

## 1982 THE RED SEA

Friday, April 23, 1982. I flew to LaGuardia Airport, NY, where I met Mother coming in from Maine. We checked into the St Regis Hotel. John Stevens came up from Washington and we had dinner in the King Cole Room of the hotel with live music and Robert Morse for company. After dinner, John and I took a carriage ride through Central Park.

Saturday, April 24, 1982. We had dizzying views from atop the World Trade Center. Then we had a visit with John Wright Stevens. This was followed by a tour of the UN building and an exhibit by the National Geographic on Angkor Wat. Then it was dinner at Sardis and Amadeus.

Sunday, April 25, 1982. We flew the Air France Concorde to Paris. We left JFK at 2:00 PM and were in Paris 3 1/2 hours later. It was certainly a thrill to fly at Mach 2. There was a mach meter in the front of the plane so we could keep track. Out the window we could see the curvature of the earth!

However some things were disappointing. The seats were more like tourist class seats, somewhat cramped. In addition the meal as served on a plastic tray. It was not the first class service we expected. They did not have time to do a first class service. Since it costs twice what a first class ticket would cost, I doubt if I do it again. Another disappointment was that it did not help with the jet lag as I had hoped. It was a little past midnight when we got to the Hotel Crillon, and technically we had time for a long sleep. However my body knew it was still six PM in New York and sleep would not come. It is fine for the businessman who needs to go to Europe and return the same day, but not so good for the tourists.

Monday, April 26. The Hotel Crillon is housed in an historical building on the Place de la Concorde. Louis XV held a competition among architects to design a square near his palace. The winner was a man named Gabriel, who established the octagon shape of the Place. He designed and built two colonnaded buildings in 1755 to flank the Rue de Royale. Originally the left hand building was the residence of a nobleman. In 1778 Benjamin Franklin signed the Treaty of Friendship here. This was the first treaty ever made by the new United States government. Now the Automobile Club and our hotel fill the building.

Our bedroom is papered in velvet. Even the ceiling was covered! Fruit and flowers were in the room compliments of the manager. Mr. Frankel, my boss, had sent a bottle of Chablis, which was a great surprise. We sat right down and opened it!

The star attraction arrived from Crailsheim, Germany where my daughter has been living. Mother had never met Exton Howard, aged 6 months. We took a four generation picture of Mother, me, Martha and Exton.

We moved out of our somewhat tiny but very French accommodations into a large but ordinary room next door to the Howard suite.

Tuesday, April 27. We drove south out of Paris to Chartres and had a great tour of the cathedral given by Malcolm Miler, the official lecturer. The first reference to a cathedral in Chartres is in 743 AD. The present crypt was built by 1024 and is the largest in France. The stained glass windows are among the most famous in the world.

In 1194, a fire almost destroyed the cathedral but the relic, a piece of cloth worn by the Virgin Mary when she gave birth to Jesus (the Sancta Camisia) was miraculously saved. Thus Chartres was a popular pilgrimage shrine of Medieval Europe.

Driving back to Paris through the French countryside, we discovered thatched houses and dolmens. The latter are great stones set up by ancient people for an unknown purpose. They are attributed to the Druids and their celestial calculations.

Near Maintenon are the ruins of an ancient aqueduct built by Louis XIV to supply the fountains of Versailles. The project was never finished due to the death of hundreds of workers from malaria.

The Chateau of Maintenon has a Renaissance façade facing the Eure River. Its most famous occupant was Mme. De Maintenon, the morganatic wife of Louis XIV. As a morganatic wife, she was not considered royalty, nor were her children in line for the throne.

In the evening we went to the Lido for dinner and a show.

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Wednesday, April 28. Dowell and I went out to take a few pictures. We took in Notre Dame, Ste. Chapelle, and the Conciergerie built by Philip the Fair in the 14<sup>th</sup> century. Marie Antoinette was imprisoned in the latter. The St. Jacques Tower is all that remains of a 16<sup>th</sup> century church that was one of the starting points of the pilgrimage to Santiago de Compostella in Spain. The place de la Bastille was once an infamous prison, stormed and totally demolished in 1789. Some stones in the road mark its dimensions. The July Column was erected in memory of Parisians killed in 1830 and 1848.

Picking up Martha and Exton, we went to a restaurant on the left bank for lunch.

Then we explored the Cluny Museum. Built in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, it was a residence for abbots visiting Cluny Abbey. It incorporates a 3<sup>rd</sup> century Roman bath that has sculpture fragments from the Middle Ages. The house has a wonderful collection of tapestries and decorative arts from the Middle Ages.

As a gala farewell, we walked around the corner to Maxims for a gourmet dinner.

Thursday, April 29. Saying goodbye to the Howards we left for Djibouti and our cruise of the Red Sea in the World Discoverer. We had a wheelchair for mother at Charles DeGaulle airport, but the plane was not at an automatic flyway. Everyone had to go down a flight of stairs, walk 50 feet, and then board the aircraft by way of another stair. Much as Mother insisted she could walk, they were equally emphatic that she could not. We waited and waited and finally they brought the truck that loads the planes near our ramp. They extended it up so the wheelchair could be rolled inside, then lowered the superstructure again and moved to the plane. Here they raised it up again so Mother could be wheeled inside through the galley section of first class. Such a production!

We stopped in Cairo and Khartoum before getting to Djibouti about 4:00 AM. We were 10 1/2 hours on the airplane and were very happy when we finally arrived at the Sheraton Djibouti.

Friday, April 30. Surely we are at one of the ends of the earth! Located on the Horn of Africa at the entrance to the Red Sea, this is the staging area for our cruise. Due to its strategic location, Djibouti has always been an important trading center. It is the legendary Land of Punt in the Bible. Exotic herbs and spices of the ancient world were shipped from here. Slave traders and pirates also sought out this port. Today coffee and hides are shipped to the Soviet Union in exchange for arms to fight the guerillas in Eritrea and Somalia.

Djibouti got its independence from France in 1977. There is still a French garrison here. French and Arabic are the official languages.

We spent most of Friday "sleeping it off". At 4:00 PM we got up and called the Kremetz who have come via Jeddah, where Dick had business, to join us on the cruise.

The new Sheraton has start-up problems. The swimming pool is not full and the dining room is only open for limited hours. Drinks at the bar cost \$5 apiece. However it is a comfortable place to recuperate from our trip getting here.

Tonight the group is taken out for dinner and a native dancing presentation. The dancers had evidently never performed in public before and the themes of the dances were somewhat hard to follow. Undoubtedly future tours will see a more polished performance, but this one was decidedly not authentic! Eavesdropping over the wall were many native Djiboutians, obviously enjoying what they saw!

Saturday, May 1. We are taken on a tour of the city. This included a walk through the native market. At an orphanage we are shown an exhibit of the handicrafts being taught to the children.

After lunch, the tour continued into the countryside. Henri de Monfreid was an adventurer, smuggler and trader between 1912 and 1940. The ruins of his house are interesting to explore and we could see the remains of his causeway tending out to sea.

We had a rest stop at the Carnivore Beach Club.

After a long day we boarded our ship and took off for Aden.

Society Expeditions ship, the World Discoverer, was commissioned in 1974, specifically designed for travel in remote areas. She has a specially strengthened hull to resist the ice of the Antarctic. She had a shallow draft that allows her to travel where other ships cannot. She can carry 140

passengers in 75 cabins. Although an Expedition cruise ship, the Discoverer has some amenities like two lounges, a lecture hall, library and swimming pool.

Sunday, May 2. We woke in Aden in South Yemen. An ancient volcano crater forms the harbor. The Romans first developed the port in the 1<sup>st</sup> century. By the 18<sup>th</sup> century it had become a refuge for pirates who preyed on the trade routes to India. The British intervened in the 19<sup>th</sup> century to protect the approaches to the Suez Canal. The country is now independent and communistic.

Captain Klaus Baare-Schmidt docked the ship on a floating dock in the harbor.

A guide who made sure we got all the communistic doctrine and propaganda about the country conducted our tour. South Yemen has such full employment that they must import workers from other countries. When Dick Kremenz asked what the workers produced, he was taken aback. "Why, why, we have projects", he said. "What projects?" "Well, we build houses for the workers and things like that".

We were shown the 550-year-old Adroos Mosque where St. Adroos lies buried beneath the floor. His male relatives lie in sarcophagi in the basilica. Female relatives must shift for themselves! We were also shown an ancient minaret that dates from 1717 AD

The British made their first settlement on a rocky island connected to the mainland by a causeway. They called it Cratertown.

One of the things that struck us about the city was the mountain of trash and abandoned cars that dot the South Yemen countryside. It probably didn't matter when most trash was biodegradable, but in this era of plastics and bottles, it is a disaster.

One of the most interesting things we saw were the first century water tanks. South Yemen is an arid land. Some seventeen water tanks supplied the ancient people with water.

We were then entertained by troop of native dancers.

Near the dock was a small but interesting museum and after a short visit we were whisked back to the ship.

Tourists rarely get to Aden so we were privileged to see what we did.

Yemen, unlike the rest of the Arabian Peninsula is fertile and mountainous. It gets much more rain than the deserts and in ancient times was called Arabia Felix (Lucky Arabia). Today the biggest crop is Qat, a narcotic plant that it seems the whole population is addicted to. Ancient dams and terraces attest to how long this area has been farmed.

The British attacked and captured South Yemen (Aden) in 1839. Working through the sultans, they acted as "protectors" for they wanted to control the approach to the Suez. However they did not control North Yemen and the capitol Sana'a. This mountainous region was too difficult to capture. North Yemen was a despotic kingdom, under the control of the Turkish Sultans.

Both parts of Yemen achieved independence during the 1960s but their governments are quite different. South Yemen became the People Democratic Republic of Yemen, a socialist government that replaced the English rule. Six and a half million people live in North Yemen, one and a half million live in South Yemen.

Mother and I ate at the Captain's table with Peg and Dick, Doris and Bert Fisk, Edith Thompson and, of course, Captain Bare-Schmidt.

Monday, May 3. North Yemen. We reached the port city of Hodeida in the early morning, but immigration took a very long time.

Half the group was supposed to fly to Sana'a and drive back, while the other group was to drive up to Sana'a and fly back. We were in the second group. It was finally 11:15 before we were ready to start the 250-kilometer trip up into the mountains. To our dismay, group one, which had left at 9:30 was still sitting in Hodeida waiting for their plane!

The first thirty miles of the road to Sana'a were across a desert plain, broken occasionally by thatched hut villages or walled towns. The architecture of North Yemen is known for interesting patterns in the stone block buildings. Many of the buildings were multi-story.

Finally we reached the mountains and started the spectacular climb up to Sana'a. Mile after mile we saw terraced hillsides and occasional houses. Rocky slopes, misty views into the distance, switchback roads all were there to entertain us. We made a couple of unscheduled stops, perhaps for the driver to rest.

On the third unscheduled stop we finally learned why. Our driver had to pray! "There is no God but Allah and Mohammed is his prophet." Most Arabs and Yemeni are Moslems.

There are five pillars of faith:

1. You must confess that Allah is the only God and that Mohammed is his prophet.
2. You must pray five times a day in the direction of Mecca.
3. You must, if you can afford it, make a pilgrimage to Mecca at least once during your life.
4. You must fast during Ramadan, a period of atonement.
5. You must give alms.

A Moslem considers his prayer rug his mosque and takes his shoes off and washes before praying. Spreading his prayer rug, three times our driver bowed to Mecca. Then three times he touched his forehead to the ground. This he repeated three times.

We really needed his prayers at this point for the five-hour drive to Sana'a was approaching seven hours! We had not yet met the group who was flying up to ride down and there was speculation that they might never have gotten to Sana'a! In which case, there might not be a plane to take us back to the ship!

Up and up we drove, on and on. At last we reached the fertile plain on which Sana'a lies. At 5:00 PM we met the other group on their way back to the ship. We did not envy them the long drive in the dark! We got to Sana'a at 6:00 PM

It was getting dark and there was only time for a fast 30-minute walk through the Suq, the native bazaar. It was a wonderful Suq, not at all touristy. At dusk it was alive with people doing their shopping in the murky and exotic light.

On the way to the airport they finally fed us. It was a wonderful box lunch of chicken and sandwiches prepared by the Sana'a Sheraton Hotel. At the airport there was even a ladies room! We were back at the ship at 9:45 PM. The other group got back at 11:30. They had only had an hour in Sana'a and had not see the museum. They drove the spectacular road down in the dark. They were angry!

May 4, 1982. The port of Hodeida closes at nightfall. Since we were so late returning to the ship, the pilot had left. Thus we spent the night in port. We were twelve hours behind schedule! Philip Matthews, the cruise director, (and Vice President of Society Expeditions) made the decision to skip the stop at Port Sudan and head directly for Jeddah. Some people were very unhappy with the decision. A number of the group were making plans to leave the ship and return to Sana'a. It was very hard for the Society Expedition staff that were trying hard to please everyone.

Meanwhile we had a day at sea and it was wonderful to relax and enjoy shipboard life. Mayer Rossabi started a series of lectures on Arab culture and life.

An Arab, by Mayer's definition, is anyone who speaks Arabic and claims the Arabian Peninsula as his homeland, even if he is, say, a Berber from Morocco. There is a kinship among Arabs all over the Arab world. The Arabs in the Middle East have the same ancestry as the Jews. In fact they consider that they descend from Ishmael, Abraham's son by Hagar.

Mecca was an important caravan stop and there was always a religious site where prayers were offered to whomever was the current God.

Mohammed was born in Mecca about 570 AD. At the time of his birth there had been a breakdown in the communal living of the nomads. There was a wide division between rich and poor. Mohammed preached of community solidarity and simple and strict morality. He had a series of visions. Although Mohammed was illiterate, his companions set his visions in writing about twenty years after his death. Thus there are some inaccuracies in what is now known as the Koran.

Mohammed preached against the moral disintegration and questioned the existing situation. In short, he was a troublemaker. His wife's money and social position protected him until 619 AD when his wife and uncle died. The new head of the family was not enamored with Islam. In 62 AD, Mohammed escaped from Mecca to Medina. He was welcomed there by his followers and became a judge. He made himself popular by conducting raids on caravans and giving the plunder to his followers.

Mohammed based his religion on Judaism. At first Moslems prayed in the direction of Jerusalem. They fasted on Yom Kipper. However, when Jews did not convert to Islam, the ritual was

changed and they prayed toward Mohammed's birthplace Mecca. The fast was done in Ramadan, a sacred period when the Moslem does not even have sexual relations. Fasting from Sunrise to Sundown, the evenings are a time of feasting and family gatherings.

Muhammad and his followers made raids on the nearby Jewish towns and divided the land between them. Mohammed's popularity and following continued to grow. In 630 he moved his capitol back to Mecca. He destroyed the other idols but kept the black stone, known as the Kabeh. This is the sacred stone to which all the faithful pray. Mohamed died in 632 AD.

After his death there were four Caliphs who succeeded him. The first three were assassinated. The fifth Caliph was Ali. Some people didn't accept him and there were schisms. The first dissident sect was the Khajarites who did not want to fight Ali's battles. The second dissident sect was the Shiites. They were the followers of Ali. They believe their imams are descendents of Ali and can intercede with Allah. The head of this sect is the Ayatollah Khomeini. The orthodox sect is Sunni. There are other smaller sects: the Zaydis, Ishmailites, Assassins (who believe murder is a way to change leaders), the Druze, and even the Bahai who are not recognized by the rest of Islam.

The world of Islam extends all across the north of Africa, across Asia to India and down into Indonesia.

We made an unscheduled stop at the volcanic island of Saba in North Yemen. Saba is in the Kamarkan Islands, fifty miles north of Hodeida. After swimming and snorkeling, we explored the lava beds of the island itself. Soon a native fishing boat joined us, attracted by the sight of all those females in bathing suits. Moslem women dress very modestly and coed swimming is unheard of.

I found my one souvenir of Yemen: a broken piece of pottery. It was fitting after all the trash we saw in Yemen!

Wednesday, May 5. A day at sea. Emily Teeter began a series of lectures on Egypt. Mayer Rossabi continued his lectures on Islam.

After dinner the crew gave a birthday party for Michiline and her twin sister, Nicole, who was visiting. I never did learn Michiline's exact title, but she is the one who seems to keep everything running. She was in charge of our group on the trip to Sana'a. She is also the person who is coping with the passengers who want to change their itinerary to go back to Sana'a.

The party was fun. Several of the crew had musical instruments and it was interesting to dance on deck with the ship rolling in the choppy Red Sea.

Thursday, May 6. I was on deck at dawn to see us come into Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. Everywhere I looked there were ships waiting to come into port. All the wealth of the world is pouring into Arabia as the Saudis use their petrol dollars to buy everything in sight.

We are the first tour group ever to go to Saudi Arabia. The Saudis do not want tourists and have no such thing as a tourist visa. We were given transit visas and allowed to go on shore as members of the crew. Unfortunately the real crewmembers were not allowed off the ship since port regulations required them to be back on board 24 hours before sailing and we were only there for a day. I do not know how an exception was made for our group. The real tragedy for the crew is that a number of them are Moslem and hoped to make the trip to Mecca, only forty miles away.

Then we were told of more restrictions. We would not be allowed to take cameras ashore. The Saudis wish us to maintain as low a profile as possible. The women had to wear long-sleeved blouses and modest skirts. Although we had an English double-decker bus, women had to remain on the lower level. We had our handbags searched as we entered the bus.

We were taken to the market square, the Suq, where there were all sorts of goods, but the tourists concentrated on the section where the gold jewelry was sold.

Dick Kremantz and I walked out behind the Suq and found a small section of "old" Jeddah being preserved. Here we saw the Masharibi latticework so traditional in Arabian architecture. Behind the lattices, the women of the harem could observe the outside world.

Italian marble sidewalks are being laid along the dirt roads of Jeddah, a classic example of how our petrol dollars are being squandered. Before the era of oil wealth, (could it only be a decade ago?) Jeddah's importance lay in its being the main port for the Hadj, the pilgrimage to Mecca.

With petrol dollars, the port has expanded enormously. There is building everywhere. Marble buildings and great skyscrapers made of cement. However they are using traditional Moorish designs. The mayor has decreed that all buildings be painted white so that the city will be dazzling when finished.

Jeddah was developed because of a break in the reef. There were 20,000 people who lived here until the 1940s and the medieval wall still stood. Now there are one and a half million people. It is projected that the population will double again in 15 years. One fourth of all the construction in the world is going on in Saudi Arabia. Oil is the number one export. The number one import is sand! The Saudi desert sand is not the right sort to build with. The number two export is skins and hides, left over after ritual sacrifices are done. Forty-two fields of oil have been discovered in the country. Fourteen of them are being pumped. Thus there may be sixty years of oil left and more is being discovered.

Jeddah is probably the most international city in the world today. On the street are westerners, Orientals, Arabs, people from every culture and every country.

This is for two reasons.

1. The Saudis do no work, so they need people to keep those white garments clean. Workers have been hired from all over the world: Pakistanis, Mongols, Chinese, and Americans to run the oil wells.
2. OPEC controls the oil prices so the wealth of the world is flowing into the country. The Saudis in turn are buying everything they can think of. It is rather frightening to think the Saudis are possibly going to be the next great world power. They have enough oil to last well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century and are still discovering more.

We were taken to the Hotel Alhamra Nova-Park for an elegant buffet luncheon. A most surprised representative from the American Consulate couldn't believe his eyes that he was seeing tourists in Jeddah!

In trying to keep the tourists at low profile, our sightseeing tour left a bit to be desired. We were driven to the University and shown the sports arena, which is designed like an Arab tent. Then we were shown Ibn Saud's old palace, now in a bad state of repair. And lastly we passed the marble immigration shack on our way back to the ship. My sister was lucky and had seen more when she came with Dick on business. Kremenz and Co. has a dealer in Jeddah.

Miscellaneous impressions: signs that say, "Please declare to the official in charge any private things in your vehicle; "Wash hands after toilet"; There are no cinemas in Jeddah, only live theater. Porno video films are popular and to buy a projector is big business. In 1948, there was one tree in Jeddah. The ostentatious use of marble is a terrible waste.

If Allah providea, "Allah be praised." If Allah doesn't provide, "Allah be praised for what he does provide."

Friday, May 7. A lovely day at sea. Emily Teeter enlightens us on Egypt with two lectures. Mayer Rossabi gave a lecture on "The Traditional Roles of the Sexes in Islam." This latter had a standing room only crowd of the women on the tour. Islam is a man's religion. It seems that Mohammed had no revelations about women in the Koran. Although women may go to the mosque they must sit apart. They mostly worship at home with the children. The world of Islam is a man's world. On the street you see only men visiting or conducting business. The occasional woman is probably on an essential errand. Women's lib means that some women are now educated. Some even have jobs, but in Saudi Arabia, the jobs are only where there is no contact with men. Women cannot drive cars.

Mayer also explained that women have had an operation to remove the clitoris. This is done so they will not seek out sex with anyone but their husband. Many of the taboos about women go back to Muhammad. Muhammad's wives were considered different because they were the mothers of leaders. They were segregated but others had to wait on them. Later on Islam adopted the veil for the elite class to show that elite women did not have to work. There was a certain status if a man could treat his wives as Mohammad did. Today, there is a resurgence of nationalism and many women have gone back to traditional roles, some say voluntarily.

Friday, May 8. We land at Safaga, Egypt where buses await for the 150 or so miles across the desert. Starting from sea level we are soon in high mountains, which rise up to a plateau. The

only signs of life are some army bases and an aluminum factory.

Then there was an abrupt change from sandy arid desert to lush tropical countryside as we reached Qena on the Nile River. Truly Egypt is the gift of the Nile.

We stopped at Dendera, forty miles north of Luxor. The Ptolemaic temple was dedicated to Hathor, goddess of heaven, joy and love. Hathor takes the shape of a cow in mythology. This temple is one of the best preserved of all Egyptian temples.

Magnificent columns covered with hieroglyphics, with the Goddess of the Sky depicted on the ceiling. Every year the statue of Horus was brought here to mate with Hathor and cause a good harvest.

We went on to Luxor and checked into a suite overlooking the Nile in the Etap Hotel. It hadn't occurred to me that having a suite on the ship entitled us to one on land as well. We had a gorgeous view of Queen Hatshepsut's temple and the Valley of the Kings across the river.

We went to Karnak, just south of modern Luxor, which was ancient Thebes. The patron God of Thebes was Amun and the great Karnak Temple is dedicated to him. Many of the pharaohs contributed to building the temple. Ramses 11 built the outer court. The hypostyle hall is the largest hall of any temple on earth. Hatshepsut's obelisk is ninety-seven feet tall and carved from a single piece of granite. Karnak was connected with the temple of Luxor by an avenue of ram headed sphinxes. The whole temple is magnificent.

We made a short stop at the small museum, which has an interesting collection before returning to the Etap for a rest. We skipped the return visit to the temple in the evening and caught a carriage to the Marhaba Restaurant where we joined the group for dinner.

Sunday, May 9. The ancient Egyptians lived on the east bank of the Nile, reserving the west bank for the dead. Early in the morning, before it got too hot, we crossed the river for a tour of the tombs and mortuary temples.

Twin statues of Ammenhotep 111 are all that remain of an ancient temple that no longer exists. Known as the Colossi of Memnon, they are 64 feet tall. One is of solid stone. The other was pieced together. A legend says that they make sounds at dawn but we were too late to hear anything.

Deir el Bahari, the mortuary of Queen Hatshepsut (1503-1483 BC) is built into the cliffs of Gurna Mountain, facing the Nile. It has been restored and is one of the most impressive monuments in Egypt.

Queen Hatshepsut was appointed regent for her nephew and stepson, Thutmose 111. She decided she wanted to be pharaoh herself and sized the throne. From then on she only referred to herself in the masculine gender. After her death, Thutmose 111 tried to obliterate all trace of her and carved his own name in her place. One of the hieroglyphics reads, "King of Upper and Lower Egypt, Thutmose11, son of Re.

Directly over the mountain, behind Queen Hatshepsut's tomb, lies the Valley of the Kings. Most famous is the tomb of Tutankhamen. He is the only pharaoh who still lies in his tomb. All the others are in the museum in Cairo or have vanished entirely. Tutankhamen rests in one of three caskets found in the tomb.

We also visited the tombs of Seti 1 and Ramses V1. Magnificent hieroglyphics adorn both tombs. The signs of the zodiac are painted on the ceiling of Seti's tomb.

At the tomb of Ramses 111 from the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC, we noted the hieroglyphics are carved deeper than at the rest. Restoration continues.

We were given box lunches for the ride back to Safaga. To our astonishment we encountered a rainstorm! The ground is so hard that the rain cannot sink in and the wadis flood. There were also a lot of army personnel in evidence.

Monday, May 10. Going up the Gulf of Aqaba, we could see four countries: Saudi Arabia, Jordan, Israel and Egypt. Out of nowhere came an Israeli gunboat. It followed us closely for some time. Nothing moves in the Gulf of Aqaba without their scrutiny. We must have proved our innocence for after a while they left.

From Aqaba it is about 90 miles to Petra, the Nabatean city of pink limestone. We drove through a sandstorm but stopped to view Wadi Rum, where Lawrence of Arabia helped the Arabs fight the Turks in 1916. Lawrence was Thomas Edward Lawrence, an Englishman who went to the Middle

East in 1911 with an archaeological expedition. During the First World War he joined the Arab revolt against the Turks.

The city of Petra lies hidden in a valley reached by a narrow siq (pronounced "seek"). The Siq is about a mile long and traditionally you ride a horse down into the city. The cliff walls narrow over you until you almost can't see the sky. I had not realized the ride would be dramatic like the city.

At last you turn a corner and there in front of you is the Treasury. Carved out of the limestone cliffs this building got its name because a pharaoh is supposed to have left his treasure here. Its actual use is not known.

The Nabatean civilization flourished between the second century BC and the second century AD. They were an agricultural society and were known for the delicate pottery that they made. They spoke Aramaic and were closely allied with the Jews.

Their city, Petra, which means rock, was an important stop on the ancient trade routes. Hidden in its valley in the mountains, it was easily defended. The city had an elaborate water system carved in the canyon walls. Many elaborate buildings were carved from the limestone cliffs. It is thought they were tombs or shrines. Most of them date from the Roman period. The Roman amphitheater could hold 3000 people.

It is a wonderful place with the huge carved buildings, the Bedouin children, and the flowers, In 363 AD there was a disastrous earthquake from which the city never recovered. Today it is virtually deserted except for the Arabs in the area who live in caves and try to sell souvenirs to the tourists.

For Mother, age 79, this was the highlight of the trip. She even rode a white horse down the siq instead of taking a land rover, which provided transportation for the elderly. We carried a bottle of champagne down to the valley to celebrate her getting here.

Tuesday, May 11. We had another day at sea cruising down the Gulf of Aqaba and around the Sinai Peninsula. Emily Teeter gave a lecture on the pyramids. The crew entertained us that night miming songs from various musicals.

Wednesday, May 12. We arrived at Port Suez and about 5:00 AM a number of the passengers disembarked to make the trip to St. Catherine's Monastery. It was billed as a seven-hour bus trip each direction. I elected to skip it since I was there three years ago. As it happened, the St. Catherine's tour was a disaster. Unprecedented rain had washed out the road and they spent sixteen hours on the bus without ever getting to St. Catherine's.

An alternate bus trip to Ishmailia sounded more appealing. This tour took us half the distance from Port Suez to Port Said on the Mediterranean. The canal is 101 miles long and was built more than a century ago. It links the Red Sea with the Mediterranean. Since the two are at the same altitude, there are no locks on the Suez.

During the Israel/Egyptian War, the sunken ships closed the Suez. The towns along the way were destroyed. Much evidence of this remains and the shores of the Suez are an armed camp awaiting the next invasion.

The town of Ishmalia is largely rebuilt. Some traditional buildings survived the war but much new has been built. A mosque and a church share a view of the canal. A strange wall has been built using pieces of the old bridge across the canal. We also saw a pigeon cote, a great delicacy for Egyptians.

We had lunch at a private club near the villa of Mrs. Sadat. She is not popular in Egypt and since the assassination of her husband, she is not allowed to come here for fear she will be assassinated herself!

We swam in the canal. The water is crystal clear and cold. Nearby we could see local fishermen with their nets. As a result I ordered fish with lunch and it was delicious.

Back on the ship, an enterprising merchant, much to the Captain's dismay, attached himself to us. He then opened a bazaar. The cut velvet rug depicting the Last Supper tempted me, but I knew it would not look right in my house!

Thursday, May 13. We traversed the canal. It takes 11 hours. Ships go in convoy; the tankers and the ones bearing explosives were first! It was interesting to see the evidence of the wreckage



that had been cleared from the canal so it could reopen. There were military encampments and ferry crossings.

Just before the midpoint we reached the Bitter Lakes. The brackish water is what gave the Lakes their name. Some think this is where the sea parted for Moses and his followers so they could flee from Egypt.

Here the northbound convoy met the southbound convoy. We anchored for a while until everyone was together and then we proceeded on through. Eleven hours after we started we reached Port Said. We had dinner and then disembarked the ship. A long dreary customs followed. From there it was a long three and a half-hour drive into Cairo and the Mena House, which we reached at 2:00 AM.

Friday, May 14. Opening our window the next morning we felt overwhelmed by the view of the Khufu's (Cheops) pyramid. The Mena House was built as a guesthouse at the time of the opening of the Suez Canal. All sorts of prominent people have stayed here. It has now had a rather unattractive new wing added but we were luckily in a suite in the old part.

After an all too short night, we took the morning tour to the sphinx and pyramids. Mother and I did not find them as thrilling as we had when we came here on our trip around the world.

However, they now have on display a 5000-year old boat that was buried near Khufu's pyramid. It is not known if this was the actual barge that carried the pharaoh's casket, but there is evidence that it was a boat that had had long use. The beams are lashed together with ancient rope. When it was found it had been disassembled and it was quite a puzzle to put it back together. Abned Youssef Mostafa spent fourteen years on the task. Unfortunately this museum is not climate controlled and it is feared the exhibit will not last! There is a charge to see the barge and it is hoped enough money will be raised to preserve it.

Mother and I skipped the afternoon tour to Sakkara and had an Indian dinner at the Mena house in the evening.

Saturday, May 15. We had a tour of Cairo. The Rifaii Mosque is the royal family's mosque. Built in the mid-nineteenth century, the Shah of Iran is buried here, since he married King Farouk's sister.

The Sultan Hassad Mosque dates from the twelfth century and is now a madrassa or theological school teaching Muslim children to read the Koran. We ended the tour at the Suq and enjoyed the many things for sale. In particular, I will remember the drug store where all sorts of exotic cures were available.

We had a farewell dinner at the Mena House.

Sunday, May 16. We flew to London and checked into the Stafford Hotel to sleep it off. Mother and Daddy used to stay here and it is Mother's favorite hotel. We flew home the next day.

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