

Jeff & Nancy
Trip to Germany
9/18/2013 – 10/11/2013

First Week



WEDNESDAY 9/18/13 - 5 PM Leave home for Las Vegas Airport. Check in very easy. We were flying out of Terminal 3 which is International. We went to the First Class Lounge to wait for plane, a British Airways Boeing 747.

First class travel is the only way to go when you are on a long flight – 10 hrs. It was our first time and afraid we are now spoiled with the service etc.

THURSDAY 9/19/13 3:30 PM Arrived London Heathrow Airport. We were in the “Fast Track Immigration Line.” That took over an hour but There were only 3 agents helping our line compared to about 10 agents Serving the regular line which wound around several times. We took a taxi to our hotel, Hilton Garden Inn. (\$1. US is only worth .61 English pound, not very good.)

Upon arriving at the hotel we found our friends from England, Den & Marge, Terry and Margaret waiting for us in the lobby. They live about 50 miles outside of London. They drove in and were also spending the night. We had a nice visit and dinner at the hotel.

 Two interesting things at the hotel – 1st you had to put your room keycard in a slot for the lights to turn on in the room. 2nd they do not have washcloths. You have to bring your own – we found this to be the case in several hotels. Also the tubs/showers have very high sides and it is difficult to get in and out of, especially for short people like me.



FRIDAY 9/20/13

We had to get up the next morning early – taxi to arrive at 5:30 am to take us to the airport for our flight to Stuttgart, Germany. We had to go through immigration again but since we were already in London and not coming from outside the country it was a much shorter line. While going thru security I set off a bell and they really patted me down! Never had that thorough a personal search before! They took Jeff's carry on and had him watch while they totally unpacked it. He had all the electronic cables in there for the cell phones, camera batteries etc. When they were satisfied it was okay told him to repack it. Heathrow is a huge airport and has several terminals and it's easy to get lost, one is just for British Airways which we were flying. We went again to the first class lounge, it was really large and had quite an assortment of food and drinks. It was about 4 times the size of the one in Las Vegas. We had a complete breakfast, so many things to choose from.

Flt. BA 718 was to leave at 8 am-now to find the gate! We did after a BA Flight attendant helped us. We waited at the gate for a bus to take us to the plane, it took 3 buses to hold everyone. We had to walk up steps outside to board plane. We boarded a smaller plane for our short flight (1 ½ hrs.) to Stuttgart. The seats were larger than normal. As soon as we took off they came around with a complete breakfast, a ham omelet, also mushrooms, tomatoes, roll and coffee. Our 2nd breakfast of the day!



Immigration at the Stuttgart Airport much easier – no long lines. Baggage quick also. Glad we had purchased Samsonite Orange Luggage Straps with TSA approved locks. We found the rental cars counter. We went through Auto Europe but it was Avis. We got a Mercedes Benz C180 T automatic, 4 door with a GPS. Nice car but had a little trouble programming the GPS. Finally got it programmed to our hotel in Stuttgart – took us almost an hour to get there. At least in Germany they drive on the same side of the street as the US. There was a Sports Bar close by so went there for dinner – had beer and hamburgers! The waitress said she and her boyfriend had been to Las Vegas a couple of weeks before and they loved it but they wouldn't move to the US because they have free medical and other good benefits living in Germany. Another interesting fact, dogs are allowed in restaurants. It had been a long day so went to bed early.

SATURDAY 9/21/13

Jeff programmed the GPS for our Bed & Breakfast, Gastehaus Wasserstelz in Hohentengen-Guggenmuhle which was about a 2 ½ hr. drive south from Stuttgart. They do drive very fast on the Autobahn and you need to keep in the slow lane to keep from getting run over! After getting off the autobahn we were on some country roads. While driving through the



small town of Blumberg my husband spotted an old train parked at a small station and there were lots of people milling around so we parked and went to see what was going on. People were dressed in 1870's clothing – men, women and children - There was a band, an organ grinder with a monkey also a gift shop and a museum. Many people waiting around to ride the train. It was about a 2



hr. ride then a stop and then 2 hrs. back. If we would have had more time we would have taken the trip. On to our B & B – on the way we passed my ancestral town Griessen, Waldshut, Baden. It was an incredible feeling just driving thru the town.

The B & B was about 6 miles south of town. What beautiful country side with lots of apple orchards and cornfields.

We arrived at the B & B around 3 pm. Had a little problem as they spoke very little English and we spoke very little German. WiFi was spotty and we couldn't get our translators to work. Used a dictionary for certain words. The owner gave us our key and didn't ask for our credit card just confirmed how long we were to stay. I had booked the room on the computer. After settling in our 2nd story charming room, there was a plate of fruit, we went downstairs to explore outside. The grounds were beautiful and the 3 story bldg. was covered on one side with vines. A short walk was the Rhine River and across from there was Switzerland. We walked back to the hotel and sat outside on the patio and ordered beer. There were several people there eating and drinking. The waitress, Melanie didn't understand when we asked for a menu. A



gentleman dining with his wife came over to help and even translated some of the menu. We went into the dining room another charming room and ordered Chateaubriand or dinner. It was delicious. It took us a couple hours to eat, they are not in any hurry in Germany as we found out. We didn't get a bill for dinner.

SUNDAY 9/22/13

We had a breakfast buffet downstairs in the dining room. Lots of different yogurt, toppings, meat and cheese trays, cereals, soft boiled eggs, orange juice and rolls or toast. It was very good. I especially liked the eggs cups and the chicken bowl for the egg shells.



After breakfast we got ready to drive back to Griessen to explore. It was a beautiful drive. We had some photos of my SPITZNAGEL relative's house, of her brother's store and buildings in the town of Griessen. My gr-gr grandmother was born in Geisslingen, it's 2

kilometers (1 kilometer is .62 miles) from Griessen, a short distance. I had hired a German researcher in 2004/2005. He went to Freiburg where the archives are and I have many documents, birth / death records, petitions for immigration etc. He also translated them. He didn't give me the street the house was on but in the background was a Catholic Church, St. Peter & Paul. We also discovered that everything closes on Sunday in Germany. We went up to the church – it was founded in 1577 and was rebuilt in the 1870's. It is beautiful inside. The church serves both Griessen and Geisslingen and all the marriages and baptisms were/are there. Quite a feeling knowing your ancestors were baptized and married in that church. I knew my gr-gr-grandfather was buried there according to his death record.



The graveyard was also very beautiful with live plants and flowers. Unfortunately, as a lot of people have found out, a burial plot is leased/rented to a family for several years and if it is not renewed the bodies are no longer there maybe the next body is buried on top and a new tombstone added. No one seems to know for sure what happens to the previous body. We found lots of SPITZNAGEL'S buried there but more recent dates. My immediate line, Gr-Gr-Grandmother(Theresia Hupfer Spitznagel) and 4 remaining children(Nikolaus, Paulina, Mary L & Stephan-my grgrandfather) left in 1865 for the USA where 3 of her older sons (Bernhard'Barney', Joseph & Oswald Spitznagel) had already moved –Lafayette, Indiana, shortly after my Gr-Gr-Grandfather(Bernhard Spitznagel) passed away. There were Hupfer's still there, my GGGrandmother's maiden name, mainly her brother and his wife and children. Other than that I do not know how many.



SPITZNAGEL is a very common name in Griessen. We drove around looking for the house with the church in the background and found it on the 3rd block we went down. It looks exactly the same only thing is that the papers say she owned ½ of a three story house at #65. The houses have all been renumbered. We parked the car and walked down to the house – I couldn't believe it but a young man was just walking out the door on the right. I went up to him and asked if he spoke English – he said a little bit. We found that everyone you ask that question says "a little bit" and it's usually more than that. I told him my

maiden name and showed him the photos I had. He recognized the name and said there were lots of Spitznagels in Griessen. He asked if we would like to see the inside of the house, I was thrilled. He said they had only lived there for a month so they were still settling in. He had a wife and three young children, a boy about 5 yrs., another boy about 7 and a daughter 9. As we walked up the narrow stairway his wife met us and he said who we were. She also welcomed us and introduced the children. The first floor was a living room, a spare room where the fire was lit inside a firepit/stove, then the tile box that was in the next room would warm up that room and rooms close by. This is a very old way they heated houses. The kitchen was also on that floor and a small bathroom. The next floor contained bedrooms and a room Andreas used for an office. He was a school teacher – kind of a one room school as he had several different ages in his class. He was also an artist and we saw several of his works. He said he had just sold 2 of his works of art. They were not of our taste as they reminded us of Picasso, a little “different”. The third floor was locked and off limits according to the owner of the house so they didn’t know what was up there. The interior of the house had the big heavy beams on the walls like those houses used to be built with stucco like on the walls. We didn’t want to take many photos of the inside as it was their private residence but did get a photo with Andreas and his wife. Also one of the tile heating system. They said they had an acquaintance whose name was Spitznagel and they called to see if he would like to meet us. I spoke to him briefly on the phone, he asked my age and wanted to know what I wanted. I said I didn’t want any personal info from him just wanted to meet a Spitznagle who lived in Griessen. He declined to meet us which was okay since he didn’t really know who we were or what we might want. We thought it was incredible that Andreas had invited complete strangers in to see his house. That really made my day. He gave us his email and address and we gave him our card with email and address/phone numbers. We walked around town a little more and then found a small restaurant that was open and very crowded probably because church was over. We had a delicious lunch. We then drove to Geisslingen, a short distance. Cornfields all along the way. I recognized the Geisslingen sign and cross and several of the buildings from photos we had. There was not one store of any kind in that town only houses. Lots of beautiful paintings on the side of the houses which is popular in certain parts of Germany. We left and headed back to the B&B – what a great day!! The roads are very narrow, like a one lane road but they are both ways and you really have to watch. We made it back and went outside to the patio and had some beer to celebrate our great day. We then went inside to have dinner, we asked the owner about the trout and he said it was fresh caught that day. It was the best trout I’ve ever had. It was a whole trout but skin and bones removed, served with vegetables and potatoes and a great glass of German wine. Jeff had ice cream served very fancy and coffee. Went to bed very happy with the day and where we were.



Monday 9/23/13

We went down to the dining room for breakfast. We had 2 soft boiled eggs, toast, juice, fresh fruit and coffee. Seems like we were the only people staying there as no one else was down for breakfast. There was still that big assortment of food laid out. Eggs were perfect today as we found the German for ‘soft boiled eggs’ and she made them for us. Thank heaven for a German/English dictionary we brought along.

We drove into Griessen again this morning and the stores were open. We went into the market to buy soap and something to use as a washcloth. There was also a bakery and deli in the market. Jeff wanted Apple Strudel but they didn't have any so he bought something else shaped like a horseshoe with ends dipped in chocolate. We asked the server if she spoke English she said, little bit but pointed to a man sitting by the window having a pastry and coffee. We showed the man the photos we had and explained who we were. He recognized the photo of the house and pointed down the street where it was located. We showed him the photo of the store that Franz Hupfer & Son owned and asked if he knew where that building was, he said it is here – meaning that this was the building we were in. We walked out to look at the building again and sure enough it was the same only with a coat of paint and some new windows. Couldn't believe that we didn't recognize it. It was on a corner and just around the corner and down the street from the SPITZNAGLE house. We found another store open across the street, like a stationary store with postcards, books and cards. She didn't sell stamps but they did at the market along with lottery tickets. Sign said closed 12 - 14:30, long lunch! We decided to have lunch and then drove back to Geisslingen one last time. No stores in Geisslingen but interesting buildings. I had a photo my researcher had sent about a local custom in Geisslingen. When a baby is born,

a tree (actually looks like a telephone pole) with a small tree on top, is erected in the yard of the house. On it is a cradle, some strips of cloth that look like streamers. the name and date of the birth written on the side of the cradle. We actually found one it had 2 names on it – must have been twins. One side said Nicklas and the other side was Aurelia on the end the date 21.2.13. Feb 21,2013. Amazing. Took photos and then drove back to Griessen. The post office still not open and we decided to go back to the B & B. It was a beautiful day sunny and 69.

There was quite a bit of fog this morning but was gone as we went up over the mountain. It was after 4 pm so decided to go downstairs and have a snack and a beer. The patio is a beautiful area with tables and umbrellas. When it was dinner time we had the fresh trout again. There were always several people there for dinner. Unfortunately we have to leave in the morning after breakfast as we

need to drive back into Stuttgart and pick up Jeff's brother Dana and wife Sue at the Airport by 12:30 pm. We checked out with the owner after dinner and paid our bill for the room and all the food for the past few days. I looked up in my dictionary how to say thank you for everything and we had a great time during our stay. I wrote it down on a piece of paper as I didn't know how to pronounce the words. He understood what I had written and smiled and also said thank you.

Tuesday 9/24/13

After a delicious breakfast again we loaded up our suitcases in the car for the trip back to Stuttgart. It was very foggy again this morning and was that way off and on almost the whole way to Stuttgart. Arrived at the airport and what a nightmare trying to figure out where to go to park. Finally found a security guard who helped us out. We found them



okay. Leaving the airport was easier than going in. Got back on the autobahn heading towards Sindelfingen where we were spending the night. That city is where my husband's ancestors were from. It is just

20 Kilometers (abt. 12 miles) SE of Stuttgart. We found the hotel and it was just down the street from the "Old Town" section of Sindelfingen. Our rooms were not ready but they let us store our bags in a secure room while we walked up the town square. All the restaurants have tables outside and the weather was picture perfect. We picked out one and had lunch – Pizza & Beer. After lunch we went to explore the old town. We found a museum that had been the town hall. They have been



remodeling and were up to the 4th floor. Lots of furniture, old looms, photos and a map showing how the town was originally with the building and the high wall surrounding them. There was some kind of meeting going on downstairs. We walked



outside and found a group of men talking. We went up to them and asked if they could tell us where the old cemetery that is now a park, was located. A nicely dressed gentleman told us I'll show you. Interesting fact was that whenever we asked someone for directions they said they would show us the way. The man took us to the cemetery and after hearing our story about a "Dieterle" buried there he said please follow me. He took us to the new city hall and on the 4th floor asked us to wait a few minutes and he'd be right back. He came back with a man carrying the original cemetery book. Unfortunately I did not bring my family history for the family so couldn't give him an exact date of death. He searched the first few pages and found a Dieterle – no given name. We found where it should have been but no tombstone. He searched further but without a date it was pretty useless. We thanked him and he left us in the park/cemetery. We walked around and looked at lots of tombstones but no luck when Jeff's brother called out he had found it. Sure enough it was for Johannes Dieterle 1830-1890 wife Marie Leonhardt 1826-1906. They had 3 children but all died before their 1st birthday. Sad. The stone was not in good shape/ lots of moss. I had



a photo that was taken several years before and it is much clearer. The stones are not kept up and some are almost completely covered in ivy or other plants. It was a wonderful thing that Gunter Todt did a few years ago – photographing all the tombstones. A friend sent me a link to the photos and I had looked thru most all of them. We took my husband and brother by the stone.

Another wonderful genealogical day! We went to the old church and then went back to the hotel to unpack and clean up before dinner. We went back to the town square, complete with fountain. Several beautiful fountains in town some with sculptures around the old town. Decided where to eat and sat outside again. Weather still beautiful. Sue & I had Weiner Schnitzel and the guys had pork Cordon Bleu and of course beer. I am normally not a beer drinker but did my share while in Germany, We ate and watched a little band perform and decided to call it a night. Tomorrow we have an appointment for a tour of the Mercedes Benz factory and have to be there before 10am. It is not far from where our hotel is located but it is so large you can't walk to it.

Wednesday 9/25/13

Met Dana & Sue in the lobby at 8 am. Walked across the street to the mall and found a McDonald's. Had something to eat and back to the hotel to check out.

Breakfast was not included in our room and they wanted 21 Euros and we didn't want to pay that much. We got into the car and drove round to the main entrance of the Mercedes factory, a huge place. Parked and walked in. We had made reservations on line before we left home. The 2 hr. tour was free but they only schedule so many people at a time. We walked around the showroom. Old cars and race cars etc. We were shown a video before the tour began, then they give you ear sets and a transmitter so you can hear what is going on. We gathered into a large bus and he drove us to one of the work areas – NO PHOTOS allowed of course. It was very interesting seeing how the cars are put together and what teamwork goes into it. We would highly recommend the tour. After the tour we got the car and proceeded to the main train station in Stuttgart where we also had to take back our Mercedes rental car. We finally found it, the rental return was underground and we were told to just park in a numbered space and to write down the number on the paper lock the doors and go into the station to the Avis counter and turn in the keys etc. Then we were off to get a bite to eat before our train was due in. Dana had bought the train tickets online. We had a 6 seat with a table compartment in a first class train car.

They have 1st class, 2nd class and general. The train was on time and you had better be ready as it pulls out at the exact time whether you and your luggage are on or not! We had the car to ourselves and our luggage for the 3 1/2 hr. ride to Munich. We each had 2 bags and also had bought clothes for the Oktoberfest in the train station. When we arrived at the main station Munich Jeff bought tickets from Munich to Frankfurt for the 29th. The 1st class compartments were full but we got 1st class seats together with a place for your luggage at the end of the car along with 2 restrooms in each car. Munich train station was a mob scene, wall to wall people. We found our way out and finally managed to find a cab big enough for 4 of us and our luggage to go to our hotel. Traffic was horrible and a 20 min ride took almost an hour. Hotel is very nice – Leonardo Royal. We checked in and got ready to go downtown – and about 2 blocks away there was a Ubahn. (underground train like a subway.) Dana knew his way around and we bought a family ticket (up to 5 people for 25 euros for 3 days. Like the trains they are on time and leave on time.

We got off at Marienplatz where the Rathaus -Glockenspiel (clock) is located. It goes off at 11am, 2 pm and 5 pm. We made the 5 pm show. Incredible show and lasts about 12 to 13 minutes. Then we walked to the Hof Brau House. There is one in Las Vegas that is an exact copy, the only other one besides the one in Munich.





It was very crowded and you couldn't find a seat anywhere inside. They do not have tables outside like most restaurants. We picked another place with tables outside and had dinner, typical German fare, sausage, sauerkraut, pretzels and beer. Think my husband is the only person of German ancestry that doesn't like sauerkraut! Found a beer we like it's called PILS (pilsner) like Bud or Coors. We walked around to the shops and then decided to go back to our hotel via Ubahn.

It will be a long day tomorrow as we are going to Oktoberfest. The Ubahn is interesting. There are many stairs or 1 escalator. Escalator will go either way. If you want to go down and it has just come up you press a button and step on and it will go down or up. We turned in for the night another great day.

Jeff & Nancy
Trip to Germany
2nd week

Thursday 9/26/13

We met Jeff's brother Dana & wife Sue downstairs in the lobby at 8:30 am for our adventure for the day – Oktoberfest. Took



the Ubahn downtown to Marienplatz station. We sat at a table across the square from the Glockenspiel to have breakfast and wait for the Glockenspiel to start its show. We had coffee and delicious pastries. Too early for beer although people around us were drinking beer and told us, "you drink beer at any hour when it is Oktoberfest." ☺



As it got closer to 11am the square started getting very crowded and it started to drizzle and then rain a little harder. Glad we were under umbrellas for the show.

After the show we took the Ubahn to the stop where Oktoberfest was held. We arrived at the Oktoberfest grounds – no admission charged. The "famous beer tents" are huge. There are 14 beer tents but they can only serve one of the 6 beers brewed in Munich. They are: Augustiner, Hofbrau, Lowenbrau, Spaten, Paulaner and Hacker-Pschorr. The 14 tents altogether accommodate up about 98,163 people, inside and out. Some are large some small but like I said they are huge. This day the breweries had their beer wagons pulled by large horses out for show. It was like a big carnival complete with some amazing rides. It was crowded but not too bad. We

went into Augustiner tent and found a seat for 4. The steins of beer are \$10.00 ea.; if you aren't drinking you lose your seat. You can only stay in your seats for 2 hrs. then you have to leave or try to find another seat. This is mainly so other people have a chance. We had a few beers – large steins – we also ate ½ chickens and pretzels. Good chicken and large pretzels. We sang the songs, in bad German but we tried. When our 2 hrs. were up they told us "goodbye". Don't know how they keep track of the 2 hrs. but they did. We left and found a seat in another tent. The guys decided they wanted to go on some of the rides – very bad idea for my husband Jeff. He got sick – rough ride and too much beer. Sue and I didn't go, we were smarter. We all walked around a little outside and then decided we had more than enough to drink and called it a day. We took the Ubahn back to the station by our hotel. We have to get up early tomorrow for our bus tour up to the Eagles Nest. Fun day but crazy. We did find out we are not the "party animals" we once were or thought we were!



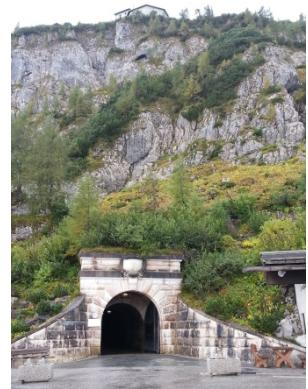
Friday – 9/27/13

We took the Ubahn downtown. The tour to the “Eagle’s Nest” was to begin at 8 am in front of Karstadt’s Department store – which was across the street from a Ubahn station. We were early so had some coffee and bagels in the station. When we went outside we saw that across the street in front of Karstadt’s there were many tour buses. There was a sign by each telling which bus and destination so you’d get on the right one. It was full bus, we started on our way. The real name is Kehlsteinhaus. It was designed as a birthday present for Adolf

Hitler’s 50th Birthday by Martin Bormann on behalf of the Nazi Party. Hitler seldom visited the Eagle’s Nest; they said it was because he was afraid of heights.

Mussolini’s present was a beautiful marble fireplace. The bus ride up is spectacular. It is in the Berchtesgaden part of Bavaria. You can see the Alps from the top. It is

1834 m or about 6,017. Ft. From where the buses drop you off you walk through a tunnel which is 124 m or 407 ft. cut into the mountain. From there you take an elevator up 124 m to the main house. We also toured the visitor’s center and the bunkers underneath. Amazing how they built all this. The site was mostly spared in the WWII bombings. It was given to Berchtesgaden by the Bavarian Government and put into a trust so all proceeds go to charity. We spent several hours up there eating and exploring. It was about 2 hrs. back to Munich where we started that morning – all together about 10 hrs. Well worth the trip.



We went back to the hotel and cleaned up for dinner. Went back into old town Munich and had dinner at Haxnbauer. We had passed this restaurant before and marveled at the meat that was on a rotisserie in the window. We thought it was Chicken but found out it was “pork knuckles” a popular dish there. We decided to try it – along with sauerkraut, and potato dumplings, it was very good. We decided to call it a night as it had been a long day. When we got back to the hotel we had a nightcap in the beautiful bar and then to bed. Our plan tomorrow was to go to Oktoberfest again and to arrive around 11 or so.

Saturday – 9/28/13

We rode the Ubahn to the Oktoberfest grounds. It was wall to wall people today, it was a weekend. You could hardly walk without someone bumping into you. The beer wagons and horses were gone – probably too many people for them. We tried several tents but no way to get a seat. It was only around 11:30 but there were people noticeable drunk and staggering, some just lying on the





street and people walking over or around them. We walked around a bit and decided it was time to leave – didn't even have a beer this time. We walked out and several blocks down found an outside restaurant and 4 seats. Decided to have lunch and a beer. It was very crowded also. One thing we really noticed about Germany – almost everyone smokes cigarettes, young and old. We went back to old town and went through more shops looking for souvenirs and of course found some 'must have things'. By this time it was getting towards dinner time so we went looking for another restaurant. Weather still very nice and we again opted to eat at a table outside. We again went for typical German fare.

Like I mentioned before the Germans are never in a hurry and dinner was again over 2 hrs. It was okay and was nice to relax. We decided to call it a night and took the Ubahn back to the hotel. Amazing how many people use public transportation over here and also bicycles. Tomorrow we have to leave. Dana & Sue are flying home to Simi Valley, CA. We were taking a train to Frankfurt to start our next adventure the bus tour – Best of Germany which was to start the on the 30th.

Sunday – 9/29/13

We had ordered a cab to take us to the train station at 8 am; Dana and Sue had a cab coming at 7:30 am to go to the Airport. We decided to eat at the hotel this morning rather than eat at the train station. Dana & Sue just stopped by the dining room to say goodbye. It was a fun 5 days together. Breakfast was outstanding an assortment of everything you can think of. The cab arrived and we told him Main Train Station. Could hardly believe we were there in about 20 minutes vs over an hour when we went to the hotel from the station. No traffic on Sunday morning! Our train wasn't due to leave until almost 11am. If we'd have known

we could have booked an earlier train. We walked around the station looking at shops that were open. Decided to go to a restaurant and have coffee until it was time to go by the track. By this time I needed to use the restroom so asked the waiter where it was and he told me downstairs. I walked down and there at the entrance to



the restrooms, both men & women's was a turnstile. You had to deposit 70E to go thru. I had no euros with me so had to go back and get some money. That was a first since we had been in Germany, pay toilets!! Since we weren't too familiar with the train tracks etc. we decided we had better go out early to wait. The signs said track 19 departing at 10:50, Train ICE 720. We found a gentleman who spoke English and he said he was on the same train and to follow him. We were in 1st class – car 29, seats 24-26 a window & aisle next to each other. We found Car 29 but couldn't board as it wasn't open yet. It was nice and the seats were large and reclined. There was also a tray to hold drinks etc.

The ride was a little over 3 hrs. to Frankfurt. The conductor came around and collected tickets and also drinks orders – we had coffee. Then we settled back and relaxed. When we arrived in Frankfurt we found a taxi and told him we wanted to go to the Sheraton Offenbach. We didn't know it was such a long ride; Offenbach is like a suburb of Frankfurt. We found out later that we could have taken the Ubahn and there was a station right next door. We checked in and went to our room. We decided to walk around town a little as it wasn't far. I wanted to buy postcards. One problem I had was not being able to find stamps to mail the postcards; we couldn't find a post office. We walked back to the hotel and got cleaned up for dinner. Went down and had a glass of wine at the bar before dinner and then later had an excellent dinner. The front desk gave us a Wi-Fi code that was good for $\frac{1}{2}$ hr. only in lobby. They also wanted 21 E for 24 hrs. It was getting late so went up to our room to relax and unpack a little. We are going to be busy tomorrow and from now on.

Monday 9/30/13 - Day 1 of Tour

Had a good night's sleep and down for breakfast. These hotels have great food and this one is no exception. After breakfast we decided to explore more of the town of Offenbach. We went the opposite way this time and found the River Main. There was a path along the river both a bicycle path and a people path. You have to keep out of the bicycle path otherwise you will get run over. We had been warned about this all over Germany, bicycles have the right of way. There were tugs and barges on the river, lots of ducks and swans. They come right up to the edge hoping you have food for them. We found many old buildings some with beautiful courtyards, a park with interesting climbing items for children. Finally wound our way around back to the hotel. We decided since it was another beautiful day to sit outside on the patio to eat lunch, service here is excellent.

We sat outside for a while and then went in as we saw many people arriving. Our tour director Paul Wormsbacher was in the lobby and introduced himself. He put up a dry erase board in the lobby telling what was happening that day. He did this everyday on the tour. We took photos on our phones so we could refer back if need be. We were to meet in the lobby at 4 pm and we'd go on a short tour of the city. It's more interesting seeing sights when you know what you are looking at. We were back at the hotel around 5:45 pm with time to change for the Welcome Reception at 7 pm. We had a light meal and a drink of choice. Everyone was nice and seemed like we had a good group of people. We were from all over, several from Australia, Canada, Syria, Hong Kong, China and many from all over the US. There were about 43 of us. Since we were to be up early we went to bed.



Tuesday – 10/1/13 – Day 2 of Tour

Our luggage had to be outside our hotel door by 7 am to be loaded on the bus. Bus was to depart at 8 am. Today we are going to drive thru Frankfurt, cruise along the Rhine River by bus and on a riverboat (nice way to



see things up close) and then onto Cologne. I will type what our itinerary lists with some of my notes in parentheses, to save time and space as I seem to get carried away describing our great trip and all the things we do. We

had some "comfort stops" along the way. The restrooms all were "pay if you want to go". ☺

"Cruise along the Rhine River from St. Goar, site of the



famous Lorelei Rock, to Boppard. Enjoy a unique lunch experience at an atmospheric castle. (Castle Liebenstein was built in the 13th century and is high above the river. It is now a restaurant which is located in the old main tower. Lunch was excellent and what a view!) Your day ends in Cologne, Germany's fourth largest city. View the impressive Gothic cathedral. Dine tonight at the Lindner Hotel Cologne. "

Wednesday – 10/2/13 – Day 3 of Tour

Today was to be a long day. Bags had to be outside our room by 6:30am and bus to leave at 7:30. As usual breakfast was included. Today we are in Cologne – Hamelin – Hamburg.

"Drive thru Lower Saxony and stop in Hamelin en-route to Hamburg. Hamelin is a picturesque town of fairy-tale fame and immortalized in poems by Goethe and Robert Browning. Later in Hamburg, see the main sights including the inner Lake Alster during an orientation tour with the tour director. Dine tonight at Maritim Reichshof Hotel Hamburg."

(Hamelin was a quaint little town that looks just like you would picture an old German town. Lots of souvenirs depicting the Pied Piper and the Rats he supposedly led out of town. Even the metal covers in the street, water or sewer?, had the name Hamelin and rats on them. Interesting fact –most all the cities had these in the streets and they had the name of the town on them. In Hamburg we took an extra excursion of the Port of Hamburg aboard a riverboat. Hamburg is Germany's busiest gateway to the sea. Hamburg is Germany's 2nd largest city.)



Thursday 10/3/13 – Day 4 of Tour

After breakfast we left at 8 am. Today we leave Hamburg and head to Berlin where we will spend 2 nights at the Hilton Hotel Berlin.

“Follow the valley of the River Elbe from Hamburg, across the former ‘Iron Curtain’ to the historic city of Berlin.” (We took another side excursion; just about everyone participated in these side tours. There were 8 altogether and cost us 668.E of almost \$1,000. USD, that was for two of us.)

“Berlin – On arrival we head to the Holocaust Memorial and the nearby site of Hitler’s Bunker, visit the largest section of the Berlin Wall, followed by a stop at the Bendler Block, the Memorial to the Resistance Movement, to learn about the plot by Graf von Stauffenberg. Finally we visit the Topography of Terror, an outdoor documentary located on the former site of the Gestapo HQ Great 1st introduction in this massive capitol city.” (These things were incredible and you learn how terrible it was for East



Berlin to be separated and the hardships these people went thru trying to live and escape)

Tonight an excellent side tour –

“Berlin – Dinner in a beautiful Hohenzollern hunting lodge, in the other side of the lake East Germans could only dream and see what real freedom was. Today it is an exclusive residential district and it is here that we find

our charming chalet-style restaurant forming an elegant setting for our atmospheric dinner of German specialties. A meal fit for a King or Queen. All about the ambience and escaping the hustle and bustle of the city.” (Wonderful dinner and dessert to die for. After dinner our tour director Paul said he had a surprise. He brought out a bottle of Jagermeister and gave everyone who wanted one a shot of it! Good stuff!! Another fun day and evening)



Trip to Germany 3rd Week

Friday 10/4/13 – Day 5

Berlin Sightseeing and Free Time

“This morning enjoy a Unique Insight experience with fantastic 360o views of the city from the Berlin TV Tower. Marvel at the landmarks of the old East and West sections of Berlin during your sightseeing tour with your local guide. See the Brandenburg Gate, Unter den Linden Blvd., the German State Opera House, Reichstag Building, Tiergarten and the shopping and entertainment district of Kurfurstendamm. Spend the rest of your day exploring on your own and shopping for souvenirs.”
Extra excursion. Potsdam (a short drive southwest of Berlin)



“We tour the Cecilienhof, which witnessed the signing of the treaty, which was to change the face of Post-War Europe. (The very room that those famous and infamous heads of state sat in), leaving East Germany and Eastern Europe to the Soviets. Finally we shall visit the Glienicker Bridge, scene of the Cold War “Spy Swaps”. Our guide will take us as an extra bonus to

the Palace of San Souci for a talk and photo opportunity.”(The Palace of San Souci was the summer residence of Frederick the Great, King of Prussia. It was built between 1745 -1747 as a place to relax. San Souci translated from the French phrase –‘without worry or concerns’



Extra excursion for dinner – Berlin. Tonight join in the fun of hearty German food, wine, beer and music. Afterwards enjoy the illuminated landmarks of the German Capital. Great night out! (There was a small band walking around playing music and a magician who was very good and also very funny! Food was delicious as usual. It was a fun night!)



Saturday 10/5/13 – Day 6

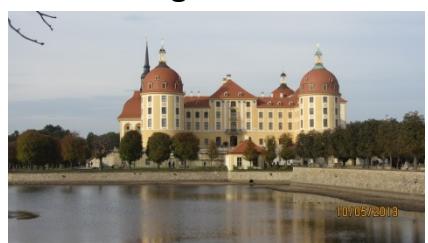


Dresden

“A short drive south brings us to Dresden – known as ‘Florence on the Elbe’ See the highlights of this astonishing Renaissance city including the Opera House and Zwinger Palace (built in 1710, completed in 1728, it is Dresden’s most famous landmark. It was bombed in 1945 but was restored to its original form)

Extra excursion Dresden –

“Augustus the strong, King of Saxony and Poland, collected masterpieces of Europe. Treasury displayed in the Green Vault. Our guided tour features this magnificent collection.



Imagine walking in Aladdin’s treasure cave. Unbelievable. Then we visit Moritzburg Castle surrounded by a moat (it was originally built to be his hunting lodge) then we have a picture perfect ending with coffee and cake. Dine at our hotel the Pullman Dresden News. “



Sunday 10/6/13 – Day 7

Modlareuth – Bayreuth – Nuremberg

“We visit the Modlareuth Open Air museum into ‘divided Germany’; see the differences and West Germany as well as parts of the



Bayreuth, admire the Theatre before arriving where you see mighty ramparts, a bustling market place and St. Sebald’s Cathedral on our orientation of the city.” (St. Sebald is the patron saint of Nuremberg; it is the oldest church in the city. Distinctive because of its twin towers.



for an insight between East original wall. In Wagner Festival in Nuremberg,

Built around 1215, it is Lutheran)

Extra excursion Nuremberg.

Enjoy a delicious light lunch with a drink, in the world’s largest bratwurst restaurant, before we set out to take in the history of the Third Reich, the Nazi party rallies, and much more in Germany’s most striking documentation centre. Two hours with headset provided.” (Lunch was very good and we have learned that there is no such thing as a light meal in Germany!



Monday 10/7/13 – Day 8

Rothenburg – Munich (2 nights)

“Your Travel Director takes you on a wonderful orientation walk of Rothenburg, perhaps the most well-preserved medieval town in Germany. Sights include half-timbered houses and the Rathaus, (old town hall). Shop for wooden



Christmas ornaments, then follow the Romantic Road through picturesque villages and pristine countryside to Munich, the lively capital of Bavaria.” (Of all the cities we have visited so far our favorite is Rothenburg. It is beautiful with all the buildings and the view and



spectacular shops, streets are cobblestone. This town was founded in 1108 when construction began on the castle. Interesting story of the “Meistertrunk” happened during the Thirty Years War. In 1631 the Imperialist General Tilly had at last succeeded in taking the town in spite of its valiant defense. So he gave orders to plunder and destroy the town and to execute the councillors. The next day the cellarman offered Tilley a 3½ liters (¾ of a gallon) bumper (lg. mug) of heavy Franconian wine as a welcome drink. Tilly promised mercy to the town if one of the councillors managed to drink the wine in one might draught(drink). Mayor Nusch actually emptied the bumper in 10 minutes and thus saved the town from being destroyed. Then he slept three days and nights and died 37 yrs. Later at the age of 80! The original bumper is in the Reichsstadt Museum.)



Tuesday 10/8/13 – Day 9

Dachau - Munich Sightseeing and Free Time

Extra excursion – Dachau

“ Dachau our most important stop. A sobering reminder of what should never happen again in history. The very 1st concentration camp in Germany.” (We saw the ‘showers’, crematorium (ovens) and what their barracks looked like. The rest of them had been leveled. There was a museum which had many photos and stories. They had a library back at the main building where you get your earphones. It is hard to imagine how one human could do this to another human!) I found this article in the newspaper and wanted to share it.

“U.N. Sec-Gen visited the former death camps to pay tribute to Holocaust victims. He walked through the infamous “Arbeit Macht Frei” (work makes you free) gate to see the exhibitions that document the inhumane conditions that the inmates suffered. He said “I stand in disbelief before the gas chambers and crematorium



"See the city's landmarks on your orientation tour including its Glockenspiel Carillion. You could visit Munich's fine museums or enjoy a walk in some of the beautiful city gardens. This evening, consider a visit to the Hofbrauhaus, the world's most famous beer hall." The extra excursion this evening was to the world-famous Hofbrauhaus to hear the 'Oompah' band. Then on to a typical Bavarian restaurant where the local dishes and drinks will be served. PROST!!! (We did not go on this excursion as we had been spent 4 days Munich a little over a week ago. We had also eaten at the restaurant they were going to Haxnbauer. I told about this restaurant earlier on when we dined on pig knuckles. We took this chance to go back to the hotel and relax.)



Wednesday 10/9/13

Oberammergau – Neuschwanstein –Black Forest



Today we head south to the quaint village of Oberammergau, where the famous Passion Play is performed once every decade. Some free time to wander and shop. Visit Neuschwanstein to visit King Ludwig's fairy tale 19th century castle. Admire the scenery as you drive through the hills and lakes of the Black Forest, famous for cuckoo clocks. Learn how these traditional local specialties are made during a demonstration of the craft which is usually passed down thru the generations in a family. Dine tonight at your hotel – Maritim Titsee Hotel."



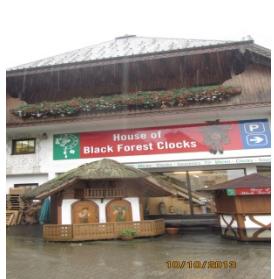
Oberammergau was mainly just shopping and 'free toilets' which is rare. ☺

We arrived at a stop where we could catch a shuttle up to the bridge for a photo op of the beautiful castle. (This castle was the model for Disney's princess castle.



It is spectacular but out of all the rooms only a few were furnished the rest stand empty. Ludwig's father had a built a castle first but it was much smaller, kind of a who can build the bigger castle ?) We stopped the cuckoo clock factory husband visited Germany in 1994 on business. It is only an 8 hr. clock so have to wind it a couple times a day. The new one we bought is much larger, is an 8 day clock and plays music. We bought

several other souvenirs and we were to have them shipped to our home. They said it would take 4-5 weeks as we had a “pile of wood” removed and a bear to replace it. Also included in the tour at the upstairs was a small snack bar. We each had a coupon for a cup of coffee/tea and a generous slice of Black Forest Cake – another desert to melt in your mouth! They gave everyone the recipe and if anyone would like it I would be happy to share just let me know.



We proceeded to our hotel the Maritim Titisee Hotel, what a beautiful location right on a lake. Our room was not facing the lake but it was nice. Dinner was very good again – a buffet.

Thursday – 10/10/13 – Day 11

Heidelberg – Frankfurt

“A scenic drive brings you to the famous university town of Heidelberg built alongside the picturesque

River Neckar. View Heidelberg Castle, one of the most important Renaissance structures north of the Alps, as well as the Baroque style Old Town. Enjoy some free time for souvenir shopping before continuing on to Frankfurt. Tonight enjoy a

Farewell Dinner with your traveling companions as you celebrate the highlights of your trip.” (In Heidelberg we drove up to the old castle, impressive but falling down in some parts. We had our group photo taken and we each received one. We then went into the old town for a time. Then back to Frankfurt and the Sheraton Offenbach where we started our tour. We had some time after our return to rest a bit and change for our big dinner. Location was a surprise in Frankfurt. We had pre-ordered a day before, Salmon or Hungarian Goulash. As usual we were not disappointed. We brought our photo with us and had some of the people sign it. Tomorrow we all head home, tired but it was a great trip with



Friday 10/11/13 – Day 12

Frankfurt and Home

“This morning, say ‘Auf Wiedersehen’ to your travel director and traveling companions as your memorable vacation comes to an end. Transfers to Frankfurt Airport are available.” (There were two groups going to the airport depending on what time your flight was scheduled. 8 am and 10 am, we were in the first group. Our flight was to leave at 11:10am. We again went to the First Class lounge and had a snack and coffee until time to board. It was a short flight 40 minutes to London. Then we had a 4 hour layover till our flight back to Las Vegas. In Heathrow Airport we again went through security and immigration but it was quick this time. Went to the lounge again for something to eat and drink and wait.



We boarded the 747 for the trip home. We were on the runway for almost an hour due to some radar problem at the tower. We again had excellent service and food on the trip home.



We arrived at 7:15 pm Las Vegas time, the scheduled time even with the delay. As much as we enjoyed our trip it was “Good to be Home.”)

P.S. It took us a week or so to get back in the routine with the ‘jet lag’ and time changes. We took so many photos with 2 cameras and both of our cell phone cameras. Wish we could have included more photos in this diary. If there is something specific you’d like to see let me know and I can see if we have it.

Jeff & Nancy Spitznagle Doak