to be deep. It must have been a sight to strike terror into the mortal soul to have witnessed the fleets of Viking ships sailing past Blois in the eighth and ninth centuries. They would make their way from the mouth of the Loire River at the Bay of Biscay east past Blois and Orleans, then up the Seine to Paris.

It was now time for the return to Paris. We wandered around the west side of town awhile getting temporarily lost. Then we climbed an extremely steep street/alley (I believe it was called Rue Triboulet) until we finally found Boulevard Chanzy and the Gare Routiere. We made it to the station with about half an hour to spare before the next train.

Returning to Paris it was back to the Hotel Magenta, reversing the path taken when going to Gare D'Austerlitz. We bought burgers-to-go at a fast food restaurant near the Gare de l'Est and arrived "home" at about 7:00 o'clock P.M. All-in-all it had been quite a day. Now it was time to ready for an evening at the Pigalle.

A NIGHT AT THE PIGALLE -- SATURDAY EVENING, MAY 27

We remained at the hotel for an hour before beginning our venture to the Pigalle, a notorious part of Paris that is a must see for anyone wanting to expand their sphere of experience or just be titillated.⁴⁷ It is in the Pigalle that one finds the Comedie de Paris the Bal du Moulin Rouge and much more. At night the area explodes in lights, noise and commotion, as local people, tourists and hawkers (or panderers, whichever term one prefers) prowl the streets and alleys. Traffic jams are chronic as thousands pack into a few blocks of vice, crime, expense and food..food..food.

We walked to the spot in front of the Gare de l'Est where the bus had let us off the day before. We knew the return bus would take us directly to the Pigalle. Unfortunately, we hadn't taken into account the fact that busses in Paris (except tour busses) stopped running at 7:30 o'clock P.M. When we finally realized our folly we hailed a taxi and were soon on our way north to Boulevard de la Chapelle, west as it changed names to Boulevard de Rochechouart, and finally to Boulevard de Clichy.

Before reaching Boulevard de Clichy, traffic ahead was so immobilized that the taxi driver let us out. He then quickly turned around and disappeared in search of more bodies. We didn't have to walk far down the north side of the street before running into street hawkers standing in front of well-lit and spacious entrance ways to places of ill repute. All of the hawkers were multi-lingual.

One place we passed had two fellows in front. The first one spoke to us in French, then Spanish, then English without our responding, so the second fellow tried German, then Dutch. They both wanted us to take a free look at erogenous "things" going on inside. Neither was at a loss for descriptive words, nor did they blush nor appear the least apologetic or circumspect when using them. They were upset, however, when we didn't respond with surprise or disgust or interest or words or glares or anything. We just kept walking to the next, then the next, then the next assault. (It was like what one might expect when walking down certain areas of Broadway Street in either San Diego or San Francisco, only less subdued.)

⁴⁷ The area probably gets its name from the street by that name which intersects Boulevard de Clichy. At this intersection is located the "Pigalle" Metro station. The street, itself, was no doubt named in honor of Jean Baptiste Pigalle (1714-85), a French artist, born in Paris, who, like the area named after him, "possessed rare skill, grace, and fire, but . . . sometimes lacked moderation . . ."

The occasional store we did venture into quickly expelled us for not buying something soon enough. Looky-Lews were not tolerated. Buy or fly. There were more than enough new bodies milling about to make any proprietor insensitive to the interests of those already proven not to be ready spenders.

Besides the places of ill repute, souvenir and novelty stores, there were numerous bars, especially down well-lit alleys, and "take-out" food establishments everywhere. At one of the latter, Eric bought a barbecued pork sandwich. The tender, succulent meat was chipped from a large slab of pork rotating on a vertical spit. I had a bite of the sandwich, and it was truly delicious.

Occasionally one would come upon fellows selling "who-knew-what" spread out on blankets. All such sellers that I saw appeared to be black Africans, in African garb. Their wares ranged from assorted costume jewelry (bracelets, anklets, necklaces, baubles, bangles and beads, etc.) to sunglasses, purses and so on.

We finally came upon the Bal du Moulin Rouge where we walked into the well-lighted gallery under the marquee. The entrance gallery displayed posters depicting sparkling scenes from the current spectacular, the last show for the night already in progress. We noticed that, without dinner, the show only cost 300 francs, or about \$41. After spending about fifteen minutes looking around we continued our walk, though beyond the Moulin Rouge things began to quieten rapidly. More and more establishments were closed, apparently observing normal business hours and marking the end of the wild and crazy part of town.

We had been walking west on Boulevard de Clichy. When that street ended we headed southwesterly on Boulevard des Batignolles for a block or two until realizing we had left the Pigalle. We stopped at a bar with outside tables and ordered some liquid refreshment -- a beer for me, for Eric some mineral water. We sat and watched the traffic and people for awhile before starting back the same way we had come, this time walking on the south side of the street.

All the while we were at the Pigalle the traffic hardly moved. Tour busses, some full and others empty, were inserted amongst the numberless autos like giant boulders being carried along by a painfully slow lava flow. Other busses were parked along the street, helping to constrict traffic, while still others were parked on side streets with no way to exit except into the aforementioned lava flow.

Local juvenile delinquents carrying blunt instruments were running about the streets and alleys with who-knew-what purpose in mind, and it seemed sirens were everywhere. The lava flow wouldn't (or more aptly, couldn't) move even for ambulances and police cars. I remember one particularly unhappy fellow pushing his crushed rented auto from the flow into a side alley.

Meantime singles, couples, and herds of tourists roamed the streets, many appearing to be in search of their tour's bus. One of these groups consisted of young scouts complete with uniforms, merit badges, etc., and their older scout leader who frantically tried keeping them together. I wondered at the time what merit badge the boys would be earning at the Pigalle. Another batch of older young people giggled, laughed and yelled with excitement, then lit out at a full run when they finally spotted their bus in the distance.

We were making our way up Clichy when suddenly we heard a man's piercing scream cut through the evening's bedlam. This was followed by the appearance of an Indian or Pakistani running from one of the places of ill repute on the opposite side of the street, his dark-skinned face nearly white in terror. Less than a minute later another man of similar ethnicity came running out, not in terror or anger but emoting concern for the other fellow. He followed the other's

route of departure. Soon a hawker came ambling out of the place and stood in the entrance, looked around, smiled quizzically and with patient humor, then shrugged his shoulders as if to non-verbally say "tourists!"

It was now after 1:00 o'clock A.M., and both Eric and I were dog tired. We walked past the snarled and snarling traffic, figuring it would be useless and expensive to get a taxi in this mess. We walked all the way to Boulevard de Rochechouart, with empty taxis whisking by and refusing to stop. Finally we caught a taxi at a 24-hour market, where the driver had haplessly stopped for cigarettes. In another fifteen minutes we were climbing the stairs of Mount Magenta.

SUNDAY, MAY 28

We slept late in recuperation from the previous day and evening. I was up first, since I had to do laundry. I had already checked out the cost of using a nearby Laundromat for the task. It was expensive, so I decided to do my own using the bathroom sink, bath tub, and travel laundry detergent donated by my close friend Ven Tan.⁴⁸

The detergent looked like a bar of hand soap enclosed in a loose-fitting, mesh bag. The mesh bag kept the smaller pieces together when the soap began to disintegrate. One dipped it into the water just long enough to make the water as soapy as desired. Then the bag would be removed and left out to dry, to be packed again for travel. After washing a piece of clothing in the sink I'd rinse it in the bath tub. Soon the entire bathroom was littered with hanging clothes dripping onto the blue tile floor.

By the time the domestic chore was completed Eric was up and about, so we departed the hotel and found a restaurant. We ate a light breakfast of croissants and coffee. Then it was off to historic Chateau de Versailles by way of the Metro from Gare de l'Est to Gare D'Austerlitz. Another Metro took us directly from there to Versailles.

A Metro attendant saw us looking around puzzled after we had bought our tickets at D'Austerlitz. There were two choices, a ramp leading to a boarding area on our level and a stairway leading to an upper level. In broken English he inquired as to our destination. When we said Versailles he said "Victor" and pointed to the stairs. I didn't understand the "Victor" part until later, when I noticed the name "Nora" on the front of an arriving train. The riddle solved, we simply awaited a train called Victor

A DAY AT VERSAILLES

The train ride was uneventful, and we spent most of our travel above-ground after leaving the city proper. Our time spent on the train was rich in scenes of French industries, suburbia, etc.

We arrived at the town of Versailles, 12 miles southwest of Paris, in the early afternoon. It was soon discovered that a few thousand other tourists and locals had decided to spend their Sunday with us. We followed the general flow of the crowd, walking up a shady, west bound boulevard lined on both sides with trees and exposition tents. Parked helter-skelter along the boulevard was an assortment of military vehicles (tanks, half-tracks, jeeps, etc.) attended by men

⁴⁸ Ven, a Chinese-American born in the Philippines, is a prolific photographer, frequent world traveller and master in the art of surviving away from home.

from the French armed forces. The soldiers did nothing to interfere, while children and grown-ups (including Eric) climbed all over the equipment.

Tents contained tourist and other information booths, various exhibitions and displays, souvenirs, and so on. As we walked further west on the boulevard, getting closer to the Place de Armes, there were rides for children on a train-like device being driven around the street. Several sidewalk vendors were set up to dispense beverages and snacks.

Three boulevards make their way west from town to the Chateau, or Palace de Versailles. They are Bd. de Saint-Cloud, Bd. de Paris (the central street), and Bd. de Sceaux. They all arrive at the Place de Armes, which, nowadays, is basically a parking lot for vehicles belonging to people visiting the Palace.

From the Place de Armes one walks through an ornate gate into the Cour de Royale, a large open area leading up to the central block of the Palace with its many facets. Straight ahead, as one walks toward the Palace, stands an equestrian statue of Louis XIV, to whom the Palace is attributed.⁴⁹

As one approaches the statue, to the right stands the chapel, with its ceiling painted by Coytel. Directly to one's left is the Galerie des Glaces where William I was proclaimed Emperor of Germany. Further ahead, as one walks toward the rear of the Palace, through the Cour d'Honneur heading for the entrance to the gardens in the west, are the apartments of Louis IV, still part of the central block. Just south of the Galerie de Glaces are the Queen's apartments⁵⁰

The royal court, under the Bourbon dynasty, was established at Versailles in 1682. For the next three hundred years the Palace, said to be unequal in fame to any other royal residence, has figured prominently in French and world history. However, the Palace as a royal residence continued only until the meeting of the States-General took place here on May 4, 1789, the opening act of the French Revolution.

Since it was getting on towards mid-afternoon when we arrived, Eric and I consulted our priorities to decide whether to see the interior of the chateau or the expanse of the gardens. We decided on the gardens and to leave the interior tour for another time. After paying our 16-franc entrance fee, we entered the gardens and were nearly overcome by the splendor.

GRANDES EAUX MUSICALES

Immediately stretched out before us was the Bassin de Neptune, largest fountain in the "Domaine de Versailles." West, down flights of marble stairs used as much for bleachers as for access to the lower garden and park area, was the circular fountain Le Bassin de Latone. To our disappointment, none of the fountains were spraying.

The garden extended axially toward the north, west and south, with a seemingly endless horizon in each direction. Due west, a mile-long pond dug by the Swiss guards of Louis XIV

⁴⁹ It was Louis XIII, son of Henry IV and second ruler from the Bourbon dynasty, who bought the land, began draining the swamp lands, built a hunting chateau around 1627 and had it enlarged in 1631. However, it was Louis XIV who had the chateau enlarged to its current size. He added the expansive north and south wings, with their innumerable galleries and long corridors filled with statuary, and the chapel, said to be his masterpiece.

⁵⁰ If one walks from the southern extreme of the south wing to the northern extreme of the north wing, a distance of about one-half mile would be covered.

drew our attention the strongest. We headed generally in that direction while letting the Muses draw us down one path, then another, through the well-cultivated and, in some instances, sculpted woods and shrubbery. Everywhere were statues, fountains and huge marble urns brimming with flowers. Yet the fountains still remained inert.

Louis XIV was probably concerned with how to landscape the extensive lands around his growing palace at Versailles when he stopped by the Chateau de Vaux in 1657. He even may have had the purpose in mind to see the work of the relatively unknown landscape architect, André Le Nôtre(1613-1700), son of the superintendent of the Tuileries gardens, who had designed this first example of what would become standard in formal French gardens. Louis was taken by the style, called "the grand manner," and hired Le Nôtre to be director of the royal grounds, charging him with creating the new park at Versailles. At Versailles, like at Vaux, Le Nôtre employed geometrical lines, artificial lakes and ponds, statues, grottos, clipped trees, all kept at a sufficient distance from the formal dwelling to enhance viewing. André Le Nôtre went on to design landscapes for Chantilly, Saint-Cloud, Fontainebleau and other locations in France, in Italy (including the Vatican grounds), and in England (including St. James' Park near Buckingham Palace). His influence on landscape architecture continued throughout Europe until supplanted by the Romantic era desire for less stiff, more natural-looking environs.

Suddenly there was an announcement, in French, over a public address system. The voice continued for several minutes, and I didn't take much notice. Then it stopped. A minute later beautiful, classical music began to emanate from hidden, high fidelity speakers. Simultaneously, every fountain sprang to life. The episode was breathtaking! No wonder the entrance tickets we bought said "Grandes Eaux Musicales."

We continued our excursion to the long pond below, ever moving to lower and lower elevations. En route I ventured down a short path that diverged from the main westerly promenade toward a ring of fountains shooting skyward between columns in a circular, open-roofed, white marble pavilion Purely delightful.

Once at the pond we each had our picture taken before the equestrian fountain at the pond's base. Later, we began the return trek via the northern section of the garden, wandering up different paths that brought new wonders in the form of statuary, urns, pavilions and, always dramatically, the dancing fountains.

My most favorite site of many favorites was discovered when we came around a corner and our eyes were met by the sudden appearance of a beautiful watery, lush, marble grotto. As if to protect it from the gaze and the envy of the gods, trees and vines were arranged to adorn and obscure the dome-like top and sides of the grotto. At the sides of its base, and the mouth of its caves, were life-size, marble statuary groupings of horses, men and women. A column, carved from the native rock, rose to the ceiling within the recesses of the central cavern. From the grotto poured streams of water which cascaded down to the pond below. Again, breathtaking.

It amazed both Eric and me that all of this -- the Palace and its enormous gardens and parks -- had been built exclusively for the use and pleasure of a very few people. Today there is no exclusion, if you have the price of a ticket. The place has far greater cultural

value than it did when governed by a careless, selfish, and, per our 20th century hindsight, stupid aristocracy.

If only Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette had taken to heart the warnings transmitted by the growing number of desperate acts committed by a people pushed beyond restraint. In one such instance, where market women and fish wives risked their lives and defied all precedent and kingly authority to ravage the Palace at Versailles on October 6, 1783, the king and queen were sent scurrying back to the "safety" of Paris.⁵¹ Louis and Marie didn't fathom the warnings, and today the descendants of those market women and fish wives on weekends bring their children to romp through the Hall of Mirrors and play in the sculpted gardens of Le Nôtre.

The time finally came for us to leave. We went through the garden exit and crossed the Palace grounds until east of the Place de Armes. From there we walked down the Boulevard de Paris, made difficult to travel because the entire length of the street had been turned into a motorized go-cart grande prix race course. There were countless people crowded along the racing path, with bales of hay stacked up to protect the onlookers and drivers from being hurt in case of accidents. We walked and watched, always heading towards where we figured the train/Metro station was located.

Somehow we took a wrong turn and ended up walking around town. During this unintentional-though-interesting tour we happened onto a bakery shop, or boulanger, that had displayed in one of its windows a tempting tray of fresh, delicious-looking, whipped-cream-topped strawberry tarts. Normally I had been good about not indulging in sweet French pastries, but my watering mouth told me it was time for exception. Eric and I gave in and bought one tart apiece. M-m-m-m! Need I say more?

Finally we located the station after walking alongside an area that was being set up for a circus. Within fifteen more minutes we were on a train heading for Gare D'Austerlitz then Gare de l'Est, arriving at the hotel after 7:00 o'clock P.M.

Two hours later we wandered out to forage for supper and see about travel arrangements to the Charles DeGaulle Airport the next day. Much to our surprise and relief we discovered that the #350 bus, which left from in front of the Gare de l'Est about every half hour, would take us directly to our terminal. Now all we needed to do was get packed and begin the difficult mental and spiritual separation from a city and area to which I, for one, had become overly attached.⁵² Tomorrow, Rome.

⁵¹ Perhaps the women were looking for cake.

⁵² For nearly a month after arriving back in the states I would wake nightly, at about 3:00 o'clock (noon in France), entirely disoriented because my current surroundings were different from those in our room at Hotel Magenta.

ITALY

MONDAY, MAY 29

The day of departure was at hand. We checked out of the hotel at 10:20 o'clock A.M. and walked to where bus #350 was just about ready to leave for the Charles DeGaulle International Airport. We each bought the appropriate number of tickets required, inserting and retrieving them from the typical, electronic ticket-punching/canceling gizmo directly behind the driver, and soon we were off.

Thus began our last look at Paris before leaving on the freeway that would take us to the airport. While we traveled through the city I watched the passing buildings. Many of the older ones were speckled with crater-like pockmarks, souvenirs of countless wars and civil disturbances that have created large portions of Paris history. Yet the city's impressive recuperative powers have ensured that the beauty which is Paris has only been enhanced. Unlike the antiquarian emphasis of Rome, in Paris one is expected to enjoy the city's eternal youth. One is never to suspect that the city has been in existence for more than 2,000 years, in one form or another possibly as long as Rome, herself.

We were deposited at the airport around 11:00 o'clock A.M. We ate lunch at a cafeteria before continuing on to our baggage check-in station. Since Eric and I didn't eat breakfast, I was especially in need of some coffee stimulation. However, the cafeteria's coffee maker was on the Fritz. So I asked for a cup of hot water and made my own using Taster's ChoiceTM Instant Coffee brought from the states.

Check-in was soon completed, and we made our way to the departure area. As was our policy, we arrived at the airport in plenty of time to ensure nothing would keep us from catching our flight. While Eric roamed the airport, I sat with a sci-fi book brought from home.

Departure was around 3:00 o'clock P.M. Taking into account a one hour time difference, the hour-long flight #632 landed us at the Leonardo di Vinci International Airport just outside Rome at 5:00 o'clock in the afternoon. We no sooner retrieved our baggage than we were beset by hotel/pensione⁵³ runners soliciting for their respective bosses. We managed to stave them off amidst occasional and very personal insults by callous agents who felt jilted. Then Eric discovered that, as in Paris, booking a hotel would require taking a bus into Rome. In this case, the bus would take us directly to the bus/train station, or Stazione Metropolitana⁵⁴, where a hotel reservation office was located.

At the airport's Banco di Santo Spirito I purchased \$200 worth of lire at 1,404.7 lire per dollar, netting me a whopping L. 277,400 after paying commission. Of course, it cost each of us L. 5,000 just to take the bus into Rome.⁵⁵

Once we were ready to take the plunge it was a short wait for the bus. We were not the only people waiting. It was pandemonium when the bus arrived and everybody began shoving their baggage haphazardly into the bus's cargo bay. There were people from a wide cross-section of races and countries speaking a cacophony of different languages. Also boarding were a tall, sparsely dressed, lanky young man and woman who carried no baggage and seemed extraordinarily

⁵³ Pensione's are similar to "bed and breakfast" establishments. They are often run by individuals or families using their own homes as boarding facilities, making them generally less expensive than hotels and potentially more personable.

⁵⁴ Also called Stazione Termini.

⁵⁵ Equivalent to \$3.56 U.S.

circumspect. They looked like members of a rock and roll band and momentarily caught my attention as they entered the bus just before we left.

The bus departed the Leonardo di Vinci Airport terminal and the Aeroporto Intercontinentale di Fiumicino area, heading up Via Jacopo d'Ancona in a northerly direction. Shortly we passed the intersection with Via Giulio Rocco, the closest we would pass to the Fiume Tevere (Tiber River). We were traveling roughly parallel with Via Cristoforo Colombo to our right. Still further east, also parallel, was the Via Appia Antica. In school we knew it as the Appian Way.⁵⁶

Near the city, Via Appia Antica passes through a fortified gate called Porta San Sebastiano (formerly Porta Appia) and becomes Via di Porta San Sebastiano as it curves to head north by northwest. Then it merges with Viale delle Terme di Caracalla en route to nearby Circo Massimo (Circus Maximus), still going in the same direction. Near this merge point are the ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, where sixteen hundred people could bathe in their choice of hot, warm or cold water in a building great in size and beauty. At the southeastern extreme of Circo Massimo, if one took a right onto Via di San Gregorio going north, one would soon be at the Arco di Costantino (Arch of Constantine). One would also be at the entrance to both the Foro Romano (Roman Forum) and the Colosseo (Colosseum) areas. This very route was followed by the conquering armies of Rome when they returned to receive their hard-won honors (and baths).

We continued northward through the Porta San Paolo past the Piramide Cestia (a relatively small replica of an Egyptian pyramid). Now the road traveled north by northeast and became Via le Piramide Cestia, then Via le Aventino, before merging with the aforementioned Via de San Gregorio and heading north. Next we swung past the Colosseum, all the time not having the foggiest idea as to what we were looking at except for the Colosseum. We took the Via Cavour the rest of the way to the bus/train terminal, our ultimate destination. The bus turned right onto Via Giovanni Giolitti, which took us in a southeasterly direction along the south side of the terminal until coming to rest near the hotel reservation office.

We were just exiting the bus when police carrying small machine guns swarmed around us, grabbed the two young "lanks" I mentioned earlier, handcuffed and took them away almost before we knew what hit us. The two didn't put up a struggle, apparently knowing they had done something to warrant such police activity. The whole episode was carried out so smoothly there was barely a ripple of commotion or concern after the police were gone.

Eric and I were carrying our baggage into the hotel reservation office when we were approached by one of the hotel/pensione runners like the ones we had managed to circumvent at the airport. However, this fellow seemed more civil and less shifty. He was a runner for the "Hotel Pensione Morgana Lo Monaco," an establishment only a few blocks away at 37 Via Filippo Turati. The hotel/pensione being so close to the station appealed to us, so we decided to check the place out.

The three of us carried everything through the crowded streets, winding between cars both backed-up in traffic and parked, until reaching a multi-storied building on the north side of the

⁵⁶ The Appian Way was built around 312 B.C., while Appius Claudius Caecus occupied the office of censor of Rome. Along its 350-mile length twenty generations of patricians are buried. The greatest of numerous contributions Appius made to Rome was his laying down the foundation of Latin prose composition.

street that looked more like an office building or factory than a hotel. I'm talking no frills. No wonder they needed runners.

I became suspicious of the runner's intent when we walked in through an open, ground floor access, with barn-like doors and a poorly lit, cavernous interior appearing more like a warehouse facility than a hotel. The cavernous entrance was designed to allow in vehicles for passenger/baggage loading and unloading. At the time, the dark chamber looked suspiciously like the snare of a trap.

We continued to follow the young fellow to an elevator about three feet wide (at the entrance) by eight feet deep. It was all we could do to cram everything plus ourselves inside. Then we lifted to the first floor of the hotel and unloaded at the front desk.

A middle-aged man at the front desk said there was a room for L. 150,000/night (\$106.78) and one for L. 75,000/night (\$53.39). Either room allowed complimentary breakfast privileges, though the L. 75,000 didn't have its own bathroom facilities. This fellow, who could have been the identical twin (in looks, temperament, and demeanor) of Mr. Matthews, my highly-eccentric-yet-personable electronics teacher at Jackson High School, was expressly disappointed when we chose the cheaper room. We were overjoyed at getting a room so cheaply in what turned out to be a nice place once you were inside. What did it matter if we had to walk a short piece down the hall to use the facilities? To save \$25 per night I'd have walked down two halls.

Once again we had gotten a room on the fifth floor, though this time there was an elevator, such as it was.⁵⁷ We were escorted to room #52, which was a smallish, no frills affair with a large armoire against the left wall, two beds and a night stand against the right, a bathroom sink on the wall housing the door, and at the far end a desk and one small window high on the wall facing out over Via Filippo Turati. The window could be opened and had shutters. The floors were covered with linoleum, I believe. Something very cold on the feet. The room would have nicely fit the bill for a monk's cell.

Eric and I spent some time moving in before wandering out into the streets looking for dinner and getting our bearings. We walked several blocks before settling on a very-Italian-looking, basement restaurant called Mario and Luigi's Ristorante. We didn't eat much yet paid a lot, so we decided to stay clear of formal restaurants and just eat at informal places. We still ate well and at the same time saved money.

We turned in early, but not before the thunder of bats' wings drew me to the window. The sky was practically black with them. There was something very eerie about that many bats ruling the night. Later, the room's sink began burping and gurgling loudly, so I had to stuff a sock into the drain holes before the noise would subside. Otherwise, for us the night was uneventful.

⁵⁷ The elevator lifted alongside the stairway, either of which could be accessed by someone from outside the hotel. To reduce trespassing there was a locking door separating the stairs and elevator from the hotel floors. One of our room keys was to this door.

TUESDAY, MAY 30

It was now morning. Neither Eric nor I had any trouble finding an open bathroom (the floor had a total of four, all near our room). Soon we took the mutant elevator down to the lobby floor and made our way past the front desk into the breakfast area. As we passed the desk I could hear two young women complaining to the manager that there had been a night prowler in their room. Never fully trusting the hotel's management, I decided at that point not to give the desk prior notice of our check out date/time.

We were treated to a buffet breakfast consisting of corn flakes, assorted fruit and plain croissants, fruit juices, and strong, hot, black coffee with heavy cream⁵⁸. There were several people breakfasting, and most of these appeared to be students. There were also some families, a fact that helped alleviate some of my suspicions of sinisterness.

CITY OF THE SEVEN HILLS

Rome is called the City of the Seven Hills. It is true that, originally, the city was comprised of seven hills -- Aventine, Palatine, Capitoline, Quirinal, Viminal, Esquiline and Caelian. It was on Palatine Hill that the legendary twins Romulus and Remus first established the city in 753 B.C.

Later, the city grew and encompassed other hills. The Hotel Morgana Lo Monaco was just north of most of the listed hills and east, if in some instances slightly, of them all. Quirinal Hill was a mile west by northwest (all distances approximate), with Viminal Hill closer at about two-thirds mile in the same direction. South by southwest one mile from the hotel was Esquiline Hill, with Caelian Hill another three-quarters of a mile further, though slightly more southerly from the hotel. Palatine Hill was southwest about the same distance as Caelian and almost in a direct line from the hotel to the Colosseum to the hill. Capitoline Hill was the same distance though a little more westerly. Aventine Hill was two-and-a-half miles in a straight southwesterly line that stretched from the hotel through the Colosseum just touching Palatine Hill at its southeastern border and continuing another half mile or so.

The bus bringing us from the airport had passed just east of Aventine, between Palatine and Caeline, and just west of Esquiline before reaching the terminal. I noticed the rise and fall of the terrain around these hills, or ridges, during our extensive walk the first full day in Rome. Still, from what I've read the contours have been greatly reduced due to construction (layers of construction) over the millennia. To me, the most pronounced hills were the Palatine and Capitoline. Between them spreads the low lying area known as the Foro Romano (Roman Forum), once undisputed center of the occidental world.

⁵⁸ This hotel, like the Hotel Magenta before and the Westropa and Owl hotels after, had a dining area that was only open during breakfast hours and only catered to hotel guests.

WALKABOUT ROME

Breakfasted and adequately stimulated by coffee, Eric and I began our day's journey by walking southeasterly along Filippo Turati. Then we went north one block to follow Via Giovanni Giolitti, again southeasterly, toward the Temple of Minerva. En route we passed through the ancient Arch of Saint Bibiana just before reaching the temple.

The Temple of Minerva was obviously ancient, though I have no idea of its age. Early in its history Rome primarily worshipped Jupiter, Mars and Quirinus⁵⁹. Later, the trinity changed to Jupiter and his daughters Juno and Minerva. Most assuredly the Temple of Minerva was built many years B.C.⁶⁰ Now it sits virtually ignored and alone next to the railroad tracks leading up to the terminal.

We couldn't go in, since there was a locked gate across its entrance. However, we could look into the tall, circular, roofless brick building through its vacant, arched windows and gaping doorway. We could see empty niches in the circular, internal walls that probably once held statues.

We left the neglected temple and headed southwesterly down Viale Manzoni on our way to the Colosseum. Manzoni became Via Labicana and traveled west by northwest. Along the way I noticed a fellow painting window shutters a few floors up on a building on the north side of the street (we were on the south side). He was precariously standing on a ledge, with nothing to hold him if he should slip. I quickly prepared my camera for a picture, and he as quickly left the ledge and entered the window. No connection, just unlucky coincidence. I still took a picture of the building, though, because its personalized balconies of plants, and clothes hung out to dry, called for attention.

I also snapped a shot of the crowded parking conditions that seemed to be prevalent everywhere we went. Sidewalks were crowded with bicycles, scooters and motorcycles, and curbs stacked two, even three deep with little Italian autos. Double or triple parking seemed to be allowed. In the distance, peeking around the corner as if bashful, or embarrassed by its own size and nakedness, loomed the Colosseum.

Following is a list of streets which end at the Colosseum's plaza: Via Labicana comes in at the northeast corner, and Via dei Fori Imperiali enters at the northwest. From the north comes little Via d. Annibaldi. Clockwise, south from Via Labicana, are Via Clemente, Via dei Santi Quattro, Via Capo d'Africa, Via Marco Aurelio, Via Claudio, Via le del Parco del Celio, Celio Vibena, Via di San Gregorio, and finally, Via Sacra leading into the Roman Forum and just south of Via dei Fori Imperiali.

Most people have seen pictures of the Colosseum more than once in their life, so it should be easy to form a mental picture of it. Large plates bearing names of popes have been embedded

⁵⁹ Quirinus was the name given to the deified Romulus after he disappeared in a sudden, black wind storm (possibly a tornado).

⁶⁰ As the Roman Empire grew, its list of gods swelled as it adopted the gods of the new peoples. Rome's original Pantheon was built by Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa around 25 B.C. and dedicated to all the gods. However, one god the Romans didn't much care for was Yahweh, the god of the Hebrews, and later, the Christians, who was violently intolerant of any other gods and their adherents. After Constantine I caused Christianity to become the official religion of Rome, all non-Christian, or "pagan" cults were prohibited by edict of Emperor Theodosius I in 392 A.D. Subsequently, many pagan temples were converted and rededicated as churches.

into the otherwise naked outer walls around the circumference. Arched niches that once held statues are now empty. The many small, round holes dug into the surface of the exterior walls were intended to hold magnificent facing material long ago stripped away to build other monuments, temples or houses.

The Flavian Amphitheater was begun in 72 A.D. by Emperor Vespasian and finished by his son Titus in 80 A.D. Later, the Colossus of Nero was placed nearby (a travertine pedestal near the Colosseum is all that remains of the statue), and the Flavian Amphitheater gradually became known as the Colosseum, probably due to its proximity to the great statue. The Colosseum became so much the symbol of Rome, its life and power, that Bede predicted "While stands the Colosseum, Rome shall stand; when falls the Colosseum, Rome shall fall; and when Rome falls, with it shall fall the world."

The Normans sacked Rome in 1084, destroying much of the classic city. The Colosseum, itself, was then abandoned except for use as a quarry for building materials. Its continued destruction was halted by Pope Benedict XIV (1740-1758) when he consecrated the old amphitheater as "Via Crucis" in honor of the thousands of Christian martyrs who had died providing entertainment to other thousands of bloodthirsty spectators.

On the occasion of its first dedication (under the Romans), 9000 animals were killed in the arena, after which they were hauled away, the arena was filled with water, and mock naval battles were conducted. On the occasion of its second dedication (under the Christians), a cross was erected in its center.

The floor of the arena is now gone, revealing the cells that once housed gladiators, martyrs or wild animals. The building is not in the least beyond repair. In fact, certain areas have been reconstructed to allow a small glimpse into how the whole once must have looked. However, the pressures of preserved antiquity are far greater than those of restoration, so the ruins continue as such.⁶¹

We remained at the Colosseum for some time, climbing around the terraces and box seats, then peering down at two young women who were taking measurements in a long, dim chamber below ground level. There seemed to be pictures or writing on the wall near them. Everywhere were recesses containing stairs or rooms. Many of these were filled with quantities of debris from fallen roofs and millennia of dirt. Barriers kept tourists from entering many areas, possibly due to danger of cave-in.

Rows of tall, arched columns stood like a hundred Atlases holding the amphitheater's upper structure's weight. Behind the columns, and deep within the recesses, dark coolness could be found in contrast with the brightly sunlit, hot exterior. Fallen columns and many sizes of hewn stone blocks lay about as if awaiting the Celestial Mason to make everything whole again.

The building was truly a marvel. I was more positively impressed by it than by anything else seen during the vacation. The many people climbing around to explore or work were dwarfed by the structure, though I was surprised by the size of the actual arena area. Probably to allow for maximum seating availability and proximity of view, the arena did not appear particularly large.

⁶¹ The tension is tremendous between the pressures of antiquity, fostered by tourism and the archaeologists' dreams of great discoveries, and restoration, the dream of city inhabitants who want Rome to thrive and be alive rather than be dominated and checked by unrestored ruins and never-again-attainable past glories.

Outside the Colosseum, as we finally made our exit, horse drawn carriages awaited potential riders who had the yen for a ride and lire enough to make it happen. We contemplated taking one of the carriages but settled instead on buying some souvenirs from a pushcart vendor nearby.

Next we wandered over to the Arch of Constantine, built to commemorate Constantine's victory at Ponte Milvio in 312. Erected by the Senate and the people of Rome, most of the marble was taken from the arches of Trajan and Marcus Aurelius as well as other monuments. The plaza around the Arch's base was torn up, and several archaeologists were busily working there. Some slowly and carefully dug below the structure's foundation. Others sifted through the excavated dirt in search of chance artifacts. I noticed a column lying partially exposed about two feet underground. In pure speculation, it would be fascinating if they found the Colossus of Nero buried somewhere nearby, possibly having been used as landfill material.

The Arch of Constantine was situated at the entrance to the Via Sacra leading into the Roman Forum. However, a fence was stretched across barring entrance. We walked down Via di San Gregorio a ways before finding the toll gate through which we would have to "ingresso." There I paid L. 5000 for a ticket bearing the words "REPUBBLICA ITALIANA MINISTERO PER I BENI CULTURALI E AMBIENTALI," then in larger letters "BIGLIETTO D'INGRESSO." Besides words, the ticket was decorated with an assortment of representational pictures of Italian (and Greek) artistic culture. The aesthetics of the ticket, itself, was worth the small amount of money asked. Eric would stay behind near the entrance.

Now it was time to take a long walk down the corridors of time. I'm not a stranger to such walks, though they are normally taken along a more abstract and less concrete path. I was not prepared for what awaited as I climbed along the side of Palatine Hill past piles of disjointed, hewn rock and numerous more archaeologists painstakingly digging, scraping and sifting along the slope above and below the path. Then I stood in awe after rounding a corner, climbing some sturdy, ancient steps and looking down upon a stretch of total destruction reminiscent of 1945's post-atomic-bomb Hiroshima.

* * * * *

Today's world witnesses almost on a daily basis conflicts between countries and people brought about by the effects of differences of potentials. The lower potentials want what the higher potentials have, and the higher potentials simply want to consume the lower. In a civilized world many constraints are in place to help mitigate the conflicts with various degrees of success.

Imagine a world where there are no constraints, where higher potentials can consume as many lower potentials as they can digest, and where lower potentials are free to gang up on higher ones and bring them down in order to devour the carcasses. Before me today were the bones of just such a higher potential, and what a long and agonizing death it had.

Still, today's world is a Roman world. Many countries use derivatives of the Latin language. Most of the continents and many countries were named directly by them, i.e., Africa, Asia, Europa, Iberia and Britannia to name a few. Other continents or areas indirectly refer to the Roman, or Italian, culture through use of names such as "Latin" America.

Post-Roman era, the Americas were discovered by Italian Cristoforo Colombo, whose search for "Cathay" and great wealth were inspired by the travel accounts of Italian merchant and

adventurer Marco Polo. The new continents were named after Italian navigator and explorer Americus Vesputius (1454-1512), even though Italy had little to do with its colonization.

Latin is used heavily in scientific terminology, especially botany, and the collective conscious of the world, especially the Christian world, is still focused on the City of the Seven Hills. It is this focus that is Rome's greatest gift to mankind and is also the very reason little now remains of classic Rome. It ate heartily and was eaten completely. Yet like the Phoenix, in its death came rebirth. Rome's spirit and influence live today brighter and more omnipresent than they did even during its most Golden Age.

Rome appeared on the scene rather recent on the list of super powers. Egypt had been flourishing for millennia and was in its waning years of sovereignty let alone power. Its high civilization and wealth, though, still commanded respect, awe, and covetousness. The Mesopotamian civilizations of Sumer and the Akkadian Empire were extinct, as was the Aegean Civilization of Crete. Assyria would soon be gone. The Troy written about in Homer's books The Iliad and The Odyssey, and a topic of Vergil's epic The Aeneid, was grown over with Greek settlements.⁶² The Kingdom of Israel was gone, and that of Judah was struggling not to be eaten. Phoenicia was going strong, with Carthage its chief commercial port. China was quietly enduring. Greece was flourishing primarily in Sparta and Athens. And Persia was polishing its swords and armor for world conquest.

Rome just happened to emerge during an era when the ancient super powers were on the decline, and the new powers were still young and unable to stamp out all competition. Soon as Rome could, it began stamping out its competition, absorbing civilizations as it engulfed and/or destroyed them. Had Greece looked more seriously towards the west besides the east, it might have overcome Rome during the early stages of its development. While Greece was incessantly being pummeled by the Persians, the Romans secured all the territory within marching distance, and the Romans could march very far.

Rome grew and bulldozed its way across the surface of earth. Except for an astounding push by the Greeks through the energies and eastward focus of Alexander, the Romans became and remained the super power to be reckoned with. By the end of Augustus' reign as first emperor of all the Roman Empire, Egypt had been eaten as had Greece, the Hebrew nation, Gaul, Britannia and many other countries. The city of Carthage, and Phoenician power, lay in ruins.

All the while, wealth and other fruits of the various subjugated cultures poured into Rome, a city capable of swallowing whole civilizations and then manifesting many of their attributes. Finally, even influential Alexandria, in competition with Rome long after Egypt fell, along with its fire-prone library, was relegated to secondary status.⁶³

It was apparent that only Rome, itself, or Yahweh could bring destruction to the city. The Christians and Hebrews did a lot of praying along those lines⁶⁴ Meantime, great parades of

⁶² Settlement layer number VIIA in the mound of Hissarlik in Turkey has proven to be the Troy destroyed by the Greeks around 1000B.C.).

⁶³ Unforgivably, the ancient library of Egypt, with its storehouse of irreplaceable books from a time we must now call pre-history, was burned three times by the Romans -- the first time by accident and the other times intentionally. (It took the Muslims to finally finish the job of complete destruction.)

⁶⁴ The Christians thought that Rome would disappear in a sea of lava to atone for the many wrongs inflicted upon their sect. Instead, it was Pompeii and Herculaneum that met such a fate in 79 A.D. during a cataclysmic eruption of Mount Vesuvius. Yahweh apparently had other plans for the Eternal City.

conquest and booty regularly entered the city via the Appian Way (the route mentioned on Page #46), entering the Foro Romo along the Via Sacra.

* * * * *

The Forum, which had first been a mere stretch of swampy land between the Palatine and Capitoline Hills, was drained during the early years of Rome's development. It became a market place and center of meetings and government while naturally growing in importance and architectural splendor. Following is a list of structures (because of the general state of disintegration, the term "structures" is used figuratively) to be found in the Forum today as one enters from the end nearest the Colosseum and Arch of Constantine:

Palatinum, Arch of Titus, Basilica of Maxentius, House of the Vestal Virgins, Temple of Venus and Roma, Round Temple of Romulus, Temple of Antoninus and Faustina (the best preserved temple and now a Christian church), Temple of Augustus, Santa Maria Antiqua, Temple of Castor and Pollux, Temple of Vesta, Temple of Julius Cæsar, Basilica Aemilia, Basilica Julia, Column of Phocas, Temple of Saturnus, Temple of Vespasian, The Rostra, Arch of Septimus Severus, Curia

I walked through the Forum, climbing over piles of building debris, walking through doorways to temples that were otherwise non-existent, gazed at occasional tall columns that no longer had anything to support, and watched the many tourists who were doing likewise. At least three people I ran across were reading Roman history out loud to their traveling companions. One particularly memorable character was a Christian clergy who joyously read portions of the Bible predicting the destruction of Rome to a few of his fellow travelers seated on a stoop at the base of the Temple of Julius Cæsar. The clergy stood facing the others and the temple, and was working himself into a state of zealous frenzy.

The temple of Julius Cæsar was built by Augustus on the very spot, between the temples of Antoninus and Faustina on one side of the Forum, and of Castor and Pollux on the other, where Julius Cæsar was cremated after being killed by members of the Senate on March 15, 44 B.C.⁶⁵ According to the ancient historian Plutarch, after the people saw the lacerated body of Cæsar brought from the Capitol they went out of control and ". . . piled up around the body benches, railings, and tables from the forum, set fire to them and burned it there." Today, all that remains of this once magnificent temple is an ugly foundation rising only a few feet above ground level.

Leaving the Forum, I climbed up Capitoline Hill to wander around more ruins like the Temple of Jupiter and the Tabularium. I also saw the Tarpeian Rock, on the steep side of the hill, where criminals were hurled to their death as late as the first century A.D. The Palatine Hill rendered remnants of temples dating back as early as the sixth century B.C., vast substructures of the imperial palace begun by Augustus, and the house occupied by Livia Drusilla, wife of Augustus. Her house is said to be the best remaining example of Roman houses during the early

⁶⁵ Julius Cæsar became, and is today, the symbol and focal point of Roman greatness. When he left this earth he took with him the five hundred year old republican form of government and left behind rule by a line of emperors begun by his grandnephew Octavian (Augustus Cæsar).

imperial period. I also saw the ruins of the palace of Tiberius, second Roman emperor, and the nearby sunken gardens often referred to as the hippodrome.

The day was sunny and reasonably warm, though a chilling breeze was playing around the Forum and the Hills during my sojourn there. By the time I climbed down off Palatine Hill to the gate through which I had originally entered, I was feeling the effects of a chill. By the next morning either a cold or an allergy was making my head and sinuses ache, a malady that would distress my next few weeks.⁶⁶

I met Eric patiently waiting at the entrance, where bus loads of tourists were just disembarking. We then continued south down Via di San Gregario to Via dei Cerchi, a road that traveled in a northwesterly direction with Palatine and Capitoline hills on the north side and Circus Maximus on the south.⁶⁷ At first I couldn't believe that the relatively narrow yet long expanse of land, contained on its long sides by the Via del Circo Massimo and the Via dei Cerchi, was in fact the famous Circus Maximus. To me it just looked like a well kept lawn with a depression running its length.

When Via dei Cerchi ended at the terminus of Circus Maximus, we began wending our way through a maze of streets and alleys in search of our next goal, the Fountain of Trevi. We passed the Theater of Marcellus on Via Petrocelli near the Tiber River shortly before reaching the beautiful Monument to Victor Emmanuel III. The Teatro Marcello is the oldest antique theater left in Rome. It was begun by Julius Cæsar and completed by Augustus. The theater was dedicated to Augustus' sister Octavia's son Marcellus, who died at the age of twenty-two and was greatly mourned. After Octavia's husband Marcus Claudius Marcellus was murdered, Augustus had adopted the nephew as his own son.⁶⁸ This theater was used as a model when designing the Colosseum. Later, the Savelli Castle was built on top of the theater requiring that the seating area be filled in with dirt. Shops are located in the theater's lower half.

We took a detour from the direct path to the Fountain of Trevi, because I wanted to see the Pantheon. Unfortunately, once we arrived at the Pantheon we discovered that it was closed for repairs. There was netting and scaffolding everywhere on one side of the building⁶⁹. There was a nice fountain in the Piazza di Rotonda in front of the Pantheon, however, and there were several restaurants in the area. We bought some fast food and ate a late-yet-pleasant lunch while seated at the outside tables.

Lunch over, we finished the trek to the Fountain of Trevi. The way was tortuous in that most of the streets were very narrow, short, and inter-connecting every which way. Finally arriving, we were once again met by a restoration project.

The fountain is part of the facade of a large palace and consists of statues and bas-reliefs on piles of rocks, with water pouring from every part. The Virgin Water is provided by aque

⁶⁶ At the time I attributed the malady to having inhaled the dust of martyrs while kicking around the Forum.

⁶⁷ The elliptical depression called Circus Maximus, a stretch of land used for horse racing, was built during the time of the kings before 500 B.C. and enlarged during the Republic and the Empire until it could hold 100,000 spectators.

⁶⁸ Octavia married Mark Anthony after Marcus Marcellus died. After Mark Anthony and Cleopatra committed suicide in Egypt, Octavia took four of Anthony's seven children in with her in addition to the two girls she had by him. Cleopatra, daughter of Anthony and Cleopatra, was later given in marriage to Juba II, king of Numidia and Mauritania.

⁶⁹ Footnote #60 tells more about the Pantheon.

ducts built by Agrippa after his men discovered the source of the Virgin Water. The fountain and its pool of water, made famous to Americans by the movie "Three Coins in the Fountain," today were dry. Once again scaffolding and netting had arrived before us. Undaunted, I threw a modern Roman coin into the dry fountain in honor of a wish made by a woman I worked with at the time, Nancy Pensavalle -- a naturalized U.S. citizen of Sicilian extraction- who had asked that I throw in a coin for her. Throwing a coin into the fountain is supposed to ensure ones return to the Eternal City. Nothing is mentioned in this tradition about the fountain containing water, except that drinking from the fountain is supposed to ensure the same thing. (Mine wasn't the only coin that had been thrown.) I noticed that the area was both a popular tourist area and a popular meeting place for natives. In other words, the area was very crowded. Then it began to rain.

A tour of Japanese tourists had just arrived when the rain started. By the time several of them had bought ice cream at a nearby ice cream shop the rain had slowed to a mere sprinkle. Eric and I bought postcards from a very disgruntled woman at a magazine stand, also nearby, who obviously was tired of dealing with tourists. Then we began our walk back towards the hotel.

We walked past Quirinal Hill and its Palace del Quirinale Then we continued past Viminal Hill on to the Piazza dei Cinquecento area in front of the terminal building, where we wandered around awhile before finishing the trek to the hotel. By then I was feeling the effects of my cold/allergy. We both rested awhile before going out to forage for dinner. We walked around the area, then returned to our room with a cooked chicken, pizza and beer. I spent the remainder of the evening reading my science fiction book. Eric read about Rome from my souvenir guide book and later called his cousin living in Naples. At the time, he thought we'd be in Rome long enough to take a side trip down to visit the cousin and her family.

AN AUDIENCE WITH THE POPE -- WEDNESDAY, MAY 31

Today we got a relatively early start and were finished with the modified continental breakfast around 9:00 o'clock. It had decided to rain, a trend that would be continued off and on all day. When we walked out onto the street the rain was definitely on. Armed, I with umbrella and Eric with camera, we started our odyssey to the world's smallest sovereign domain, Vatican City.

Rome's metro system was simpler than those of Paris and London. From the train/bus terminal, one leg traveled northwesterly and southeasterly, while the other leg headed south by southwest. That was the entire system. Above ground, however, they had a very elaborate trolley system.

We entered the cavernous subway (neo-catacombs) and were met by the sight of numerous beggars and peddlers taking refuge from the downpour. Several entrepreneurs had their wares spread on blankets, making the place a great market. We exchanged lire notes for coins at a crowded machine, then purchased tickets with the coins, also from a machine. I didn't see any "human" attendants.

We finally located and boarded the northwesterly underground train. Soon we were on our way to the rail's terminus at the corner of Viale Giulio Cesare (Julius Cæsar) and Via Ottaviano (Octavius), ten blocks west of the Tiber River and a few blocks north of Citta Del Vaticano. Upon arrival at the terminus, Eric and I walked south down Via Ottaviano along with a multitude of other people.

We didn't spend any time at the numerous shops along the route, figuring we'd shop after the Vatican visit. I had heard from a lady at work, who had recently come to Rome on a tour, that the pope (bishop of Rome; supreme bishop, or pontiff, of the church and thus its head; Vicar of Christ on earth) gives audience on Wednesdays besides Sundays.⁷⁰ Despite the rain we were still hoping to see Karol Wojtyla, the Polish cardinal elected Pope John Paul II by the cardinal college in 1978, 264th to hold that office, Saint Peter being the first.⁷¹ Ahead we could see the unspectacular-yet-utilitarian wall surrounding Vatican City, and its crowded entrance gate.

It was raining, a generally bleak day, when we walked through the entrance with a great throng of people just arriving by foot and by bus. Several policemen were on hand for crowd control. Barricades had been erected to keep people out of Piazza Saint Pietro, where thousands of chairs had been set up for the day's public audience.

Rising from the center of the piazza, and pointing towards the pope's heavenly Authority, stood an obelisk by Domenico Fontana, raised to its position by a hundred men on September 10, 1586. To the north and south of the piazza were the colonnades by Bernini, extending from magnificent Saint Peter's Basilica in semi-circles of welcoming arms. These extremities provided entrance to Saint Peter's in the Vatican and to Vatican City.

Our first order of business, after entering through the outer gate, was to locate the Vatican's post office. There we bought Vatican-related postcards and Vatican City postage, sending the cards off through the Vatican postal system. The next order of business was to determine what had to be done to see the pope.

Meantime, we were approached by an enterprising Italian bearing religious souvenirs guaranteed blessed by the pope. I bought a set of commemorative medals/coins that depicted Pope John Paul II, Saint Peter's Basilica, the Pieta, etc. When he tried to sell me some rosary beads, I explained that I wasn't Catholic. He then placed a hand on my shoulder in very genuine compassion and said that he was very sorry.

As a large mass of people came through the gate, the police herded them into the south colonnade, so that's where we headed, too. Most of those arriving were part of groups, either on secular tour or religious pilgrimage. Group leaders stood around hoisting signs around which their people could congregate before entering. The great crowd moved slowly but steadily, as its width was narrowed until coming to a constricted inner entrance way. As we passed through, suspicious packages, containers and people were searched by the police.⁷²

We made it past the police check point and stayed with one particular group as it left the colonnade, crossed an empty lot and entered a low, relatively modern-looking building protected

⁷⁰ A divine commission was given to Saint Peter by Jesus Christ. Peter was invested with attributes making him king, priest and teacher of all the followers of the Master. The power conveyed to Peter by Christ is said to be passed on in full measure to each duly appointed successor in the Roman bishopric.

⁷¹ a) John Paul II is actually the three hundredth pope before subtracting from this number the many anti-popes. b) I'm not Catholic. Still I feel great awe for the institution to which all of Christendom owes much, especially during pre-Reformation times. Roman Catholic excesses during the sixteenth century did much to define Protestantism, just as the excesses of Rome fifteen hundred years before did much to define Christianity. The competition of Protestantism vs. Catholicism has done much to fine tune both rivals.

⁷² Vatican security has been beefed up and made more alert since Pope John Paul II was shot twice by Turkish terrorist Mehmet Ali Agca, 23, on May 13, 1981. The incident occurred while John Paul prepared to address an audience of 15,000 people gathered here.

by colorfully-dressed Swiss Guards. Inside and to our right, beyond a line of columns, was a vast, cream-colored audience chamber with a cavernous ceiling. A stage with its pedestaled, papal chair spanned the far end.

The large foyer we were now in ran the width of the building and was from where one entered the aisles accessing the audience chamber. Our adoptive host group continued across this foyer to the far end. It then turned right following a hallway that maneuvered the depth of the chamber, separated from it by a great curtain. Finally, we were ushered through an opening in the curtain to assigned seating. The organizer looked inquisitively at Eric and me as we passed but said nothing. Serendipity, the benefactor of our entire European vacation, was still with us.

I passed time watching the cross-section of individuals making up the great throng of visitors. Our number kept growing, with a steady roar of chatter blanketing all, pierced only by a choral group, standing in one of the aisles, singing religious songs. Just to my right, and across the aisle, was a contingency from Mexico City, who had a banner at the ready. One of its members had an assortment of souvenirs brought to be blessed. He busily arranged them so as to obtain the greatest exposure. Down in front, at the viewers' stage left, a man stood holding a large painting that appeared to be of the Madonna. I figured that he was having it blessed, too. (He would continue to hold the picture there throughout the coming proceedings.) Seated near the front were scores of priests, nuns in all-white habits, and a uniformed military contingent.

On the stage, or platform, also to the viewers' left, were several chairs occupied by a number of bishops facing the papal dais. Some of the bishops were there as special guests. Others were linguists. Behind the raised papal dais at center stage loomed an ominous work of art, light brown or tan in color, the meaning or symbolism of which escaped me. In fact, it is difficult even to describe. My personal impression is that it was a great, complex, entangled snare of entrapped souls, with one larger than life figure, presumably Christ, rising from it. Perhaps it is from the Christian concept of "fishers of men."

The great room eventually filled to capacity. Then people were seated in another area at mezzanine height, visible through an opening in the wall on the opposite side of the chamber from us. When the pope made his entrance it was SRO (standing room only), with many people standing in the foyer. Our group was about 300 feet or so from the stage, at the left side of the chamber, about one-fourth the distance from stage to foyer.

It was 11:00 o'clock when the chamber suddenly exploded in lightning of camera flashes and thunder of joyous shouts, applause and cheers, as the pope entered stage from viewers' left. He was preceded by two Swiss Guards who then stood behind the papal dais, toward the back of the stage, where they would remain motionless for well over an hour.⁷³ Two additional Swiss Guards also stood near each end of the stage at audience level.

The pope, who had turned 69 years old on May 18, was dressed in the purest white from head to toe. He climbed the few steps to his chair, all the while raising his hands in acknowledgment and thanks for the great shower of adoration being bestowed by his well

⁷³ The Swiss Guard is a papal guard of the Vatican, formed about 1505 by Pope Julius II [Giuliano Della Rovere (1443 - 1513)], pope from 1503 to 1513 and patron of Bramante, Raphael and Michelangelo. During that era Swiss mercenaries were a prized fighting force in the armies of Europe. The Swiss Guard is comprised of six officers and 110 men. Only Swiss can join, and privates are not allowed to marry. Michelangelo is said to have designed their colorful, Medieval-looking uniforms.

wishers. He then sat with his forearms resting on the arms of the chair, his hands caressing the chair's two golden orbs,⁷⁴ while the people continued their acclaim.

The room finally quieted, at which time the first linguistic bishop walked over and stood at the microphone placed just left of the papal dais (viewers' left). One spoke Italian, one French, one German, one English, and one Spanish. Each announced the presence and origin of the groups speaking their respective language.

An American bishop presenting the English speaking peoples announced, among others, a group from Los Angeles that was sitting near Eric and me, so we felt accounted for and legitimized -- not necessary but nice all the same. Each time a group was singled out and announced, members of the group would stand and present the pope with a gift anywhere from a cheer to a chant to a banner (the Mexico City group had a too-loud chant and a long banner), to a song (one was sung by the choir which had been singing when we arrived, another by a choir which had there-to-fore kept its peace), to a far-too-long performance by an Italian band standing in the foyer. By far the most effusive groups were the Mexican and Italian contingencies. In return they received a more lively response from the pope.

The presentation process took some time. Whenever a group was announced, the pope would respond with raised hands, often pointing to the group in acknowledgment for gifts given. When this operation was finally completed, it was time for the pope to present his blessing to the people of all linguistic categories and to present us with his message. The message was spoken by him in each language, read from sheets of paper handed him.

I was very impressed with Pope John Paul II. Whether he has a direct line of succession to Christ, this pope has the kind of soul that would make a person proud to be a Christian, whether Catholic or of another sect. It isn't difficult for me to believe this benevolent Vicar of Christ on earth possesses Saint Peter's keys to Christian Heaven.

The formal audience ended at 12:15 o'clock P.M. Then the pope stood, walked down the steps to the stage, and waited while the acclamation roared and flashes flickered. He then surprised many by walking down to audience level, where he mingled as we headed out the door.⁷⁵

Now the time had come to visit Saint Peter's Basilica. This edifice is said to have been built over Saint Peter's tomb. It is also over the locale where he was martyred by being crucified upside down, about 65-67 A.D., the same year that Saint Paul was beheaded.

⁷⁴ Each golden orb is about eight inches in diameter and affixed atop the end of a chair arm.

⁷⁵ Later that same day the pope left on a visit to several Scandinavian countries. When Eric and I reached Amsterdam the following day, his travels were in the news. There we saw him again, this time on Dutch television. He may have been in Holland at the time. Pope John Paul II has far surpassed the record for travel by a pope.

SAINT PETER'S IN THE VATICAN -- WEDNESDAY, MAY 31

There is a poignant legend, recorded by Origen Adamantius (185 A.D. - 254 A.D.), set in the period shortly following the 62 A.D. conflagration that destroyed two-thirds of Rome.⁷⁶ During the holocaust Emperor Nero had enjoyed watching the fiery spectacle at a distance, reciting passages from the burning of Troy. To assuage claims from Roman citizenry that he had in fact started the fire, Nero turned the attention of the masses against the Christians.⁷⁷ Saint Peter was asked by his flock to leave Rome until Nero ended his ferocious persecution of the Christians.

Saint Peter, leader of the Christian flock as its first pope, left the city by way of Via Appia and through the Porta Appia (now Porta Saint Sebastiano). Not far south of this gate he met a man walking towards Rome and recognized him as Jesus Christ. Peter asked "Domine, quo vadis?"⁷⁸ Christ answered "I am going to Rome to be crucified again." Then the vision vanished, leaving footprints on the paving stone.

Today, there is a place called the chapel of "Quo Vadis?" built along the Via Appia Antica on the very spot where Peter is said to have seen the vision. A little further south along the same route are the catacombs of Saint Callixtus and of Saint Sebastiano, early burying places for the Christians of Rome.

History has shown there was great need for burial space. Thousands of Christians were martyred during those early years of the contest between Romans, with their growing pantheon of gods and timeless ways, and the Christians, with their new methods of interaction, generally high moral values, sense of circumspection, powerful beliefs and faith, and adamant intolerance of all but one god. In the Decalogue (Ten Commandments) closely followed by the Jewish Christians, and later by the gentile Christians, it explicitly proscribed the worship of any deity except God.

Rome became the Holy See in 42 A.D., though Christianity didn't become the only tolerated religion of Rome until a few hundred years later. For nearly a thousand years, from 400 A.D. until the dawning of the 14th century, the papal residence was at the Lateran Palace on the estate in Rome originally belonging to the Laterini family. Nero had confiscated the property from the Laterini, and Constantine I gave it as a gift to his newly adopted religion.⁷⁹ The Pontificate Court then transferred to Avignon in southern France, on the Rhône River, where it remained from 1309 until 1377 (sometimes referred to as the "Babylonian Captivity")⁸⁰

⁷⁶ Origen was the most famous Christian writer and teacher of the third century. Born in Alexandria, Egypt, his father Leonidas died a martyr under Septimus Severus in 202 A.D. Origen, considered the father of the allegorical method of scriptural interpretation, wrote at least 6,000 books. He was a Platonist who endeavored to combine Greek philosophy and the Christian religion. Late in life he was imprisoned and tortured during the persecution of Christians under Emperor Decius. Though released in 251, a few years later he died from injuries incurred during the incarceration.

⁷⁷ See Appendix D entitled "The House of Caesar."

⁷⁸ "Master, whither goest thou?"

⁷⁹ The Lateran Palace is said to be one of the greatest treasure houses of art in the world. The original palace was torn down in the 16th century and replaced with a smaller version. However, among the parts of the original structure that were left intact was the Scala Santa, or Holy Staircase, believed to have been part of Pontius Pilot's Jerusalem palace and touched by the feet of Christ.

⁸⁰ By 1300 A.D. the papacy had been growing in temporal power for more than five hundred years, a process that would ebb and flow for another five hundred.

The Papal Court returned to Rome in 1377, this time to the Vatican, a residence originally built by Pope Symmachus (498 A.D. - 514 A.D.) in an area once part of Nero's gardens. Nicholas V (Tommaso Parentucelli 1397-1455), pope from 1447 to 1455, is considered the founder of the Vatican Library. He began a systematic policy of improving the Vatican and called for rebuilding Saint Peter's basilica.⁸¹ Today, Vatican Palace covers 13½ acres and has 1,100 rooms.⁸²

The temporal power of the papacy abruptly ended in 1870, when the unification of Italy took place under King Victor Emmanuel II. The king annexed the Papal States (much of central Italy) and removed the pope's sovereignty. In protest, the popes from that time until early 1929 remained voluntary prisoners of the Vatican.

February 11, 1929, the "Roman Question" was resolved. The sovereign State of Vatican City was created when the Lateran Treaty was signed by Pietro Cardinal Gasparri for Pope Pius XI, and by Benito Mussolini, premier of Italy, for King Victor Emmanuel III. Also included were thirteen buildings outside Vatican City and in Rome, which were given extraterritoriality and placed under the jurisdiction of Vatican City.

The treaty's series of agreements returned sovereignty to the pope, named Roman Catholicism as the religion of Italy, and made financial restitution to the papacy for its loss of temporal power in 1870. In return it pledged the pope to perpetual neutrality in international affairs, except when papal assistance was specifically requested by all parties in a controversy.

* * * * *

Constantine I built the first basilica over the grave of Saint Peter. Nicholas V called for the basilica's reconstruction after it fell into disrepair during the "Babylonian Captivity." Yet it was Julius II who actually initiated building the new basilica. A few of the notable artists/architects involved in the project were: Bramante, Raphael, Sangallo, Maderno, Bernini, Filarete, Fontana, Michelangelo, and so on indefinitely, since work virtually has never ceased.

Saint Peter's in Rome was a great treasure chest of inspired and inspirational art and architecture. Outside were two beautiful fountains (one by Maderno and one by Bernini), the building's facade by Maderno, and, of course, Fontana's obelisk and Bernini's colonnade. Upon entering the portico, then the edifice, itself, Eric and I were immediately overawed by the spectacularity of the place. What we had seen till then did little to prepare us for the jewel box now being entered.

During our hour-and-a-half in the basilica we were treated to an endless variety of objects d'art. There were decorative columns/pillars, frescoes, a special bronze door and iron gate from the original Saint Peter's basilica, confessionals, niches, chapels/temples, bas-reliefs, and a single painting on canvas (the only one in the basilica, entitled "Blessed Trinity" by Pietro da Cortona). Sprinkled generously throughout was a virtual garden of bronze and marble statuary.

⁸¹ The original draw of the area was no doubt the prevalent belief that Saint Peter was buried there. A tradition ultimately verified as fact, Saint Peter's tomb is located directly under the high altar of Saint Peter's basilica.

⁸² Included in the list of Vatican Palace facets are: the Vatican Museum with its Raphael's Rooms and Sistine Chapel; Gregorian Museum of Egyptian Art; Gregorian Museum of Etruscan Art; Museum Pio Clementino; Museum Chiaramonti; the Pinacoteca (Picture Gallery); the New Picture Gallery; and the Vatican Library containing 60,000 priceless codices and more than 500,000 volumes.

Frankly, I couldn't fathom that the hand of man could create such statuary, some of which was gargantuan in size yet delicate in detail. Michelangelo's *Pieta*, located in the first chapel to the right and one of the first works we saw upon entering, was accurately proportional and exquisite, reflecting human form as though real people were cast in marble. Everywhere were scenes depicting aspects of the church, its foundation and history, Biblical stories, plus more contemporary tales of conflicts. Also shown were saints and other people of great faith, including popes and their papal accomplishments.

The high altar, located directly below the dome, rises over Saint Peter's tomb. Ninety-five lamps burn day and night before it. High above is a canopy by Bernini supported by four spiral columns made of bronze taken from the Pantheon. Not unlike an ancient Egyptian tomb that would depict and signify the life and deeds of its tenant, this monument to Saint Peter, and the religion with which he was charged by Christ, depicts and signifies what has transpired since the entrustment.

We spent much of our time in the basilica, itself. Then we began a tour of the assorted chambers below ground housing more papal treasures. One series of small rooms held a tremendous variety of crucifixes of all sizes, most of which had been given to popes by sovereigns and other great people.⁸³ Some crucifixes were made of crystal. Others were jewel-encrusted. Still others were of gold or other precious metals. Many more were creative mixtures of precious stones and metals, crystal, porcelain, and anything else pleasing to the eye. All expressed wealth, good taste and financial sacrifice as penance.

There were rooms filled with candlesticks of similar description as just given for crucifixes, rooms with historical papal robes and crowns, etc. At tour end we exited by way of a Vatican store, where I bought a tiny replica of the *Pieta*.

Our search for the Sixtine Chapel (*Sistine Chapel*) ended in failure. It was part of the Vatican Museum, and that museum closed at 1:00 P.M., just before the time we started looking for it. Thus we decided on returning to the pensione for regrouping and determining what to do next. The weather was still inhospitable, though the heavy rainfall had slowed to a mere sprinkle. On the way back we stopped at a few shops along the *Via Ottaviano* and bought more trinkets. Then it was back to the metro station and the pensione. My head was feeling renewed effects of the aforementioned cold/allergy.

We had originally planned on staying in Rome another full day. However, the way things were working out -- especially weather-wise -- we decided to move on instead. While I stayed behind to nurse my aching head, Eric lit out to find a KLM Royal Dutch Airlines ticket office and see what could be done to give us a full day in Amsterdam rather than another in Rome.

Two hours later Eric returned, saying that he had made all necessary arrangements. We would leave around noon the next day. Meantime we were getting hungry, so we left the pensione and took a walk, stopping at a ristorante where I had ravioli and zucchini, and Eric had turkey and small, boiled potatoes.

Returning to the room around 7:30 o'clock P.M., Eric called his cousin in Napoli, while I read from the sci-fi book. Although she was very disappointed that we wouldn't be going there for a visit, Eric and I were looking forward to spending time in Amsterdam, Venice of the North.

⁸³ Many of the crucifixes on display could be measured in feet as well as in inches.

NEDERLAND AND VACATION'S END THURSDAY, JUNE 1

We still had Amsterdam, in Nederland, to see. However, we knew the vacation was quickly coming to its conclusion. We were up and having breakfast by 8:30 o'clock A.M. Then it was time to pack, make our way (walk) to the train/bus station nearby and purchase tickets for the next bus to the Leonardo da Vinci International Airport. Finally, we made the forty-five-minute bus trip through southern Rome and Emperor Marcus Aurelius' Wall⁸⁴ via Porta Saint Paolo, whence we had entered just three days before.

Rome certainly had been an adventure, and it was awe inspiring to see remnants of so much history. Now we looked forward to leaving behind such monuments and monumental ruins, to go someplace where life and the here-and-now were celebrated far and beyond the then-and-gone.

Holland had also been a world power, though never on the scale of Rome. It had vied for sea power and had hoped to build an empire in the New World. Holland supplied a great influx of settlers to the New World and built New Amsterdam, with its area called Haarlem. Today, New Amsterdam is called New York City, though many other Dutch names still can be found throughout the area. Harlem remains to denote the section of New York City situated in northeast Manhattan, and the eight-mile-long tidal river separating Manhattan from the Bronx.

We arrived at the airport terminal, checked our baggage, received boarding passes and went through tight security procedures. It was now 10:55 o'clock A.M., and we wouldn't be boarding the plane until a little after noon. We tacitly went about touring the various airport shops and Duty Free Store. Thus we spent most of our remaining time and lire. We boarded KLM Flight #346, Gate 42, at 12:20 o'clock P.M. and were soon off to lunch in the sky consisting of the regular KLM beef with noodles, roll and chiffon pudding (all delicious, of course). There would be no movie during the one-hour-and-fifty-five-minute flight.

An interesting thing happened during the flight. I had made a few purchases of Italian dessert products for friends and to share at work. During the flight I noticed a familiar name listed among several other Italian product manufacturers on the clear plastic carrying bag received at time of purchase. The name was Villafranca, spelled exactly the way Eric spells his last name. When I pointed this out to Eric he was surprised, excited and relieved. It finally explained the puzzle of why a number of Italians, upon hearing or seeing his name, had asked if he was Italian.

Flight #346 touched down at Schiphol International Airport a little after 4:00 o'clock in the afternoon. We already had a hotel booked for June 2nd, but since we were a day early we would have to find other lodgings for this night. A hotel reservations desk was located at the terminal, and in no time we were booked at the Westropa near central downtown Amsterdam. The Westropa was only a few blocks from the Owl Hotel, where we would be spending the vacation's last night.

We caught a KLM bus that would take us nearly to the front door of our hotel. Then we settled back for a glimpse of Hollandisch countryside. The bus stopped at a few hotels outside Amsterdam as we headed east toward the city. Everywhere were bicyclists out for a ride, people of all ages pedaling down roads over surprisingly level land with few trees. It was truly a biker's paradise. No strain on the pedals, just smooth riding. Not once during our stay did I see a hill, or a bike with more than one gear.

⁸⁴ Marcus Aurelius' Wall was begun circa 270A.D. to enclose the area then covered by Rome.

When we arrived in town I was enchanted by sight of a woman, presumably in her early fifties, with reddish hair and a reddish fur piece wrapped around her neck, expertly pedaling her bike from a side street onto the main road, to head in the opposite direction from the bus. In a basket attached to the bike's handlebars was a small, perked dog, attentive to its surroundings and obviously enjoying the excursion.

The KLM bus took us to within a block and a half of our hotel. We walked north by northwest on the west side of Nassaukade to the Westropa situated near Helmerstraat (Helmer Street). Nassaukade ran alongside a canal called Singelgracht. The Westropa was directly across the street (on the west side) from the western end of a canal called Leidsegracht, which intersected Singelgracht at a perpendicular angle.⁸⁵

South of Leidsegracht, and bordered on the west by Singelgracht and on the east by Lindbaansgracht canals, was Leidseplein, or Leidse Park. We would become very familiar with this park and with the street, Leidsestraat, which headed northeast from the park directly into the hub of central Amsterdam, the place where everybody went to eat, shop or be otherwise entertained. A tram ran down the center of this street and was generally packed with those coming or leaving the area. Our hotels were close enough to the action that we never needed to use it.

We checked into the hotel and were given room #72 on the third floor. Once we had deposited our luggage and retrieved jackets, we each headed out alone to explore the new territory under darkening skies (due to low-lying clouds). Eric took to Amsterdam as if he had lived there for ten of his lives. He went directly into the hub, whereas I was disoriented right from the start and simply roamed around the nearly deserted streets and canals in the vicinity of the hotel.

I never did get used to the street names. I bought bottled water at a local store, and a few unseen locals heckled me-as-tourist by softly calling out "Gondolier! Gondolier!" Everywhere were bicycles chained to iron fences and other sturdy objects. Several of the many small cars I saw parked hither, thither and yon had a locking device on their steering wheel. It quickly became obvious that there was a crime problem here.

Eric and I met back at the hotel around 6:30 o'clock in the evening. Then he guided me into the hub, or city center, for a bite of dinner. We ate at the Maria Restaurant (Spanish food). Next we walked around and did a little shopping until nearly 9:00 o'clock, when we returned to the hotel room and watched a movie on one of our TV's English language channels. Before finally turning in for the night we saw footage of the pope's Scandinavian travels on the English language CNN channel.

⁸⁵ If one were to follow Leidsegracht a short distance from this spot, then make a left onto the canal called Prinsengracht, it would be only a mile or so before you passed Ann Frankhuis, or the house where Ann Frank and her family attempted to escape capture by the Nazis.

FRIDAY, JUNE 2

WALKABOUT AMSTERDAM

We were up early and out by 8:00 o'clock. The first order of business was to help ourselves to the complimentary breakfast being provided on the first floor, including boiled eggs, toast, assorted jellies, fruit, orange juice, coffee and cereal. We dawdled for awhile over the unlimited supply of coffee. Then it was out onto Nassaukade, down to Leidsestraat, east through Leidseplein and across Singelgracht, past a few streets until crossing the bridges over Prinsengracht and Keisergracht, respectively. Here we noticed a ticket booth just off the northeast side of the Keisergracht bridge, where one could buy tickets for bus and boat tours arranged by a company called Lindberg Tours, also called Lovers. We purchased tickets for a bus tour the agent said would start at 1:30 o'clock P.M. from in front of a hotel not far from our own. This would give us time in the late morning to return from our adventures in the "centrum," check out of the Westropa before noon, and move to the Owl hotel before taking the tour.⁸⁶

Continuing down Leidsestraat we passed another park, this one the Koningsplein. I had purchased \$100 worth of Dutch guilders the day before at Schiphol Airport but was concerned about running low. We stopped at the "Change-Express," where I bought another \$50 worth at the same rate, DFL 2.2 per U.S. dollar.⁸⁷

Just past the Koningsplein we veered toward the right down Amstel to the Muntplein then veered left (north by northeast) up Nieuwe Doelenstraat past the Turfmarket and Theaterschool Center. Of course, we frequently had to pass over canal bridges. When we entered Nieuwe Doelenstraat we were at the northern extreme of the Amstel, the only actual river in the city. It was for this tributary that the city and a very popular bier (beer) were named.⁸⁸

The Turfmarket had an open area that was a natural draw for freelance entertainers, people who wanted to be thus amused for the cost of an occasional guilder or two thrown into a hat, and people who just wanted to lounge around on chairs set about in the open. The place reminded me of Union Square on Powell Street, downtown San Francisco, a popular hangout for mimes and others.

It seemed that whenever I passed this area there would be a different group, or single act, playing musical instruments, dancing, singing, doing mime, juggling, etc. The only group I noticed more than once was a troupe of Indians from South America. One time they were doing an indian dance, another time they played musical instruments (drums, wooden flutes, guitars) and sang. Still another, they all played guitars while one fellow sang.

The remainder of the morning was spent wandering up and down the various side streets, shopping and doing other tourist things. At one point we spent some time at the Nieuwmarkt, located approximately a mile down Nieuwe Doelenstraat. Here I saw a picturesque, red brick clock tower built in 1620, still owned by the Thomas Cooke money exchange. One part of the tower building housed a souvenir shop filled with expensive and authentic, handmade articles, all out of my spending range.

⁸⁶ The city zones were: noord (north), west, zuid (south), oost (east), and centrum (central).

⁸⁷ The formal name of a silver coin, and the monetary unit of the Netherlands, is the Dutch florin. The commonly used name "guilders" is a derivative of the word "gulden" (golden) from the days when the florin was made of gold.

⁸⁸ Hundreds of years ago a dam was built on the Amstel, and the town grew up around this dam.

We returned to the Westropa at 11:40 o'clock in the morning to check out. From there we lugged our luggage to the Owl, located on a little side street called Tesselschadestraat just off Nassaukade heading west. The name was longer than the street.

Our room, #51, was on the 4th floor. We soon learned it was next door to the elevator motor and cable operation chamber. When we were in the room, loud clanks and whirs would alert us to someone using the elevator. On the positive side the room was light, with some view if one stood on the bench below the window.

Eric and I went our separate ways, meeting back at the tour's pickup locale after 1:00 o'clock. There we waited, along with a few other hopefuls, until 1:45 o'clock. While we stood around waiting, getting more impatient by the minute, an Amstel beer wagon went by. The wagon was an open, keg-laden affair pulled by beautiful, Clydesdale horses. Luckily for us the traffic light turned red. The wagon and team came to a full stop, giving us a greater chance to enjoy the view and take pictures.

A Lindberg Tours bus finally stopped. When we tried to board the bus, however, the attendant looked at our tickets and said they were for city tours. Those only started at 10:00 o'clock each morning. Apparently the ticket agent had a screw loose.

This bus was on its way to an outlying area tour that would take the rest of the day and part of the evening to complete. For additional guilders they would let us take this instead of the city tour. However, neither Eric nor I wanted to commit so much precious time to a single tour, especially one that wouldn't even encompass the city.

Disappointed, we returned the tickets and received a refund. We then went our separate ways again for the afternoon. I walked around some before returning to take a chance at purchasing a ticket at the same booth, this time for a canal tour. I didn't want to leave Amsterdam without taking at least one guided tour.

GUIDED TOUR OF CANALS

It was now 2:40 o'clock, with the next tour beginning in twenty minutes. With the ticket agent's permission I climbed aboard the vacant, long, narrow, glass-roofed tour boat for a spot inspection. The couch-like boat seats were comfortably upholstered in a soft fabric and were arranged in u-shaped groupings, with the closed end of the "u" parallel with the sides of the boat and the legs perpendicular. In the middle of each grouping was a wooden table, though neither food nor beverages were sold on board. The windows could be opened, but I found it best to keep them closed except during actual picture-taking. It may have been June, but the weather was still early April.

The tour began on time and lasted an hour. During that time we traveled down several of the 100 canals slicing through Amsterdam. We also spent some time on the Amstel, itself. We passed the church where Rembrandt is buried and the artist section of town. Our guide was not the fellow who managed the steering wheel but a cassette tape that was timed for the different aspects of the trip. Occasionally the pilot would stop the tape, especially if we were delayed by traffic, then start it again at an appropriate locale. Among the things discussed by our tape guide were:

The town has 750,000 people and as many bicycles (I personally think there are more than this number of bicycles). These bikes are not skimpy, flimsy

things. These are solid, heavy-framed, balloon-tired vehicles fully fendered and with garment-proof chain guards.

HOUSES OF VARIETY

There are several thousands of houseboats docked in the channels. Less than 50% are legal, meaning they paid their annual 500 to 1000 guilders to the municipal government. Only legal houseboats may receive municipal gas, electricity and water. When an address is needed, the houseboat tenant uses the address of the nearest house. I noticed that many of the houseboats sported very nice and very comfortable looking dwellings. One such vessel, called the "Cat Boat," was dedicated solely to be home for stray cats. Volunteer veterinarians would come occasionally to treat the inhabitants. We could see countless felines lounging and luxuriating about.

The wealth of a family, during former days, was pronounced to the world by the number of stairs leading up to the house's front door. Two sets of stairs were symmetrically placed so that each set formed the leg of a triangle. At the top of this triangle was the dwelling's main entrance door. Directly below the main entrance, between the two sets of stairs, the servants' entrance was placed a few steps below ground level.

Gables on house roofs are often unique and sometimes elaborate. Most of the older houses have a lift beam near the peak of their gable extending out about three or four feet, necessitated because the stairs inside are too steep and narrow to allow passage of articles much wider than a person. A hook at the bottom of this beam is used to lift or lower furniture to or from an upper story window. One of these typical, older houses we passed was that of the Burgemeester (Mayor) of Amsterdam. Also of note, the older houses have the date of their construction centrally located somewhere on their gable. Many of the houses we passed were built in the 1600s.

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We took channels all the way to the river from which the city takes much of its livelihood, the "Het Ij." Its north channel leads in from the sea, through which all shipping passes to and from Amsterdam harbor. Near the harbor were two of the tallest buildings in the city. One was only about ten stories high. The other, the Shell building, was a little taller. In the case of the latter, its most interesting feature was copper-colored windows. The tape explained the reason for the coloration. It was the result of a process using gold dust in the glass-making process. With the gulden windows in place, the building's temperature could be completely and evenly controlled to within a few degrees variance all year around.

All the time we were in the city we could hear pile-drivers banging away. During the tour I learned that a city building ordinance requires a structure's

support piles to be driven down so many feet per story. This is due to the ground's tremendous instability from high water saturation.

One of the canals we took was the narrowest in the city. This channel was just a little wider than our boat and not wide enough for two boats to pass. We also went through several open locks used in the past before the north channel locks were installed. (They are still used occasionally for closing off the channel network long enough to pump the enclosed water into the sea. This is done to keep the channels from becoming stagnant by replacing older with fresher sea water.) We also saw where some channel bridges were designed to lift, allowing passage by taller boats.

The tour completed, I stayed around the Turfmarket area for awhile people-watching. Yet the sun wasn't warm enough to keep off the chill from northern breezes. I was still suffering the effects of the cold/allergy received as an unwanted souvenir in Rome. So after dinner I wandered back to the hotel and spent the evening in bed, alternately reading the science fiction book and taking catnaps. By 9:30 o'clock I finished the book and turned in. Eric returned at 11:30 o'clock after a fun evening partying, toting several bags filled with souvenirs. He said that after sundown, it seemed everybody in town converged on the centrum.

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HOME AGAIN

SATURDAY, JUNE 3

We were up by 6:15 o'clock A.M. and were packed and ready to leave by 7:30. Then we visited the complimentary breakfast area, which just happened to be on the hotel's window-enclosed back porch overlooking a small yet beautiful, flower-and-bush-lined yard. The sun was out, lighting everything to full glory. A pretty, blond girl brought us a tray with four kinds of bread (not toasted), marmalade, coffee with cream, thinly sliced ham and cheese, and two one-minute eggs in egg cups. The whole package was quite a going away treat!!

We caught the 8:30 o'clock KLM airport bus to Schiphol, boarded the plane about 10:30 and were in the air at 11:30. During the eleven-hour flight back home we were given two complete meals plus a sandwich snack. As usual, there were unlimited drinks. We saw two movies, "Rain Man" and "A Fish Called Wanda." All of this made the flight go by surprisingly fast.

The plane touched down at the Los Angeles International Airport at 1:30 o'clock P.M. Pacific Standard Time (10:30 P.M. in Holland). We waited in a very long customs line for a process that took an hour. About an hour later still, Mike Roy, the friend who had taken us to the airport at vacation's beginning, retrieved us.

Soon I was back home, surrounded by familiar things. Though it was great to be back, the two weeks in Europe were well worth the time, effort, expense, even the illness.

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