

VACATIONS – CHAPTER NINE

1998 – GERMANY AND AUSTRIA – Isabel, Bill, Jimmy and Lisa

June 14-29, 1998

June 14 - Newark 5:50 pm – Lufthansa #403 to Frankfurt 7:25 am
Boeing 747

June 29 – Frankfurt 1:30 pm – Lufthansa #402 to Newark 3:55 pm
Boeing 747



Rental car – Hertz – Ford Modeo

Sunday, June 14, 1998

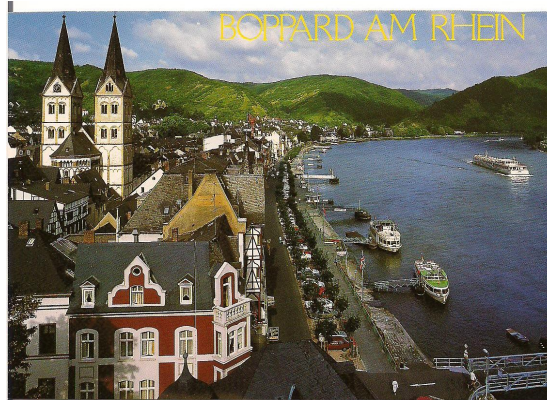
Last year, we invited Jimmy, our oldest grandchild to join us on our trip to Germany and Europe. We said that he would be responsible for paying his airfare but that we would cover the rest of the expense. He worked hard to save the money. This year, we invited Lisa, our next oldest to join us with the same stipulation. Jimmy then asked if he could go along as well. They both joined us, and both paid their own airfare. It was very nice to have them together and for the two of them to share in the experience in their own way rather than ours



Jim drove the four of us to the Newark Airport boarding Lufthansa 747 at 6:00 pm . Seating in this large plane is 3-aisle-4-aisle-3, in other words, ten across. Flying over the Atlantic Ocean, we then flew over London, the English Channel, France, and Brussels, Belgium before landing at Frankfurt. The TV screen showed not only the route of the flight with a digital plane moving across three different maps. First there is the entire route from beginning to end, then two close-ups with the names of cities, speed, altitude and outside temperature.

Monday, June 15, 1998

We arrived at 7:35 am at Frankfurt Airport, picked up our Hertz Rental car, a green 4-door Ford Station wagon with stick shift and AC. Five on the floor means good pickup. Driving into Frankfurt we kept moving on to Rudesheim and Assmannausen. At 12:00 noon we got on a Rhine River Boat on a beautiful, sunny and cool day for a two-hour trip to Boppard.



Everybody really tired. After walking the shopping street with all its gift stores, our return trip to Assmannhausen took three hours because of the strong current northward. We then enjoyed a late lunch at the restaurant on the boat. Of course, Jimmy took many photos of the castles, towns, vineyards and trains on both sides of the River.



Not finding accommodations for the right price in Assmannhausen, and because it was almost eight o'clock we went to the Berg Hotel in Bad Salsig on the Rhine where Isabel and I had stayed in previous years.



At 9:30, Jimmy, Lisa and I wanted something to eat, so we drove down the hill to a little German Pub. Neither one of them liked the food but satisfied themselves with cokes. We also sat watching the World Soccer Games on TV with a game between Germany and the USA.

Back at the Berg Hotel, Jimmy and Lisa shared a room with a balcony looking over the valley to the Rhine. Isabel and I had a room across the hall. The cost was – 95 DM or \$60.00 each. The Deutsch Mark was still being used, I believe until January 1, 1991.

Tuesday, June 16, 1998

Here at the Berg Hotel in Bad Salzig on the west side of the Rhine across from Rudesheim and Assmannhausen, we drove to Castle Rheinstein at Trechtingshausen, Jimmy's favorite from last year. At that time he was the only one with us and was so amazed at the old castle which was built in the 8th Century, and the medieval relics on display.

We then took the small auto ferry back over the Rhine to Rudesheim, a town that became one of our favorite sites. From the center of town, we took the ski-lift open cable car, seating two, up to the Niederwald Monument. Riding just a few feet above the vineyards, it offered a fantastic view of the town and the surrounding Rhine Valley.



The monument stands high on the cliff and is 132 feet high and 120 feet wide. The top statue is of "Germania" holding in her uplifted hand the Imperial Sword. It commemorates the re-establishment of a unified Germany and was constructed between 1871 and 1883. It is said that thirty-two tons of bronze were used for the building of Germania.

While Isabel and Lisa rode the cable car back to town, Jimmy and I walked down through the vineyards and on rocky paths.



Jimmy walking through vineyard Rudesheim on Rhine

We then went back over the Rhine to Castle Rheinstein where we had to park on River Road and climb a steep hill to the 9th Century castle. This was fantastic with a beautiful terraced garden where we sat and ate a snack. Most interesting of all we have seen! There was also a beautiful chapel in the castle.

At 6:00 pm we didn't know where we were going to stay but ended up back at the Reichenstein Castle where they have an adjoining castle building converted into guest rooms and a restaurant. Very expensive but delightful! We were given a large room with two pull-out sofa-beds and one large double bed, ideal for the four of us, with private bath. It too, looked out over the Rhine River and valley. We had a great dinner in the hotel restaurant – pork over toast – chicken nuggets, fries, ice cream and apple strudel.



Jim and Lisa at Rhine – Reichenstein Castle across River with guest house at right

Wednesday, June 17, 1998

Here at Reichenstein Castle Guest House where we had a great fruhstuck. It's a magnificent place to stay – family Arenz.

We drove south to Worms to visit the Cathedral and hear the bells at noon. The under-the-church burial vault contains several stone sarcophagi containing the bones of bishops and other dignitaries of the Catholic faith. It is here where Martin Luther was tried for heresy and said: "Here I stand, I can do no other." The adjoining garden has a memorial wall with inscriptions relating to its history. A block away is the large Reformation memorial with statues of Protestant Reformers of the world at that time. At another spot on another walkway is a memorial plaque quoting Luther. As a Protestant

Christian it was a very moving experience to see all this and to realize what price the reformers paid to take such a stand against the un-biblical practices of the Roman church and its theology.



Driving farther south we passed through the Black Forest to Baden Baden, stopping long enough to take pictures. We found the guest house, the Burg Friedel in Buhlertal Schwarzwald. We then had supper in their fancy restaurant with fantastic views of the mountain out the windows as we ate.

Thursday, June 18, 1998

A Thailand chef prepared our breakfast here at the Burg Friedel this morning before we took off for Strasbourg, France. Passing from Germany into France across the Rhine, we were surprised that there were no boarder guards as in the past. The previous border/customs buildings were still there – a silent witness to the past, all previous customs restrictions had been lifted.

Entering an underground parking garage, we found that we were ten or twelve blocks from the cathedral. We walked along the canal watching a large tourist boat pass through the locks. At the time, we didn't realize that ten years later in 2008 we would be back there with Jimmy again and his wife Ellie, and we would take the canal tour on just such a boat.

Arriving at the Cathedral, we purchased tickets required to see the famous Astronomical Clock with its many movable characters that appear at the striking of the chimes at the noon hour. The clock is about 35' high and is inside the church at the side of the chancel. The movable parts depict a Biblical scene with the cock crowing three times, Peter appears along with the twelve apostles, and Jesus. An hour class turns over and several other actions occur. Quite fascinating.

After the presentation, the iron gates leading into the sanctuary from that area are opened. We then entered the massive nave and toured the interior, looking at the chancel, the pulpit, the organ casing and the magnificent stained-glass windows.

Jimmy, Lisa and I decided to walk up the 300 steps to the Cathedral tower with a wonderful view across the city.

In the large square in front of the Cathedral there were several gift shops, a restaurant with outside seating, and several street vendors. There was also a pantomime actor dressed in a long flowing white robe, looking like the Madonna. The head covering

was white and the face painted white. The hands were painted white and folded in prayer. Standing absolutely motionless on a small pedestal, with a musical recording playing, it made quite an impression upon many who dropped coins in a container on the sidewalk.

At one corner of the square was a below-ground public restroom accessible down a long stone stairway. The first room to the left was for men, with the women's room farther down the hall. Strangely enough the door to the men's room was wide open with no attempt to provide privacy, and inside was a woman attendant mopping the floor and cleaning the sinks.

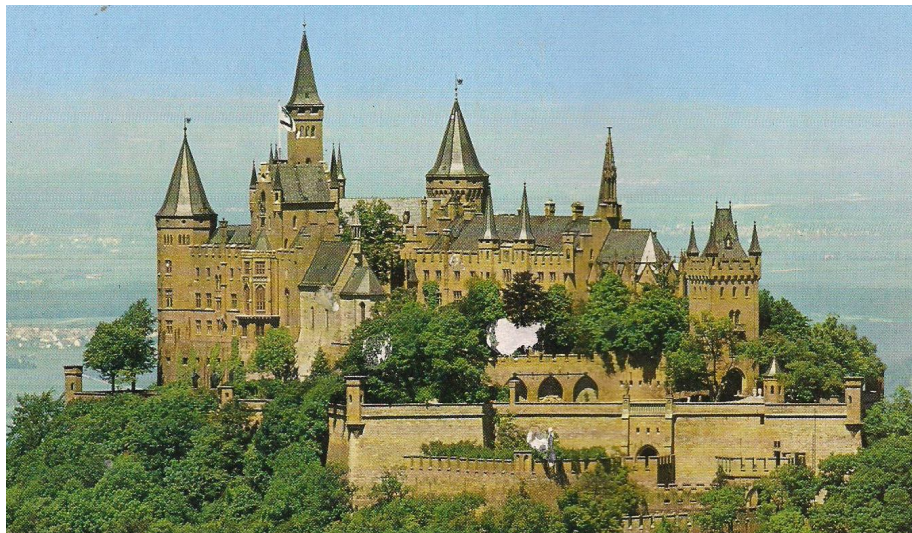
Going back to the car, we found that French coins were required for the machine that printed out the tickets before departure. We didn't have any, but fortunately, a kind Frenchman came to our rescue.

We then drove back into Germany, crossing the Rhine again and going through the Black Forest on route 28, through Bad Peterstahl into Bingen-Thanheim. We found rooms at Pension Morchel, not the best, and went to another town for supper at McDonalds.

Friday, June 19, 1998

Leaving this guest house after a meager fruhstuck which Jimmy and Lisa passed up, we drove to the nearby Hohenzollern Castle high on a mountain that can be seen from mile and miles away. It is well kept but very few tourists. One wonders why it is not as famous as Linderhof or Neuschwanstein? Taking the thirty-five minute guided tour, everyone is required to wear a soft slipper over one's shoes so as not to damage the wood floors. I guess it also helps polish the floors as one scuffs along trying to keep the slippers on.

The interior is marvelous and hard to describe. What elegance. It has been maintained just as it was when occupied, so unlike the Rheinstein and Reichenstein castles so barren and bare.



Driving on through the Black Forrest we arrived at Dreimaderthaus Pension at Fussen Oberkirch. It is a very nice guesthouse with a small "honeymoon cottage" behind the house. Jimmy and Lisa loved it with its small terrace leading down to the edge of the

Weissen Sea. Going to the guesthouse restaurant next door we had an Italian Supper on the outdoor covered patio. Afterwards, as we walked the area of the Sea, there was a small playground that included a chessboard marked out on the sidewalk with large two-foot tall chessmen made of plastic. Jim and Lisa played on it for a while.

Saturday, June 20, 1998

After fruhstuck on the beautiful second-floor terrace at the guest house, we headed toward Neuschwanstein Castle. When we arrived and parked we had a choice: either walk up the hill, take a horse-drawn carriage or a bus, or even shop for a while beforehand. We rode the bus and waited at the entrance 30 minutes for the English-speaking tour to begin. .

This is a fantastic place, built at the top of a mountain between 1858 and 1876. Walt Disney used this as a model for his Disney World castle. Parts of it were never finished, but what was is luxurious.

Returning to the valley with shops and the parking lot, Jimmy and I walked up to the adjoining Hohenschwangau Castle where King Ludwig lived as a boy. It is another unbelievably beautiful mansion-castle.

Leaving the castles, we drove to see the Zugspitz Mountain that is between both Germany and Austria. Both claim it, and both have tourist buildings at the top which are connected by an elevated walkway. The German ascent is made by either a cable-car from one location or a combination of a cog-railway and cable car from another location. The Austrian ascent is by a cable car. At the top of the 2962 foot mountain, the highest in Germany, there are open-air viewing areas as well as two restaurants. It is also the starting place for those who wish to ski across the mountains at that level, and we watched some of them.

Arriving at Lermoos, Austria, we found a large three level guesthouse - the Tirolerhof owned and operated by a very friendly husband and wife – Evelyn and Norbert who can also speak English. After supper, we heard about the annual celebration to welcome the beginning of summer. At various levels on the mountains that encircle the city, celebrants light fires in design patterns that include a cross, and other forms, as well as a long line of fires stretching across the night sky. We were told that groups climb the mountain during the day, have a picnic, set up an overnight camp, and wait for darkness before lighting their fires. It really is an unbelievable sight. The fires were still burning as we went to bed.

It just amazes me when I think of the marvelous, unexpected sights and events that we encounter here each year we come. And how few Americans have ever heard of such as these summer “Fire on the Mountain” celebrations? What a privilege.

Sunday, June 20, 1998

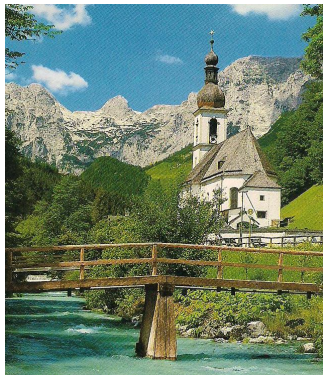
The first day of summer though it is so cool here at Lermoos in Austria. We took the cable car to the top of Zugspitz Mountain. About twenty people on board. The buildings on top were first constructed in 1924, improved and expanded continually. We spent about two hours walking about the inside and outside viewing platforms, some still snow-covered.

Chapter 9 Part II



Returning to the valley, we then drove on to Ramsau and found Gastehaus-Martins Klause, Gabi Rasp. We have two very nice rooms, with Jimmy and Lisa in a room with a small balcony overlooking the fast-running stream. After a great meal we visited the small church and its cemetery. Isabel and I have a ceramic replica of the church that was produced and featured by the Danbury Mint.

Monday, June 21, 1998



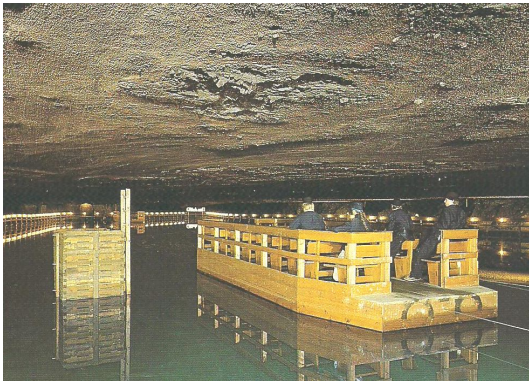
Here at Ramsau it is 65 degrees. We walked the bridge over the stream to a wood-working shop operated by Maria Bauman and purchased one of her hand-carved angels.

Traveling on, we drove to Bertschesgaden and got the bus up to Eagles Nest, Hitler's retreat high on the mountain top. During our several visits here, we have marveled at the sights of the surrounding mountains, but have always been shocked, saddened and angry about the terrible effects of Hitler's reign. To think that he could come up here, relax and enjoy himself while thousands were being murdered at his command, is hard to understand.

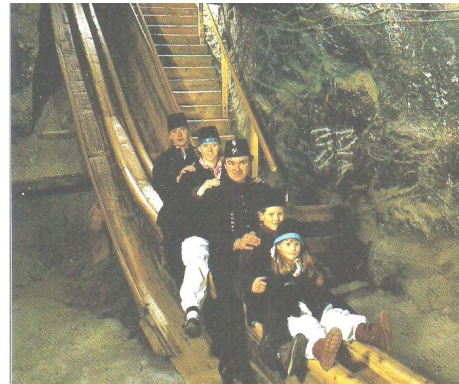


Hitler's retreat – Eagle's Nest

Leaving here and heading to Salzburg, we stopped at the Hallein salt-mine. We took an hours tour deep into the mountain and saw how salt has been and is still being extracted and sent by water pipes to processing plants. We rode on an underground-railroad cart used by the miners and then straddled long wooden slides to descend to another level. We also floated on a flat-bottom boat across an underground pool of salt-water.



Flat-bottom boat on underground salt lake



Miner's slide to lower level of mine



Riding the Miner's train out of Salt Mine

Though we did not know it at the time, Hallein also houses a "Silent Night Holy Night" museum honoring Joseph Mohr, composer of the Christmas carol, who became the organist at the local church and is buried in the church cemetery.

We stayed overnight at the Lampl-Leiten guest house in Marktsschellenberg, found a nearby restaurant for supper on the patio and called it an exciting day – with surprises as usual.



Tuesday, June 22, 1998

On our way to Salzburg, we arrived at the Plaza, then took the tram up to the Castle-Fortress overlooking the city. It was built in the 12th and 13th centuries and is now a museum with a large courtyard and numerous rooms. The amount of gold, silver and marble used in the construction of the fortress is impressive as are the various displays of medieval armor used by knights and uniforms used in various wars, even WWII.. Throughout our tours of these castles in Europe, we have noted that measures of security are so minimal compared with those found in our historical places in the USA. One can wander about in a room filled with irreplaceable artifacts and not see a security person or camera. The level of trust is impressive.

We left the fortress, walked down through the cemetery of the Benedictine Church to the Great Cathedral and Mozart Square where his statue is so prominent. Here in the center square next to the Cathedral is another large chess-board painted on the sidewalk, with very large chessmen. Anyone can step up to play.



Jimmy at far right taking photo of sidewalk chess board

Leaving Salzburg, we stopped for the night at Leitsburg (St. Christopher) at Gasthaus Schmiek twenty minutes away from Vienna.

Wednesday, June 24, 1998

Here at Gasthaus Schmiek for the night and fruhstuck, we then drove to the beautiful Schonbrunn Palace in Vienna (Wein), walked through the gardens but decided not to tour the palace. We parked nearby and got the train which then went underground as a subway to the center of the city. We bought an all-day pass ticket which is inserted in a machine at the entrance to each station. There are no toll-takers, but if you get stopped and don't have a ticket, then you are fined. We haven't seen anyone stopped and it seems again that the honor system is widespread here as in Germany.



Schonbrunn Palace – Vienna



Lisa and Pop Pop



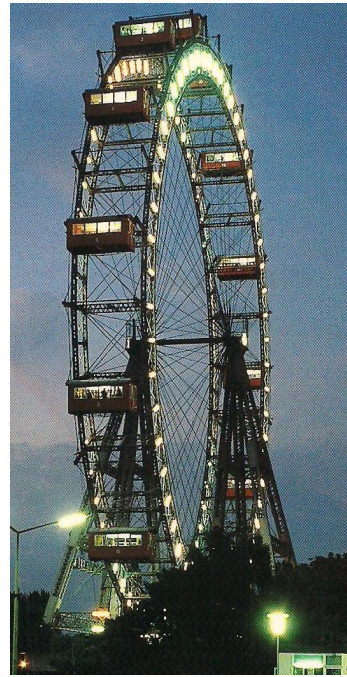
Vienna Opera House



Interior of Vienna Opera House



Vienna Opera House



Giant Ferris Wheel - Vienna

We toured the magnificent Opern Haus which is adorned with numerous statues and figurative embellishments. We then had lunch at a Pizza Hut in the underground subway shopping mall before catching another subway train to the Danube Riverfront. Here the Danube is called the “Donau.” Unfortunately we missed the last tour boat of the day since the busy tourist season had not begun and trips were just a few daily.

Along the riverfront is an amusement park of sorts with a Floating Trampoline with 52 trampolines attached to each other. After paying and removing shoes, you play until your number is announced, indicating the end of your time. We watched.

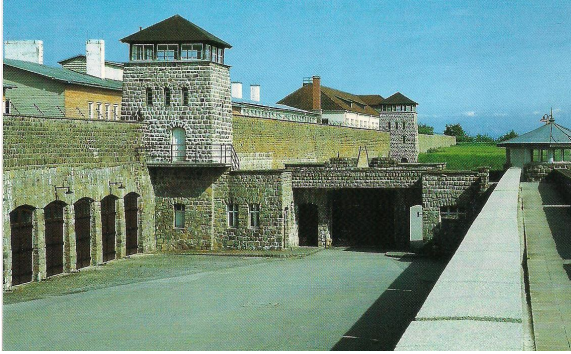
Taking another subway train we went to a major amusement park where I had heard there was a huge Ferris-wheel. At first, Jimmy and Lisa were not enthusiastic about walking from the subway to the park because everyone was really tired. But as we got closer, they saw an unusual-looking roller-coaster type ride and perked up. The ride was in a typical amusement-park ride car going backward straight up a steep 75 degree slope to the top. Then it dropped very, very fast. Lisa and Jim thought it was the best ever though he broke his glasses, probably sitting on them after taking them off for safety reasons.

The Ferris Wheel is similar to the original one at the Chicago World’s Fair in 1892 built by George Ferris, with the capacity for 30 closed cabins (just 15 now after the rebuilding of the damage done during WWII) holding up to 25 or so people. On ours there were twelve. They are similar to European mountain cable cars with a small sitting platform in the middle for about six people. Others stand and gaze out the windows at the beautiful sights overlooking the surrounding amusements and rides below and the city of Vienna. The wheel makes just one rotation that takes about 15 minutes as it stops for each car to load or unload. .

Getting back to our car on another train, we drove to Gasthof Fink in Bheimkirchen for the night.

Thursday, June 25, 1998

After fruhstuck we drove to the Mauthausen Concentration Camp in Austria, one of the many used by Hitler to enslave and murder anyone considered a dissident of his reign. It was so much like Dachau with the story of atrocities unbelievable, and most prisoners died of being overworked or beaten. There was also a gas chamber here.



Mauthausen Concentration Camp – Austria Goldenen Schiff Guesthaus on Danube

Driving on through Linz, Austria, we stopped for the night at a very nice hotel and restaurant overlooking the Danube River. The Hotel Goldenen Schiff (Gold Ship) Steinegenm located at EngelHrzftszell, Austria is first class. Because their season had not yet begun, the owner gave us a special discount for two very large rooms with a great view, and TV. The Danube River separates Germany and Austria at this point, and there is a large hydro-electric plant in the middle. We watched a couple of river barges and passenger ships go by, and enjoyed the quiet of the area. Unlike the fast running Rhine and its turbulence, the Danube at this point is slow running and very smooth, glass-like. The beauty is hard to describe.

On a cool evening, the four of us ate supper on the terrace overlooking the river before taking a stroll along the river and the little town just a short distance away. Unforgettable, again.

Friday, June 26, 1998

Day thirteen. - After fruhstuck we visited the hydo-electric dam site on the Danube and walked across the top watching a passenger ship pass through the locks.

Driving on to Rothenburg, Germany, we found Pension Becker, a small guesthaus inside the old walled city. We had the second floor apartment with two bedrooms, kitchen and bath, and planned to stay for two nights.

Walking around Rothenburg, one of the interesting places is Kathy Wolfahrt's Christmas Shop. While Isabel was there, Jimmy, Lisa and I went to rent bicycles, not knowing that Becker's had them, if we had asked. I rode for about a half-hour and they kept going longer. Fun.

See Chapter 8 for 1997 photos of Becker's as well as Rothenburg.

Saturday, June 27, 1998

Here at Pension Becker with Lydia DiVivo, husband and children we had the typically delicious German breakfast with cheeses, hard crispy rolls, a variety of sliced cold meats, and more.

We attended a brief organ and flute concert at the Franziskaner Church, met with the organist Ulrich Knorr again, and renewed our acquaintance begun last year at the St. Jakobs cathedral.

Jim, Lisa and I went to the Torture Museum with its four floors of Medieval torture implements, and then watched a parade at market square.



Here at the square by the city hall (the Romerberg), there is always something going on such as a festival, a fair, or a concert. (As I re-write this record for my web-page in June 2011, I watch a web-cam each day on the internet that pictures these events. Yesterday, the Oklahoma Musical Ambassadors were in concert.) On this Saturday, June 27, 1998, we attended the concert of the Missouri (USA) Youth Band here on their European trip. A hundred or more folding chairs are set up in the square, and people either sit or stand for the forty-five minute program presented at 2:00 pm, and again at 4:00: pm.

Supper was at the Roma Restaurant where our landlord Mr. DeVivo works when he is not at the Pension.

Sunday, June 28, 1998

Here at Pension Becker in Rothenburg, we left for the church service at St. Jakobs Cathedral. Though we understood only a few of the words spoken, we sure enjoyed the organ music with Ulrich Knorr. What I thought was a part of the organ prelude was his improvisation of the hymn "Morning has broken" and was his organ introduction of the first hymn which we then stood to sing. It was very moving. The postlude after the benediction was his further arrangement of the closing hymn we had sung, "O God Bless us and from us Never Depart." What a magnificent conclusion to the service.

Returning to the Pension, we were packing up when Lydia De Vivo asked me to review their web-page in English and make corrections, if necessary.

We then drove on to Kelsterbach and the Grunen Baum with the Angelis family, and went to visit Mrs. Areti Lucas at the nursing home where she had moved since our last visit.

Walking along the pathway of the Main River, we reflected upon the several times we had been in Germany and this particular town, and the good time, and the nice people we had met though the years.

Monday, June 29, 1998

After a good night's sleep at the Grunen Baum and a good fruhstuck, we returned the car to the Frankfurt Airport just a couple of miles away, and boarded our Lufthansa flight to Newark Airport. Beth and Jim were there to meet us and take us back home to Wayne. Another memorable trip to Europe, with two of our nine grandchildren. More trips to follow.

Places visited on this trip –

- Frankfurt
- Bad Salsig
- Trechtingshausen
- Buhlertahl, Schwarzwald
- Bisengen-Thanheim
- Fusen-Oberkirch
- Lermos, Austria
- Ramsau
- Marktschellenberg
- Leitsburg, Austria
- Boheimkirchen, Austria
- Engelhartzell, Austria
- Rothenburg
- Kelsterbach

THE END OF CHAPTER NINE