



Merry Christmas 2008



Dear

5 December 2008

Christmas greetings from Linda, Robert, and Derry! We have been doing well in the past few months, and went on some trips together.

JOURNEY TO THE EAST COAST

Our long trip in the last half of the year was to the east coast. (more than 6,000 miles) The summer convention of the Family Motor Coach Association (FMCA) was to be held in St. Paul, Minnesota, on 12-17 July. In addition, the Safari chapter of FMCA would be celebrating its 20th anniversary at a rally in the Amana Colonies, Iowa, on 1-4 July. We planned to attend both the rally and the convention. Then we planned to continue east to the coast where we would visit family members whom we had never met before. The areas we planned to visit in Iowa and Wisconsin were severely damaged by floods in June. Fortunately, the flood waters receded and the land dried out sufficiently before we arrived in the area. We left Albuquerque on 26 June and headed east. At Oklahoma City we turned north. The weather was hot, and we discovered that the dash air conditioning was not working properly in our motor home. We got some refrigerant put in when we were in Kansas, and then the weather turned cooler. That kept us cool enough for the next 8 weeks until we got back home and had the air conditioning repaired. When we arrived in Iowa, our first stop was near Boone where we stayed at Ledges State Park. The portion of the park down by the river was still closed due to the recent floods. The higher region where the campground was located was dry, however. We stayed near Boone because we wanted to take a ride on the Boone and Scenic Valley Railroad. In fact, we rode on three other trains on the trip. We had a beautiful day for our train ride.



Boone and Scenic Valley Railroad.

Our next stop was at the Amana Colonies for the Safari Chapter rally. The rally was attended by a couple hundred owners of Safari Motor Coaches. We enjoyed meeting our Safari friends and celebrating the 20th anniversary. Also present at the rally was Dennis Dame who painted the Giraffe mural on our motor home



Dennis Dame paints another mural.

Since we had 8 days between the rally in Iowa and the convention in Minnesota, we spent that time in Wisconsin. Our first stop there was at the Wisconsin Dells. This is an area of fantastically eroded rock through which the Wisconsin River flows.



The Lower Wisconsin Dells.

We took a Duck trip on the Lower Wisconsin River (below the dam). Ducks are amphibious vehicles.



One of the Ducks.



Side canyon of the Upper Dells.

We also got a look at Lake Delton whose dam had been breached during the flooding in June. The lake had drained completely and some homes had been swept away. This is what remains of the lake.

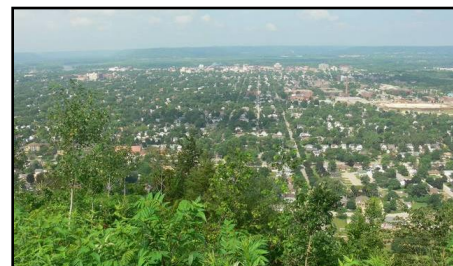


Lake Delton will be re-filled in 2009.

Our next campsite was on an island in the Mississippi River at La Crosse, Wisconsin.



Dinner by the Mississippi.



La Crosse from Grandad Bluff.

The University of Wisconsin at La Crosse library is a repository of the Wisconsin Historical Society. This is where some of the papers of Samuel D. Hastings are kept. He had been the treasurer of Wisconsin during the Civil War. More importantly, he had married Robert's great-great-great-grandaunt, Margaretta Shubert. There were supposed to be some personal papers in the collection, and Robert hoped to discover some new information about his Shubert ancestors. We searched through a box of correspondence and found two letters from Margaretta's brother, Samuel, and a letter from a brother, Benjamin, whom we had not known about. These letters also revealed information about other family members. After we left La Crosse we drove to Green Bay, Wisconsin. Robert wanted to see if there were any descendants of Samuel Hastings still living in Green Bay. We stopped at the cemetery where

Samuel is buried and asked at the office if they knew if anyone were still living. The last known descendent of Samuel had been the president of the cemetery. He died in 1994. The person working at the cemetery office did not know of any living descendents of that person, so we looked in the phone book for Hastings and found several. Robert attempted to call them. Some could not be reached. Those that he did reach were not descendents. It appears that there are no living Hastings descendents of Samuel living in Green Bay. We then spent some time enjoying the sights of the Green Bay Botanical Garden. Here are some lovely photos of the gardens.



Green Bay Botanical Gardens.

Then we visited the National Railroad Museum.



An aerospace engineer playing train engineer.

The following day we departed from Green Bay and drove to Eau Claire, Wisconsin. That evening we visited Robert's Russell cousins who live there. We shared some more family information and photos with them.



Greg Russell family.

The following day we continued our journey to St. Paul, Minnesota. We spent the next few days in St. Paul at the FMCA convention. We had a great time at the convention, and we were also able to meet Linda's cousin, Carolyn, and her husband, Don, from Tucson, Arizona. On Sunday at noon we visited with Robert's Shubert cousins Kathy and Ginny and their husbands.



Linda with Carolyn and Don.



Robert with Cathy and Ginny.

After the convention, we headed back across Wisconsin and stopped just south of Milwaukee. As we passed through Milwaukee, we stopped and visited with Kristin who has also been looking for information about Samuel Hastings. She was in Wisconsin doing some research in archives in Madison. We had some frozen custard at Kopps. (A treat we do not get here.) We spent a day in Kenosha, Wisconsin, where we wanted to see the new Civil War Museum that had just opened. It was very nice, but only partially open. It is on the shore of Lake Michigan, but the weather was so cloudy that we couldn't even see the lake. We enjoyed a very good lunch at Frank's Diner in Kenosha. We would certainly recommend that experience if you ever visit Kenosha. The following day, we continued south and went through Chicago and headed east into Indiana where we spent the night. Next stop was Erie, Pennsylvania, for a night. Then we headed into New York State on a very rainy day. We stopped that night at Jack Gardner's home in Canisteo. He and Linda are fifth cousins once removed. He was in Afghanistan with the Army, but his wife and children were home. We spent that night camped in their front yard and enjoyed a good time exchanging family information with them.



Linda with Gardner cousins.

Linda's and their common ancestor was Benjamin Baxter, who had fought in the Revolutionary war and who is buried not very far from Canisteo. The following day we traveled a short distance and went to Owego, New York, where Gordon Orton, Robert's former Air Force roommate lives, and spent the remainder of the day there with Gordon and

Nancy. We enjoyed visiting, talking about old times, and looking at and copying old photographs. The following day we moved on to our destination near Boston, Massachusetts. We actually stayed in Foxborough, not very far from the Patriots (football team) stadium.



Campground in Foxborough.

We were in Massachusetts to visit Robert's Shubert cousin, Charles Schubert. Our first day there, however, we spent with Vickie, a friend who had lived in Albuquerque around 30 years ago.



Vickie came to visit.

Then we spent portions of the next four days with Charles. We went through many boxes of old photographs and documents that he had inherited. Robert scanned many items.



We were very delighted when Charles discovered a photograph of Robert's great-great-grandmother, Eliza Shubert Malseed. In fact, Charles found two photographs of Eliza and gave them to Robert.

We enjoyed very much our time spent at the Shubert house in Wellesley and enjoyed learning many new things about Robert's Shubert family. Charles and Robert are third cousins once removed.



Robert with Jan and Charles Shubert.

Their common ancestor is George Shubert who lived between about 1804 and 1840. George's sister, Margaretta, was the one who married

Samuel Dexter Hastings. After we had left Wisconsin, Kristin did research in the archives in Madison and discovered some letters written to Samuel Hastings by John Shubert. She sent digital copies of these letters, and we were able to confirm that John was a brother to George. Our next destination was Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. We stayed on the outskirts of Philadelphia in the town of Hatfield. That is where Robert's cousin Debby Conigliaro lives. She is a second cousin once removed. We had never met Debby before. It was only in the last couple of years that we learned about her.



Robert with cousins Debby and Carole.

She had inherited many old Malseed documents, and we were very anxious to see what they were. We spent several days there in Hatfield scanning documents and photographs that Debby had. We discovered that she had the family Bible of Andrew and Eliza Shubert Malseed. She also had photographs of Andrew and Eliza's son George Shubert Malseed, which she gave to Robert. She also gave Robert a wedding photograph of his grandparents. While in Philadelphia, we spent one day downtown. We wanted to see the Irish Immigration Memorial. The sculpture there was produced by a New Mexican named Glenna Goodacre. She designed the Sacajawea dollar coin.



Irish immigration memorial.

On another day we met with Barbara Lewis, who is also a Shubert descendent but from a different family line. She lives in Grand Forks, North Dakota, but was there visiting her mother and doing some Shubert research of her own. On Saturday, we took Debby and her husband, Joe, on a tour of some of the family sites in Philadelphia. We showed them where Andrew and Eliza had lived and where John Malseed had lived. We also

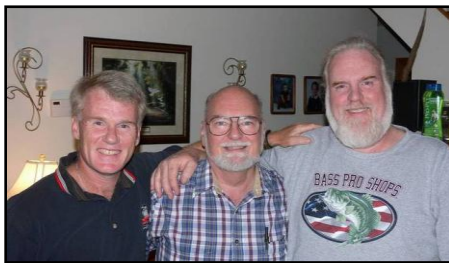


showed them the cemetery, where they are buried along with some other family members. For lunch, we stopped close to where Daniel Malseed had lived, and had a Philly cheese steak sandwich at Geno's. Debby also has Andrew Malseed's Journal, which dated to 1844 and inside of which was placed many documents relating to his Civil War service in 1863 and 1864. It appears that the documents that he had from that time were split into two bundles. Robert inherited one, and Debby inherited the other. So we have exchanged scans of each other's so that each one of us has either an original or a good scan of the complementary documents. When we left Philadelphia, we continued south and stopped in Towson, Maryland, where we stayed with Robert's cousin Jan Sorensen. It was Jan's birthday when we arrived so we celebrated with Jan and her daughters.



With Jan, Barb, Sue, Pat, and Nan.

We met with several other family members there including Robert's nephews and also his cousin Bill Malseed.



With nephews James and John Abell.

Our next stop was near Williamsport, Maryland. While there, we made a visit to Robert's nephew in Emmitsburg, Maryland. We also spent a couple days touring some sites that Robert's ancestor, Andrew Malseed, had visited during the Civil War. Robert has a letter that Andrew wrote from Falling Waters, Virginia, so we went there. We found the falls that Andrew had written about in his letter.



The falls at Falling Waters.

He also wrote from Martinsburg, West Virginia, so we went there and saw the railroad yards that Andrew described seeing after the raid by Stonewall Jackson had destroyed much of the railroad stock. We left copies of Andrew's letters with the Historical Society.

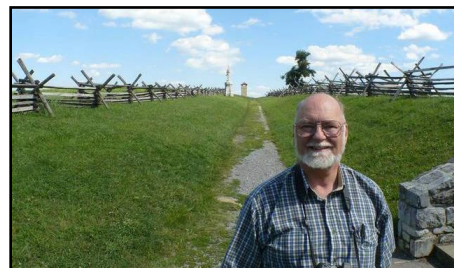


Martinsburg railroad yards.

Andrew was not involved in the battle of Antietam, but nevertheless we spent the day touring the battlefield and surrounding area.



View of the famous Dunker Church.



Robert in the sunken road.



At the Burnside Bridge.

We also visited the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park.



Lock on the C&O canal.

From Williamsport, we headed west into the mountains of western Maryland and West Virginia and stopped in the town of Durbin. On this trip we had planned to ride on three historic railroads. The first was in Boone, Iowa, the second and third, were at Cass and Durbin, West Virginia. The railroad at Cass is an old logging railroad and the ride takes you up a steep grade to the top of Bald Knob, a very high point in West Virginia. The Shay engine is a geared engine with vertical pistons and a driveshaft. It was designed for climbing the mountains.



Shay engine. Note the driveshaft on the side.

We also rode the train at Durbin along the river that flows down the valley. The Climax engine of the Durbin Rocket is also designed for climbing. Here you can see the drive shaft beneath the engine.



Climax engine of the Durbin Rocket.

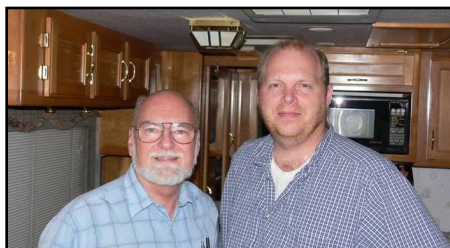
Between Cass and Durbin is the National Radio Astronomy Observatory in Greenbank. Because the telescopes are so sensitive, the entire area is a radio quiet zone. That means there is no cell phone service and also means that no electronic cameras are allowed near the telescopes, so we took this picture from an approved distance.



The large telescope at Greenbank.

Robert had transcribed the John Shubert letters and sent copies to our other Shubert cousins. One, who was a descendent of John, managed to contact another descendent of John. We

discovered that he lived in Franklin, Tennessee. This was more or less on our way home, so we revised our path and we were able to stop in Franklin to visit with our new-found cousin, Shane Van Wey. He and Robert are fifth cousins once removed.



Robert with Shane Van Wey.

We arrived home on 20 August.

RALLY IN CREEDE, COLORADO

In September, our family motor Coach Association local (Chaparral) chapter, held a rally in Creede, Colorado. We went and spent several days there and enjoyed visiting with our friends and touring the area around Creede which is an old mining town. We drove up into the mountains and saw many remnants of the mining activity. It is possible that mining could resume there.



The small town of Creede, Colorado.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN RAMBLE

The Rocky Mountain Motor Coach Association of FMCA held its annual Rocky Mountain Ramble in Farmington, New Mexico this year. It had been held there at the San Juan County Fair Grounds a couple times previously.



Friends' property along the Animas River.

We spent the week in Farmington, and again we enjoyed visiting old friends and also visiting the area around Durango, Colorado.

CHRISTMAS MUSICAL

As this letter is being written, we are busy rehearsing and preparing for our annual Christmas musical. This year we will be presenting a rather elaborate musical drama on 6 and 7 December.

DERRY

Derry loves to play games like 'fetch', or 'keep-away' where he grabs something he is not supposed to have and then has us chase him around trying to get it from him. You can see in this photo that at 2 years and 4 months of age his red color has faded almost completely away.



Derry freshly groomed with bandana.

THE BOTTOM LINE

We continue to be thankful for the Lord's providing for us in all ways. We trust in Him, and pray that you will do likewise and enjoy a blessed Christmas season and New Year as well.

Love,

Robert + Linda

and Derry



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Le Gach Deaghui i gComhair na Nollaig agus na Bliana Nua.

Frohe Weihnacht und ein glückliches neues Jahr!