

## **Thursday 6 April Maria, Grace and Christian depart for Australia.**

Travelled today 36km

Temperature 8c

Marie, Maria and Grace walked around a few blocks closeby for a last sightsee of this lovely Paris, while Christian stayed home with me. I point out that we were only about 5km from the Louvre. They purchased a few small items and at one stall an old French man hugged and kissed Marie and said something in French. We assume he was so thankful for the Australian servicemen in both the World Wars.

They arrived back before noon and so we all checked out. I brought Nancy out from her resting place and we packed her with all our baggage for the last time. Because Maria did such a good job navigating to this home, she navigated again to leave Paris. In Brisbane we arranged two nights accommodate near the CDG Airport so our next job was to book in there. We drove onto the big A1 and into the airport then to a suburb called Roissy to the Mercure Hotel arriving at 1pm. It is one of a group of about five hotels on the western side of the A1 and so about 3km from the airport.

We all had a buffet lunch but still no real food as we know it. Christian ordered hamburger but it was so disappointing to him because it was not really cooked, it still had blood in it.

As the Fields were flying out this evening they used our room to clean up for the big journey back to Australia. Grace and Christian tried the free shoe shine machines similar to the one in Nancy, the city. At 7.15pm we all caught the courtesy bus that runs between all the hotels in this group to CDG. After they checked in we sat at the foot of the escalator they had to use to go to the departure lounge. After a half an hour or so Christian said that a tear was coming from his eye. I was not far behind him. I hate good-byes and Christian started to really cry so I said to Maria it would be better if they left us then as I couldn't take it any longer.

So off they went up the escalator, it was so sad, after such a wonderful time with them. Such well behaved grandchildren and Maria enjoyed it more than she thought possible. Boo hoo!

So we caught another courtesy bus back to the Mercure. It was so quiet just the two of us again. From now my darling and I were going to commence another journey, just the two of us to look after each other.

End Album #4 commence Album #5

## **Friday 7 April to Senlis.**

Travelled today 29km

Temperature 2c

Our last full day in beautiful France, just the two of us. What a noisy area as the hotel is only about 100mt from the big A1. Even though the windows were double glazed the noise was still high which naturally wasn't the best for Marie. A feature of this hotel was that there was a loudspeaker in the bathroom so one could hear the CTV. We had the hotel's buffet breakfast then off we went back onto A1 to Senlis about 25km north.

We drove through Senlis a few times in 1997 but never stopped so this time it was great that we couldn't get a flight to London, then USA two days after the Fields departure. We arrived there at 10am and were fortunate to use a car wash just before the city centre. I always like to keep our rental/lease cars clean especially on their return to the depot. We parked Nancy just near the city wall, yes another ancient walled city. We came across a street market where Marie bought another watch band. The man actually replaced the old one for her. We came across the Information Office and spoke to the two women for about half an hour.

Both spoke good English, one was an ex air hostess. They told us that we were their 13th and 14th inquirers so far this year which was a big increase from the same number for all of 1999. For toilets I went into the Mairie (city/town hall) which were sort of unisex, like they all must have been in the past. See the photo in the album of the men's urinal where women and men have to walk past to go to a closed box for the other purpose.

We booked into the Hostellerie De La Porte Bellow for 400FF (A\$105) for the night. After lunch we walked around and saw much of the inner wall and the remains of the outer wall which were built about the 3rd century by the Romans. So very historic, our real last hours of fantastic historic France and Germany!

We decided to eat out but as usual nothing would be open until about 7pm. We even had to wait until 7pm for a pizza place to serve dinner.

## **Saturday 8 April back to Paris (CDG)**

Travelled today 77km

Temperature 4c

We knew Maria, Grace and Christian would now be home in Brisbane.

We drove about 10km south to Luzarches where we stayed in 1997 as our base for a week to visit Paris. Memories for us! We phoned Maria who told us that they had arrived back home OK. So far so quickly.

Then back onto A1 to the CDG Airport to leave Nancy at the Hertz depot at 1.15pm. Yes even times like that is sad for me. Our mobile home for the five of us for three weeks. Maria drove about 1930km in Nancy.

We caught the courtesy bus back to the Hotel Mercure for our final night in Europe. I got a refund on Nancy's car park at the hotel as we were not going to require it again.

After a wonderful time with Maria, Grace and Christian in France and Germany we now are on our own.

U.S.A. and Canada, here we come.

## Marie and I to Canada and the USA

Commence Album #5

### Sunday 9th April to USA

Temperature 6c

We received the CTV walk-up call as well as our own alarm clock at about 4.00am. We caught the courtesy bus to the CDG Aerogare (terminal) 1 in the dark. My suitcase weighed 19kg and Marie's 17kg, well within the limit. We departed at 7am on a British Airways Boeing 747-400, a one hour quick flight to London's second airport, Gatwick arriving at 7.15am. I 'phoned Sylvia Groom in Florida who was going to meet us at Orlando. It was earlier in Florida, about 5am but I couldn't do anything about getting her out of bed so early.

We also had time to have a good look around the terminal then caught another BA flight, another Boeing 747-400 at 1150am. This plane was loaded with lots of British people and children who were obviously going to the Disney area in Orlando.

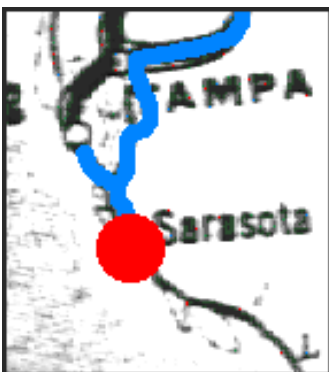


## The USA

### Florida



Nickname - Sunshine State  
 Motto - "In God We Trust"  
 Song - "Old Folks At Home" " The Swanee River"  
 Bird - Mockingbird  
 Animal - Florida Panther  
 Flower - Orange Blossom  
 Tree - Sabal Palmetto Palm  
 Gem-Stone - MoonStone  
 Capital - Tallahassee



Entered Union - Mar. 03, 1845 (27th)  
 Population - 14,399,985 (4th)  
 Largest City - Jacksonville  
 Presidents - None Yet

We arrived in Orlando at about 1415 (2.15pm) where we were met by our friends, David and Sylvia Groom. A grand reunion! The last time we saw them was in 1990. when they visited us again in Australia. It was much warmer here and sunny as they drove us to their home in Sarasota, about 80km S/W. At 6pm we stopped for dinner, our first meal in North America. At their home we talked a lot to catch up on news but bed at 9pm after a long day.



David and Sylvia's Chrysler Grooms and Marie

David and Sylvia look OK but like us, just older.

### Monday 10 April to rest for a couple of days.

Temperature 9c

David and Sylvia' snew home is huge with extra garages and a big shed in the back yard. They have hundreds, perhaps thousands of antique and other items which adorn their home. A couple of rooms are set up like a museum, very well done but "not my cup of tea".

I took a few photos so the reader can see in the album. David was a barber during his working life so has an old type barber chair set up in the main living room. He also has a well appointed workshop at the end of the house which is where he can repair many items pertaining to their rental houses. He gave me an American power plug for my electric shaver. I had an adapter that John and Lyn loaned me but it was too big so I connected the plug myself.

The big shed in the backyard houses many other items used for their rental places as well as their own new home. Their place has to be seen to be believed.

We did go on a small drive to some local places and left the last roll of print film that we took in France after the Fields departed, at a supermarket.

They took us to lunch at a restaurant named "Sarasota Brewing Co." which has a beer brewery attached.

### Tuesday 11th April

Temperature 13c

Marie read in Sunday' newspaper that the actress Clair Trevor died. After breakfast David and Sylvia drove us to some shops closeby. One was to a computer shop that sold only Gateway Computers and left me there while the others went elsewhere.

Sarasota doesn' seem to have a central shopping area, shops and businesses are all over the place in different areas.

I did not see a single newsagent at all, a bit like in Europe, not like in Australia. The only places to purchase newspapers are from the coin machines on the footpath and magazines in the supermarkets. Even then there is not a very big range of either.

We visited a special house that demonstrated how to save the environment. Building with certain materials, in the case of Florida, to keep a house cooler naturally rather than using airconditioners. Marie and I were surprised that the man on duty didn't know much or anything about dual flush toilets. The type we have in Australia, to save water because Florida is always short of water as it is a very flat state. For lunch they took us to a sea side restaurant at Osprey on Sarasota Bay. We had potato skins with cheese, bacon and chilli, yummy.

Then onto their friends who live on Lions Bay, their name being Grace and Leo. Later to a supermarket called Wal-Mart. These stores are similar to our K-Marts and huge. The choice of foods is astounding, pickled pigs feet, pickled eggs and more that we have never seen before. No wonder Americans are so fat.

Back home we all talked some more and for dinner we had salad and ham.

### **Wednesday 12th April**

Temperature 14c

It was becoming warmer as we expected but the temperature in David and Sylvia's home is kept at a mild temperature, about 20c - 24c I think. They don't like opening the windows and so it's so quiet inside which for me is not the best because I notice my ear tinnitus noise more so. At night I opened a part of the window in our room because we both like fresh air. During the night having the window open was not such a good thing because Marie was woken by many birds squawking. The most amount of birds we had heard since we left Australia.

Sylvia took Marie to Sizzlers for lunch with some women friends. David took me to Gecko's pub like restaurant for lunch which was not too noisy and so we had our talks where I enjoyed a pasta meal. Then to another store a bit like Harvey Norman to see more computer equipment. What a great place, better than Harvey Norman too. I bought a software item called "Linux Caldera 2.4" for US\$39 (A\$75) which was about A\$30 less than if I purchased in Australia. Other than that most prices are not much lower than Australian prices. In 1988 when Marie and I were in the USA there was a big difference but now the new world economy has made the differences much less.

Later on we all went to a hardware store a bit like our Bunnings. Sylvia showed us what she did to choose the items that were used for their new home. Plumbing, electrical, paint and all the things required. Sylvia did most of this herself while David was working, helping their carpenter friend build the house. A big job!

### **Thursday 13th April to Saint Petersburg**

Temperature 17c

David and Sylvia drove us to Saint Petersburg to visit the Holocaust Museum which was a very distressing place but is part of history. First we watched a video recording which was excellent then we looked at the many exhibits at our own pace. There is even one of the actual railway carriages that the unfortunate people were taken to various concentration camps in.

We then spent an hour or so wandering around the area trying to find a place or shop that sold record player styli that David was going to replace in two of their radiograms. I didn't think there was going to be any possibility that they were still obtainable but I was wrong. These items were in no supply in Australia years ago.

For lunch we enjoyed smoked fish, smoked salmon on saltines which are like a Salada cracker biscuit. On the way back home we called into a store where there is nothing over 99c US.

A bit like our "Crazy Prices" stores with the usual cheap items. Yes even tinned foods of all types. A lot of items are imported into the US.

### **Friday 14th April**

Temperature 18c.

We stayed home then David and Sylvia took us to lunch at a local Chinese restaurant which was staffed by Asian people. The food was the best and biggest variety since we left Australia, which was set up as a buffet so one could have more than one helping. The place was very clean and decorated in the usual Chinese theme. Cost for each was US\$6.

### **Saturday 15th April to Orlando**

Travelled today 126 mi (201km)

A sad time approached as Sylvia played some older time music on her electronic organ as we sang along. At 11.30am they drove us to the Sarasota Airport, arriving at noon where we said our good-byes outside.

We wheeled our luggage into the Alamo Car Rental desk and completed the paper work for the car.

I asked what type of car we had arranged in Australia to rent and the woman showed me on the chart which was up to date and a bit more detailed than when we booked it back home.

It was a medium size car which I thought might still have been a bit small in regards to our luggage. I asked what the extra cost would be for the next size car up which was about US\$155 (A\$267.75) plus the costs that we couldn't pay in Australia. These being for taxes, insurance etc which came to US\$1003 (A\$1729). Our car was to be a Toyota Camry which sounded OK.



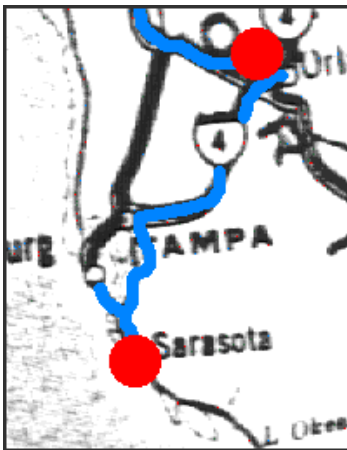
Dimpo

We wheeled our luggage out to the car rental lot and we were delighted that the Camry was so much bigger than Nancy in France even though it was a sedan and not a station wagon.

We had booked both US cars to be sedans and not station wagons. It was a white car and almost new as it was registered in February 2000 and had only 4967 miles (7947km) on the odometer. Its registration number was "DPO83M" so we nicknamed her "Dimpo".

After the usual time to settle in we were on our way to Orlando. We did get lost within the first 10km as we exited I75 somehow but got back onto it within a few minutes. We stopped at a gas (petrol) and food stop and had a bread roll with salad works. Near Tampa we entered I4 East to arrive at the RCI Resort at Kissimmee called "The Orange Lake Country Club". We were within 10km of the Disney area, if the reader looks at the Florida map the shaded area of Disney can be seen near the junction of I4 and 192. The whole area is about 20km by 10km, big!

We drove through a storm so we knew we were in tropical country arriving at the resort at 4pm. The office is the biggest resort office we have been in where we booked in and shifted into room 5207 for a few days. Our room was in the original old section which had only one window but it looked out not to the outside but into an atrium and restaurant on the floor below.



### RCI at Kissimmee

The club does have newer little?big chalet type accommodation but we did not have any choice. Anyway it was OK as we weren' going to be home much anyway.

After settling in we drove to various shops only 200mt away and bought our first groceries in the USA. I/we used the microwave oven to make our dinner then to the office and bought our Disney tickets. Two four day passes to the three places, Magic Kingdom, Epcot and MGM Studios which cost A\$298 for the both of us.

This may seem a lot to the reader but for about A\$150 each for four days is cheap. Epcot itself is worth that.

### Sunday 16th April to see Disney.

Travelled today 30km

Temperature 21c

A very thick fog this morning greeted us as we drove to Disney MGM Studios. The entrance highway of two and three lanes each way for about 3km gives one the feel that there are a lot of people visiting the area especially in the summer time. Australia will never have anything like it. We were guided by plenty of signs then parking assistants to park Dimpo.

Then a short walk to a little wheeled carriage, like a small train with repeated announcements advising people what to do and which train to catch to return to ones car. We knew we were at Disney because everything is so professionally done, no half measures. Warnings such as "watch your step", "Children should sit away from the doorway" and so on. And of course everything is so clean, no, spotless.

We visited many pavilions including "Beauty and the Beast", "Disney Animations" having lunch at 12.30pm. After that we visited the "Great Movie Ride", and "Little Mermaid" and more. We left at 3pm but got lost as the exit does not enter the highway at the same place but arrived home at 4.30pm.

I counted the TV channels that are free to air not cable or satellite and there were forty, yes 40 of them. A fantastic day, again!

### Monday 17th April to Disney again, Epcot.

Travelled today 32km

Temperature 24c by Dimpo' gauge

As I couldn' put my temperature gauge outside easily I used the gauge in Dimpo, which one can select to measure both the inside and outside temperatures. We drove away at 9am along some of the same highway as yesterday, the only problem is that roadworks were in progress that is well over due so we didn' arrive at Epcot until about 10.30am. I measured the distance to Epcot as 13.6km, quite close to home.

The similar parking arrangements for Dimpo and little train with the parking areas given a name.

A second day of seeing so many fat, no, obese people that we took a couple of photos of them, see in the album. Even children from about eight years old have thick arms and legs, so ugly and unhealthy. This problem in the USA was featured in newspapers, magazines, TV and radio the whole time we were in the USA. We visited many attractions, see the photo album and watched the daily parade at 6.30pm then stayed for the nightly fireworks and laser display at 10.00pm, fantastic as usual!

These fireworks were the special millennium fireworks for 2000. The queues were about medium I suppose and we waited about forty-five minutes to visit the Norwegian pavilion. Many Americans who of course love Australians, still asked us did we know Crocodile Dundee or Steve the crocodile hunter, who they see on cable or TV. We haven't seen him yet ourselves. Due to the darkness we got lost on the way home so I stopped on the busy highway and got out of the car to use our compass. This put us on the correct direction to home.

## **Tuesday 18th April to Disney again, Magic Kingdom.**

Travelled today 30km

We departed at 10am with the same traffic hold up due to the roadworks and arrived at Magic Kingdom at 11.45am. The similar parking arrangements for Dimpo and little train.

We caught the boat to Magic Kingdom which was packed.

For lunch we bought two smoked turkey legs which were huge, I couldn't eat all of mine so I kept it for later. We were comparing this Magic Kingdom with the Paris Disney one. We visited various places including Tomorrow Land and of course It's A Small World which we thought was not as good as the France one. The temperature was higher today as we watched the daily parade in the sun at 3pm.

Our feet and legs were very tired so we departed but not by the boat but by the monorail which connects the whole Disney area including the expensive hotels and resorts. We finally had some trouble finding Dimpo in the huge car park, Marie was right after all but we weren't that far away. Travellers have the best fun who do it themselves, not on a tour. We were home at 5.30pm then went to the resort's Country and Western BBQ on the lake side. It cost us A\$21 which was a bit expensive and no alcoholic drinks included. The food wasn't much either with the same band as last night playing a sort of country music, very poor.

I must mention that Americans and perhaps many other people we saw who were not Americans but visiting tourists, suck in special containers. I suppose a quarter of the people at the Disney areas suck on a bottle of some sort, water or perhaps some other liquid, instead of having a good drink they suck on them like a baby does.

They even have special drink container holders. I know we have a similar thing in Australia but over there it seems to be a rage or the cool thing to do. We suspect this is another reason why Americans are so fat, the constant calorie intake.

## **Wednesday 19th April home today.**

Travelled today 6.5km

A rest day today so we just read, watched TV and for me, I walked around the resort. We did drive up the highway a couple of km to purchase more groceries ready for our trip northwards.

## **Thursday 20th April to Disney, Epcot again.**

Travelled today 59km

We departed for Epcot the second time at 8am through the roadworks to arrive at Epcot at 9am. We visited more pavilions, the last was the France one, how appropriate. In the French area the wall along the side of the lake is built to represent the River Seine with the little arty stalls hanging onto the wall.

We left Epcot at 2pm and tried to drive to Disney Village. Tried is what I just typed, it took us about an hour to find the village. Disney Village is another part only about 3km from the main Disney part which has other smaller attraction and shops. On the way we gave Dimpo her first gas, eight gallons US\$13.45 which works out at A\$1.68 per gallon. This is where I took the photos of various items made from Lego pieces, see the photo album.

Back home we decided we would leave the resort tomorrow, Easter Friday to continue north. We had dinner in our room of pasta, chicken and blackberry wine. We packed ready to move out mañana.

## **Good Friday 21st April to Valdosta, Georgia.**

Travelled today 340km

We drove onto 27/301 and stopped at a roadside stall to buy some tangelos for \$3. A bit further on we stopped at a roadside flea market but because it was Good Friday only a few stalls were open. Marie bought a couple of pieces of jewelry. We had our first North American picnic lunch in a little grass part beside a church. We drove onto I75 until south of the border where we drove onto a small road, 41 which was probably the old highway decades ago. The little towns were deserted, life seems to have stood still for these people, for good or bad. It was good to get away from the very busy Interstate highway.

## **Georgia**

Nickname - Empire State of the South - Peach State  
Motto - "Wisdom, Justice, Moderation"  
Song - "Georgia" - "Georgia On My Mind"  
Bird - Brown Thrasher  
Animal - Right Whale  
Flower - Cherokee Rose  
Tree - Live Oak  
Gem-Stone - Quartz  
Capital - Atlanta population ~ 2.5mil  
Entered Union - Jan. 02, 1788 (4th)  
Population - 7,353,225 (10th)  
Largest City - Atlanta



We crossed into Georgia at 2.30pm on 41 arriving in Valdosta at 3.15pm. We found a motel called "Holiday Terrace Motel" close to the town so booked in for \$31 with a bath. This is cheap at about A\$54. These motels that were popular decades ago when they were on the main highway were the normal place to stay but as life has passed them by they have declined in quality. Many are owned or run by people born in other countries.



This one being an Indian not an American Indian.

We had dinner at a cafe about 50mt along the road at 5.30pm, Marie had a New York sub, like a Subway sub, mine was an Italian, very tasty. But as we expected a very limited menu, not many vegetables. The woman who served us liked our

Australian accents. I type "accents" as plural because people can hear the difference between my Tasmanian/Victorian accent and Marie's Queensland accent. During the



day we saw many signs advertising the sale of fireworks. Some signs were as big as the side of a house so we assume that it's quite legal to have them in Georgia.

Even though it was Good Friday, most of the shops and businesses were open, this is what one expects in the USA. We even saw children going home from school at 3pm.

### Saturday 22nd April to Macon.

Travelled today 260km

Temperature 13c

The big news that has been constant on TV since we arrived was about the young Mexican boy, Elian Gonzales who was taken by the US authorities to be given back to his father. To Americans it seemed the most important news in the world.

We departed at 8.30am driving out of town onto I75 again, where the country was becoming a little hilly and so more picturesque and interesting. We saw a road sign to a town called "Vienna" so we thought to go to an American Vienna, having been to Venezia in Italy. On the way we visited the Cotton Museum which was quite interesting even though small.

We then drove into the little town which of course was in the thick of the American Civil War, see the photo of a monument to the Confederate soldiers in Dooly County. We had lunch in the park and because we had left the hot states it was rather cold, about 14c.

Sometime during the day we bought more gas, US\$18 for 12.2 gallons. We passed the typical cotton growing peoples houses, other crops such as pecan nuts,peanuts, peaches and other fruit trees.

Many houses did not have any fences around them and the buildings were not always built close to the road as in Australia. Rather odd to us.

We were getting closer to Atlanta so I75 became three lanes close to towns. We decided not to stay the night in Atlanta but Macon or thereabouts instead.

## Macon

Rather than try to find accommodation in the town we looked for it at the exits from I75. I would like to stress that sometimes or perhaps most times it's better and easier to find accommodation close to the highways than go into a city or town. I also stress that traffic and highways are much bigger and busier than the little Australian ones.

We exited to a group of businesses and accommodation and booked into Inn Ambassadors for US\$37. The man was very friendly and told me he spent some time in

Australia during the war. We had a very nice dinner at a Mexican restaurant next door where I tried a Mexican beer which was OK.



End Album #5  
commence  
Album #6

### Sunday 3rd April to Nashville.

Travelled today 245km

We departed and got back onto I75 OK and soon were in the thick of big traffic as close to Atlanta, perhaps 20km I75 had seven (7) lanes both ways, big! We found our way into the city centre or as Americans say, downtown.

It was just as well it was Sunday. The place was almost deserted so most of the car parks were closed but we eventually found one where Dimpo could rest for awhile.

Atlanta has freeway/highways and entry/exit ramps right in the centre of the city, a bit ugly I suppose. We and a few other people obviously had similar thoughts and wanted to visit the Coca-Cola building and the Underground which is a group of shops and restaurants built underground that once was a railway station. We found out that the Underground would not open until 11am and Coca Cola not at all today.

Before 11am we went to the entrance to the Underground where a black security man was kind enough to let us in just to go to the toilets. He then let us out where we waited for 11am.

The businesses and shops are very nicely set out where we met the black man again. He told us he had to flee Nigeria and hoped to return one day. I took a photo of him and Maria standing together but the flash could not have worked as his black face can't be seen. We promised him we would send him the photo.

At the time of me typing this I plan to re-scan it in colour and try to improve the image. Marie gave him a little kangaroo stick pin. Back onto the street we walked passed many black people on the footpath but we didn't feel threatened as they were so clean and orderly. We visited the Visitor Centre then tried to walk to the CNN centre.

I said "tried" because although we could see it only 1km away our path was stopped by a couple of freeway ramps, remember I told you they are big. Anyway we back tracked and found our way there only to find that the part where people can visit and participate in a CNN News show was closed. Drats! The building of course belongs to the tycoon millionaire Ted Turner which houses a cinema complex, hotel accommodation and a sports complex about the size of the MCG in Melbourne. I think two grounds, one for baseball and the other football (grid iron).

At 2pm back to Dimpo and drove around a bit because we were lost. In the process we came across another sports ground called "Turner Field" after Ted Turner. We finally got back onto I75 to visit the Stone Mountain Park which is where there are another lot of figures carved out of the stone, in this case, Stonewall Jackson, Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis. The whole area has many attractions as well such as a cable car and camping. So close to Atlanta, about 30km that it must be very well attended in summer.

We decided to head back towards Atlanta for accommodation and booked into Travelers Inn for US\$42. Although the room was a bit dirty, dirty sheets which I should have complained about but didn't it had a microwave oven so I heated up the rest of my baked potato that I had in Atlanta. The room also had a refrigerator.

## Monday 24th April to Nashville.

Travelled today 365km

Temperature 16c

We were woken by fire trucks whizzing past. We departed at 8.30am with our next destination being a town named "Dalton". We drove on I75 which was also called 41. At one point we exited I75 to drive on the quieter 41 and arrived in Dalton at 10am.

## Dalton, our first

We stopped at a Phillips 66 service station to say hello to some one in Dalton and of course tell them that our surname was D' Alton. We ordered a couple of hot chocolate drinks and talked more to the man and woman operating the service station. They were so very friendly that they insisted we did not need to pay for the drinks. So a stick pin each for them also.

We drove into the down town part of Dalton and took some photos then back onto I75 crossing into Tennessee at noon.

## Tennessee

Nickname - Volunteer State  
Motto - "Agriculture & Commerce"  
Song - "When Iris Time in Tennessee" - "The Tennessee Waltz" - "My Home Land Tennessee"  
Bird - Mockingbird  
Animal - Raccoon  
Flower - Iris  
Tree - Tulip Poplar  
Gem-Stone - Tennessee Pearl  
Capital - Nashville population ~520,000  
Entered Union - June 01, 1796 (16th)  
Population - 5,319,654 (17th)  
Largest City - Memphis

Just inside the border we pulled into the Visitor Centre, these are quite large in the USA and are situated on the interstate highways. We got plenty of brochures and maps.



This state is USA Vice President Al Gore territory as we saw many signs to that effect. Other signs we saw were "Bee alert, arrive unhurt" with a bee logo. The country was now mountainous and so very pretty with long straight stretches of highway. As I have said before, it was a pleasure to drive as we were not hassled by trucks and other vehicles. Of course Dimpo's cruise control made it a lot easier too.

We crossed another time zone so we turned our watches back one hour. This was not at the border but within Tennessee. We skirted around Chattanooga on I24 and arrived in Nashville the country music city at 3.45pm after exiting on Exit 59.

## Nashville

We booked into a "Knights Inn" for US\$40 but this time on the first floor.

We stopped at a Wal-Mart and amongst other things we bought some Pokemon cards for our four grandchildren. In this store one can buy reading glasses for US\$18 with the cost of the frames one can choose for a little more. Cheap!

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### keville.

Travelled today 156km  
Temperature 12c

On the TV news we saw that there had been a major problem due to a semi-trailer that turned over on its side which blocked a couple of lanes of I40, a main highway in and out of Nashville. We usually watched the TV news in the morning because it' something we don' do in Australia, so we feel we are away from home. This was the first time that we saw a road crash of any kind which to me proves that the drivers are better than drivers at home, bearing in mind that there is a horrendous amount of traffic over here.

We arrived in Nashville which is about the size of Hobart, at 9am and soon found a rest spot for Dimpo in a multi-story public car park. We walked through the old arcade which has many shops and businesses then to the building that was the original "Grande Old Opry" now called the "Ryman Auditorium", see the photo in the album. Across the street we visited the Visitor Center (centre) and found out where to catch the City Sights Bus which was just next to the centre. The tour cost US\$1 each which lasted about one hour. We saw many buildings including one called the "Parthenon" which really was a very good representation of a Greek Parthenon.

We visited the State Museum Military Branch where we saw artifacts about the various American wars, the Spanish War, the Civil War and all the ones since. I got talking to the black man at the desk and asked him did he know what this day, the 25th of April would mean to Australians. He said he didn' which was the answer I expected him to give. I told him a bit about Anzac Day. He seemed very appreciative. We then walked back to the Arcade and had lunch at a Lebanese cafe.

Yes and this day was also an important one for our friend, Vera Whitehead, being her birthday.

We left Nashville at 2pm driving on I40 and came upon the problem caused by the truck that rolled over that we saw on TV this morning. We were stopped for about 15 minutes. Later on we exited onto a small road 70N where we stopped at a town called "Lebanon" for a toilet but surprise surprise it was a Portaloo out the back, rather primitive as all/most gas stations have good facilities.

The next section was very pretty with Dogwood trees in flower, rocking chairs out on the front porch of many homes, like one sees in movies set in country places like Tennessee, very typical. During the day we bought Dimpo another drink, US\$18 for 13 gallons. The petrol consumption of Dimpo was really quite low as she was a four cylinder car.

## Cookeville

We arrived in Cookeville at 4pm and booked into another "Knights Inn" motel for US\$37 and a deposit of US\$10 for the ' phone. We had dinner at the "Huddle House" next door. This appeared to be a truck stop as there were about fifty trailer trucks parked here.



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Travelled today 212km  
Temperature 11c

This day was Jack and Vera Whitehead' 42nd wedding anniversary. We departed at 8.15pm for Knoxville. We stopped at a gas station for bread or milk and I wanted to check Dimpo' air in all tires (tyres) and had to pay 50c I think. We crossed over the time zone again and changed our clocks forward an hour about 45km west of Knoxville on I40/75. We arrived at 11.30am and visited a Visitor Centre then had our picnic lunch in a little park a few metres away.

## Knoxville

Knoxville held a World Fair in 1982 and their catch phrase is "Cradle Of Country Music" and is a small town about the size of Gympie, perhaps 20,000 population.

The woman there advised us to go to the bigger and newer Visitor Centre which was only about 3km away which we did. We parked Dimpo in the centre' free car park and caught the City Sights rubber wheeled trolley car which was free. We walked around the little town which is very pretty, lovely trees and quiet.

We drove off to continue eastward on I40 again and arrived in Pigeon Forge booking in to one of the many motels, the Parkview Motel for US\$29, cheap.



# Pigeon Forge

Pigeon Forge is a very unique place which seems to be the centre of an area about 50km in size. The whole area is a no alcohol area where it is not sold or served anywhere. We never did find out why as we did ask a few people but apparently the town or area was settled by a man who forbid alcohol in "his" area, very commendable.

Not that Marie and I are teetotalers but we disapprove at the extremes some people go when alcohol is concerned.

Pigeon Forge is on road 441 and has lots of fun things to do which young and old alike can enjoy. The length of the entertainment area is about 5km, which is



along 441, a bit like the Gold Coast at Surfers Paradise or Miami but busier. Dolly Parton's

"Dollywood" is one such place but is a km or so off 441.

We had dinner at one of the many restaurants which was closeby which was a buffet, by this time in our journey I was beginning to feel bloated by trying to eat the big meals that American restaurants serve, huge! No wonder so many are obese. In the car park of the restaurant were nine cars from other states and one from Canada so its a popular tourist place.

Our home was on the 441 which had three lanes both ways so we were quite game walking across to the "Comedy Barn" show at 7.45pm. All the shows are safe for all the family to attend as there is no swearing and blue jokes. A wonderful change to what is produced in shows these days. It was a great show with many people from a Baptist Church there, one of them participated in a section of the programme. As is usual with Americans, there were many people eating pop corn out of big buckets and bags, enough to fit in a big Cornflakes packet.

This is where I should mention the style of American dress. Men are rather daggy wearing blue jeans and baseball caps and kept them on during the show. We estimate that 95% of women also wear daggy jeans or at best slacks. This applied to this part of our journey so far.

## Thursday 27th April to local sightsee.

Travelled today 128km

Temperature 8c

We liked Knoxville so much we went back there on I40 and visited the Old Gray Cemetery where we felt the sad things that occurred in the American Civil War. See the headstone of a "Fred A. Dalton" in the photo album. We went back to the new Visitor Center and had our picnic lunch in the little open area which has a delightful little waterfall. We drove to Fort Dickson which is on the top of a small hill where the Confederate Cavalry attacked the Union Blues in November 1863 but were held off. We decided to drive back to Pigeon Forge via a small highway 441, this is where we came upon a hairdresser/barber so I had my hair cut by the young woman there costing US\$10.

Back at Pigeon Forge we visited the big Christmas Shop and usually these sort of shops don' allow the taking of photographs or video but we did here with their consent. The shop would be about 30mt by 30mt, big. See photos in the album. I always feel a bit uncomfortable in these shops as I think of the poor people in the world who don' have enough food let alone afford these luxuries.

As usual there was only a small 5sq mt part dedicated to the Nativity scene, the true meaning of Christmas! Dinner at 6pm to Bennet' cafe where Marie had pork and I sausage. As I mentioned before about Tennessee being as typical as we see in the movies, the rocking chairs, swing chairs and in most cases the folding camp chairs are set up in front of all motels. There was to be a big rally or gathering of Harley Davidson riders with their motorcycles over the coming weekend so there were many driving around.

In a car park across the street various caravans were set up and about 100 motorcycles there at one time. The Harley Davidson' are the usual two wheeled units we see but also many are three wheeled ones with a sidecar or trailer. All the latest modcons, sound communication between rider and pillion passenger and so on.

And all kept in immaculate condition. This is rich mans country. We noticed very few black people in the last day or so but many people from other countries.

## Friday 28th April to Ashville and The Smoky Mountains

Travelled today 154km

Temperature 9c

We departed at 9am driving on 441 and drove straight through a skiing resort town called Gatlinburg which looks like a town in Europe. We were in the southern part of the Great Smoky Mountains and also part of the Appalachian Mountains. The road that one drives on is a small road with a speed limit of about 50km/h its length from the southern point to the northern end is 470miles (750km).

It is called The Blue Ridge Parkway and is extremely pretty due to the rugged mountains and in spring and summer has kilometres after kilometres of Rhododendrons, which of course were not in flower as the season had not yet commenced.

## North Carolina

Nickname - Tarheel State & Old North State  
 Motto - "To Be Rather Than To Seem"  
 Song - "The Old North State"  
 Bird - Cardinal  
 Animal - Not Yet  
 Flower - Dogwood  
 Tree - Pine  
 Gem-Stone - Emerald  
 Capital - Raleigh  
 Entered Union - November 21, 1789 (12th)  
 Population - 7,322,870 (11th)  
 Largest City - Charlotte



We crossed into North Carolina where the temperature was 5c at the Visitor Center at the top, Newfound Gap.

Down the other side northward we stopped at an American Indian area with shops and a museum near Cherokee. We saw some live bears in the little museum and bought a few souvenirs at a shop that was purported to be owned by American Indians. I bought my Smoky Mountains hat here also.

## Ashville



We arrived at our planned night stop at Ashville finding accommodation quickly at the Plaza Motel costing US\$60 which was a bit expensive for about 2 star quality. We dined at the Popeyes takeaway which was very meager, the worst in the USA so far. Back home we watched a movie on the CTV, an old b&w war movie with the late John Mellion, Richard Todd and David McCullum.

### Saturday 29th April to Blowing Rock

Travelled today 187km  
 Temperature 8c

Before we left the town we drove about 300mt to the entrance to the Biltmore Estate then about 5km along its driveway to the chateau or castle like building.

It was built by George Vanderbilt in 1895 and is the biggest and grandest in the USA, a copy of many European ones that we had seen. It was quite impressive but at US\$32 each to enter was rather expensive.

The gardens were very colourful and probably better than many European ones we have seen so we thought we got our monies worth, almost. We had our picnic lunch in the garden area then departed to continue on the Parkway.

More gas for Dimpo being 12.7 gallons for US\$18 at US\$1.42 /gallon or A\$0.53/lt being cheaper than in Europe or North America. We continued on the very slow road to arrive at Blowing Rock at 3.45pm and booked into a cute motel named "Blue Ridge Motel" so appropriate.

## Blowing Rock



I really knew we were in the high country as when I knocked on the office door, someone called out in a broad drawl "Come in". The voice was an old mans, probably about seventy or eighty years old, so very friendly.

The rooms were more like cabin rooms with some joined together and others separate. The condition of them was not the best and we think that when the old man dies the place will close down. In a tree outside our room we heard our first woodpecker bird which made a really loud clacking sound as it pecked at the tree trunk.

The main attraction is the Blowing Rock with its wooden overlook ramp. Marie did walk out on it as the reader can see in the photo in the album. On the way back home we had dinner at a very family like restaurant called "Mount Restaurant" where Marie finally had what she had been craving for since coming to the USA, Baby Rack Ribs of Pork". US\$13 for that while my pasta cost US\$8, very yummy. The photo I took of the "Park Rules" sign interested me due to the park hours, "-12.00 AM". What time is that, noon or midnight?

### Sunday 30th April to Strasburg.

Travelled today 540km  
 Temperature 8c

Just after we rose we heard the loud machine gun type noise again and saw that it was a woodpecker bird pecking on a nearby tree and may have been the same one we saw last night.

We estimated that we were a bit behind schedule so we would drive a long way today by exiting the Parkway before its northern end. We departed at 8am still seeing lots of rhododendrons but not in flower. We saw so very briefly a rabbit, a squirrel and a deer.

At 10.30am we crossed into Virginia where we just caught a glimpse of the sign.

## Virginia

Nickname - Old Dominion -  
 Mother of Presidents - Mother of states  
 Motto - "Thus Always To Tyrants"  
 Song - "Carry Me Back To Old Virginia"  
 Bird - Cardinal  
 Animal - American Fox Hound - Dog  
 Flower - Dogwood  
 Tree - Dogwood  
 Gem-Stone - Not Yet  
 Capital - Richmond  
 Entered Union - June 25, 1788 (10th)  
 Population - 6,675,451 (12th)  
 Largest City - Virginia Beach



We exited at Roanoke having lunch at a Taco Bell. We were rather shocked because we saw four women wearing skirts not slacks, so we figured we were now in the north of the USA.

We meant to re-enter the Parkway but missed the entry somewhere and found we were on I81 and arrived in Strasburg at about 4pm where we stopped for gas, US\$22 for 14gals.

## Strasburg



The man at the gas station suggested we don't go to the expensive hotel down the street but to a motel a couple

of miles south. We did that and booked into the Budget Inn for US\$40. This place was run or owned by Indian or Pakistani people. I remind the reader that there were many battles fought in the Civil War in this area which is flat country, from here to Alexandria and the surrounding country. Strasburg is the red dot in the centre of the little map, the other one to the right is Alexandria.

A rather long distance day but the big smooth highways make driving almost a pleasure.

## Monday 1st May to Alexandria

Travelled today 152km  
 Temperature 12c

Another sunny day as we drove on I81 for a few metres then on I66 eastward leaving the mountains behind us. We missed a turn somewhere as the highways and roads were numerous and the traffic was very heavy. At one point I asked someone directions which helped but we still drove around in circles somewhat but eventually arrived in the centre of Alexandria at 11.45am.

## Alexandria

We parked Dimpo in a public car park which had been a torpedo factory in WWII. We found the Visitor Information with a little trouble as the sign was not very big and was covered by tree branches.

We obtained a lot of information including some about a motel which the woman so kindly ' phonedo check the address of it. We had lunch at a Thai Restaurant across the street which was excellent, again too much for me so I got them to make me up a doggy bag.

We did the usual walk around Alexandria which is a very important historical American city. It was part of D.C. from 1791 to 1846.



We visited "The Church Nigh Alexandria" which was completed construction in 1773. It was attended by both Robert E. Lee and George Washington. It is a quaint and pretty city, a very touristy place but not like the normal American cities with their tall buildings. We visited the small but so historic museum and talked to the two women for awhile.

We came across a newsagent/bookshop. If the reader has not read the "Overview" section of this book you have missed what I said about the American newsagent type shops. The fact that we did not see any such shops as Australia has. This shop was stocked with many local newspapers and many from around the world.

Also plenty of magazines although not in the case of computer ones. Many other paperback and similar books as we have in our Australian newsagents. As I explained before that most American newspapers are either sold from automatic sidewalk (footpath) coin operated machines or directly sent to peoples homes. This shop was a surprise!

We drove about 5km following the Visitor Centre woman' s directions and found the motel "Days Inn" without any trouble. Days Inn is another modern motel chain, this one was about ten stories high and cost us US\$60 with Dimpo parked right outside our door. We bought more groceries at a 24hour shop next to the motel. For the first time in the USA we saw "Weetbix" which we purchased because I like them for breakfast.

We telephoned both our families at 6pm who were all OK. We had dinner in our room which was my lunch doggy bag and something else. Marie read an article in a magazine about Bob Hope being close to death.

The temperature in the afternoon was 22c, yes it was getting hot again for us but we thought not for long as we would be continuing further northward.

## Tuesday 2nd May to visit Washington D.C.

Travelled today 78km

Temperature 15c

We were woken by noisy children on the floor above at 6am but we needed an early start to visit Washington again. We caught the motel' s free shuttle bus to the nearest railway station called "Van Dorn". Here we bought our tickets from a coin operated machine costing US\$2.40 one way each.

## Washington D.C.

District of Columbia

Named after Christopher Columbus

Nickname -

None

Motto

"Justice for All"

Song - None

Bird - Wood Thrush

Tree - Scarlet Oak

Flower - American Beauty Rose

Became Capital - December 1, 1800

Population - 543,213

After about 15km and about ten stations, some underground, we detrained at the metro station, Smithsonian. We walked along Independence Avenue to what was to be a garden highlight for Marie. But alas, the gardens had been closed for a year or so and were being renovated. We talked to a couple of women gardeners who told us this and that it would be closed for another year or so.

We walked further to the Library Of Congress, then the U.S. Capitol, so far a distance of about 2.5km so we were becoming a bit weary. Then back westward along Madison Drive, Jefferson Drive and the main long park. In the park a display was being constructed by the US Armed services where I inspected among other items a Patriot Missile Launcher and a Thunderbolt aeroplane. The Patriot unit had four launchers with a range of 88km.

We visited "The National Museum of Natural History" and rested awhile by viewing a film or video. In 1988 Marie and I had visited a couple of the museums which by the way are huge, so we didn' t do a repeat so continued to the "Bureau of Engraving and Printing", aka the Mint.

We and a man and his daughter were disappointed that we had to have bought tickets yesterday to visit it. Oh well, Marie and I will visit the Australian Mint one day. We caught the metro train back to the station near our motel then a taxi home, back into Virginia and drove of at about 2.15pm crossing another state border this time into Maryland.



End of photo Album #6 commence Album #7

## Maryland

We travelled on a small highway called "Gladys Spellman Parkway" which has no number on the map and we have no note if it did have one.

## Near Baltimore

About 10km on I695 we exited it and booked into another Days Inn for US\$50 which included breakfast in their breakfast room. This motel was owned by Indians and was being renovated. Dimpo was parked next to the building and this time we used a plastic card to gain entry into the building then our room.

Their restaurant was closed due to the renovations so we drove across the highway to a small shopping centre. The food area was a bit grubby and our dinner at the Chinese food takeaway was not really hot. We then walked the few shops which were very clean then back home.

## Wednesday 3rd May to Lancaster

Travelled today 237km

Temperature 14c

We had breakfast in the motel' s breakfast room where a small range of cereals, donuts, coffee and fruit juice was set out. It suited me so I enjoyed the lightness of cornflakes and orange juice. We departed for Lancaster at 8.15am arriving in downtown Baltimore at 9am.



## Baltimore

We drove around Baltimore for an hour or so in very heavy traffic but as I have mentioned so many times before, the other motorists are so very patient, it's a pleasure to drive. We saw their Washington Monument and an old church and other buildings.

We drove on I795 for a few kilometres then it became smaller at Westminster changing its number to 140. About here we came across the very first roundabout in the USA that we had driven on as they are not popular here but we assume they are replaced by traffic lights. In this area there are many cities and towns with their name ending in "burg", very German sounding names. We crossed into Pennsylvania at about 10am.



## Pennsylvania

Nickname - Keystone State

Motto - "Virtue, Liberty and Independence"

Song - "Pennsylvania"

Bird - Ruffed Grouse

Animal - White Tail Deer

Flower - Mountain Laurel

Tree - Hemlock

Gem-Stone - Not Yet

Capital - Harrisburg

Entered Union - December 12, 1787 (2nd)

Population - 12, 056,112 (5th)

Largest City - Philadelphia

Our planning was to see much of the American Civil War relics and monuments as possible. Our arrival in historical Gettysburg at 10.30 was with mixed feelings. The delight to finally be here, the sad feelings knowing that a war was fought here. The countryside is rather flat with the occasional hillock perhaps 100 mt high, not like the Great Smokey Mountains that we drove on a few days before.

We actually came to the war area which is about 5km southeast of the town of Gettysburg and I would advise the reader to read at least some of the brochures about this area. We drove around the site for about an hour where there are numerous monuments, statues, relics and signs with stories pertaining to a particular battle.

What I thought a bit strange was that 99% if not all of the statues were of the Union side (the north) and not the Confederate side (south). In the booklet or brochure they say that many/most of the Confederate soldiers bodies that were buried there after the battle were removed and taken to cemeteries in the south.

The area can be self driven with a sound tape to guide one, or personal guided tours with the guide riding in ones car which is an excellent idea. At the end of our drive we ended up at the visitor centre and museum. At the centre we paid US\$3 each to see and hear the 30 minute story about the Gettysburg Battle which was fought over four days, 30th June to 3rd of July 1863. The show was called the "Electric Map" and is a first for us of this type of display. An ex US Army man talked through the battle, in the centre was a model about 100sqmt in size. As he spoke about the events little lights of various colours lit up to show on the model, excellent!

The cemetery is across the street but as we were feeling depressed by this time, we didn't go into it. We drove away at 2pm on 30 north eastward and arrived in Lancaster at about 5pm but got a little lost trying to find motels. I stopped at one but it was too expensive. I make a point here that when one is looking for accommodation and you need a local map, most times there are brochures for the motel or hotel you are enquiring at this moment. The map will usually include where this motel is and so you can orientate yourself and search out others. A little trick.

We found the motel "Econo Lodge" on 462 for US\$49 with a senior' discount, on the 2nd floor and a park for Dimpo below our window. We booked two nights as there is so much to see in this Amish area. For dinner we walked a few metres along the street to a pub where Marie enjoyed steak, chips and salad in the bar-grille. I had potato skins, cheese and bacon. Marie had a scotch and gingerale which we learnt the yanks call a "highball" while I enjoyed a local beer. Back home on TV we watched a Country Awards programme and ice skating.

### Thursday 4th May to see this Amish area.

Travelled today 58km

Temperature 14c

We left home at 8am and drove to our first visit, the Mennonite Centre which is a small museum. The women working there explained a bit about Mennonites then we watched a 18 minute movie explaining in more detail. Very interesting!

Mennonite people are a branch of the Amish with slightly more relaxed beliefs, one being that they are allowed to own a motor car. We then went to the Amish Farm which is a museum with working farm items and buildings. Marie paid US\$6 (A\$10.35) and I paid US\$5.50 as a pensioner to have a private tour of the house. Amish are very frugal, no electricity, ' phonecar, buttons on clothing, no pictures, a very pure simple life. Please read the brochures in the photo album.



We had lunch there, hotdogs with sauerkraut and mustard. Then to the Railway Museum which was the biggest and best we have ever been to about 5km out of town. We drove around the area along little streets between Amish farms with a few Amish horse drawn buggies slowly trotting along. People in cars have to be patient and respectful.

Back home we walked across the four lane road to the Ponderosa Steak House. Marie had a 6 ounce steak, big and tender while I had a small shrimp salad and sweets.

### Friday 5th May to Schuylkill Haven.

Travelled today 170km  
 Temperature 18c

Today was Cinco de Mayo which is Español for the "fifth of May" being like our workers May Day holiday. On the TV news the story about the computer virus called "Love Bug" was prominent which did a lot of damage world wide. To be a little technical here, most of the viruses that are written effect Microsoft' E-mail and Web programmes. A good reason to use other software and not Microsoft' s.

We left at 8am and drove on 743 to Hershey' s Chocolate factory arriving at about 9am and did the little wheeled car tour inside showing how their chocolate was made. The tour was past animated models of machinery so it was a bit disappointing. The tour of the Cadbury factory in Tasmania is a proper walking tour so is better. The town was built by Mr Hershey who was a Mennonite and has a hospital, school, sports ground and so the workers are well treated.

Onward to a town named Lebanon where Dimpo' thirst was quenched, US\$13.40 for 10 gallons or \$0.50/lit which was the cheapest so far. The next stop was at Fredericksburg" for lunch but couldn' find a park in the sleepy town so had our picnic lunch from the back of Dimpo in the street. On I78 we exited at Hamburg, and stopped and booked into a 1 star motel in Schuylkill Haven 4km south of Pottsville.

### Schuylkill Haven

I had been feeling quite sick all day so I needed an early rest. At 1pm we booked into the "Country Squire Motel and Restaurant" for US\$42 with Dimpo parked outside our door.

After I rested for awhile we had dinner at the restaurant which was an extra star compared to the motel part. Marie had beef stir fry while I half enjoyed three scrambled eggs. The waitress was very understanding that I did not want the usual big American dinner.

### Saturday 6th May to Tamiment our 2nd RCI resort.

Travelled today 272km  
 Temperature 17c

The temperature was rising again but we would soon be cooler today. We departed at 8am on 61 and although this area is a little hilly it was rather dry and not very pretty at all. Our destination today was our second RCI resort. We joined I81 where we saw road signs "Arrive alive, don' drink and drive" and "Buckle up it' your life, it' our law".



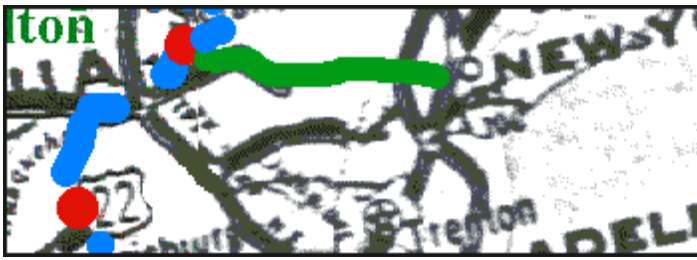
We then joined I80 East which was quite hilly and pretty. We came across a radio station on the car radio which played all polka music. It was a breath of fresh air, the type of music Marie and I had danced to in the past. We drove through Stroudsburg and Stroudsburg East which I will mention later on. Then into the New Jersey to find the Visitor Centre which was 6km east.

### New Jersey

- Nickname - Garden State
- Motto - "Liberty and Prosperity"
- Song - Not Yet
- Bird - Eastern Gold Finch
- Animal - Horse
- Flower - Violet
- Tree - Red Oak
- Gem-Stone - Not Yet
- Capital - Trenton
- Entered Union - Dec. 18, 1787 (3rd)
- Population - 7,987,933 (9th)
- Largest City - Newark

After getting some good information we exited but only to the south, no exit was to the west as we needed to get back into Pennsylvania. We had to drive another 6km before we could exit and re-enter to drive westward. On our way back we stopped at a little rest/picnic park and had our picnic lunch, we were still in New Jersey.

This was beside the river Delaware which divides these two states. I must say here that I80 is probably one of the most busiest interstate highways in the USA, I think there were three lanes both ways; it is on the way to the Big Apple.



At the border we paid the toll costing the magnanimous amount of US\$1, just A\$1.60 or thereabouts. Toll costs are extremely low in the USA. We drove into Stroudsburg where I went to a couple of bus offices to find out about the bus to New York but they were both closed. We hoped to find a supermarket which we did, a huge Wal-Mart. See the photo in the album of the cereals section. Then onward to our resort on 209 north stopping at an open air flea market which was probably the biggest open air market we have ever seen then onward to arrive at our resort at 3pm. This is the red dot next to the green bus line to New York.

## RCI at Tamiment

We booked in at the very small office, about 10sq mt and drove to our Chalet bungalow amongst the trees. Although this resort has the original main multi-story accommodation block similar to the one in Orlando, Florida, we were this time accommodated in one of the separate chalets. A two story unit with a mezzanine bedroom. Very nice, one of the best we have been in. Dimpo had her spot next to our unit where we could keep an eye on her.

One thing we forgot to purchase at the Wal-Mart was milk so I drove 5km back to a little shop, no problems. With a full kitchen Marie cooked dinner, sausages, bacon and vegetables. By this time on our journey we were beginning to crave some/more vegetables as Americans don't serve much of a choice. They have a big choice of other foods but not vegetables.

## Sunday 7th May we stay here a week.

Temperature 24c

It was warmer than we expected at 24c but we knew for certain it would be cooler soon. Today was a day of rest for both of us so Marie did some more washing and we both sorted some of the brochures and paperwork that we had collected. We intended to send some back by seemail in a carton. I didn't mention before but while we were with David and Sylvia I got two cartons from a US post office. They are free but of course one pays for them in the postage no doubt.

Anyway we made up a carton about the size of two telephone books which I taped up really well with wide brown sticky tape. We didn't want it to come apart. I wrote the destination address twice on it and also the return address which of course were the same, ours in Toowong.

We watched a lot of TV. Marie made us a welcome salad lunch and cooked a nice dinner. As the reader can see by the photos in the album, our unit was surrounded by trees. It had about 10 steps to enter at the side. The kitchen was a good one which was installed with all the necessary devices. Normal oven, microwave oven, refrigerator, dishwasher which we never used, all crockery and cutlery and so on.

On the right was the second bedroom and a toilet. Next was the dining area, lounge with CTV, stereo, video recorder and fireplace. Then the main bedroom which included an ensuite with jacuzzi bath. Upstairs was the third bedroom, on a mezzanine floor. We had a storm early in the evening which was a little scary because we didn't know what to expect.

## Monday 8th May to sightsee the area.

Travelled today 81km

Temperature 20c

The area had a heatwave, the highest temperature for the same time since 1936. Some people said that we brought it with us from Australia.

While we were having breakfast we watched five deer that were only about about 10mt away which later came within a couple of mt of our unit, see the photos in the album. I went downstairs to take photos of them. The exercise today was to arrange our bus to the Big Apple, New York. About 6km from home we stopped at the little US Post Office and posted the packet of the paperwork that we made up yesterday, it cost US\$26 (A\$44.80) by seemail.

We drove into Stroudsburg to find the Martz Bus Line office. Well did we have trouble and got totally lost. We even stopped at a fast food place where I used the 'phonoutside and got better directions from the Martz office woman. This only confused the issue. We finally found the office at noon, about an hour and a half to do so. We booked our return journey for tomorrow with a parking ticket for Dimpo, she would be safe in the Martz car park.

On leaving there we found out by our clever deduction that the road, 209 was duplicated just near Stroudsburg which means we were trying to follow someone else's direction but we were on the wrong part of 209. We lunched by the roadside then drove into the local skiing area which of course was closed although it would be open sometime in the future for summer sports.

Heading back home we visited an American Indian museum which was quite interesting. The Indian tribe that settled in this area was called the "Leni Lenape Tribe" or Delaware Indians. The area is called the "Poconos".

Further on we stopped at an area called "Bushkill Falls" which was an ideal place for families to go in the summer time as there are a couple of small waterfalls, bushwalking tracks and places for camping. We didn't go on any walks as we had seen plenty of waterfalls in our journeys so had an icecream instead. We had an interesting talk to a man who was cleaning up the area.

Back home at 3.45pm where I had a sleep and Marie read some more then prepared dinner.

## **Tuesday 9th May more sight-seeing the area.**

Travelled today 63km

We departed 5.15am and arrived at the Martz Park and Ride depot where we booked at yesterday to go to New York. We arrived there thirty minutes or so later, and parked Dimpo where I left the parking ticket on her dashboard. We didn't have long to wait inside the depot to catch the 6.20am bus. The service was quite frequent about hourly from 4am to midnight as it really was a workers bus for people to commute to the Big Apple which is about 120km east. The return journey cost us US\$31.85 each (A\$54.90) which took about 2h15mins so arriving at 8.35am. The first half was fast on I80 but as we got closer to New York there was a hold up in the thickest traffic we had ever seen.

We queued up at a couple of toll gates where there were about 15 lanes on our inward side of the highway, one has to see this to believe it. Even if I had wanted to drive ourselves Marie would not have been able to direct me as there were so many road signs and so many decisions to make. Decisions that we would have had to make in advance, which lane, exit or highway to take. Our coach by the way was the usual interstate type with toilet, the driver was a very relaxed black man so we felt quite at ease.

We crossed under the Hudson River in the Lincoln Tunnel to arrive at the New York bus depot, or station called the "Port Authority". A bit like Brisbane's Transit Centre but huge. There were bays or gates for 400, yes four hundred buses for twenty four bus and coach companies.

## **New York**

We had a cup of coffee each at a cafe in the centre before venturing out into this, the biggest, busiest city in the world. We walked around the corner and bought tickets to have two city lights types bus tours of New York at the Gray Line office.

There are two tours one can choose from, we chose the "Grand Tour" which was both tours as a package and cost us US\$35 (A\$63) each. The buses were probably the oldest buses we have ever been on but our black woman guide named Pam was excellent and so friendly. The first tour was the Downtown Tour which among so many things we saw was the Statue of Liberty.

We sat in the upper open deck to get some fresh air because of the heat. After the main city we got off the bus at the park called "Battery Park" and could have taken a ferry to the Statue but as it would have taken a few hours to complete we decided against it. Another reason was that there are many stairs to negotiate to reach her head and would have been too much for both of us. What a lovely sight from the foreshore where I took three photos.

I won't mention all the sights other than Wall Street where the money of the world circulates. One strange thing we saw was about car parking. Space being so limited in New York there were cars parked over the top of another car. The car would have been lifted by the mechanism over the one below and it's a pity we didn't see it in operation. One of the photos I took was of the Bell Atlantic truck with the biggest temporary cable I have ever seen disappearing down into the ground, see the photo in the album.

Back to our starting point we had lunch at a Burger King on West 42nd Street which had about ten computers set up for Internet use and more upstairs, quite impressive. We talked to a policeman whose area was the one and only Times Square. He told us how the crime rate had dropped so dramatically in the last couple of years to a point where crime was almost nil. We did not feel unsafe anywhere but of course we weren't there at night.

As I had previously mentioned, this part of the USA were experiencing a heat wave which certainly was the case so we didn't go upstairs of the bus for our second tour called the Uptown Tour. Pam was our guide again so that pleased us. By this time the temperature must have been about 30c so after awhile she left the door of the rattly bus open to let some air in. Again I won't mention all the sites but Harlem was good to see. Many two/three story apartment buildings, the ones we see in American movies where there are big wide steps leading up from the footpath to the front door, so typical.

She got the driver to stop in Harlem at a little street food and drink stall so we could buy something. I think I bought a couple of drinks. Near Central Park we saw where Jacky Kennedy lived, John Lennon lived and later shot, Bruce and Demi Moore lived, John MacEnroe lived as well as many more well known people.

We left the bus on our return to its starting point, the depot and walked around a few streets and in particular Times Square. I felt that this is the centre of the world as I could feel the excitement, the business world concentrated here, the mix of many cultures, the amount of people, traffic and so on.

No wonder Americans are self centered, I don't blame them really as it's in their country where the big things occur. But with this the people were so friendly to us, so helpful, so interested to hear us talk from a country so far away, down under where many said they would like to visit someday.

After a weary day we caught a Martz coach back to Stroudsburg at 5.40pm. Even though the traffic was so heavy, we did not see any accidents or smashes which again shows us that these people know how to drive. We arrived back at the Martz in Stroudsburg depot at 7.20pm where we were welcomed by Dimpo. She then drove us by mistake over the border which was only about 3km away so we had to find an exit and return through the US\$1 toll gate. We stopped at an American type diner for dinner where Marie had a steak meal and I just soup and salad.

More gas for Dimpo, US\$13.31 for 10 gallons at US\$1.32 per gallon (A\$0.50/lt). Back home at 9pm after a wonderful unforgettable big day.

### Wednesday 10th May a rest day

Temperature 21c

A bit cooler with some thunder and rain, a good day to stay home. I wanted a rest before our next leg of our journey. Marie commented that "everyone seems to have a Web site" which was quite correct as I figured the USA is about a year advanced in the use of the Internet than in Australia. Marie was a little sunburnt from the hot sun on our first tour in the old bus in the New York yesterday.

We watched three Fred Astaire movies during the day. We 'phoned Maria again also. By afternoon the temperature had dropped to 8c. We watched another movie with Glen Ford in "The Blackboard Jungle", remember that movie?

### Thursday 11th May more sight-seeing the area.

Travelled today 130km

Temperature 21c

We departed at 9.15am to visit Stroudsburg and see the shops. We found a toy shop with mainly toy soldiers of various wars. We had a long talk to the man who did know about Anzac Day and the Boer War. He said that he usually made a special display for the 11th of November when most locals would ask him what it was about, Armistice Day.

We called into a bank to buy some special American \$1 gold coins. For some reason \$1 coins are not popular in the USA so the \$1 bill (note) is used. There is a growing need by businesses to use the coin such as in coin vending machines. They don' have a \$2 coin so often one sees people stuffing many \$1 notes into machines. We also bought some 50cent coins which were printed with the name of state on them. This was another occasion that Marie showed in this case the two bank teller women our pretty and different sized notes, they were so interested.

Then another games shop where the young man made an effort to give some space for young people to play games, board type games so as to get them off the streets. Very commendable! Marie bought some Pokemon cards for our grandchildren, the man even gave some without charge. We had lunch at a nice little cafe, which still had some of the decor of a few years ago and we thought it also reflected the fact that Stroudsburg is a small country town. On the way back we stopped at the Wal-Mart for groceries then home at 3pm.

We packed our suitcases ready to leave tomorrow as again we decided we would leave a day earlier. The normal stay in the RCI resorts is seven nights but one can leave at anytime.

On the TV the population of the USA was announced being 274 million and India' swas 1 billion. There was a squirrel on our roof that seemed to look at us and say "feed me please" which of course we did.

### Friday 12th May to Corning

Travelled today 302km

Temperature 12c

This morning we saw a skunk below our unit, black with the white band on its back.

We had to ring the office to arrange our checkout which meant that someone had to come to our unit to do a quick check, to check if we had stolen anything. Not all resorts do this but we don' blame them as some unscrupulous people do steal things. The man who came was impressed at the tidy manner that we left our unit. We drove off at 9.30am on 209 north and stopped at Milford to have a look see at a craft shop then toilets at a pub. A pretty area where we saw a lot of wild wisteria and dogwood during most of the mornings travel.



Just west of Melford we entered I84 which runs through New York State and Connecticut. Two lanes each way as usual with the divide strip. Just past Scranton we exited I81 onto 6 and arrived in our second Dalton town at noon.



## Dalton, our second

We parked at the back of the fire station where its siren went off for what we don't know as there was no activity at the station. We had our picnic lunch from the back of Dimpo while there, then over to the old hotel where we enjoyed a cup of coffee each. We told the woman our surname was D' Alton and she was so amazed that she gave Marie a hug and wouldn't accept payment for our coffee, so Marie gave her a koala pin. We continued on 6 then 220 north and crossed the border into New York State at 2.20pm.

## New York State

About 30km onward at Elmira there was a heavy downpour which was the heaviest we had driven through.

The highway was number 17 where we soon exited at Corning where Corning glassware is manufactured.

## Corning

We booked into the GateHouse Motel for US\$49.95 with Dimpo parked outside our door. We made our own dinner tonight and watched a movie on TV called The Young Philadelphians with Paul Newman.

### Saturday 13th May to Niagara Falls

Travelled today 304km

Temperature 18c

We continued on highway I390 and exited firstly to buy gas for Dimpo 12 gallons for US\$18.25 then onward to another town called Dalton arriving there at about 10am.

## Dalton, our third

We drove up and down a couple of streets of the small town. The school reminded me of the one I attended in Hobart. We had morning tea in the little shop called "Dalton General Store" but the owner was so busy that he didn't have a long discussion with us even after we told him our surname was D' Alton. His two young children were there and spoke to us for awhile and so Marie gave them a book about Queensland.

I must mention here that the people like garden decorations such as plastic flowers, animals, rotating fans and similar gadgets.



Continuing northward on 63 through Batavia, we entered I90 which was very busy and just before Buffalo we visited the Visitor Centre and obtained lots of information in particular where the airport was because we would be flying from here to Seattle in a few days time.

We had some trouble finding our way but after driving through another toll gate costing the measly sum of US50 cents we missed the main bridge to Canada. We eventually came to the next one a couple of kilometres further north called the "South Grand Island Bridge" paying a toll of US50 cents.



This is on I190 which then leads to the "Lewiston Queenston Bridge" where after crossing over it and paying a toll US\$2.50 (A\$4.50) we had to stop at the Canadian Customs and Immigration station, the time being 2.15pm. We didn't have any Canadian cash so we paid the toll with US cash.

We both had to get out of the car and show our Passports to the very friendly people. They gave us a little Canadian flag stickpin each. A nice gesture! Our next task was to go to the money exchange place that was only a few metres away from the Customs building we just visited. We cashed a US\$500 Thomas Cook Travellers cheque into Canadian money, CAN\$725.75. The exchange rate was CAN\$0.92 to A\$1, a bit better for us than the US\$.



End Album #7 commence Album #8

## Canada Ontario



## Niagara Falls

The exchange rate was US\$1 to CAN\$1.44  
Canada Population - 10,753,573 (1996)  
Capital - Toronto (provincial)  
Population - 2,400,000 - 1st  
Ontario entered Dominion - 1 July 1867  
Motto - Ut Incepit Fidelis Sic Permanet (Loyal She Began, Loyal She Remains)  
Flower - White trillium

We soon found our way without problems to Niagara Falls driving on the Niagara Parkway. We stopped at the Centennial Lilac Gardens and the floral clock. This clock is unusual as it had a second hand. Another 3km or so we booked into "Henri" Motel for CAN\$53 (A\$54). We paid with an US\$ travellers cheque, this was at 3.30pm. We drove into town and saw the great Niagara Falls, the highlight of our journey so far. Wow!!

We parked Dimpo near the Skylon Tower for CAN\$5 then walked along the edge with thousands of other people. I went to the top of the tower costing CAN\$7.50 which has a fantastic view all the way around, 360 degrees. Marie did some shopping then we met and had dinner in the cafe with a wonderful view of the Falls. We then drove to the main street and walked back to the Falls to see the Falls lit up by coloured lights at 9pm. Yes it was just dark enough.

### Sunday 14th May another night here.

Travelled today 34km  
Temperature 13c

Mother' Day. A nice place to celebrate Mothers Day with Marie. We sorted out the food that we would not be able to take with us tomorrow on the aircraft to Seattle. We would give it to the motel owner. Big fires were burning in the USA in Los Alamos in New Mexico which is a state on the border of Mexico, a long way away. (At the time I type this, September 2000, there are still many fires still burning in the USA).

We drove back to the floral clock then the Botanical Gardens taking some slide photos to show the CSSQ members. I had loaded my camera with slide film ready for here and most importantly the Butchart Gardens on Victoria Island near Vancouver, on the west coast.

We went back home to have lunch then drove back to the Niagara Falls area and parked Dimpo in the same park as we did yesterday. Marie was not going on the Maid of the Mist boat tour as she had a cold and getting wet would not help her to get rid of it. So she did some shopping and looking while I took the tour. The tour is well organised which cost me CAN\$8.50 (A\$9.55).

One has to walk down from the street level which is equivalent to about ten flights of stairs. At the jetty everyone was given blue plastic rain coats which were very hard to put on due to the continuous wind created by the falls. The boat held about two hundred people and did not go through the fall but within about 50mt of it, quite close enough. It was very windy, wet, cold and rugged. I managed to take only one photo before it got too windy and wet. The tour would not have been any good for Marie as we expected, it was too cold and wet.

Back on shore I replaced my wet socks as the motel woman had suggested then met Marie up the street.

The two streets here have all the various tourist places, House of Horrors, Wax Works, Guineas Book of Records and many rides for children and adults. A very touristy busy place. Then we drove onto the Botanical Gardens to see more colourful plants and little birds inside the glass house. Also some beautiful large hydrangers and some succulents which Marie said were in good condition. We drove a bit further on to a little lake where we just sat in the car because it was so peaceful and quiet.

Then back to the main street where we enjoyed dinner at the Hard Times Cafe costing CAN\$38 for both of us. Marie ordered Steak Ribs with baked potato and beans and carrots. She also had horse radish with it to help chase her cold away. I had Chicken Mexicana.

### Monday 15th May to Buffalo.

Travelled today 75.5km  
Temperature 7c

We drove along past the Niagara Falls for the last time and because it was so early there were only about twenty people watching the beautiful falls. We drove to Fort Erie which was a fort that protected Canada when they were at war with the USA. We had morning tea in the little cafe which had an English flavour. The woman even warmed our muffins. Then over the Rainbow Bridge back into the USA.

## USA again

We had to stop briefly at the USA customs gate then on into Buffalo.

## Buffalo

What a quiet city, we think another American city that has died but are trying to resurrect it with a very modern tramway system.

We parked Dimpo and walked and had our lunch in the main street where we bought hotdogs from a hot dog stall. As we had planned we found the hotels near the Buffalo Airport and booked into the Wellesley Inn which is a modern multistory motel with Dimpo parked safely next to the office. The cost for the night was US\$62.15 (A\$107.15) which was quite reasonable as we were only about 2km from the airport, close.

We took our suitcases up to pack ready for the air trip tomorrow. The room numbers and some other signs were also printed in braille which was a great idea, great for blind people. This motel actually had coffee and tea making facilities, a coffee maker with real coffee and a microwave oven. We had dinner at the Dennys Restaurant next door, Marie had chicken wings, onion rings, chips with chilli sauce while I wasn't very hungry so I had a waffle with strawberries and cream. All for about US\$12.



**Tuesday 16th to Seattle.**

Travelled today 4km  
 Temperature 8c



Up early to catch our American Airlines flight to Chicago then to Seattle. We arrived at the Rental Car area at the airport at about 8am and said our good-byes to Dimpo, she was a very good car for us. It's always a bit sad to leave a rental car as one does become a little attached to them as our rental periods are usually more than the normal seven days that many people rent a car. The total kilometres she took us was 4833km. We had a coffee in the airport cafe where there was a big photo advertising the Niagara Falls but it was of the American Falls which is nowhere near as spectacular as the Canadian Falls.

At the baggage and ticketing counter we learnt that our original flight number had been changed from AA1271 (American Airlines) to AA483 but the departure times were the same being 10am. As it appears the norm in the USA we sat in the plane, a DC MD-80 on the tarmac for twenty minutes in the queue before taking off. We arrived at the Chicago Ohare Airport at 11.15am but to us it was 12.15pm as we hadn't bothered to change our watches. We had a long walk in the terminal to get to the departure lounge which was not the best for Marie as it affected her lungs.

We boarded AA1369 at about 11.25am then had to wait on the tarmac again in another queue, this time about thirty minutes during which time I counted about fifty aircraft that landed and took off, a very busy airport. In the photo I took of the line up of aircraft I counted eleven waiting behind us, next stop Seattle.

I had a window seat so I saw some good scenery, one photo in the album is probably in Washington State of Mount Rainier with plenty of snow. By the way, there is no smoking on all American Airlines aircraft so perhaps all other US airlines have the same policy.

We arrived at Seattle (Seatac) at 2.30pm but to us it was 6.30pm so we were becoming tired, a long day.

**Washington State**

**Seattle**



We signed for our next rental car at the Alamo Office and again I asked what an update would cost and the reply was "US\$90" (A\$155) so I said "yes, we will upgrade". The extras we couldn't pay in Australia for taxes, insurance etc came to US\$598 (A\$1031). Down at the collection office we took charge of a Buick Regal 3800 V6 Series II, a very nice silver sedan a bit bigger than the Toyota, Dimplo.



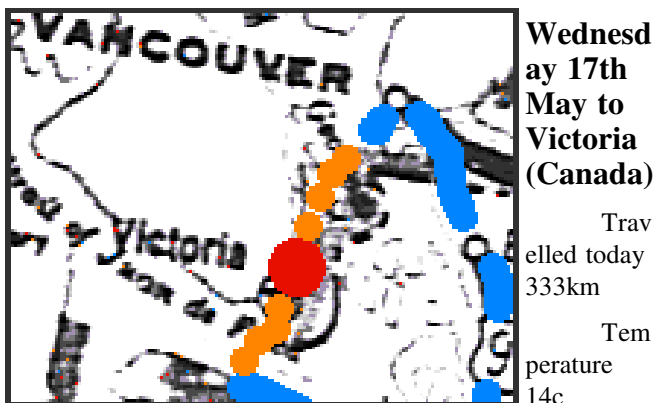
More fancy things in this car with its registration number being 426 LBR so we nicknamed her "Ladybird". Another almost new vehicle having been driven only 9771km. As I had been driving a left hand drive car only hours ago I was quite confident so we departed the Seatac Airport within minutes.

The Alamo man was very helpful and directed us to a hotel closeby and so within a kilometre or so we came across a couple of other motels that would be cheaper. We booked into the Seatac Inn for US\$52. It was the usual basic motel run or owned by Indians or Pakistanis and clean. Ladybird was parked outside our door.

I had a look under the bonnet and one of the motels guests, a black man said "the Buick is a great car".

I told him that it wasn't ours but a rental. I read some of the owners manual about the cruise control, the electric adjustable warmed drivers seat, CD player and other items I needed to know about.

For dinner we walked next door to a Dennys' s Restaurant where we both had chicken. I later walked up to a service station and purchased some milk.



**Wednesday 17th May to Victoria (Canada)**

Traveled today 333km

Temperature 14c

Some rain this morning and colder again. We departed at 7am and decided to take the smaller 99 which took us close to the harbour of Seattle. Elliot Bay is on the western side of the city which was somewhat an ugly sight. The wharves with the usual shipping machinery is only 500m from the city streets. This means that to us it was an unattractive city. We exited the 99 and drove up and down a few streets of the city which is about the size of Brisbane. It was too dark for Marie to take photos with her camera while in the car and moving.

We drove back onto 99 and stopped about 10km north for morning coffee at a McDonalds. As I mentioned before that Ladybird had many fancy features so I will tell the reader about the radio/CD controls. These are also on the steering wheel, the volume, tone, stations select, CD, station search and so on. Very fancy! We tuned into a Canadian radio station on the AM band, AM600. At last a radio station that played the type of music we liked.

Some rock-n-roll and some decades before and after type music. A breath of fresh air as the saying goes. Then onto Canada on I5. The Washington State road signs have Washington' s face depicted on them, some other states have other drawings on theirs.

## Canada British Columbia Victoria

Canada Population - 10,753,573 (1996)

Largest city - Vancouver

Capital - Victoria (provincial)

Population - approx 64,000

British Columbia entered Dominion - 1 July 1867

Motto - Splendor Sine Occasu (Unfailing Splendor)

Flower - Dogwood blossom

We drove through Vancouver and stopped at a rather nondescript park to have our picnic lunch which by this time, noon was windy and cold, perhaps 12c. We then drove through Gastown which was an old area rejuvenated with many old buildings. We couldn't park anywhere closeby so we drove through it but I did catch a glimpse of the Steam Clock.

We didn't plan to sightsee Vancouver as our main destination was the Butchart Gardens area on Vancouver Island. We drove about 30km southward from Vancouver to Tsawwassen which is one of the ports where various ferry boats can be boarded to go to Vancouver Island and other places closeby. We arrived there at 1.45pm and lined up behind about two hundred other cars. The next departure was 3pm so we had a long wait by which time there were just as many cars behind us as there were in front. The port is very well conducted and has a building with a shop where food, drink and other nick nacks can be purchased.

Our ferry was a very modern vessel with the usual food, drink and souvenir shop on board. The journey cost us CAN\$8.50 (A\$9.24) each and CAN\$27.00 (A\$29.34) for Ladybird. We arrived at the port, Swartz Bay at 5pm so being a two hour journey. We drove past the road to the Butchart Gardens to find accommodation in Victoria at "The Victoria Fountain Inn" which cost CAN\$46.80 (A\$50.87) per night and double that for two nights which we needed. The Canadian man who owned the Inn was very friendly and he said that because he liked Australians and we were the third group of Australians that booked in today, we could have an apartment instead of the normal room, for the same price of a room. Great!

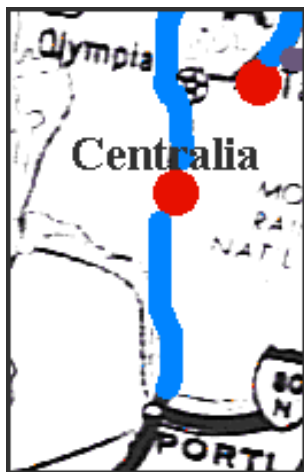
## Victoria

The apartment had a kitchen with oven, refrigerator, some cooking utensils and cutlery. A lounge room, toilet, bathroom and bedroom. After settling in we asked him where was a good place to eat nearby, he suggested a Chinese Restaurant up the street which we had a little difficulty finding as it didn't have the usual Chinese sign out front. We had a nice meal costing CAN\$15.30 but as usual too much for me so we took a doggy bag home.

### Thursday 18th May to Butchart Gardens

Travelled today 48km  
 Temperature 53f (11c)

Canada still uses the old imperial measurements in many cases, I suppose because Canada is next to the USA it is hard for them to change.



Today was one of the main sight-seeing places that we had planned, the beautiful Butchart Gardens. We departed for the short drive to the gardens, arriving at 8.20am, but much too early as it didn't open until 9am. We waited in the car and being the first vehicle we were stopped next to the entry gates.

Entry was CAN\$12.75 (A\$13.85) each which is really quite reasonable. Please read or at least view the photos in the brochures and/or the photos we took in the photo album.

Marie and I agree that these gardens were the best we have ever seen.

As people may know, I am no gardener but I do enjoy seeing beautiful flowers and smelling the perfume that many flowers have. We walked and Marie took many print photos while I concentrated on taking photos on slide film. I took many closeup photos, most to be shown at the CSSQ (cactus and succulent club) of which Marie is a member. Because we were there early there were not many people about but by lunch time the gardens were crowded. We had lunch in one of the restaurants called "The Blue Poppy Restaurant" which was suitably decorated with lots of real flowers, no plastic ones here.

We walked around some more then 'phoned Marie and as always it was great to hear her voice. We drove back to Victoria which by the way is the Capital City of British Columbia and stopped at a shopping centre where I purchased a Canadian flag.

Marie bought some Pokemon things. All our grandchildren are crazy over Pokemon cards. Back home for dinner Marie heated up the Chinese meals from the doggy bag. It started to rain, we were so thankful it didn't during our lovely time at the Butchart Gardens.

The TV news told us that today twenty years ago, Mount Saint Helens erupted. Mount Saint Helens is in Washington State (USA) and we hoped to visit it in a day or so.

### Friday 19th May to Centralia.

Travelled today 234km  
 Temperature 10c

A heavy fog greeted us this morning as we departed at 7.45am and drove a couple of kilometres to the ferry boat port just across the road from the B.C. Parliament house. Victoria, although is the Capital City of B.C. it's population is small, about 64,000. We parked in the queue with about a hundred other cars then went into the office and booked our passage costing CAN\$53.65 (A\$62) (US\$36) us and Ladybird. We had time to walk over to the Parliament House and viewed down into the chamber which of course was empty at the time.



We were back to Ladybird at 9.30am to answer a couple of questions from a US Customs woman. We then drove onto the ferry M.V. Coho, a smaller vessel than the one from Vancouver. The ferry departed at 10.35am at which time we said our good-byes to Canada, most likely for ever.

After a smooth journey we arrived back in the USA at 12.35pm.

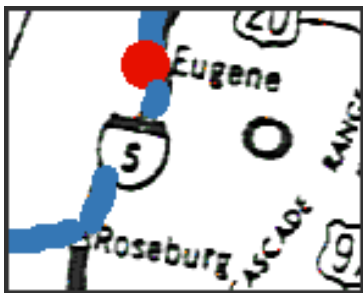
## Back into the USA

# Washington State

The ferry docked in Port Angeles which is on 101, at this point West and East. We were again asked a couple of questions by the US Customs man but soon we were driving on 101 East which hugs the coastline just across the way from Seattle. We stopped for the first drink that we bought for Ladybird, US\$16 for 10 gallons of gas. The drive on this part of 101 was very picturesque and windy with views across the Hood Canal to Seattle.

We drove past the city of Olympia which is the Capital City of Washington State. This is where we joined I5/12 so the traffic was very busy. We exited at about 4pm at Centralia and booked into a "Motel 6" for US\$46 (A\$79.30) Motel 6 is another of the modern motel chains in the US which was very clean but no bath, just a shower.

For dinner we walked to the "Country Cousin Restaurant" down the street which was decorated in a farm house theme, very cute. There was even the sound of a rooster as we entered it. I had an omelette and Marie pork steak and salad.



We then walked to the Safeway

supermarket for our usual groceries. The checkout was the most modern we have ever seen, instead of the woman giving Marie her change in her hand, she had to collect it from a machine. This store was also open 24 hours per day.

## Saturday 20th May to Eugene

Travelled today 373km  
Temperature 16c

We departed at 8am driving on I5 then exited onto 505 to visit the Mount St. Helens area visitor Centre arriving early but we only had to wait a short time for its opening at 9am. We were in luck because entry was free for the weekend due to the fact that Mount St. Helens erupted twenty years ago on 18th May 1980. It was a terrible disaster which killed fiftyseven people and flattened many forests.

We watched a very interesting movie and then viewed the many displays. As the distance to the closest viewing area of the mountain was about two hours drive over rough road, we decided to not go there. Just outside the centre a clearing through the trees allowed photos to be taken of the mountain. The mountain with its peak blown off was clearly visible so I took one photo.

We joined I5 and soon drove through Vancouver, no not in Canada but in Washington State. Crossing over the Columbia River which is the border just before noon we drove around Portland. Portland has a population of about 450,000 people.

# Oregon

Capital - Salem  
Entered Union - February 14,1859 (33rd)  
Population - 3,203,735 (29th)  
Largest City - Portland  
Presidents - None Yet  
Oregon State Symbols  
Nickname - Beaver State  
Motto - "The Union"  
Song - "Oregon, My Oregon"  
Bird - Western Meadowlark  
Animal - Beaver  
Flower - Oregon Grape  
Tree - Douglas Fir  
Gem-Stone - Thunder Egg

We exited into a rest park where we had our picnic lunch. There was also a small caravan set up to give free cups of tea or coffee to weary travellers, a good idea. We fed some birds too then continued until Woodburn where we exited I5 to see some back country. On 99East we saw some pretty scenery with flower and vegetable gardens. See the photo in the album of the iris flowers. We joined I5 at Salem where we stopped for more gas for Ladybird.

I started to pump the gas myself when a man called out and told me to stop. It was a law in Oregon that the gas must be pumped by a station worker. Wow! 10 gallons costing US\$15.40. We became aware that Ladybird was a thirstier car as she had six little cylinders to feed, but a very comfortable car. We saw lots of lupins and gorse on the road side and many gardens had rhododendrons in flower, beautiful.

At Albany we exited I5 again onto 99 where the country was flat and uninteresting.



## Eugene

We arrived in Eugene taking a wrong turn but soon found our way back. The highway splits before the town, three lanes going one way and a block away the other three lanes going the other way.

We booked into a motel called "Classic Residence Inn" for US\$46 (A\$79.30). The motel was owned/run by Indians, our room had a kitchen with refrigerator.

We cooked our own dinner in our room of this nice looking motel. See the photo in the album showing Marie and Ladybird at the front. A bright blue roof with little peaks.

## Sunday 21st May to Gold Beach.

Travelled today 350km



Temperature 19c

The temperature was gradually increasing as we had left the nice cold/cool weather behind. Back onto I5 through some hilly country stopping at another Oregon rest stop. We exited at Roseburg onto 42 West and through very picturesque country. I stopped to take photos of a road sign which just happened to be near a mobile home sales place. We went in and introduced ourselves and the man was so thrilled that we wanted to find out about their mobile homes or mobile homes in general.

Please view the photos and the two sheets showing the plans in the album. The smaller one price was US\$100,000 (A\$172,413). The outside appearance does not reflect the inside quality of them which is really quite modern and up to date. They are built in sections about 3mt wide so they can be transported over the roadway system. The smaller home is two sections joined together and the bigger one is made up from three sections.



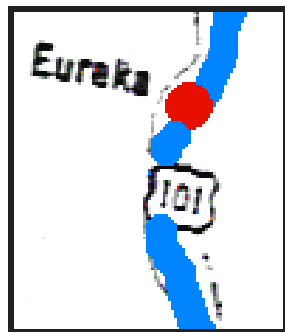
As we continued the country became even more picturesque until we came upon one of the many covered bridges in the US. I have marked this on the main map of Oregon about 15km east of Myrtle Point.

The covered bridge is at Sandy Creek, yes there are also plenty of Sandy Creeks in the US. The bridge was set up with tables and seats so we had our picnic lunch on the bridge. Some covered bridges are no longer in use so it was possible to have it here on the bridge, a bit strange though.

Marie caught a glimpse of a bear paddling in a river and we also saw small fields where cranberries are grown, a sort of rice paddy field, the fruit are harvested in October.

We reached the Pacific Ocean at Port Orford and saw it for the first time in the US since we were here in 1988. As beautiful as ever, which ever country one is in. We were now driving on 101 and being an odd number means that it is a North-South road or highway. 101 starts at Port Angeles where the Ferry we caught from Victoria in Canada landed and follows the west coast south to Los Angeles. In other words a long highway which once was the main interstate highway.

We drove down a hill which overlooks Gold Beach so we got a good view of the town.



## Gold Beach

We booked into the "Sand n Sea Motel" at 3pm which was on 101 with a parking spot outside our door. This cost US\$48 (A\$82.75) and had a small kitchen with coffee making facilities. This is where we first experienced the fog, thick fog. Across the highway we bought Ladybird another drink, US\$16.60 for 10 gallons. We walked down to the beach that was only 200mt away where I was determined to have a brief paddle in the water. My paddle was very brief, as I had never had such cold feet after standing in the water for only about five seconds, cold!

The motel woman suggested we have dinner at a seafood restaurant down the street at "The Chowder Head Restaurant" which was well decorated and the food delicious. Marie had fresh salmon steak, chips and salad and I enjoyed shrimp salad although I could only eat half of it.

## Monday 22nd May to Eureka.

Travelled today 240km

Temperature 16c

We were so pleased that our planning was going to plan, our night stops were close to where we planned and we were not travelling too far each day so that we could have a walk around the town or city where we were that night.

We departed at 9am still on 101 with the fog as thick as ever. Marie says it is smog but I don't agree. It does look more like smog as it's not the usual white look but more of a dirty grey colour. One of our sites to see today were the Redwood forests. We soon crossed into California at 10am and had to stop at a check gate for a fruit and vegetable inspection. The man gave us a map of the area which included the Redwood Forests.

## California

Nickname - Golden State  
Motto - "Eureka" - "I Have Found It"

Song - "I Love You California"

Bird - California Valley Quail

Animal - California Grizzly Bear - EXTINCT

Flower - Golden Poppy

Tree - California Redwood

Gem-Stone - Benitoite

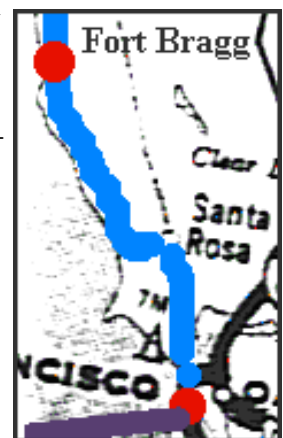
Capital - Sacramento

Entered Union - Sept. 09, 1850 (31st)

Population - 31,878,234 (1st)

Largest City - Los Angeles

Presidents (1) - Richard Milhouse Nixon



We drove on a small road of the Redwood National Park which became a one lane width dirt track winding through and around giant redwood trees, magnificent! We drove through another covered bridge, so charming.

At 2pm we arrived at Eureka and booked into the "Town House Motel" costing US\$41 (A\$70.70)

End Album #8 commence Album #9 last album

## Eureka

The motel was a two story one with the accommodation on the second floor and the car parking underneath, the ground floor. This is what one expects at larger multistory motels but not at a small motel such as this one.

The motel was owned or run by a South African white man and also had coffee making facilities. I had made up another packet of brochures to post home so we went to the post office, this packet cost US\$20.88 (A\$36) to send by seemail.

The town is another pretty town which was an important port in years gone by where they have restored many old buildings. It was a pleasure to walk the town where we came across a second hand junk shop which probably had the best variety of second hand items for sale we had ever seen anywhere.

We walked quite awhile then to a take away pizza place where we sat in to have dinner, a thick layer of ingredients on the delicious pizza made up for the sparse interior. On the way back home we bought more bread and milk.

### Tuesday 23rd May to Fort Bragg.

Travelled today 264km

Temperature 12c

We departed at 8.15am to the sounds of sirens which stopped the traffic. Police cars came up behind us to attend to something at a tall building across the highway. It was a bit frightening at first. We had to stop but within a minute we moved off as we saw a lot of people standing around outside the building.



Still travelling on 101 which now did not follow the coast and past a town named "Alton" then at Pepperwood we exited 101 to drive on "The Avenue of the Giants" which was many years ago 101 but now a gentle quiet drive through giant Redwood trees.

The Avenue is about 50km in length with so many natural things to see. We stopped at a Visitor Centre where there is the stump of one of the trees laying on its side with markings denoting past centuries. One marking showed how wide the tree was when the Magna Carta was signed in 1215, now that is magnificent! Further on is another attraction called the "Chandelier Tree" where a car can be driven through which of course we did. See the photo in the album.

Back onto 101 for a short time then westward onto 1 which closely followed the coast but unfortunately it was foggy again. While on the Avenue of Giants we had driven under and over 101 at various points and arrived at Fort Bragg.

We noticed plenty of motels but drove through the town and arrived at Mendocino which is about 20km further south, a trendy expensive craft town. I checked at a bed and breakfast but the nights stay would have cost us about US\$200 so we drove back north to Fort Bragg arriving at 2pm where we booked into one of the many motels, this one was the "Driftwood Motel" which cost us US\$48.40 (A\$82.75) and Ladybird parked outside our door.

## Fort Bragg

Another drink for thirsty Ladybird costing US\$19 for 10 gallons (A\$0.71/lit) which I think was the most we ever paid in the US. The room was big with the usual CTV and a walk in wardrobe. The fittings were modern of glass topped table and marble looking tiles.

I have not mentioned before this but as the temperature was rising we were keeping our milk cool by packing ice around the packet or plastic bottle. The ice is free in most motels that we had been in so no extra expense there. We had dinner across the road at Dennys where Marie enjoyed buffalo chicken wings and for me sausages and hash browns. We walked around and came across a shop with a cactus and succulent garden, see the Yankee one dollar bill on pink flowers in the photo in the album. We purchased a bottle of coffee brandy which was supposed to help soothe Marie's sore throat! At home we watched an old movie on the TV called "Rio Bravo" which starred John Wayne, Dean Martin, Ricky Nelson and Angie Dickensen.

### Wednesday 24th May to San Francisco.

Travelled today 299km

Temperature 15c

We departed at 8.15am with the fog again about 100mt visibility so driving through it was a bit tedious. The road is within 20mt of the edge of the cliffs in places, which are about 50 mt high. It reminded us a little of The Ring of Kerry in Ireland. We bought more gas for Ladybird costing US\$9.15 for 5 gallons then decided we had enough of this foggy driving so we turned eastward on 116 at Jenner through more pretty countryside.

I took a photo to show the controls on the steering wheel of Ladybird which is in the album. We had our picnic lunch in a town called Forrestville beside a small shopping centre. By now the area looked like a suburb of San Francisco so we knew we would be there soon.

## San Francisco

We crossed over the famous Golden Gate Bridge which we could not see the top of due to the fog. We booked into a motel called "Lanai Motel" in Lombard Street for US\$68.40 (A\$117.9) and because we suspected if we drove closer to the city the accommodation prices would have been very high.

Anyway I had to pay a ' phone deposit of US\$10 because we needed to ' phone American Airlines to confirm our departure and to ring the RCI resort in Hawaii.

We tried to cash some of our US Thomas Cook Travelers cheques but the US\$500 was too big so we would try Uptown tomorrow. For dinner we went to a restaurant called "Mel' Drive In" which was a very popular place to eat at and have takeaways from, decades ago. The waiters and waitresses used to move around quickly on roller skates to serve people inside as well as the people in cars wanting take aways. A very interesting place still with many photos of days past where we enjoyed a meal called "Lumber Jack".

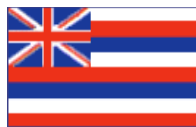
I also had pancakes with maple syrup, yummy.

## Thursday 25th May to sightsee San Francisco .

Travelled today 38km

Temperature 13c

Our last day on the USA mainland. We rose at 6am after a distressful night. At about 8pm some dark people in the room next to ours played a stereo radio of disc player very loud but we erred on the side of caution by not telling them to turn the volume down. It lasted until midnight. During the early hours of the morning we jumped out of bed to the noise of some black people yelling in the car park right next to Ladybird. A man yelled at a woman to get in the car. Something to remember San Francisco by.



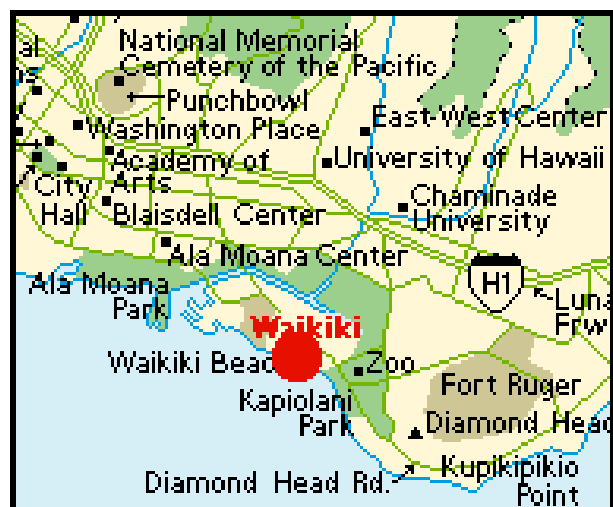
In the morning when we were packing to leave we felt a short tremor, the floor moved a little which is normal in this area of the USA. I went down to the office to get the unspent money of the telephone deposit. No one was around, another man guest was also there so we were both not very happy. At about 9am a black man in what looked like his pyjamas reluctantly gave me back some money.

We drove off saying that it was the roughest and worst accommodation we ever had in the USA. The next job was to try and cash the US\$500 travellers cheque. I had earlier ' phoned Thomas Cook and was instructed to go to the uptown office. We drove uptown which had changed a lot since we were there in 1988. We drove into a car park but because it was valet only parking we drove back out. We eventually drove all the way around to the Fisherman' s Wharf area where we intended to go any way and parked in a park there.

We caught one of the famous Trolley Tramcars uptown and went to the Thomas Cook office. The man there told us that Americans don' like changing such a high value as US\$500 because they are too easy to counterfeit. We also cashed CAN\$200. We caught another Trolley Tram and got off at the Tramway Museum which was very interesting. They also had many photographs of the 1906 earthquake. Then back to the Wharf where we enjoyed a simple fish and chips lunch.

Back to Ladybird and we paid US\$15 to park there for three hours, not cheap!

We drove around a few blocks to find Lombard Street, the section that is called the "Crookedest Street" and is the one that is always pictured in most San Francisco tourist information. We drove down it again like we did in 1988, what wonderful memories.



We then said good-bye to San Francisco as we drove on 101 to check out the airport. The exit to it which we most likely would have to take tomorrow looked easy enough so we didn't take it. We took another exit to find accommodation which was a few minutes away at suburb called "San Bruno". On the way we filled up Ladybird's gas tank in readiness for her return costing US\$9.12 for 5 gallons. We then found and booked into a "Budget Motel" for US\$71.50.

It was going to be easy in the morning to get to the airport and leave Ladybird. This motel was also owned or operated by Indians. For dinner we walked around the corner to a Spanish or Mexican restaurant where Marie had a burrito and I strawberries on pancakes. Back home we packed again and I cleaned another rental car.

## Friday 26th May to Hawaii.

Temperature 13c

Up at 6am to arrive at the Alamo Rental office by 7am which we did. Everything went OK although not such a sad occasion because Ladybird was ours for such a short time. From Alamo we were taken in a minibus to the terminal which was about 5km away. We saw some of the construction progressing for the new huge San Francisco airport, a new generation airport that they say will accommodate the next generation of huge aircraft.

An airport man at checkin told us if we had any film in the suitcases to take it out. I took it out then after the machine scanned it I put it back. We had a quick coffee and bun each for our breakfast then boarded our American Airlines flight 39 on a DC10 at 9am for Honolulu.

The 5hr 30min flight was smooth which arrived in Honolulu at 11.30am. We caught a taxi costing US\$25 to the RCI resort called "Imperial Hawaii Vacation Club" which is on Waikiki Beach. The checkin on the ground floor was friendly at this resort which was really a hotel.

## Hawaii

Nickname - Aloha State - Paradise of the Pacific  
Motto - "The Life of the Land is Perpetuated in Righteousness"  
Song - "Hawaii Pono"  
Bird - Nene (Hawaiian Goose)  
Animal - Humpback Whale  
Flower - Hibiscus  
Tree - KuKui (Candlenut)  
Gem-Stone - Not Yet  
Entered Union - Aug. 21, 1959 (50th)  
Capital - Honolulu  
Population - 1,183,723 (41st)  
Largest City - Honolulu  
Presidents - None Yet

The Bell Hop took us and our luggage up to our apartment on the 18th floor. What fantastic views from our unit. Outside both our bedroom and the lounge room were little balconies but Marie was not game to go out onto them to get better views. A bit too high! After settling in we went down to the office and booked a tour to the Pearl Harbour area which cost US\$35 (A\$60.35) each for Tuesday.

We walked in summer clothes to the beach and some shops in what could have been the Gold Coast. No more car driving for me and no map reading for Marie so the last few days were going to be very restful. For dinner we went to one of the many restaurants five doors away where Marie had steak and salad while I had eggs and beef hash. Back home we both went to the top of the resort which was the 26th floor which had a small swimming pool from where we saw a lovely sunset.

We went back again to the floor below which is a sort of entertainment area and watched the nightly fireworks which were a bit disappointing. We see better from our home in Toowong.

## Saturday 27th May to sightsee Waikiki.

Temperature

Marie walked to some shops about 2km away to a big shopping centre called "Ala Moana". I visited the U.S.A Army Museum which was free. It was most interesting and mainly about the history of the Hawaiian Islands even before it became a state of the USA. Of course the main display and video was about the bombing by the Japanese of Pearl Harbour which brought the US into WWII. We were both back home for a little lunch of noodles. Marie had purchased various jewelry made from shells and other little gifts and souvenirs.

I walked the short distance to Waikiki Beach for a look at their famous beach and a swim. To my surprise I discovered that there are lots of large flat rocks within about 10mt of the water line, about knee high. I ventured out to neck high and it was still rocky and no surf.

The surf was quite a way out, perhaps 500mt so it was a long way to swim if one wanted to do any surfing. This is apparently like this for half of the year, not like at the Gold Coast with the surf within a few metres, very disappointing for surfers I would think.

When I returned I had a swim in the pool on the top floor of the hotel, where there were no rocks. At 5.45pm we had dinner at another Dennys which was next to the hotel. Marie had chicken, rice and fries and I had pea soup and salad.

## Sunday 28th May.

I am not giving the temperatures from now on because it was hot here, up to 25c. We went up to the 25th floor to the entertainment area and heard a talk about what attractions people could visit. Various tours around the islands and the usual night time functions. We had booked our tour to Pearl Harbour for Tuesday so we didn't bother with any others. We would be quite happy with walking around by ourselves. Marie won a box of chocolates with her lucky door number.

After that we walked to a bus stop to catch one of the very frequent buses to a big flea market close to Pearl Harbour. The Hawaiian bus driver was very informative and comical. The markets were a disappointment as most of the stalls were of clothing and jewellery, all the same things over and over again. The markets were actually in the car parking area of the sports stadium where football (gridiron) and base ball is played.

On the way back home we stopped off at the Ala Moana shopping centre which Marie visited yesterday. A very modern centre but a bit disappointing as most shops were clothing shops and expensive at that.

I took a photo of an escalator which shows down is on the left and up is on the right. The same as in Europe. We had a Chinese lunch in the food court then back home on another bus. I went up to the 25th floor again to watch and take a photo of the lovely sunset.

## Monday 29th May.

### Memorial Day

Our journey almost over, although it hasn't been as long as the five month 1997 journey, this three month one was quite long enough so we were looking forward to home and our families. We walked around the shops again and found more markets. I had seen from our unit the garbage trucks collecting but now we were in the street we could see that they do it a bit differently than in Brisbane or Australia in general.

A small machine picks up the industrial type bin and takes it to dump into the big truck which waits out in the street. We were amazed at how many Japanese looking people were in Hawaii, but we must remember that Japanese were a big percentage of the population long before WWII. Many people with a Japanese background joined the USA armed forces and fought side by side with the other races of Hawaii. Marie and I each had a mai thai drink which is a typical alcoholic drink which although was very tasty I don't think it was worth the money.

We had lunch back home then Marie went out again for more shopping and looking. We went to Davey Jones restaurant for dinner where Marie enjoyed ribs and chips and I had baked potato. We both walked to the beach before returning home.

## Tuesday 30th May to Pearl Harbour.

We were downstairs at 8.45pm to catch the special tour bus

The very friendly man told us a few facts about Hawaii and about the tour, where he would leave us and pick us up afterwards and so on. We toured the "Arizona Memorial" firstly that is reached by a small ferry boat taking 15 minutes or so for the rney. This is the main and biggest ship that was sunk by the Japanese en they attacked Pearl Harbour on day 7th of December 1941. Over thousand sailers died when the big ship sunk. The walkway is actually built over the ship where some of it protrudes out of the water by a metre or so. A very sad and solemn affair especially for Americans.



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Our bus collected us and then took us to the "USS Missouri" which was supposed to have been the last of the big battle ships ever manufactured. The USS Missouri was the ship that surrender papers were signed by the Japanese and the Allies at the end of WWII. It was a working ship until quite recently but now decommissioned. It still floats on the water though but tied to a wharf. This was very interesting too, even for Marie. The walls of some parts I saw were about 50cm thick.

Marie walked on the main deck while I ventured up and down a few stairs (ladders) and even went into the main bridge, magnificent! But one has to think, all this effort was used to destroy and defend something. A pity that humans can't put efforts to peaceful use.

Marie and some others went back home while I and the rest toured the USS submarine "Boffin" costing US\$8. My tour of this small submarine included a sound tape which was well done. Please view the photos I took, the radio room was of particular interest to me. The whole area is a memorial to 52 US submarines sunk and 3,500 submariners who were lost in WWII. Such a waste of life.

Back home by the tour bus then we had dinner at "Lewers Street Fish Market" which is a short distance from home at 5.15pm. Marie enjoyed her fish and chips and I my pork dumsims.

## Wednesday 31st May our last day.

We packed our suitcases and checked out at 10am but arranged that as our departure flight was late at night that we could have our baggage kept in storage. We caught a bus to the Honolulu downtown which was about 8km west. We stopped off at the "Lolani Palace" then walked past downtown to China Town. This was very good and had not lost it's culture like the one in Singapore.



The streets and shops were still a bit grubby, with real smells and people going this way and that way like a real Chinese market. Marie bought some womens fans and other jewellery then we walked back a few blocks to the modern downtown. It was time for lunch but to our surprise we could not find any toilets. There were plenty of food takeaway places rather than restaurants. At a KFC we bought chicken, potato, gravy and a biscuit and ate it in a little mall.

We just caught the end of a lunch time musical show in the little square, four young people playing what appeared to be traditional Hawaiian type music which was a nice ending to our journey.

We still needed toilets so I asked a couple of people where they were and finally was told there were some in one of the multistory office buildings. We went up to the first floor to what were not public toilets but for the office workers use. After many weeks on mainland US one becomes complacent so Hawaii caught us napping.

We caught another bus back home arriving at 2.30pm and collected the key so that we could use the facilities on the 26th floor. We just watched TV until 5.30pm to fill in the time. This was what many people need to do when departure flights were in the evening so the Courtesy Room and the other rooms were very useful. We went back out to a restaurant to have dinner then back up to the Courtesy Room where we both had a shower in the bathroom and changed into winter clothes.

We had arranged for a special airport bus to collect us at 7.45pm so we collected our baggage from the hotels storage room, I put my summer clothes into my suitcase then we boarded the bus to the airport. This cost us US\$7 for both of us (A\$12). We arrived at the very quiet airport and had to walk almost to one end of the terminal to wait in the Qantas departure lounge. These walkways are not covered in like most other airports we have been in so one does not cool down until entry into the lounges.

I walked back to a duty free shop to check out the scotch whiskey prices which were very expensive compared to Australian prices so I didn' purchase anything. Marie and I very rarely buy anything at the duty free shops as the prices are no cheaper for many things than at a normal shop. We had no problems at the baggage checkin although our suitcases were overweight. Mine weighted 25kg and Marie' 23kg.

### **Thursday 1st June to home.**

We boarded our Qantas QF4 flight, a Boeing 747-200B at 30 minutes after midnight, hearing the familiar Australian accent again. A couple hours or so later we crossed the International Date Line into Friday. Gee, Thursday was a short day.

### **Friday 2nd June to home.**

## **Sydney**

This aircraft did not have the video screens on the seat backs either but we managed to endure the ten hours flight time OK. We arrived in Sydney at about 6.30am so we didn' have much time to connect with our flight to Brisbane. Our travel agent assured us that it was quite quick and easy to do the transfer but we found it was not. I had wanted to ' phondohn about our arrival in Brisbane but in the rush didn' have time to do even that task.

We told the customs woman that our connecting flight was due to depart in five minutes time so she didn' t check our suitcases. We caught the transfer bus which took us to the domestic airport. We entered at number one but we had to go to departure lounge 26. By this time Marie was in some pain and we were very lucky that a little mobile car came by and the driver could see we were rushing so he let us on it.

Although Maria said she had no trouble when she and the children returned to Australia a couple of months earlier, we found it a real pain, a hassle. Just not good enough!

We boarded our Qantas Boeing 737-300 QF 508 at 8am and had a little chat with the airhostess during the flight. We soon arrived in Brisbane at 9.30am and was pleasantly surprised to be met by Maria. She drove us home, our final leg of our journey.

## **Back home**

Back home to little toy town Brisbane. That' what I call Brisbane because as the reader may agree with me that although Brisbane is spread out somewhat, the traffic, the buildings and the amount of people is small.

My weight was 63.8kg so I had gained about 3kg.

I hope the reader has enjoyed reading this book and perhaps gained some information for a future journey of your own. Thanks.

----- end -----

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