Sept. 12 The Tower of London
The only snapshot taken on the trip!

GRETNA GREEN BLACKSMITH'S SHOP
THE OLD ANVIL

Sunday Sept 10, 1989

after attending the Morning worship service at Wyoming Park U.M. Church we went for "Brunch" with several of the Seniors at Holiday Inn. They are a dear group and heartily wished us "Bon Voyage."

It was easy to have it "all together," the house properly closed and be ready when the Cab came to pick us up at 3:00

---

Sept 11 - (next day) Now I am writing this from London England! How can I say how I feel? Having delighted in all I could learn in my geography lessons back in Elementary school I feel a need to pinch myself and make sure this whole experience is true!

The "Delta Connection" from Grand Rapids to Cincinnati was so smooth that I actually slept about half the time. A lay-over in Cincinnati gave us time to have a snack, phone our good friends Charles & Evelyn Fox at Otterbein Home. Although they announced that take-off would be delayed a few minutes due to plane maintenance

we were in the air about 9:00 PM.
The large aircraft was not much more than half filled. We were supplied with a light blanket and pillow. Many slept most of the 8 hrs we were in the air.

Soon after lift-off my sciatica set in and for an hour or so I was in utter agony. Not much excercise space in such a confined area. Before the flight was over I had taken a guinam pill one Fiorinal and one Valtaren. Relief came so that I, too, could finally get some sleep.

About an hour into the flight we were served a delicious meal. Filet Mignon with lots of other good things.

Before our arrival in London we were served a nice Continental Breakfast. Between the two a movie was offered "LISTEN TO ME." I napped and skipped it as did Stanley.

I left my watch set on Eastern Daylight time until we reached London. Dawn began appearing about 3:00 A M (EDT) The sun became brilliant. On descending for landing we found ourselves in the turbeical "London Fog."

Gatwick Airport, London, is so enormous as to be unbelievable. (And there is also Heathrow, even more vast.) Good signs guided us through customs, baggage claim and on to the trains. It was about a 30 mile trip into Victoria Station. So very smooth on an electric train.

We had obtained PURCHASED a personal luggage cart which we found invaluable at the airport.

A taxi brought us helter-skelter through the crooked, narrow, crowded, one-way streets of London to our Hotel, The Regent Crest. It often made our heads swim to see the driver dash and dart about and, of course, when occasionally we were on a two-way street we were "barrelling" down the left lane! All vehicles have drivers seats and steering wheel on the right side.

Arriving at the hotel at approximately Noon, check-in was simple and a Trafalgar Tour Guide met us to explain details. We have most of the next two days at our leisure.

Our room here is Comfortable. Twin Beds, TV, all the equipment and supplies for "tea-time" including an electric tea kettle tea bags, instant coffee & Chocolate, creamer, sweeteners, even "biscuits". In US we would call them "wafers" but in England there are no crackers, cookies, or wafers, everything is a "biscuit."

Both of us were dead tired. In a short while (after I made myself a cup of tea!) we stretched out and had naps.

Our body clocks are really all messed up. Now I have set my watch on London time. I am writing these lines at 3:30AM Tues. Sept 12. Back home it is only 10:30PM Sept 11 and we wouldn't even be in bed yet. Which explains our utter dilema - wide awake at this unholy hour.

After awakening from our naps yesterday we studied our London maps a while, also lots of travel brochures and then went out walking. It was evening rush hour. "People watching" was fun. I observe more out-landish

outfits and costumes on young women than I ever saw any where else. There seems to be two skirt lengths: either they are so short (and tight) that the hips are scarcely covered, or they are sweeping about the ankles. The young women wear lots of black just now. And the hair-dos! Most of them look as though they have one finger in an electric socket!

We bought some supper in a very modest little eating place nearby. Stanley ordered Shepherd's pie, I had a quarter of Roast Chicken (very delicious) and a "Jacket Potato." (Nothing other than a Baked Potato in USA!)

We had obtained £60 (pounds) of British Currency before leaving home. a pound equals approximately $1.60 U.S. It is always difficult and frustrating to think through foreign monies. Stanley continues to be suspicious of a rip-off. Tipping is difficult. Even allowing for the difference in value, we believe prices are exhorbitant. As near as we can figure it our modest supper cost us over $15.00 = U.S.

We have read that no part of this huge metropolis was ever planned or laid out. Rather, it just evolved, or "happened" and the result is a confusing mass of streets, alleys, courts, etc running every which way. None are very wide, many so narrow that single lane traffic is all that can get through and parking must be a real dilema. While construction is going on on all sides much of the architecture bespeaks the age of the area. We from U.S.A. do not have this much history behind us.

It was not cold in London today but very cloudy and our jackets felt good I even wore a long-sleeved blouse this evening.

(Evening) Tuesday Sept 13 London

Today we began to get the feel of the size of this city. We did learn that London proper or, as many name it, the "Old" City is the portion on the southeast side; Much of the remainder through which we traveled today is Westminster. Although I had known that London

remains among the largest cities in the world, I was not prepared for its immensity. We fell to conversing with a "Native" on the bus and found his remarks most interesting. He said that England, and London in particular was more unkempt and dirtier than the large cities on the Continent. It has been impossible for the general population to become motivated to clear the streets of litter.

On our city tour our guide pointed out the awful damage and deterioration to the old beautiful buildings because of acid rain.

The old coal fires in fireplaces have mostly disappeared; now the homes are usually heated by gas, sometimes electricity.

Trafalgar tours provided a pass for us to go on a guided tour this morning. A courtesy bus picked us up here at our hotel at 8:30, transported us to the Tour headquarters where we were assigned to a very comfortable bus with a very able guide. Her

Narration was excellent but did seem she talked rather rapidly.
I wouldn't assume to point out all the sights called to our attention. As we listened to her I felt a compassion for English History students. After all we in USA have not more than about 300 yrs of history to remember while these people must study well over 1000 years of it.

Many very old structures had been or were being sand blasted. They are now beautiful. Sometimes it seemed every other section in Old London was either being replaced, restored, or renovated.
Our guide pointed out many fine old edifices where the bomb damage from Germans in WW 2 was left as a reminder of that awful, ceaseless catastrophe.

We were allowed to leave the bus on the Tower Bridge to get a snapshot of "Big Ben" and Parliment Houses. We personally think the Guide was dying for a cigarette!
We disembarked for 50 minutes

at Buckingham palace where we could observe the changing of the guard. Stanley and I were desperate for a rest room by then and used part of our time in pursuit of one! We were astonished at the vast number of tourists and wondered how it must have been earlier in the summer.

There are hordes of Japanese Tourists. We remembered seeing the same in Washington D.C. 2 years ago.

Before the guided tour was ended she announced an afternoon 2:00 Tour which would take us to The Tower of London to see the Crown Jewells, and also to Westminster Abbey. The cost for 2: ~~#~~£33 - in USA $ nearly $56.00 We decided we could do much better than that. Bought all-day bus/underground tickets @ £2.30 each, Tower Tickets £1.50 each and the abbey tickets were £1.00 each. Including tickets and transportation our cost as we went to these two places "on our own" was about $16.00 = USA. A saving of $40.00 = and we could move

at our own pace, sitting to rest whenever we felt like it. I am so very thankful we saw the Crown Jewells. It was exciting.

Westminster abbey was interesting but dark and dreary as we strolled all about viewing the tombs. Again the size is almost incomprehensible. And built over 800 years ago.

Now I am interested in reading up on some more English History, having evaded it as much as possible back in high school.

Both of us developed sore feet and my back gave me fits. We wound up back at Victoria Station about 4:30. Of course rush hour traffic was building up to its' peak. It seems all transportation systems, subways (the "Underground, they call it) the buses and the trains all converge at Victoria Station. We had arrived there Sunday night from Gatwick Airport.

Having skipped lunch we needed a meal by now. A lovely

place called Victoria Mall, connected to the Station, provided several eating places with acceptable prices and we had ample food in pleasant surroundings. AND rested our feet.

We had thought of taking a bus to Trafalgar Square, not far away, for an hour or two just to "people watch" probably also to "pigeon wash." But when we emerged into the streets after eating we discovered a very light rain was falling.

So we went below and took the "Underground" back to our hotel. Had to walk a few blocks in the rain. But it was a warm rain, not at all unpleasant.

Our tour guide said they have had a warm, sunny summer and called it a drought so this rain is very welcome here.

It has been good to relax, play a little Rummy 500. Now Stanley appears to be asleep. Last night Bardered

on the ridiculous. Both of us were so utterly exhausted at the end of our first day (really a half day as we did not arrive at the hotel until about noon.) that after we returned from eating our supper in a restaurant we practically collapsed The old "Jet Lag" had us!

By 9:00 PM we were sound asleep. Of course that was only 4:00 PM Michigan time! But we had more or less missed a day.

At midnight both of us were wide-awake so turned on the lights and read. He got back to sleep about 2:00 AM but I did not get sleepy until 3:30 AM.

I had set the alarm for 7:00. Oh, how tired and sore we were! We dressed and at 7:30 our delightful breakfast was brought to our room: Tea, Coffee, half a grapefruit, a danish roll, a Croissant, plenty of butter and jelly, snowy linen and pretty white China. Oh I felt like a real Lady!

Wed. Sept. 13 London

Yesterday I did not describe our interesting trip to the Tower of London to see the Crown Jewells. "The Tower" was begun, the building process, that is, over 900 years ago. I bought a book which gives a detailed description of it, also its history. Remnants of an ancient wall built by the Romans more than 1500 years ago remain. The Tower is not merely one structure but practically a small city, and originally was protected by a moat wide as a river (which was drained in 1843). It has been, during the past centuries, a palace, a government prison, a hospital, a fortress, an arsenal, a Garrison, a mint, and sometimes a combination of all of these. Today it is a showplace, with medieval costumed guides, a real mecca for tourists.

The crown jewells are displayed on two levels. On the ground level are huge gold scepters, maces, altar appointments, Medales, ceremonial robes, including the caronation regalia, etc.

On the lower level are all of the Crowns, precious gems etc, They dazzle with brilliance, such a collection of

huge diamonds can be found no place else, we were told. Guards stand about and one must keep moving, cannot stop and gaze even 5 seconds.

---

As for today we found the London Zoo very interesting. Spent the forenoon there. It was almost (but not quite) cool. The flowers all about the grounds were beautiful beyond description. Their rose gardens seemed almost as lovely as ours would appear in June. We think it is probably due to the moderate temperatures.

After we finished seeing what we could at the Zoo we rested before proceeding back ~~at~~ the bus stop.

I must write down the experience of seeing the newest addition at the Zoo, the small Mammals Building. The first floor exhibited some unusual small animals but the lower level interested us the most. (Stanley said he'd read about it; it is new, he thought no other Zoo had tried it) All animals on exhibition there were Nocturnal.

So they had reversed the lighting procedure, using bright lights at night in an attempt to "fool" the animals ~~into actual~~ to sleep. Then during the day the lights are dimmed very low; this way they endeavor to bring them out of their sleeping places so we can see them. It is about a 50% success. Many were indeed active but many were nowhere to be observed.

When we boarded a bus we decided to spend a while simply riding about seeing what we could. After all we had purchased an all day pass so could ride the subway and buses as often as we wished at no extra charge.

After riding in the top section of a double decker bus for about 1½ hrs we ended up at the end of the line in a somewhat remote borough called Hackney. The Bus Parked. The driver had forgotten we were up there! But only he told us which bus to take, ~~but~~ a few feet away and we rode all the way into the city to Picadilly Circus.

By now we needed food. Ran across

a nice restaurant on a second floor level - particularly noted for BBQ ribs. Stanley ordered them and said they were delicious. I ordered Chicken Cordon Bleu and like it also. But our baked potatoes tasted a bit "warmed over." Met a couple from Idaho. (People, not potatoes!)

We looked about Piccadilly Circus a while then took the "Underground" to Hyde Park, wanting to see the famous "Speakers' Corner," a place dedicated by the City to Free Speech. But it was too late in the season as well as too late in the day and no one were there. Back to the sub-way and the Hotel.

Tomorrow we join the Tour Group and move on. I washed and rolled up my hair. We expect a "wake-up" call at 6:00 AM in the morning! Ugh! Must have our suitcases outside our bedroom door by 6:30. London has been great but now we are ready for other sights. The weather has been comfortable But our feet are not! Hotel fine.

Thursday, Sept. 14 Taunton (Eng.)

We rejoiced when we discovered sunshine this morning, but it soon gave way to typical England grey.

Today we joined our Trafalgar Tour Group. A wake-up call came at 6:00 A.M. Breakfast was brought at 6:30, and Bags outside our door. The Trafalgar bus picked us up at 7:20. We learned we were the only ones in our group who had stayed at the Regent Crest Hotel. The bus picked up others at two different hotels plus some at the Company's main offices. It took a long time to get through the morning rush of traffic and on the super highways.

We so much enjoyed seeing the beautiful countryside. During most of today we drove through farm land and also saw lots of Holstein cattle and sheep. We observed that 75% of the houses are built of stone. Even a few thatched roofs. Our guide told us that the art of thatching is dying out. Also it is a fire hazard making insurance costs prohibitive

All of the villages we passed through had narrow main streets. We

constantly marvel at the skill with which our driver manipulates the vehicle about in the busy traffic. I am sure I will never feel 100% at ease barrelling down the left lane of a busy highway at 70 MPH!

By 10:15 we arrived at OXFORD, the famous college town. We had a very short tour about a tiny portion of the grounds. There are 35 colleges which make up this University town, altogether totaling slightly less than 10,000 students. They have been flocking here for nearly 800 years. It was a little chilly and windy. We had an hour here.

Rain set in by noon and continued with us the remainder of the day. I was drowsy much of the time.

There are 41 in our group. We have found only one other couple from U.S.A. and they are from Mt. Clemens, Mich. Most are from Canada, a few from New Zealand. They are all friendly but we have trouble remembering names.

The bus is comfortable but there is no rest room (Our travel agent had assured us there would be!)

All of the flowers along the way are still beautiful. It has been such a pleasure to enjoy all their color and brilliance. In all of the towns huge hanging planters fastened to the utility poles along the main streets are a sight not to be forgotten. Window boxes everywhere and planters in all sorts of unexpected places add so much to the enjoyment of travel here.

We even rode through "Marlborough Country," that is, through the town called Marlborough. Just outside the town in a huge mound called "Maerl's Barrow" is said to be the grave of Merlin, the Magician. From the name of this mound came finally the name of the town.

A planned two-hour stop was in the City of Bath. This place has always been famous because of Natural Hot Springs there. Roman Colonists who arrived in this area as invaders in 55 BC, suffering from the damp, northern climate, built large pools and saunas to take advantage of the curative waters. These Romans built cities and roads and established some law and order. They withdrew their legions in 410 AD and

apparently the elegant Bath houses fell into disrepair. Other edifices were built over them and through the centuries visitors came here to vacation and enjoy the hot baths. (Temp 49° (CELSIUS) constant 120°F)

Greatest fame was during 1700's.

The Baths were discovered in the late 18th Century 20 ft below street level. Constant excavation has been going on ever since.

We bought a bite to eat here. Found a tiny "hole in the wall" where we were served a very modest sized pasty with a bit of lettuce, a slice of tomato, a slice of cucumber and a pot of tea for me. In American money it cost us $8.45!

Concerning the baths, they are no longer used. Many years ago there was a death and health officials say the Menengitis germ is sometimes found there. But the hot water continues to flow!

On through the rain another two hours to this town of Taunton (pop. 35,300) It is quaint and pretty and they say the most important industry is Cider-Making! Checked into County Hotel here. They served us dinner here tonight. The rain has ceased.

7th Friday Sept 16 Glenridding Hotel (Lake District)

It's as I suspected it would be; we are seeing so many different and fascinating sights that already I get confused trying to sort them out. This is the main reason I record each days events during the evening. (It also gives me an activity for the period of time between dinner and bedtime!)

I think the variety of hotels where we stay will be (I can't think of a proper word) interesting.

The ones in England are all equipped with electric teapots and everything else needed to make tea, coffee or perhaps hot chocolate. So far the beds have been comfortable. The one where we were last night (Taunton) and this one here at Glendenning have bathrooms which were modernized well after the buildings were erected. All of the plumbing pipes are visible.

The chief complaint about this room is lack of proper light. The weak bulb in the ceiling fixture does not shed adequate light to read by. There are built-in bed lights but the light is not shown on the correct area for reading!

This is only the second day traveling with the group. Both evenings dinner has been horribly late. 8:00 last night, 8:15 tonight. Service is fancy but slow; it was almost 10:00 by the time we returned to our room. Breakfast this morning in Taunton was ample. At a buffet we were offered cereals, fruits, fruit juices, croissants, cheese etc. Then they came around for entree orders such as eggs, Bacon, sausage. Plenty of coffee and tea.

Not long after getting on our way this morning we made a 30 minute stop at the famous ruins of Tintern Abbey. The history of it was not made entirely clear to me. I'll have to read up on it. It was a huge structure now roofless, only partial walls with bright green grass where the floors have been. It is out in the open country, miles from any city. It is actually in WALES.

The weather today was Mostly Cloudy. Not too cheerful but easy on the eyes.

Not long enough there! On our way and lots of gorgeous scenery

to enjoy. Miles and Miles of stone fence, or sometimes Trimmed Hedge fence. As before an abundance of beautiful flowers. No matter how humble the homestead, there were brilliant blossoms in the dooryard.

About 12:30 we arrived at Stoke-on-Trent where we visited the Wedgwood Pottery Center. A 20 minute movie helped us understand how the pioneer Josiah Wedgwood got it all started in 1759. This was followed by a stroll through a wonderful museum showing old methods used in the craft and also some very old China pieces.

Best of all was an area where we watched today's workers through the various steps of completing some of the china and pottery for which they are famous.

Finally (of course) we wound up in the sales room.

There was a cafeteria where everyone in our group except us had lunch.

Back on the road and on to Chester. This was a Roman Community and after they were driven out, the Medieval City was built over the ancient city. Much of the ancient ruins are visible. An ancient

very high stone wall still stands. Modern streets utilize the original gates in the wall. We walked along the top of it and viewed the old, old, cathedral of St. Peter and other ruins. We saw the excavated portion of one of the largest Roman amphitheaters in Britain. It was a thoroughly fascinating stop.

Now we had a long ride to our overnight spot. We by-passed the city of Liverpool as well as the Industrial and mining city of Birmingham.

While we were in Chester the sun came out and it actually became quite warm, and breezy.

However we had not driven far until the skies blackened and we were in rain again. We were told (in Taunton) that it always rains in the Lakes District. This is a vast area of mountainous forest land, lakes, rushing streams. Our guide remarked that this scenery inspired many great poets, particularly Wordsworth and she read a few passages from his works. Of course we saw only highlights of this beautiful area. Our hotel sits on the shores of one of the Lakes.

Saturday Sept 16, 1989 Edenbergh, Scotland

How surprisingly chilly we found it this morning! The surroundings at this hotel where we spent last night defy description. The lake is beautiful, the surrounding mountains are awe inspiring. They have turned quite a few sheep loose to enjoy the lush grass the recent rains have caused to flourish.

We did not have as many miles to cover today. After enjoying the spectacular scenery for a couple of hours we paused for an hour at the village of Grasmere where the great poet William Wordsworth lived for many years. Here much of his immortal poetry was penned. Some of our group visited his residence, "Dove Cottage." It is a great vacationing area. The beautiful village is beside Windemere River. A bit of observation helps one to understand why the poet referred to this place as the most beautiful place on earth. Here he wrote "Intimations of Immortality." It is easy to think about eternal things in a place like this. This whole day was sunny & bright.

All of the miles covered today was through picture-book looking farm

and grazing territory. It was very hilly, even mountainous in places.

The valleys are so green and grassy; all along the route we enjoyed seeing sheep and cattle grazing.

Thousands of miles of stone fence separated the fields. One sees very little wire fence here.

ALL houses are constructed of stone. We enquired and learned that lumber is not plentiful here. Stone IS!

Crossing the border into Scotland we stopped for a little while at Gretna Green. Somewhere in my memory the name rang a bell - but I couldn't identify it. In brief it is this way: For many years the minimum age (in England) for marriage without parental consent was 21. But in Scotland they could be married at 18 "on their own." And it would be considered legal in England. So the young couples eloped to Scotland - to Gretna Green. Eventually England became "fed up" and said they would not consider any marriage legal unless the couple HAD resided in Scotland 3 wks at least. So they came anyway and the guide said he here began the whole "Bed and Breakfast" trade!

Back & forth the controversy raged until finally, a few years ago England lowered the age limit to 18, the same as Scotland. But the Young People still come to Gretna Green. Over 900 couples so far this year!

The guide who told us the story was Hilarious! He wore the entire traditional Kilt Costume. He chose a couple from our group who were celebrating their 25th Anniversary and a mock wedding ceremony was performed. It was truly a fun stop. See picture in Back of this Book.

On our way again, pausing for a lunch stop at Moffat, where they have Woolen Mills and a large retail store. I even itched merely looking at the wool. Many of our group bought things. all I bought was a bite of lunch.

We arrived in Edinburgh about 4:45. Because all of the stores would be Closed tomorrow (Sunday) they let us out downtown for an hour. The crowds were unbelievable. The town is jammed with tourists. We moved along the sidewalks in a solid stream of people. At a

bookstore I bought a Newsweek and some postcards. It was cool and windy on the streets. For a while we browsed a little in an art shop. We were glad to get inside our bus again.

The Hotel Room is acceptable. Our tour guide told us it is "luxurious." Not by American Standards!!

We had to buy our own Dinner this evening. The Hotel is far out on the edge of town and we are far too tired to go by bus back down town. So we chose to go to the dining room here at the Hotel. Stanley had Roast Beef (and Yorkshire Puddin'!), I had Roast Turkey. No appetizer, poor service but lots of atmosphere. Couldn't get any water until the meal was over. The whole "tab" including tip was £24 which comes to $38.40 (U.S.) I am positive the equivalent back in Grand Rapids could be purchased for $20.00, Even less at some-place like Ponderosa.

Stanley was "draggy" and low on energy most of the day. Plus heavy mucous. It all worries me greatly. I think it is too strenuous on him.

Sunday Sept 17

It cant be possible that we left home only one week ago today. We have covered so many miles, seen so much scenery and historical places that it is all commencing to "blur" together. As I read over this journal frequently I can see in my mind's eye all of the things over again. I am sure that this record will be all the more valuable as time goes by.

On Sundays, when we are traveling we usually try to attend church services somewhere. However a forenoon tour was available, one which would take us up into the "lower" highlands. We agreed we should take it.

Stanleys condition has me very greatly concerned. He seems to have so much throat mucous plus nasal dripping. He is slow and seems tired. He insisted that he felt like going on the tour.

A different guide today proved to be delightful. Her ready wit was valuable. She explained so much about the Scottish language which we have never understood. Our tour took us up through the hills (braes) and valleys (glens) beside rippling brooks and through stone-fenced farms.

Our destination was an area called "Trossachs", in central lower Scotland. We passed an ancient castle which was the birthplace of Mary, Queen of Scotts. As we rode along our guide narrated the colorful history of this famous Historical woman.

Scotland, being a separate kingdom, was for centuries one of England's fiercest enemies. Scotland was originally called Caledonia, and it was inhabited by Picts and Celts. The strife and often brutal, barbaric warfare, continued until in 1603 James VI of Scotland (son of Mary, Queen of Scots) became King James I of England and this was the beginning of the United Kingdom. The animosity continued for nearly 150 years. Then Scotland's Bonnie Prince Charlie attempted to reclaim the Throne of Scotland but failed. Any effective resistance came to an end

Scotland had been granted representation in Parliment about 1700. Today they have 76 representatives. The two nations have since 1746 shared a history of friendship but Scotland remains persistently and distinctly Scottish. Edinburgh (pronounced "boro") remains the seat of their Government, the Capital.

They have their own legal system - patterned after the ancient Roman law. Their money is different but they use the same monetary units as England with the same value. The same goes for postage. The Church of Scotland (Presbyterian) is also independent from the Church of England.

When Bonnie Prince Charles's rebellion was put down, Parliment disarmed the once powerful Clans, and even prohibited the wearing of the Kilt (a symbol of Scottish Pride). This was totally unsuccessful and the practice of the wearing of the Kilt thrives today.

Other than stopping a few times for picture taking we mostly rode this forenoon. At one point on a very windy hilltop we paused in a large patch of heather. We were allowed to pick a little. Our guide pointed out lovely spots among the lakes where many famous poets often came for inspiration.

Many monuments and Memorials are about honoring the Scottish Poet Laureate, Robert Burns.

In the town of Callander we paused for an hour for lunch and exercise. About half the shops were closed, it being Sunday.

This afternoon the same guide and bus took us to downtown Edinburgh where we visited two historical sites, Holyrood House Palace and "The Castle." The fascinating history of each is gripping and too complex to even try to mention here.

The Queen of England comes and lives for a short period of time each year in this Palace. It was begun in the 15th Century. We saw where she hosts her famous garden parties. The furnishings are not so elaborate as some other palaces but the tapestries, period furniture, etc. are of particular interest.

The castle, visible for many miles sits high on a rocky hill about a mile from the palace. This too is full of history.

After much walking in the chilly wind everyone was glad to return to our bus and eventually to the Hotel. I am still most uneasy about Stanley's condition. He coughs and sounds as though some laryngitis may be developing. The pace is too much. I can tell that he is tired. We had dinner here in the Hotel same as last night.

Mon. Sept. 18

When I first looked out our hotel window this morning all was wet, foggy & dreary. A little dismaying. After breakfast, it cleared and our bus pulled out in bright sunshine at 8:15.

Breakfast was nothing more than a headache! They were crowded, could not seem to get fresh supplies of food from the kitchen fast enough and, on top of that, finding a ~~seat~~ table was next to impossible. But we muddled through. The food was OK once we got it. Breakfast seems to be a self-serve business most of the time.

We find it extremely difficult to understand what the waiters or waitresses say to us. The whole language problem was one we had not expected to face until we reached the Continent. It is frustrating for me. (Stanley, with his hearing problem, completely gave up on it!) I did not expect to be able to communicate in Holland, France, Germany Italy, Switzerland or Austria. But I thought there would not be

any such difficulties in England or Scotland. How wrong I was! I soon learned there's English English, not like American English. Most seem to speak rapidly, short, clipped words and of course pronunciation is vastly different. One must learn the English Equivalent for so many of our US words and terms. The subway is the "Underground." An elevator is a "Lift." A napkin is a "serviette." a baby diaper is a "Nappie." a cookie or a wafer is always a "biscuit." A Baked potato is a "Jacket Potato."

The pronunciations also differ widely in some cases. I observed that the placing of the accent on a syllable varies. Any disagreement is a con-'TRO-versy (we'd say 'CON-tro-versy). Also to deal or mete out they say 'DIS-tri-'BUTE; we'd say dis-'TRIB-ute.

We did not have very many miles to travel today - from Edinburgh to York. It was more charming countryside with green fields, stone fences and lots of sheep grazing. Our Scottish tour guide told us that there are 3 times as many sheep in Scotland as people. However, we have a couple from New Zealand here who told us there are 20 times as many sheep in their country as people!

We paused in Jedburgh for a few minutes to allow the "shutter-bugs" to photograph the ruins of a large abbey which dated back to the 13th Century.

Farther on we had a "Coffee stop" (More aptly defined as a potty stop) at a place connected to a sizeable retail woollen goods store. As usual many of our people purchased things. I am not tempted to purchase woolens for I seem to be allergic to wool of late.

Our lunch stop restaurant was the equivalent of a Turnpike Service Area in U.S. Cafeteria type of service with full meals or light snacks available.

In a matter of 2 hours or less we were in the City of York for our overnight stay at the "YORK NOVATEL." It is a nice hotel; the Lobby and restaurant is not as posh as some others so far but the individual rooms are nicer. The decor is white, even white furniture. Plenty of lamps is a great contrast to the past three overnight accomodations.

TV in the hotel rooms is very good. However none was in our room at Glen Ridding.

Stanley's cold continued to worsen and he feels "lousy." After we arrived at York, he spent the remainder of the afternoon in bed.

Our director led us on a walk through the narrow, busy, cobblestone streets. The destination was the "Minster," a huge old Cathedral, still used for Worship, Evensong, etc. I was astonished at the immensity of the Edifice. The quaint little shops were fascinating. Stanley was asleep when I returned. He couldn't hear me knock; I had to return to the Lobby and phone him to awaken him. Dinner included in Tour tonight.

Tues. Sept 19

The main event today was the business of getting us to the Ferry which will transport us across the North Sea tonight to Rotterdam, in the Netherlands.

We had the opportunity to remain abed just a little later at the Hotel at York. Not much later, but a little. This A M when I got the wake-up call I felt absolutely horrible with headache, body weariness, etc.

Although we did not have to get rolling until 2:15 it was necessary to vacate our rooms by 11:00 A M.

There are many, many interesting things to see and do here in York. Today "Fergie" (Duchess of York) was due in the city for some special ceremony or dedication or something. Some of our people said they saw the Motorcade and a few claimed the caught a glimpse of her as she passed by.

The shops in this town are really fascinating and I would love to get into some of them, perhaps buy something.

Stanley felt only slightly better today. After re-arranging our luggage and he had a bath we dressed and I took a walk

to a News shop where I purchased a couple of Newspapers. After that we spent the remaining time sitting in the lobby waiting for our bus and reading our papers.

It seems a shame to pass through these famous and interesting places and see so little of them. We have been there and yet we haven't!

The whole process of boarding the ferry seemed to require an unnecessarily long time.

It is a huge craft with 6 decks. The Bottom 2 are for cars and trucks and any other vehicle.

Next is the "Green" deck with the restaurant facilities and some 1st class cabins and State Rooms

Next, the "Red" deck has lounges, shops, discothe, etc. also a Theatre.

At the top was our cabins, on the "Blue" deck. The cabins are small but immaculate and comfortable.

Our dinner, Mostly self serve, was good. We used up nearly all of our English coins to buy a Magazine and a deck of cards and played some Rummy 500 before retiring.

Wed Sept 20 Amsterdam

According to my calculation we are now at the half-way mark of the tour. We have completed eleven days, eleven remain.

Everyone says the ferry crossing of the North Sea was very smooth but it is impossible to avoid some slight "pitch and throw" on such a large body of water. I wished to take a sleeping pill but discovered they were left in the suitcase ~~that~~ down in the Baggage region. Consequently I had a lot of difficulty falling asleep. The toss of the vessel did not bother me as much as the "creaking" I could hear. Stanley says he slept very, very well. I insisted on sleeping in the upper bunk, feeling it was not best to have Stanley doing the Climbing. However I bumped my knee on the top of the metal ladder! Thankfully neither of us needed to answer Nature's call during the night!

We were awakened at 6:00 AM by the ship's PA System. Breakfast was served from 6:30—9:00 AM. We ate while the vessel glided into ~~Amsterd~~ Rotterdam. It seemed to take as long to disembark as

it did to embark.

Our Tour bus was awaiting us. This bus and driver will take us the remainder of the way.

Rotterdam has the busiest cargo port in the entire world. As we wound our way about through this huge city, our guide pointed out a few points of interest. Very soon we were on the open highway heading toward Amsterdam, a distance of only about 25 miles. It felt wonderful to be riding on the <u>right</u> (the correct!) side of the highway again.

Penny explained a little about the city's history and physical features. Amsterdam was actually built on land masses or islands. It is a city of canals, about 50 miles of them; also about 1,000 bridges. We were treated to an excellent cruise on the canals in a comfortable glass-topped boat.

I feel so frustrated at the fact that we will actually spend scarcely 24 hours in this country which I have longed to visit nearly all my life. It put such a damper on the day that I was sad.

a short drive out in the Country was a treat. So many cattle! But of course where there's so much cheese, there must be milk!

Everything is so beautifully green. Lots of water everywhere. Drainage ditches criss-cross all the grazing land.

The houses here are made of brick attogether. They butt against each other and get their distinction from the unique design of the gables. (I am now describing the structures in Amsterdam)

Of course in the country the individual houses are set apart, still built of brick or stone.

This country rests on a huge area of "reclaimed land." 1000 yrs ago dikes were constructed of earth; for centuries wind mills pumped out water, replaced the areas with rich soil. Reclamation is still enlarging the useful land area.

We stopped at the town of Valendam on Ijsselmeer Lake for lunch and shopping. It is extremely jammed with tourists. We had a pleasant stroll up and down the one main street. There was scarcely a place to park long enough for us to load and unload.

Before going back to Amsterdam we stopped at a cheese factory. It was a bit primitive, not nearly as interesting as the one we visited a couple of years ago in Wisconsin. A costumed young lady explained (in a heavily Dutch accented English) the various steps involved in making Edam and Gouda cheese. No actual demonstrations.

adjacent was a clog (wooden shoe) factory. Several times Stanley and I have observed this process at Holland, Michigan. Of course there was a large store, selling not only cheeses and wooden shoes, but a great many other souvenirs and novelties. It was not a very tidy place.

Our dinner at the DOELEN CREST HOTEL was very delicious and the personell was very thoughtful.

One thing must be said for this Tour. We see and do such a variety of Things. Tonight, after dinner, at 9:00 our Guide, Penny, led us on a walk through the Red Light District. It seems it is world famous. Beautiful woman clad in only ribbons flaunted their bodies in huge store windows with Red lights illuminating them. Truly it was an unforgettable Evening.

West Germany
LUDWIGSHAFEN

Thursday Sept. ~~24~~ 21

In order to get everything in which was planned for this day we were called at 6:00 A.M. Breakfast was at 6:45, bags outside our door. All were on the bus on time for us to get rolling at 7:30. Penny has complimented us for being so conscious of the importance of being on time. This actually surprised us a little. Usually you can count on some one or two to be habitually late. But this was not the case with this group. It is truly nice not to spend a lot of time (and frustration) waiting for someone.

The ride from Amsterdam to the German Border was uneventful. Many, (including me!) slept some of the way. It was mostly farming area, crops and cattle. To make their famous Cheese they must have the milk.

Just across the border there was a nice rest stop. Passports or Visas are not needed. They even had a money exchange place here where we turned in our Dutch Guilders in exchange for German Marks. There's a snack bar here if one needs a bite to eat.

Several expressed the feeling that in general the highways here are in better shape than the ones in USA & Canada. Also the Tour buses have a better "suspension" system which adds to the smoothness of the ride.

Only one fly in the ointment. The air conditioning in our bus was very poor. I heard rumblings from several of our group. We had not expected such warm weather this late in September. Today we did not need jackets after the first few minutes outside the hotel.

Neither had we anticipated such large numbers of Tourists. The buses are everywhere. If it was heavier than this during the summer months it must have been something.

At 11:45 we paused for 1¼ hrs. in KOLN ("Cologne" to us). for a lunch stop. But far more impressive was a chance to see and walk inside the Magnificent DOM (Kolm Cathedral). Begun in 1248 it was 600 yrs in the building. In no way can one begin to appreciate such an edifice without actually

being there. I believe they said the spires are 600 ft high. It is said that air pollution has blackened the exterior of all of these colossal structures. Of course city has been built up all about this church.

During WW II, in the year 1944, Bombs dropped only destroyed some of the stained glass windows but did not reduce any of the rest of the structure to ruin. These windows have been replaced with less beautiful designs with various arrangements of clear glass. What an experience!

Our guide told us that this city actually got its name from the fact that there is a factory here which produces Eau de Cologne (toilet water).

Across the street from the Cathedral is none else than a MacDonald's Restaurant. The girl behind the counter handled English very well. We had a nice little lunch. It seemed easier to order and eat here. After eating we tried without success to locate a shop where we could buy tissues.

Stanley's cold is no worse. Now he is into the coughing stage which always hangs on for a while with him. I am

doing OK except for headaches which have been developing each afternoon late.

Our bus route continued southward through the Rhineland. This area produces some of the finest wines in the world. The vineyards are on hillsides of 45° (or more) angle. Miles and miles of them. Each separate vine in supported on a pole instead of the fence-like supports we see back home. One wonders how they tend the vines on such steep hillsides.

We boarded a boat at BOPPARD and had a Cruise down the Rhine River past numerous Medieval Castles built by robber barons! Also more vineyards which we were told, were originally planted by the Romans. Towns dotted the Riverbanks. We were shown an old Church, joined with a Pub. Access to the church was only through the Pub and the Priest is also the Bartender! Our bus had ~~pick~~ gone ahead and was waiting for us. By 5:00 we were in LUDWIGSHAFEN where we stayed over night at Europia Hotel. They have those "feather-bed" comforters. Might do for Zero weather! Delicious dinner (part of the tour).

Friday Sept 22 Innsbruck Austria

This early arising, eating and getting on our way is to continue the remainder of our journey, Penny informed us.

We learned that our lavish breakfasts are a thing of the past. All across Britain we were served what we in America call a "farmer's breakfast." Penny warned us not to expect the same on the continent. However we were all surprised when, at Amsterdam we found a buffet breakfast to top them all! That was yesterday.

This morning, in Ludwigshafen we were served tea, coffee, hard rolls, butter jams & jellies. And we were limited to to not more than 2 rolls each.

A dense fog covered the city this morning and continued as we traveled farther down the Rhine Valley.

Soon we were at Heidelberg where we rode up narrow, steep, winding streets, then walked some distance to Schloss Castle. The ancient Cobblestone streets made getting a foothold difficult. The castle, in a half-ruin state sits high, high, overlooking the city. It would be a

Majestic sight on a clear day but alas! It was so foggy we could see NOTHING. It dates back to the 16th century.

The oldest University in Germany is at Heidelberg, founded in 1386.

This city has another claim to fame these days. The operetta "Student Prince" was filmed here.

Moving swiftly across the very excellent highways we headed east, south east. At noon we paused for a rest stop. Several bought substantial snacks but Stanley and I only got some soft pretzels. Penny was insisting on getting us to Munich for lunch and we arrived at about 2:30.

Everyone was on his/her own for lunch. We meandered around for a while; what few restaurants we found had unheard of prices, and only offered meals. There were lots of open air "quickie" food stands. We could not read their list of things offered. We wound up at ~~xxx~~ a large market place and bought bananas, an apple and a roll!

I couldn't analyze what had happened. Finally I put it together. On all the other guided tours we have been on, our driver and guide has stopped at a restaurant where arrangements had been made for us to eat as a group, each paying his/her own tab.

To be turned loose in a busy foreign city this way may be a challenge to the young. But it is a headache to us seniors! I guess we like to have the feeling that someone is taking care of the details for us. Anyway we had enough to satisfy our hunger and Stanley has a bottle of water in his "knap-sack."

Munich is a sizable city with many important features. As we entered town, Penny Pointed out the far-out architecture of the structures which were built for the Winter Olympics held here several years ago. Also the corporate headquarters for the Auto Company B M W. Plus many other attractions. Plus many other noted spots.

Now we began to drive into the Austrian Alps. No mountains with snow on them yet. The buildings or houses

with artistic paintings on the front, plus the lovely window and Balcony Boxes of mostly geraniums remind us of the trip we had through this region 5 years ago when we attended the Passion Play. The fog was gone, (no doubt we drove out of it) so we could enjoy the fabulous scenery.

At the border (Austrian) we paused at Customs. Some had bought enough merchandise in Germany that it had to declared, we never buy anything so we have nothing to do with customs.

The valley where Innsbruck lies is green and fertile. Innsbruck has been the site of many events of the Winter Olympic games.

After our dinner here at the hotel about 2/3 of our group accompanied Penny to take in a "Tyrolean Native Folklore Evening." It sounded great but this has been a very tiring day so we passed on this one. Stanleys cold is better. He does not feel so badly except for the cough,

Sept. 23, 24, 25 Written Sept 25 in Rome

The "hiatus" in this journal has a "painful" explanation. Most events recorded here-in have been so written in order to preserve them in my memory. However, in no way could I EVER forget my visit to Venice!

For several days I'd had intermittent distress in my stomach area. Thinking it to be a sort of flare-up of my old Chronic Duodenal Ulcer I tried to ease it with an occasional "swig" of pepto-bismal.

Part of the sight-seeing tour in Venice I was able to enjoy to a degree. We rode on a commercial passenger barge from the spot where all buses (and other motor vehicles were required to park, since no such are allowed in the City of Venice proper). We disembarked near St. Mark's square. A foot tour about St. Mark's Church proved interesting. The millions of pigeons, always seen in any movie or travelog about Venice, were present. The size of the square cannot be comprehended except by being there.

Stanley and I then walked a few of the many extremely narrow streets where shops by the thousands

line the cobblestone walkways. They told us the city was actually built on about 100 tiny islands. The canals separate the buildings and dozens of tiny humpy-backed foot-bridges span them.

We walked across the Rialto Bridge which is so large that shops line each side of it. The merchandise in most of these stores is very high quality, in large part of the gift variety.

We were now dealing in Italian Currency, the Lira. One lira is worth .00075 in American Money. 1000 lira is 75¢. It becomes extremely frustrating. But they deal mostly with 10,000 lira paper notes, one such being worth $7.50. There are smaller denomination notes, also coins.

Most of the merchandise does not interest me too greatly but their shops selling their exquisite ~~bad~~ hand-made needlework items were unbelievable. (Venice is famous for hand blown ~~Ess~~ glass and hand-made lace. They are equally skilled in beautiful embroidery). I would have loved to have purchased one of the pretty blouses but didn't suggest it.

Toward the end of the afternoon I began to experience more severe discomfort. Thinking perhaps I needed a bit of food we sat at a tiny outdoor table where I had some tea and a croissant. It only made it worse. Somehow or other I endured it until we returned to the hotel, about 7:15 PM.

I am too far ahead of my story. Before I felt quite as bad about 16 of our group had a genuine gondola ride. They divided us up among 3 gondolas, One gondola had 2 musicians, a singer and an accordionist. It lasted an hour and 15 minutes and, had I felt up to par, would have been really fun. But for the most part I can say I enjoyed it and am glad we took it.

Anyway, after returning to the hotel my agony grew worse. I insisted that Stanley join the group in the hotel dining room at 8:00.

By the time he returned at 9:00 I was literally writhing in pain, Tossing, Moaning and groaning.

At 9:30 he contacted our tour leader, who then called room service, who ordered

a doctor to come. By 10:15 he was there. A very kind, elderly physician who could speak a little English. Our tour guide handles the Italian language well. By the time the doctor had arrived I was vomiting violently. He felt it was either food poisoning or a virus but could not be sure which. He gave me medication which I promptly brought back up. All night my agony continued. Finally I had a fit of vomiting about 6:00 AM which brought a little relief from the pain. Then the doctor's medication began staying down. I was still sick and weak and sore and aching and declared I simply could not board the bus and ride all day. But what was I to do? (Dr's charge $75.00=)

All of the group wanted to be helpful and vacated the seats across the back of the bus so I could lie down as we traveled. This we did. I slept some and got a little better but remained weak and "woozy". Stanley brought me some dry toast (we would call it Melba) and that, with a bottle of water was my food for the day! But it stayed down and was all I needed.

We arrived in Rome about ~~5~~ 4:30 P.M. The group was scheduled to leave in our bus for an Italian dinner plus an "Illuminations Drive" after the dinner. I could have skipped it but felt guilty that Stanley would have to miss it. After freshening up and resting a little I felt equal to it, seeing as how it did not involve much walking.

The restaurant was nice enough. Our group had a room to ourselves. There were half a dozen courses. I was able to pick out a few bites which were bland enough but sent most of it back! Our group certainly put away the wine. We had five single women who got a table to themselves and got really "happy." We had two handsome young waiters, one a real comic, who alternately kissed and pinched some of these women. It got so loud and hilarious that my head began to ache. We are used to quiet, peaceful groups. Some singers came in 2 or three times and sang loudly — in a small room it was deafening. But everyone else apparently loved it and tossed money at them like crazy. A new experience for us.

They presented each lady there with a long-stemmed pink rose and a kiss.

We thought the night-time traffic unbelievable. It was Sunday night which may have accounted for part of it. I will never understand how the Tour buses manage to get around these narrow streets. Cars, cars, everywhere. Old fashioned narrow streets give little parking space. No parking meters - they park everywhere, even on sidewalks. As we were on our way to the restaurant a local taxi-cab tried to pass us for some time and finally drove up over the curb, passing us on the sidewalk, then onto the street in front of us.

As we left the hotel for the restaurant a car was parked so it protruded too far out on a corner. Our bus got jammed and couldn't move and we had a great traffic jam behind us. Drivers got out, waved arms, shouted and shook fists. Finally all of them got together and literally lifted that car (all cars over here are small) over onto the sidewalk and then our bus continued on! The traffic jam was relieved with no fist fights.

The "Illuminations Tour" didn't amount to much as such. A few fountains were lit but many ruins were not. At one point we left the bus and walked a considerable distance to see the Trevi Fountain. But alas! all was dark, and there was no water. It was "under repair." But the big, gaping, concrete basin was lined with coins just the same. I heard someone near say that it had been under repairs for 2 years. We concluded that the person responsible for retrieving the coins each day must have some "Clout" and likes it dry!

Having missed a nights sleep in Venice and still having an active day I fell asleep on the bus and had to be awakened when we arrived Back at our Hotel. Both of us slept soundly until 7:00 AM!

Sept 25 —

There was an 8:00 Tour to the Vatican Basicilla also the Sistine Chapel but we were glad we had not signed up for it. We did not have to rush about as we would not be picked up until 10:00 AM (It turned out to be 9:30)

We went down to the Hotel Dining Room

for breakfast. Some places it has been self-service, some serve us at a table. The waitress couldn't understand any English and dragged us out to the Reception Desk! He quickly told her that we were "self-serve," so we helped ourselves to our dry rolls, juice tea & coffee. The language problem is a real headache.

At 9:30 we were on the bus and transported to St. Peters square (the Vatican.) A local guide took over.

We were given a brief lecture, then taken inside the huge church. She explained many features, showed us the Tomb of St. Peter and the huge main altar. No pews cover the ornate marble floors. Services only for special occasions when they place chairs in there.

She pointed out the building, even the windows where the Pope lives.

The immensity of the great square is only comprehended by being here. In 1961 Stanley was there on Easter Sunday when Millions of pilgrims filled every inch of the area. It is hard to imagine that many people. As bad as the traffic is now

I cannot see how the City contains the increase in the numbers of cars and people at such a time.

We were then driven about the City and saw many ruin sites. I believe the Guide told us that the high interest in excavating and preserving ruins came about during the past 100 years. They have laws in Rome controlling the preservation of ruins. Building Contractors are required to leave any ruin intact as it is discovered. They must incorporate it into the structure. Down through the ages cities were built over other cities, hence nearly all of the ruins we viewed were below street level. Among the most interesting we saw on this tour were: The Old Roman Forum, The famous Coliseum, The Pantheon, and finally, the Catacombs.

By all means the most interesting were the Catacombs. These are ancient burial caves of the Early Christians. An oriental Monk was our guide there. He says there are 360 miles of these far ~~above~~ below ground level. No way can be devised to determine how many burials took place here but possibly 1½ Millions.

At Lunch time we were "turned loose" again. I detest this. By luck we found a little place where we each had a milk shake and a ham/cheese sandwich. Had to eat it standing up. It cost 11,000 lira ($8.25)! Prices are horrendous.

After about 45 Minutes of Leisure our Guide returned and we began our "Optional Tour" called "Ancient and Christian Rome. Only about half of our group went on this trip.

Our first stop was the PANTHEON. The word is derived from the Greek meaning "Temple of Many Gods." Like all other temples it is colossal in size. Finished over 1300 years ago, it was dedicated to the 7 planetary Gods. 7 statues, plus other art work adorn the interior. A round opening 27 ft in diameter in the top center of the dome lets in the sunlight (as well as rain, which disappears through special drains). I had always heard of the Pantheon and seeing it had great significance for me.

On we moved through the city. As we advanced, special ruins

and interesting sights were pointed out such as remains of the old city wall, the ancient aquaduct and countless other ruins, as well as many large statues, Memorials and fountains.

A high point on the entire Rome experience was the visit to the Catacombs, the subterranean cemeteries surrounding Rome. Christians were considered a subversive sect and the government was "out to get them." (Now see I described the Catacombs trip when I was writing last night - thus I will skip further Comment)

Of course one has not truly been to Rome unless one has seen the Colosseum. Building was began in the 1st Century AD. It is the best known and also the best preserved structure remaining from Ancient Rome. It could seat 50,000 spectators who viewed Gladiatorial contests etc. Legend says Emperors and other VIP's were entertained by watching Christians being fed to hungry Lions. Our guide told us it was so constructed that the arena area could be filled with water and they staged Mock sea battles etc for entertainment.

Of course the guide was highly informed on ancient Roman History and could tells us the interesting and important facts to make us fascinated by everything we saw. Rome must have been quite an Empire. In fact, at that period nearly all of the Mediterranean area was under Rome's Control.

But, as the old adage goes, the higher they fly, the harder they fall. The "Glory that was Rome" fell under Moral decadence and ceased to exist in 476 AD when the empire was split. The Eastern Capital became Constantinople. Rome became the capital of Western Christianity. Once again Culture and the arts began to flourish and Rome became one of the Birthplaces of the 15th Century Renaissance.

Dead tired we returned to the hotel, rested a couple of hours and then everyone was on his/her own for Dinner. Nearly all of our group ate in the dining room here at the hotel. I still have some cramps after each meal but am slowly better, but no yen for food!

Tuesday Sept 26 written in Florence Italy

Upon awakening today I recalled that it is our darling granddaughter Jenifer's Birthday. 13 yrs old. How we love her!

Time to leave Rome, "The Eternal City." There isn't time tonight to write my evaluation of the experience. Some very valuable things happened. With some bible background, certain spots held much meaning. Yesterday we looked through bars down into a damp dingy prison where it is almost certain Paul wrote his letters to Timothy more than 1900 yrs ago. But the remainder of the city is so crowded, dirty and noisy that we are fully ready to leave it. When we thought about only 2 nights and 1 day in Rome we were dismayed. But it takes so long to get about in the City, plus it was very warm there, that we are both fully ready to move on. Anything one sees or does here requires much walking - it isn't really a trip for Seniors!

By 2:00 PM today we arrived

in the city of Florence (FIRENZE, in Italian). The first obligation was a group picture. A photographer was waiting. I had not planned to purchase one but when we saw the finished product at dinner tonight, I wanted it. Since I have taken no photographs this seemed good to have.

Florence was very warm today (as Rome had been yesterday.) We were first taken to a Leather Factory. Florence is famous for leather; it is exquisite and every possible item is available. Very expensive but people were buying like crazy.

Our Guided tour (on foot) did not begin until 4:00 PM. We found a bench on the spacious square in front of the Church of the Holy Cross. We met and visited for nearly an hour with a charming couple from England.

At 4:00 our guide took us first inside the Church of the Holy Cross. 2nd largest Church in Florence. Founded by Franciscan Monks 700 yrs ago. It is the only cathedral with wood

overhead instead of stone. Original Frescoes in an excellent state of preservation cover the walls.

There are 217 tombs in the Edifice including many statesmen and political and war heroes. Also famous Composer Rossini, Michaelangelo (sculptor, painter, architect). Who died at age 89 yrs. The most famous of his works are statues of David and The Pieta.

Dante the "Father of the Italian Language" is memorialized here but buried elsewhere.

Galileo (who first claimed the earth was round and rotated about the sun instead of visa-versa and was excommunicated for such heretical pronouncements) is entombed here.

In 1966 an unprecedented flood brought the waters of the Arno rived over the city and over 9 ft of water filled the cathedral — over 18 ft over the square in front. It was an awful catastrophe and more than 30 lives were lost.

We proceeded to "City Hall Square". Dubbed an out-door museum, she explained

and identified the statuary. "Most impressive to me: an exact copy of Michangelo's "David." (We could not see the original, not enough time to go to the Museum.) The sculptor did the statue in 3 years. He was 29 when it was finished. Died at 89. Seldom completed a work, was temperamental and clashed with his client.

Another statue is ~~Heard~~ Hercules also Neptune.

The whole city has lots of scaffolding is up all over the city. We learned the City is getting all fixed up for the International Soccer games here in 1990

A place we saw which I had never before heard of was the Battistero (The Bapistry). Built in 1000, all gold leaf and Mosaic. All babies used to be brought here for Baptism by Immersion. During the 16th Cent. This was changed. Babies were Baptized in local parish churches; by sprinkling twice a year in the Bapistry.

Opposite the Bapistry ~~was~~ is the enormous Cathedral, Church of St Mary of the flowers. It gives an impression that a

type of race must have been on to see who could build the largest Cathedral. Often determined by little more than a meter (!) they range in order: 1. St Peters in Rome (Vatican)

2. London St Paul's

3. St Mary of the Flowers.

We acknowledge that, in spite of our high interest in religion and the churches, we are losing interest in Cathedrals! ~~But~~ Yet one more yet remains on our itinerary. ~~At~~ The Cathedral of Notre Dame in Paris. Each has special features, standing it apart from the others.

From Early morning until about 2:00 I had felt badly. As we rolled along the highway I was "woozy" and became very distressed that I might be suffering a relapse.

As we waited on the huge, huge square in front of the Church of the Holy Cross for our walking tour to begin, a cool wave suddenly swept across the area accompanied by a few drops of rain. Up until then it had been very warm and muggy. When the atmosphere cooled down I immediately revived. We both stood all of the walking well. All of our guides have been young, as

is to be expected. We can do a lot of walking provided it isn't too rapid. The old streets of Florence are very narrow, might accomodate one line of traffic with a tiny sidewalk, often no more than two feet wide. In this place most bikes are motorized and they go like the wind, a real danger. It was actually a little cold as we traipsed the long distance back to the bus. Everyone was dog-tired.

Perhaps today I was impressed by one bit of "education" I gleaned more than anything else: Dante was the FATHER of the Italian Language! Up to his day all was written in Latin. Only a few of the Elite could read. The common people developed a language of their own, a corruption of Latin. Dante used their language; having made a written variety of it the poor, common people could hear his works and understood them. They began to read. The Italian Language became the language of the people. I had often wondered why the Italian and Latin languages were different. Today I learned the answer! This was the earliest beginnings of the Renaissance.

Wed. Sept 27 Written in Lucerne Switzerland

It seemed good to arise this morning in Rome knowing that we would today drive farther north out of the heat.

When we first studied the itinerary for this trip we were dismayed to learn we would have only 2 nights and one day in Rome. After the hectic time in traffic, plus a heavy schedule, the heat, the dirt, etc. we were both ready to leave the city. No coins in the Trevi Fountain - we have no desire to return at our age. We are extremely thankful for the Experience but feel we really saw and did Enough.

Even the drive through Italy was not too interesting nor attractive until we got into the Italian Alps. Their highways, however, are excellent and our capable driver moved us swiftly along.

As we crossed over into Switzerland we stopped for a coffee Break and bought a few "snack" food items, cookies and candy to get rid of our lira. Shortly after crossing the border we had a lunch stop in a beautiful town beside a Lake. (The name eludes me) We found a bank

where we had Travelers Checks changed into Swiss Francs. On Franc equals about 61¢ in American Money. Much easier to calculate than Italian Lira!

Then we came a cross a BURGER KING where we bought lunch. One sees many Americans here.

We passed through dozens of Tunnels. One, the Gotthard, is 10 miles in length, longest in the world, completed only 2 yrs ago. Truly an engineering marvel. It goes without saying the scenery is gorgeous.

Our Hotel here in Lucerne is OK but the temperature here is in the 60's and our room is COLD. We learned the heat hasn't been turned on yet this fall. This city lies along Lake Lucerne and is chock full of Tourists. Maybe we will look into the shops tomorrow - Maybe?. The flowers everywhere are bright and glowing. I couldn't help but wonder if the Frost had "nipped" the flowers in Michigan.

Thurs. Sept. 28 Written in Lucerne, Switzerland

It appears it was too much to hope for a clear morning for our trip to the top of Mt. Rigi. When we first awakened we thought we saw a glimpse of the sun. But it is difficult to ascertain here in this deep valley. It was BITTERLY cold today. With no heat in our room here at the hotel we were chilled to the bone by the time we got dressed. We donned about all the warm clothing we could find.

The trip up the mountain was by cog-railway in comfortable heated cars. But a cloud obscured the mountain even before we started. It isn't much of a mountain, being less than 6,000 ft high. We are <u>not</u> in that part of the Alps where one sees snow-capped peaks in September. A very dense fog enclosed the station at the top. The combination of cold and cloud made it seem sub-zero. Actually it was 1° C. (This means 33-34° F). We descended via aerial tramway, which I actually enjoyed, much to my own surprise! Of course no one is to blame for the weather; it can't be predicted. So all we got out of it was the rides, but every-

one was in high spirits so we had a good time in spite of it all!

The plan was to drop everyone off in the center of town for shopping but when our guide stopped briefly at the hotel we opted to stay here. Our room was still cold. Stanley got into bed to "thaw out." He read and napped; I read, worked crosswords, played solitaire. About 3:30 we again put on jackets, sweaters, etc., caught a city bus in front of the hotel and went down town for a while. Walked about a while and saw a few interesting things. When we got quite cold we'd pop into a store and get warm. Found an acceptable restaurant. Managed to get "almost" enough to eat for 39 francs plus tip ($29.00 US). When we returned to our hotel, praises be, the heat was on! So it is bearable in here. Bought a "U.S.A Today" ($1.78 US) to find out whats happening back in God's Country.

Our memories of Lucerne will not be happy ones, but who can predict weather? In another 3½ days we will be safely in our own home again, God willing. That will be the best part of the trip.

Friday, Sept. 29 Written in Paris

What a birthday! Today I am 73 years old and who could ever imagine I would celebrate it in Paris? This evening while at dinner I smiled inwardly, thinking of all my friends and family back home and wondering what they would think if they could only see me now!

We shivered plenty as we boarded our bus at Europe Hotel in Lucerne. The grey skies overhead and misty atmosphere didn't do a thing toward lifting our spirits. I speak of mine and Stanley's and a few others near our age. We have a sizeable group of younger folk who are always in high form. Seeing as how we got a late start we really rolled along. Arrived at the International Hotel in Paris eleven hours after boarding! Everyone was complaining of stiff legs. The countryside was not so interesting once we left the mountains. The foliage was not so green; things were taking on an autumn "dryness."

An "extra", optional dinner was offered for tonight plus an "illuminations tour" after the meal. It cost slightly over $50.00 (US) per person, but we decided to splurge. Most of

our group attended. We battled the unbelievable Paris traffic across the city, up the narrow cobble-stone streets to Montmartre (Mount of the Martyrs) to a cafe so crowded there was scarcely breathing room. The service was not as slow as we had expected! Everyone could have all the wine he/she wanted and I became concerned lest our ~~dinner~~ would drink too much. (We did!) The ceilings were low, the noise, singing, ~~talking~~ laughing etc was nearly enough to make me wish we were not there. What food I ate was good but I simply do not have my ~~appetite~~ appetite back and couldn't eat it all. (I had Escargot! [SNAILS])

The trip to see the Eiffel Tower all lighted was very worthwhile. No pictures, no TV shows can begin to make one imagine how "awesome" it actually is. One has to be here to get the feel of it. We went on an elevator to the first level which was plenty ~~for~~ for me. I only went that far so I could say I did. Most walked about and viewed the city. I can't handle heights, only went up that far so I could say I did. It was ~~the~~ so cold. Our coats were not enough. Am I ever tired and sleepy. The scrubbing [illegible]

Saturday, Sept. 30 Written in Paris

This will be the last writing in this Journal until we are settled once again in our own little place on Goodman Ave. Both of us agree that the hectic pace of the last three weeks has been more than we had anticipated and we are now plenty ready to get back to our own quiet routine. However, as we ponder on it a bit, we realize that we could well find ourselves under some pressure again the next two weeks as we prepare to depart for our Florida Home for the winter. But at least we can do it at our own pace and will not need to roll out each morning until we are ready!

During the forenoon today our entire group went on our bus for a guided tour of Paris. We drove about and a local guide explained things. She spoke English with a very heavy French accent. I missed about ½ of what she said. The traffic was not as bad as last night. We made only one stop, at the Cathedral of Notre Dame. This was worthwhile but not much parking space for the bus. There were hordes of tourists there. I am very glad to have seen all these great old Cathedrals but must admit

that I am glad this is the last one. Enough is enough of anything. I especially enjoyed seeing the Arche of Triumph several times as we rode about the city both last night and today.

A group of us went on a paid Tour of the great Art Museum, the Louvre. We had only about 1½ hrs which only gave us a mere glimpse. But we saw the original "Mona Lisa", the original Venus de Milo statue, also the winged Victory. One should allow a week to see the Louvre!

This afternoon we went on another paid tour of Versailles Palace & Gardens. The Palace is gorgeous, had been the home of Louis 14th. Trouble was the crowds of Tourists was unbelievable, shoulder to shoulder everywhere we moved. To top it all off, the Emperor of Japan was there today and the gardens were off limits to us. So we sure never got what we paid for!

Tired and not wanting to go searching for a restaurant, we had our dinner here in the Hotel Dining Room! Really "splurgy!" 440 Francs (about $80 US plus $10 tip!) I am calling this my birthday dinner, trying to forget last night. Everything was most delicious.

Sunday, Oct 1 Cincinnati Ohio

How wrong can I be? We had thought all of the adventures connected with Tiip would be over by now but it was not to be.

Our flight from Atlanta was late so that we missed the succeeding one to Grand Rapids. Delta Airlines "put us up" in a Hilton Hotel overnight here and we are booked to leave at 10:35 AM. We should be home not too long after noon.

It is still a marvel to us that we can eat our breakfast in Paris and our supper in Atlanta!

Paris was beautiful today. The sky was blue with a few cotton candy clouds, lots of sun. All the flowers smiled on us as we rolled along to the airport.

We had risen early enough to go down and bid goodbye to the tour group who departed for London at 7:30. Everyone seemed to especially appreciate it. Some who were already on board got off and hugged and kissed us. Our guide Penny was especially kind and thoughtful. We realized how much

we had come to love and appreciate these people as we were together for 3 weeks.

We had our last Continental Breakfast in Europe, got our things together, called for a Taxi and managed to communicate to the French speaking driver where we wanted to be dropped off at Orly Airport. The place is unbelievable huge and I think we walked miles. Took off at 1:15.

The plane was packed. Something was wrong with the air conditioning system and we nearly froze all the way. Accounting for a 5 hr difference in the time, the flight took 8 hr. 45 min. It was nice to feel the plane touch ground again. After a lengthy lay-over in Atlanta, the plane for Cincinnati was late. As I previously mentioned this affected a change in plans.

We have never stayed in a Hilton Hotel before. It is a luxurious room. At the present time we have been up for over 22 hrs. I just now took a Dalmane sleeping pill. Stanley is especially tired. Had a warm bathtub soak. Can I promise to write in the Journal tomorrow night at home?

Monday Oct 2 — written at Home —

Once I read a quotation inferring that the two most enjoyable days of any vacation or trip were: The day we leave and the day we return! This is probably true for most of us. All of the anticipation and excitement of finally setting out on a planned experience such as we had can only be matched by the satisfaction we feel upon setting foot in our home again.

I had been apprehensive that either of us were really equal to the rigors such a tour would certainly present. But both of us have enjoyed travel so much that we felt compelled to try it and perhaps the greatest thing we learned from it all was that we can't do it this way again.

Maybe we chose the wrong Tour. Covering the highlights of six countries in 3 weeks is bound to be hectic and frustrating. It meant arising very early each morning, hurrying about and leaving on a bus at 7:30 or 8:00 at the latest. Sometimes we felt we couldn't do it, but on this sort of occasion one must jolly

well go when the bus goes. On the optional side trips, the group walked rapidly, and it was a hardship on the rest of them when we couldn't keep up the pace (us two!) We found the baggage problem frustrating, as well as the different currencies.

I am not inferring that it was not a rewarding experience. Sights we saw and experiences we had will never be forgotten, not to mention the wonderful tour-mates.

Leaving Cincinnati about 11:00 AM, we arrived in Grand Rapids, hailed a cab and were here in our house by 1:00 PM.

There had been some frost here. Our impatiens had "had it." The trees are donning their glowing Autumn Colors. Now we must concentrate on preparing for our Florida trek.

We had phoned Bob from Atlanta. Mary Ruth phoned us about 4:00 PM today. I called Paul's this evening. Also Ruth. Our hearts are aching as a rather ugly letter from Karen's father was here awaiting us. We love these dear children to the point of it hurting and constantly pray for guidance as to how to help them. Dear God please answer