

A FAMILY TRIP TO EUROPE

by
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In 1958, Howard and I began to plan a trip to Europe for the family. We chose 1960 because that was the year for the *Passion Play* at Oberammergau.

After preparing a long list of possible sights to see and things to do, I let each member check off his/her favorites. Howie had married in 1955 and had two children, but it was agreed that a nurse would be hired to take care of them. Johnnie and Don weren't even engaged. However, by 1960, both of them were married so our party swelled from six to eight. In the meantime, Howie and Peggy had a third baby but the nurse was willing to take on a third child . . . so we were all set. A careful check before the final payment was to be made, found everyone in excellent health and nobody pregnant.

Should we divide the boys and girls into separate flights? It was decided we should all go together. Off we flew to Scotland landing at Prestwick. Peggy nearly froze to death because she was the only one who could not believe (since we were departing during a heat wave) that Scotland could be so damp and cold.

Howard carried all of the tickets which made us refer to him as our "nursing mother." We took a cue from the Mafia, and kept one of the boys on each side of him constantly. The third boy superintended the luggage—counting in and counting out, the enormous pile for eight people. We never lost a bag!

The first snag we hit was in the Hotel Washington in London . . . the one and only time that our hotel reservations were not exactly what we had ordered. However, this proved early in the trip, the unbeatable combination of four male Sanborns.

Everything went according to plan through Denmark, Switzerland, Germany, Austria and Italy. Then we reached Paris and Peggy discovered that she was pregnant again. We have learned in the intervening years to be tremendously grateful for one thing—she did NOT take Thalidamide!

We flew to Europe but had voted to take a leisurely trip home on the Queen Mary because none of the children had had a trip on a large ship. We had four beautiful staterooms side by side—or so we thought. However, in the taxi, on our way to the ship, we learned that the personnel of the Queen Mary had gone out on strike and the trip was cancelled. We turned around and fled back to the hotel. Here we were lucky enough to get the same rooms we had vacated.

We had no choice but to fly home. This gave us five more days in Paris—really not hard to take at all.

We allowed “free time” at each stop. Our system was to scatter, without consultation, and then bring everyone up to date at the dinner table. Howard and I benefitted especially by the day Johnnie and Lee discovered that the Jeu de Pomme had a magnificent exhibition of the work of Degas. Howard and I hurried there the next morning. I had not even been aware of the fact that Degas was a sculptor as well as a painter. I can still see in my mind’s-eye, those beautiful bronze horses.

At the end of the trip, there was the inevitable summing up. What was the high point for each one of us? The reason for choosing 1960 was because of the *Passion Play* at Oberammergau so this, of course, was on the original list of suggestions. When the lists were returned to me, I discovered to my surprise, that not a one had chosen Oberammergau. So that became my choice. However, when the final vote came, stating the high point of the trip, the vote was unanimous for the *Passion Play*.

My grandmother’s bracelet has a special charm for each grandchild. The little gold Mermaid Statue of Copenhagen is for Lynn. I figure that she made the trip with us even though she may not remember it.