

VACATIONS CHAPTER TWO

9/26/2011

1990 – ENGLAND AND GERMANY – Isabel, Bill, Barbara
November 15 -25, 1990

November 15 - TWA #747 –Philadelphia 5:37 pm to JFK, NY, 7:55 pm to Heathrow, London, - 7:15 am, and British Airways to Frankfurt, arriving at 3:15

November 25 - Return from Frankfurt to London, to Heathrow at 12:00 noon, to JFK, New York 5:40 pm to Philadelphia, PA

Places visited on this trip –

- London
- Frankfurt
- Weisbaden
- Heidleberg

When our daughter Barbara was working as a travel agent, she was given the opportunity to travel to England on a “familiarization trip” without cost and to take another person to accompany her. She took Isabel, and I went along at my own expense.

November 15, 1990

Thursday, November 15, 1990, the three of us flew from Philadelphia to New York and then London the next morning. Because Barb had a business-class seat along with Mom, I flew coach. But sometime during the flight, the flight-attendant came to me and asked me to accompany her. I didn’t know where we were going, and the people around me must have wondered what I had done. She then took me up to the second level “bubble” of the plane where I joined Isabel for breakfast in Business Class, and Barb took my seat for a while in Coach.

Friday, November 16, 1990

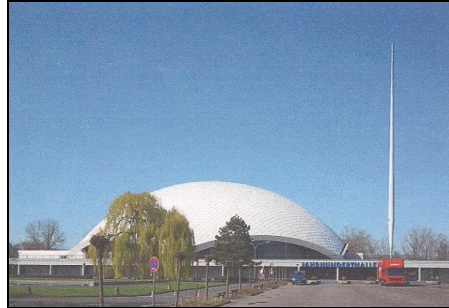
Arriving in London, we then transferred on to Frankfurt arriving in the mid-afternoon, quite exhausted. We picked up our rental car and drove to Hochst, the town where I had been stationed in the Army in 1946 I had previously arranged by correspondence for our first two-day stay at a small German hotel, the Ursula Hof, just outside Hochst, though I did not know that it was not the best, as we were concerned.



The room Isabel and I had was very small 10’x 8’, with two single beds – like cots - head to foot, on one side of the room. A metal stall-shower had been added on the

other side of the room, and the two-stall toilet was down the hall. Barb had another room, much the same.

I had also previously purchased tickets for the East Berlin Symphony at the nearby Yahrhundert Halle in Hochst, built in 1963.



Yahrhundert Halle

The concert was to begin at 8:00 pm, which meant that we had to hurry. We made it. Claus Peter Flor was the conductor and Michael Erxleben, guest violinist. My, what a wonderful feeling it was for me to be in Germany once again after 44 years and to be enjoying an evening of music. But Isabel was so tired that she could hardly stay awake. At intermission, most everyone in attendance moved to the adjoining reception hall for refreshments and social mingling, a custom which we later experienced at other concert halls in Germany. The Halle was quite modern and not typically German.

Returning to Ursala Hof, totally exhausted, we slept so well that we were awakened by the ringing of the telephone at 9:40 am, and told by the lady-owner that breakfast (fruhstuck) was served only until 10 am. We quickly dressed, ate, and then canceled our second-nights reservation, hoping to find something else, and better. It was the Holiday Hotel, still in the Hochst area, extremely nice with a two-level suite with a separate bed-room upstairs for Barb.

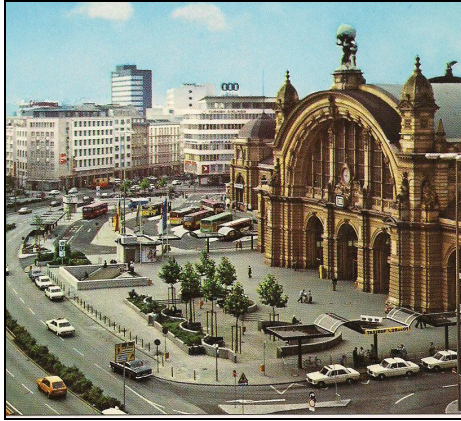
Saturday, November 17, 1990

After breakfast (fruhstuck), we toured the US Army Base at McNair Kasserne where I had served in 1946 as the Chaplain's Assistant.



Bill at Mc Nair Barracks

We were treated very cordially by the service-men and women we met. Then on to Frankfurt, the Hauptbahnhof (main train station)



Hauptbahnhof, Frankfurt

and Round-up Chapel where we held Saturday night Youth For Christ meetings and where I was President and emcee for the rallies way back in 1946.



Roundup Chapel

We drove past the I.G. Farben building that had been the headquarters for the US Forces after the end of WW II.



We drove back to the Holiday Inn near Hochst-Neid, changed clothes and then drove back to Frankfurt for a Gala Concert with 450 voices, Inga Nielsen, Soprano, and a 70-piece orchestra at the Alte Oper Haus in Frankfurt.

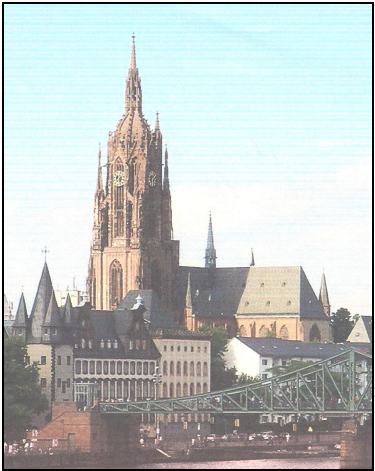


Alte Oper Haus – Frankfurt

It had been terribly damaged in the war but was remarkably rebuilt in just the last few years after remaining a pile of rubble for several years. One of the memorable moments occurred during the intermission when we spoke to a young lady usherette. She had lived all her life in East Germany where the Russians were in control and prevented any interaction with the West. But in August 1990, just three months before we got there, East and West Germany reunited. As a result, this was the first time that she was experiencing freedom, crossed over to West Germany and got a job in the Oper Haus. We could sense her joy.

Sunday, November 18, 1990

On Sunday morning we went to the old Cathedral, the Dom (Bartholomew) in Frankfurt.



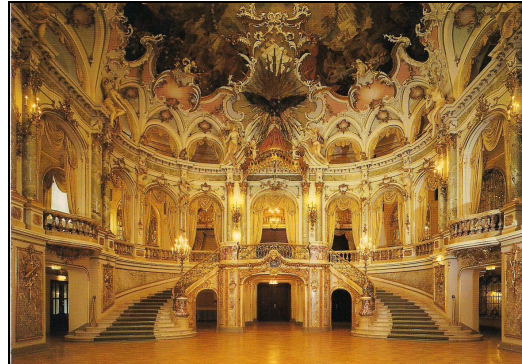
Frankfurt Dom 1991



WW II Destruction I saw in 1946 – Dom in background

This magnificent church built in the 14th century was terribly damaged during the six bombings of Frankfurt in 1944 and 1945 when more than one thousand buildings nearby were destroyed. I remember seeing the Cathedral in disrepair in 1946 when I was there in the US Army. It was eerie looking then with no roof, but the great stone walls still standing. After many years, it was rebuilt. When the three of us entered on that Sunday morning and joined with the German worshippers, I was almost overcome with emotion. We were sitting and worshipping together, no longer enemies, but now fellow-travelers on our Christian journey through life.

Traveling on to Wiesbaden on the Rhine, and checking in at the Penta Hotel, a first-class modern hotel in the center of town, Barbara and I then went to the Staatstheater for Beethoven's opera "Fidelio."



Staatstheater Wiesbaden

What a fabulous, opulent opera hall. I had never seen such before. Words are not adequate to describe it. It must be seen to be fully appreciated and enjoyed. We had excellent seats in the balcony, just two seats from the Emperor's box. The performance was quite amazing. Again, as at the Yahrhundert Halle, most everyone left and went to the reception hall during the intermission – an experience Isabel and I had in later years when visiting there again.



Barb and Isabel at Staatstheater

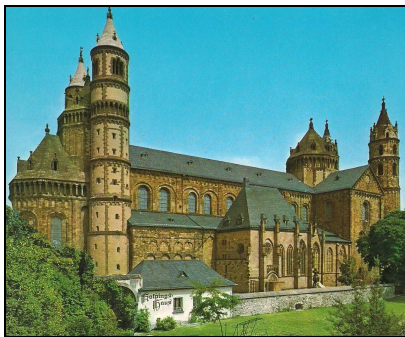
Monday, November 19, 1990

The next morning we walked the town of Wiesbaden, got a parking traffic ticket which I took to the local police station. When I indicated that I did not understand the parking regulations, the office in charge understood and told me to forget it. The parking procedure common throughout Germany is to first find a spot in the parking lot, then find a parking meter nearby (usually within 50 or 100 feet), put sufficient coins in it for the number of minutes desired, get the printed ticket showing the time, and then place the ticket inside the car at the windshield so that it can be seen. Terrific! What a cost-saving measure with only one meter for a dozen or so cars. A parking attendant can easily check on the time, as convenient.

Tuesday, November 20, 1990

After leaving Wiesbaden, we went to Assmanhausen looking for the location of “the Rally on the Rhine” in 1946 where we had boarded the tour-ship “Mainz”, reportedly used by Hitler and then under the control of the US Army. Someone directed us to the docks where it was moored waiting to undergo repairs. I could hardly believe it. A few years later on another visit, we actually got to board it, having been restored as a ship museum, and permanently located at Mannheim on the Tauber River

Driving on to Heidelberg, we first stopped in the city of Worms and went to the cathedral where Martin Luther was tried by the church for his stand on “faith”, not “works” as the basis for redemption.



Worms Cathedral



Luther & Reformers

At Heidelberg, we once again benefited from the courtesy extended to Barb as a travel agent, and had wonderful room accommodations without cost at the Penta Hotel.

Wednesday, November 21, 1990



Bill & Isabel at Heidelberg – Castle in background

The old castle at Heidelberg was one of the highlights of our trip. This was the first of several visits there in the following years. The huge wine-vats in the basement are so large that wooden steps enable visitors to walk to a platform on top. The grounds surrounding the castle are vast, high above the ancient city, overlooking the Tauber River below and the shipping locks. Walking the streets of the old city and visiting the shops consumed the remainder of the day. Then, on to Frankfurt for our last night in Germany, this time at the beautiful high-rise Holiday Hotel, another courtesy stay. Before retiring for the night, and being unsure of the way to the Frankfurt Airport for our early morning flight, Barbara and I made a late-night dry-run trip to locate the auto-return facility. It was a good thing to do.

Thursday, November 22, 1990

Up at 5:00 am, we just about made our 7:45 am flight to London. Arriving in about an hour and a half, we took a double-decked bus to the city and a taxi to the Strand Palace Hotel, an old, old, three-single-beds room.



Strand Palace Hotel

We walked to Buckingham Palace, saw the “changing of the guard”, the Mews, where the Queen’s carriage as well as others are kept, went to Trafalgar Square and Victoria Station. It was our Thanksgiving Day, and daughter Bev called from home.



Isabel & Barb with London Tower Guide

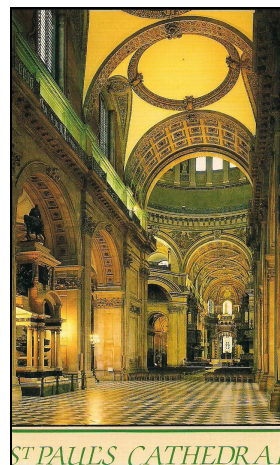
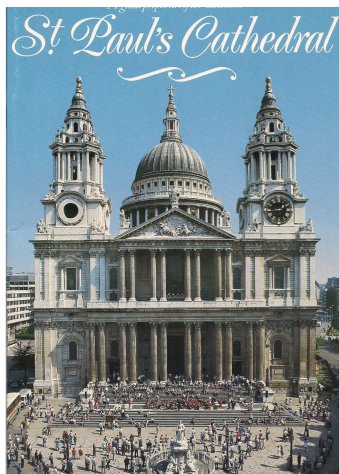
Friday, November 23, 1990

More walking today to Big Ben, Houses of Parliament, Westminster Abbey (which was free then, but not in later years), #10 Downing Street, and a boat trip on the Thames to London Tower and Tower Bridge.



Parliament Buildings and Big Ben across Thames River

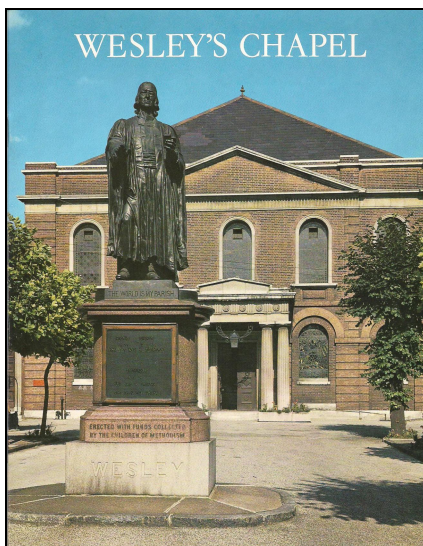
Saturday, November 24, 1990



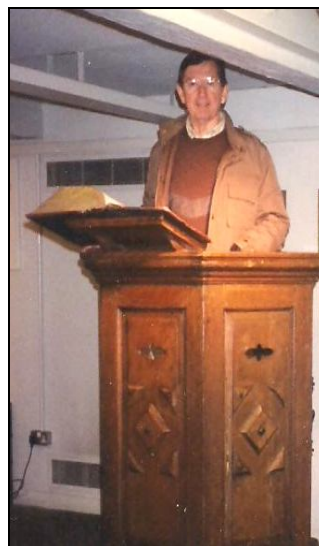


Kensington Palace

We visited St. Paul's Cathedral, Kensington Palace and the museum of wedding dresses and court clothes dating from the 17th century to the present, and Harrods famous store.



Wesley's Chapel



Bill at Wesley's Pulpit

I went on to the Barbican, the London Museum and John Wesley's house, church and museum. As one brought up in the Methodist Church, it was quite an experience to stand at the pulpit from which Wesley, the founder of the Methodist Church, had preached. I shall not forget it.

Sunday, November 25, 1990

We left the hotel early to get to Heathrow for our TWA flight back to the USA. Barbara managed to get us into Business Class for a very enjoyable trip home to NY, then to Philadelphia where Bev met us.

END OF CHAPTER TWO
