

CANADA & NEW ENGLAND 2011

I had to wait until after New Year's 2011 to suggest this trip to Kathy, as she is still not used to planning as far ahead as I am. Anyhow, since she had never been to Eastern Canada, we opted to take a 6 day pre-cruise land tour.

It will stop at four major Eastern Canada cities; Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Quebec.



We called our travel agent, and had her make the reservations. We opted for this cruise rather than the one going the other way because we would have had to get to New York a day early, and the Brooklyn Cruise Terminal is a real zoo, from what I have read on the Cruise Critic Website. The other factor is that if we do the land tour first, we can have our laundry done on the ship, plus we just have to pack once for going home.

I booked our flights using British Airways miles, so it only cost us \$10 for 2 round trip tickets.

Otherwise, it would have been \$500 each! Our flight from LAX was scheduled to leave at 10 AM, and to avoid any traffic problems, we decided to stay down at the airport the previous night.

In checking my Best Western account, I discovered that I had enough points for a free hotel stay!

LOS ANGELES

We had a leisurely ride down to our hotel to spend the night at the airport. The next morning we took the hotel shuttle to our terminal, and discovered that for a change our gate assignment was not the furthest one in the terminal!

After we got to our gate, I looked around for the other couple we knew would be on our flight from a cruise. The lady had described herself and her husband, so they were easy to locate. We introduced ourselves and chatted for a while before boarding the plane.

TORONTO

A day or so before we left, we got an urgent e-mail from the cruise line changing our hotel from the Fairmont to the Delta. Apparently the Fairmont was undergoing renovation, and there was not enough room for our group, which numbered 150!

On the bus to the hotel, we sat next to a very nice couple, Jim and Marsha, who were from Fort Worth. I had spent time in Fort Worth on business, so we chatted about the area. We really hit it off with them, and rode right behind them on the entire bus tour. We ended up having dinner with them almost every night, they are a terrific couple.

We arrived at our hotel after fighting rush hour traffic and construction, and settled in. There was a little bag in our hotel room containing a bottle of champagne and a note of apology from the Fairmont. Kathy does not care that much for champagne, so we decided to make mimosas and have them on our balcony one day on the cruise.

The next morning we took a city tour, passing the CN tower, and heading for Niagara Falls. We passed over the Welland Canal, which lets ships pass from Lake Ontario to Lake Erie on the St. Lawrence Seaway.

Our stop was on the Canadian side of the falls, Horseshoe Falls. At 170 feet in height, we watched as 34 million gallons of water cascaded by each minute. In the distance we could also see the American Falls.



As we viewed the falls, we watched the “Maid of the Mist” boats sail up the river almost to the base of the falls. Everyone was clad in blue plastic ponchos to try and stay dry.



We were then taken to the Skylon Tower, which overlooks the falls for lunch. The view of both sides of the falls was spectacular!





After lunch we were taken to the dock to board the Maid of the Mist for our ride up to the falls. In South America, at Iguassu Falls, we were taken under the falls in an inflatable boat. No raingear involved there, we really got wet! While Niagara is a beautiful national treasure, it pales in comparison to Iguassu Falls. Our Eleanor Roosevelt said upon seeing Iguassu Falls, "Poor Niagara! This makes Niagara look like a kitchen faucet."



There is an elevator on the American side that takes you to the base of the falls, and it is possible to climb up behind the falls. We did not do that, however.



After drying off, we boarded the bus to go to Niagara on the Lake, which is sort of a tourist town. As I walked toward town, I passed a small pub. I had been to the town some years ago, so I decided to stop to sample some of the local microbrew instead and met a nice couple from Maryland. One of the things we were looking forward to on this trip was the “fall colors”. Unfortunately, we were a few weeks too early, so there were only spots of color here and there. On the way back to the bus, I spotted a small tree on which the leaves had changed, so I took a couple of “artsy” pictures.



OTTAWA

We left for Ottawa the next morning, and took a boat tour of the Thousand Islands on the St. Lawrence River. There were houses of all sizes, but the most interesting ones were on the smallest islands





The most spectacular island was the one that held Boldt Castle. It was owned by the family that owned the Waldorf Astoria Hotel. Mr. Boldt was building the castle for his wife, but four years after construction started, his wife died and he abandoned the project. It slowly was going to rack and ruin until the 1000 Island Society bought it and restored it. It is now a tourist site. Below is an aerial view I downloaded.





We arrived in Ottawa and checked into our hotel. From our window we could see the Rideau Canal, which bypasses some rapids on the St. Lawrence River. In winter the canal is partially drained and allowed to freeze. Many people actually skate to work!



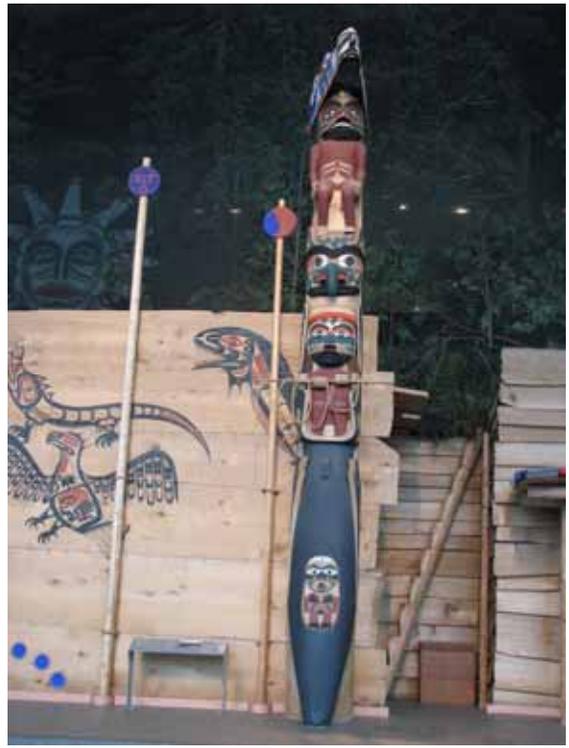
The next morning we took a city tour of Ottawa. Sights included the Parliament Buildings, Government House, the Prime Minister's residence, and the Supreme Court of Canada. Our drive also included views of the National Gallery of Canada, Byward Market, the Canadian Mint, National Arts Centre, Ottawa City Hall, Rockcliffe Park, Rideau Falls, National War Memorial and the Rideau Canal.

We were then taken to the Canadian Museum of Civilization. The Museum is Canada's national museum of human history and the most popular and most-visited museum in Canada. It is located in the Hull sector of Gatineau, Quebec, directly across the Ottawa River from Canada's Parliament Buildings in Ottawa, Ontario. The Museum's primary purpose is to collect, study, preserve, and present material objects that illuminate the human history of Canada and the cultural diversity of its people.

For the visiting public, the Museum of Civilization is most renowned for its permanent galleries, which explore Canada's 20,000 years of human history, and for its architecture and stunning riverside setting. The Museum also presents an ever-changing program of special exhibitions that expand on Canadian themes and explore other cultures and civilizations.

The exhibits on the upper floors are laid out in serpentine fashion to maximize the use of space. The main floor exhibits are of the First Nation totems and artifacts.





We then stopped for lunch at Byward market, which is a huge open air market similar to Farmer's Market in Los Angeles. There were all manner of fruits and vegetables, as well as places to eat.



MONTEBELLO

After stopping for lunch at Byward market we headed toward Montebello. We checked into the Fairmont Montebello Hotel, which is the world's largest structure made of logs.



The grounds were extensive, and there was a marina on the lake. I wished they had kayaks, because it was a beautiful day for kayaking. We wandered around the grounds and finally found a tree with some splashes of fall color.

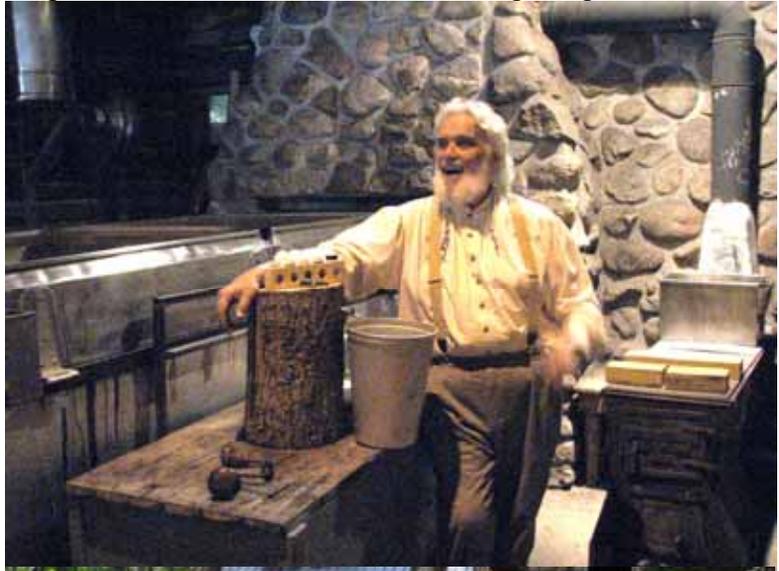
After freshening up, we went to the main dining room and met Jim and Marsha for dinner. The dining room was huge, and there was a balcony that went all around it.



MONTREAL

We took a leisurely motor coach ride through the Canadian countryside toward Montreal. We stopped at the Sucrierie de la Montagne (Sugar shack of the Mountain) for lunch which is an authentic Quebec sugar shack. We learned about sugaring off and the traditional art of making maple syrup. It takes 40 gallons of maple sap to make one gallon of maple syrup.

We were taken from the parking lot in horse drawn wagon, and met the owner in the sugaring barn.

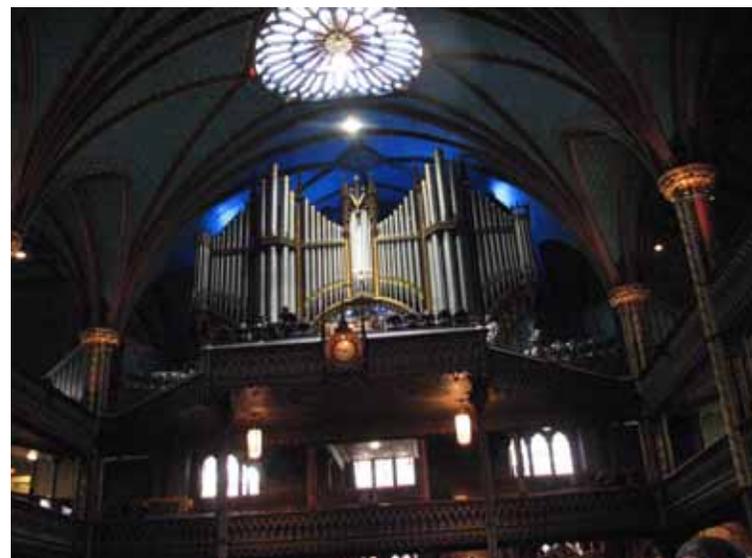


We were served a nice lunch, which was accompanied by two musicians. The fiddler also played a musical saw, which we also enjoyed.



We checked into our hotel, and were directed to the reception that the Toronto hotel set up for us since we had to be moved to the Toronto Delta. There were all kinds of hors d'oeuvres, plus wine. By the time we ready to eat dinner we were not that hungry, so we just had soup and an appetizer at a restaurant across the street.

The next morning we had a sightseeing tour of Montreal. We stopped at the Notre Dame Basilica .We toured both the main church, as well as the chapel set aside for weddings, etc.





After our tour of Montreal, we headed for Quebec and the Crown Princess. Embarkation was easy, and we tried to settle into our cabin. Right away we discovered we had a problem with the cabin temperature, which was 82 degrees. We gave it a while to cool down, to no avail, we called down to Passenger Services at about 2:30, and after 8 calls we had someone look at it around 11 PM. The following day we had one of the senior people look at it and reprogram the thermostat. He also said we could request a fan in the mean time. We called and requested a fan, and hours later, no fan. We called again and were told that Princess no longer had fans because of safety considerations! The room finally cooled down, and we found out that while we were on a tour, the head air conditioning man came and readjusted the temperature. After that it was comfortable.

QUEBEC CITY

We docked overnight in Quebec, and since the old town was very easy to walk around, so I opted to tour on our own rather than with the ship's excursion. I broke out my Quebec maps, and found the location of the funicular that goes from the Old Town up to the Chateau Frontenac on the high plateau.

There were 2 churches I wanted to visit, Notre Dame des Victoires in the old city, and the Basilica up on the plateau. When I got to the church in the old city, I found it did not open for about a half hour, so I took the funicular up to the plateau. There are 2 ways to get up and down, the funicular, or a series of steps called "Breakneck Stairs" for obvious reasons



The easy way



The hard way



Basilica of Quebec City



After visiting the Basilica I took the funicular down to the Old City to visit the other church.



On my way back to the ship, I discovered that one side of a building had a huge mural painted on it. This must have been done after the last time I visited Quebec. The mural carried the design of the front of the building around to the side, and it looked very real!



As we sailed out of Quebec City, there were hordes of people down on the dock to see us off. It was a Sunday, and we guess they used our ship as an excuse for an outing.



SEA DAY

There is a website called Cruise Critic, and there is a section called "Roll Calls" where people on the same cruise can arrange to get together. On this cruise, one couple has one of the large suites, and invited us all to meet there. It should be interesting, because at latest count, there are 26 people! The couple was very welcoming, and had mimosas and snacks set out. It was kind of fun putting the faces with the names of people with whom you corresponded.

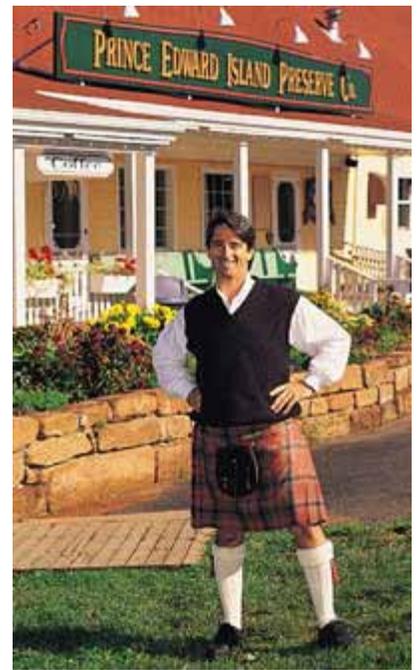
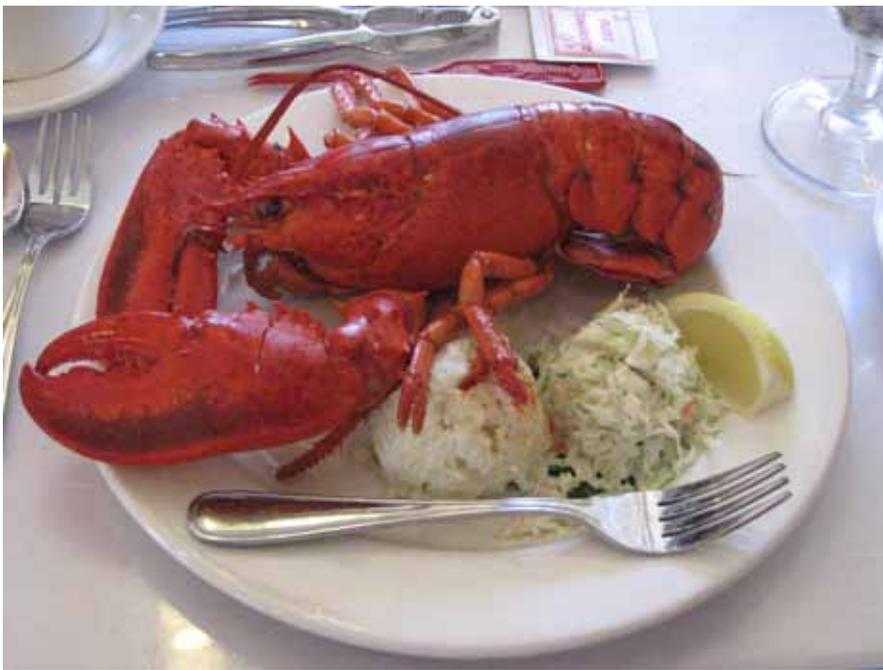
CHARLOTTETOWN, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

We drove to Prince Edward Island National Park, enjoying the sights that included quaint farmlands, and breathtaking seascapes. PEI's North Shore is most famous for its red cliffs on Cavendish Beach. We also stopped at Anne of Green Gables Homestead. This was the house that inspired Lucy Maud Montgomery to write the story, which was published in 1908.

The house is small, and with 10 buses of people passing through the house, there was a bit of a wait. It was well organized, however, as you went up the front stairs and exited by way of the back stairs.



After our visit, we enjoyed lunch at the Prince Edward Island Preserve Co., an island landmark known for its food. The owners Bruce and Shirley McNaughton have renovated a 1913 butter factory into a wonderful showcase of island products, including their world famous preserves. It is located in what was once voted one of Canada's prettiest little villages. We experienced island charm and hospitality along with a spectacular view. Our lobster lunch included fresh cooked lobster, with traditional island potato salad and coleslaw, homemade soup as an appetizer, and for dessert, their famous raspberry pie.



SYDNEY, NOVA SCOTIA

We boarded our motor coach at the dock and set out on a six-hour excursion to the picturesque resort village of Baddeck on Cape Breton Island. En route were the spectacular sights of rugged rock formations, rolling green hills reminiscent of Scotland, and the shimmering waters of the Bras D'Or Lake. We continued on past Boularderie Island and Seal Island Bridge which connects the island to Cape Breton. Heavily forested Kelly's Mountain, situated on St. Ann's Bay, rises 1,000 feet. Once we arrived at Baddeck, we boarded the "Amoeba," a 67-foot schooner that is a reminder of earlier days when sails were large and masts were tall.



We embarked on a leisurely 90-minute sail around the Bras d'Or Lakes the azure blue waters and kept our eyes out for bald eagles, since the area is known for bald eagles. In fact, Cape Breton has the largest population of bald eagles on the East Coast and several eagle's nests can be viewed from the boat. Sometimes they will circle overhead because they know that the crew will throw them a fish; as they dive into the water to retrieve the fish. Our skipper was great in throwing out fish for the eagles to swoop down and grab.



It was really an interesting experience to see the eagles close up, and the skipper, who was a real character, knew them by name.



It really made for incredible photo opportunities. As we continued to sail the lake, we enjoyed the wonderful views of the beautiful Baddeck shoreline and the lush trees and flowers, and Alexander Graham Bell's 137-room mansion Beinn Bhreagh (Gaelic for 'beautiful mountain').



There is a funny story about the house. The one thing missing in Bell's office is-of all things- a telephone! Bell considered them a nuisance and an intrusion.

At the end of our cruise, we drove to the Inverary Resort in Baddeck for lunch. Originally built in 1850, the 11-acre resort offers outstanding views of the beautiful lake.



Another scenic drive took us back through the Cape Breton to our ship at the pier.



HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA

Peggy's Cove is a beloved fishing village and popular destination for travelers from around the world for generations. The hospitality of its residents and its unique granite coastline shaped by millions of years of erosion and pounding tides made for a memorable experience.



Up the road from Peggy's Cove is the studio of William deGarth. He sculpted an outcropping 30 m (100 ft) granite face of rock which he named *Fisherman's Monument* which he dedicated to Nova Scotia fisherman. He donated the sculpture of thirty-two fishermen and their wives and children enveloped by the wings of a guardian angel to the province of Nova Scotia and it can be viewed in a park located behind his former home.



On the way back to where Kathy was sitting, I noticed a shop that featured Cornish Pasties (a meat filled dough half round) and picked one up for us to share. Next to where we were sitting I noticed a sign for a shop featuring fudge. I told Kathy I would pick up a half pound for us. When I got to the counter, there was a sign offering a free half pound if you bought a pound! That was an offer I could not refuse.

We were supposed to take a Hop-On Hop Off (HoHo) bus on our return from Peggy's Cove, but we ran into a snag. Our ship was docked in the container port, and we had to take a shuttle to the HoHo terminal. Our tour bus drove right by the HoHo terminal and took us back to the ship, which meant we would have to take the shuttle to the HoHo terminal, so we said the heck with it.

SAINT JOHN, NEW BRUNSWICK

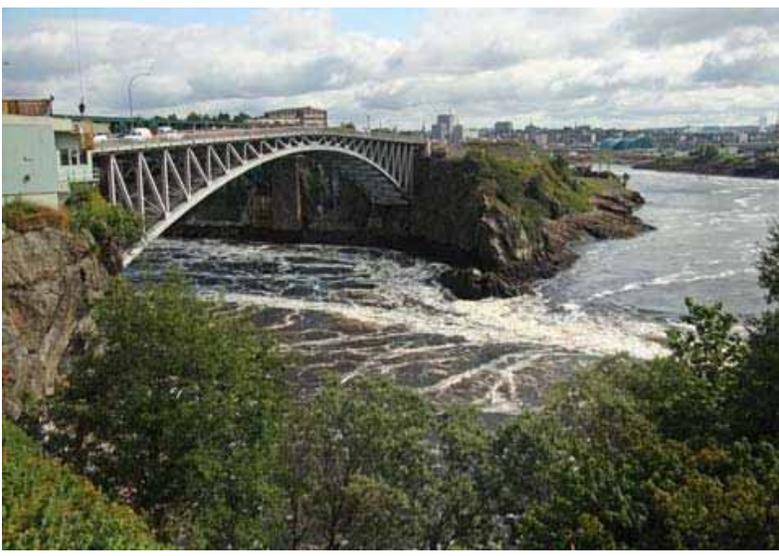
Our tour began as we boarded our motor coach for a scenic drive through the city with a stop at the Old City Market to shop. Located in the heart of Saint John, the oldest working farmer's market in Canada is still a popular meeting place for local residents. The market first opened in 1876 and has withstood the test of time, from the Great Fire of 1877 to the 20th-century urban renewal. The shipwrights who built the market gave it a crowning touch: a roof in the shape of a ship's hull.



Next we drove to Fallsview Park to experience the meeting of the St. John River and the famous tides of the Bay of Fundy by jet boat, the only vessel authorized to navigate the Reversing Rapids. We donned life jackets and rain gear. Our boat took us right into the rapids for a breathtaking view of powerful whirlpools swirling about and waves towering as high as 10 feet. The world's highest and wildest tides actually force the longest river in Atlantic Canada to reverse direction and flow upstream. The best ride times were reserved for Princess Passengers.



We were very fortunate to be in the last group, because the rapids were at their peak. We drove downstream under the railroad bridge and could see whirlpools on both sides of us. We then headed upstream and hit the big waves! Our driver was really crazy—at one point after we hit a big wave he stood up and turned around holding a rubber fish in his mouth! We ran up and down the river, stopping to do 360 spins.



Needless to say we all got wet, but it was really a great experience. The outfitter had set up changing rooms for us and had hot chocolate and coffee waiting to warm us up.

BAR HARBOR

We were supposed to take scenic drive aboard our motor coach into Acadia National Park on Mount Desert Island. Then continue along the 27-mile-long Loop Road past famous sights including Jordan Pond House, Otter Cliffs, and Thunder Hole to Cadillac Mountain. Rising 1,532 feet above Mount Desert Island, it's not only the tallest mountain in Acadia but is the highest point along North America's eastern seaboard.

Well, when we awoke at anchor in Bar Harbor, the fog was so thick that the visibility was about 20 feet! Needless to say, any sightseeing was not possible. The fog was so thick, that our tenders had to be led to shore and back by a local boat! The pictures below are the view from our balcony. The dark smear in the left hand picture was an island the tenders had to navigate around. Needless we cancelled our shore excursion.



Kathy wanted a lobster roll, so we took the tender to shore. The Fish House Grill was recommended by the ship as a great place to get the rolls, and it was right at the tender dock.



We both ordered the lobster rolls, plus a side of onion rings and some oysters. I also ordered a local beer called Bar Harbor Ale. At least this way our visit to Bar Harbor was not a total loss. We spoke to some people who did take the tours, and they said they could not see anything!

BOSTON

We awoke early as we were pulling into Boston Harbor, and were amazed to see the approach lighting for Boston's Logan Airport off our starboard side! Our ship was so tall that the airport had to hold all planes landing until we passed the runway.

I sat on our balcony with my camera, trying to get the best shot of jets landing just past our ship!



Since we have both been to Boston previously, we toured on our own. Kathy wanted to visit Old Ironsides and have a lobster roll.

We took a taxi to Legal Sea Foods on Long Wharf, and wanted to sit outside to watch all the boats. Unfortunately, it was a little chilly, so we opted to eat inside. The lobster roll was even bigger than the one we had in Bar Harbor and was delicious!



We then took a taxi across the Charles River to see the USS Constitution. It is the oldest ship in the US navy that is still commissioned and afloat. We took a tour of the top deck and two of the lower decks given by a guide that was actually an enlisted US sailor.

He described the living conditions including the food and accommodations for the 400 odd seamen on the ship. He also described in detail the unique construction that made the ship so strong. As an example, the ships ribs were spaced 4 inches apart because cannonball diameters were 6 inches. That way, a cannonball could not penetrate the hull. Also the hull was constructed out of 3 layers of oak; the inner 2 layers were of southern white oak, which was twice as strong as northern oak.

There were also diagonal beams to distribute the weight of the cannons. The guide pointed out that not all cannons would be fired in a broadside, as the recoil would likely cause the ship to roll over and sink!

All in all, it was a very interesting visit to an American icon.



Main Gun Battery



Sleeping Quarters



Deck Gun Battery

NEWPORT

We boarded our motor coach and begin a scenic drive through Newport's colonial district. Newport was once an important trade center and enjoyed prominence in American history during colonial times. The historical buildings we saw are marvelous examples of 18th-century architecture. The narrated drive included such highlights as Washington Square, which contains several prominent historic landmarks, and the Tennis Hall of Fame, celebrating Newport's distinction as the cradle of tennis in America. We passed the Trinity Church with its magnificent Georgian design and Redwood Library, the oldest lending library in America.

The highlight of our day is a walk through one of the area's sumptuous summer "cottages", Rosecliff, an example of Newport's Gilded Age.

Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century, wealthy southern planters seeking to escape the heat began to build summer cottages on Bellevue Avenue such as Kingscote (1839). Around the middle of the century, wealthy Yankees such as the Wetmore family also began constructing larger mansions such as Chateau-sur-Mer (1852) nearby. Most of these early families made a substantial part of their fortunes in the Old China Trade.

By the turn of the 20th century, many of the nation's wealthiest families were summering in Newport, including the Vanderbilts, Astors and Widener family who constructed the largest "cottages", such as The Breakers (1895) and Miramar. They came for a brief social season to grand, gilded mansions with elaborate receiving, dining, music and ballrooms, but with few bedrooms, since the guests were expected to have "cottages" of their own. Many of the homes were designed by the New York architect Richard Morris Hunt, who himself kept a house in Newport.

The social scene at Newport is described in Edith Wharton's novel *The Age of Innocence*. Wharton's own Newport "cottage" was called *Land's End*. Today, many mansions continue in private use.

Others, including Hammersmith Farm, the mansion from which Jackie Kennedy was married, are now open to tourists as house museums. Still others were converted into academic buildings for Salve Regina College in the 1930s when the owners could no longer afford their tax bills.

We experienced the splendor and grandeur of Rosecliff, commissioned by Nevada silver heiress Theresa Fair Oelrichs in 1899. Architecturally designed after the garden hide-away of French kings at Versailles, it was completed in 1902, at a reported cost of \$2.5 million. The home was famous for its fabulous parties and entertainment, including a fairy tale fete and a party featuring famed magician Harry Houdini. The Rosecliff has magnificent grounds and gardens and several films have been shot on the property, including "The Great Gatsby."

Our tour guide was a charming lady, who would go to all the grand houses when there was an open house. That way she added to her knowledge of the history of each mansion we passed.





There was a comment made by F. Scott Fitzgerald that the rich are different. It was really brought in focus when we were told the lady of the house made two trips to Paris to purchase clothes. She would spend about \$60,000 per trip. In today's dollars that would be over a million dollars! After the tour, Kathy waited for me at the tender pier while I visited Touro Synagogue, the oldest synagogue in America.

In 1758, a Dutch Jew named Isaac Touro became the congregation's first spiritual leader. A year later the congregation purchased land and hired Peter Harrison, the preeminent architect of the colonial era, to design Touro Synagogue. The synagogue was completed and dedicated in 1763.

Touro Synagogue took on a special significance in 1790 when President George Washington, in his letter "To the Hebrew Congregation in Newport," declared that the new nation would "... give to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance." These few words affirmed the founding fathers' commitment to the principals of religious freedom as a cornerstone of democracy in America.

The synagogue, which continues to serve an active Jewish congregation, greets approximately 30,000 visitors a year who come to see its magnificent interior and hear the remarkable story of its founding.



I chatted with the guide before going on the tour, and mentioned the synagogues in Venice that were built on top of other buildings, as there was no room to build them in the old Jewish Ghetto. The synagogue was laid out in Sephardic style, with the bema or desk in the center on the room. The scrolls would be taken from the ark and then placed on the bema.

To the right of the ark on display, was a torah given to the synagogue by the Jews of Amsterdam in the 1700's. The torah is opened to the book of Exodus, and dates from the 1400's.



NEW YORK

We arrived very early in the morning, and were greeted by the Statue of Liberty. I can only imagine the feeling that immigrants to the New World had seeing it for the first time.



For the most part, this was another wonderful trip, but this time we had some unexpected challenges. Kathy developed a serious respiratory infection and was expertly treated as an outpatient at the Crown Princess hospital on board. When we were about to arrive at our final port in New York, the Doctor decided she was not "fit to fly" home because of her oxygen levels, and sent us to a NYC hospital where she was admitted and aggressively treated. Thankfully, after three hospital days, we

boarded Jet Blue back to California, and are extremely happy to be home safe. Our next trip will be to Hawaii in November where we will attend the wedding of Kathy's son.

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