

## FLYING THE COOP

H. Ezra Eberhardt, Jr.

"I got a merit badge in poultry keeping. I learned how to take care of chicks and sold eggs to the neighbors. That's how I funded my trip to Europe with two Princeton classmates when we graduated in 1933."

*Editor's note: Thus spoke Eagle Scout Ez Eberhardt at the recent 75th anniversary of Maplewood, New Jersey's Boy Scout Troop 3 where he started his scouting career 69 years ago. At the dinner they gave Ez a plaque "In recognition and appreciation of outstanding service to Troop 3".*

*After his European trip Ez joined the Prudential Insurance Company of America and devoted much of his spare time to scouting - as Scout Master, Cub Scout leader and committee member, "teaching boys things they sometimes don't learn in school", he said.*

*Retiring from the Pru in 1973 gave him the time for volunteer church work and to pursue a long time interest in genealogy. With one book published, he is now working on a book called "History of Gould and Eberhardt, Manufacturing Machine Tools since 1933, in Newark, N. J." Ez decided to pass up that career opportunity in the family company saying, "I wasn't too mechanically inclined and I didn't want to be the boss's son." So Ez's brother carried on the family business.*

*As to financing his own European trip we suspect that Henry Eberhardt Sr. thought it would be good for his son's soul to finance his own way. Here is Ez's account of this trip when he and two classmates flew the coop in the summer of 1933.*



*A scout is cheerful. Eagle scout regalia with required 21 merit badges.*

Bill Powell, Bill Skelly and I sailed on the French liner Ile de France on July 6, 1933. I recently relived the great time we had on discovering my diary of the trip deep in my old files.

The ocean crossing was a happy one with many other recently released students. We became particularly friendly with a philosophy

professor from the University of Wisconsin, who knew all the ropes in London. He became our mentor since we had made few fixed plans, preferring in today's parlance to "just do it". He guided us to the Abraham Lincoln Hotel where room and breakfast for 5 shillings six pence, or \$1.37 per night, suited our pocketbooks!

In Hyde Park we listened to soap box orators preaching on morals, religion and politics, then walked to Buckingham Palace and, like all good tourists, witnessed the changing of the guard. Moving about the city on the "tubes" we found

them much better than New York subways - well run with huge escalators and automatic lifts. We dined at Simpson's and other famous restaurants of the time and took in an occasional musical comedy.

We were unimpressed with London's Flea Market, the Caledon market, with trinkets and junk for sale at cut rate prices spread all over the cobble stones. Going from rags to riches we walked through the Wall Street of London, visited the Stock Exchange, and were much impressed by the gentlemen of the business fraternity each dressed in black-striped pants, black coat and high silk hat. Impressive, too, were the splendid stained glass windows in Westminster Abbey, the tombs of the kings and statesmen. We were a little surprised to see a statue of Abraham Lincoln rubbing elbows with British great, but understood the absence of George Washington.

One morning our curator of cathedrals, Bill Skelly, lured us up to the whispering gallery of St. Paul's Chapel where, due to the wonderful acoustics one's voice travels 100 yards around the dome. To get a brief rest from famous tourist attractions, Bill Powell and I had a good workout rowing up the Thames in a hired boat.

Winding up our stay in London we rented a Hillman-Minx and enjoyed the scary business of learning to drive on the left side of the road. A visit to Canterbury Cathedral followed by a tour to the south of England brought us to Hastings, where William the Conqueror beat up the Saxons

in 1066. We drove on to visit yet another cathedral at Salisbury, then crossed the Severn to Wales on a ferry that was powered by ropes and the muscles of the ferryman.

Back in England en route to the Shakespeare country we visited Warwick Castle, then the home of the 22 year old Earl of Warwick. Built in the 10th and 11th centuries, the castle awed us with its magnificent collection of medieval armor, its ghost tower and torture chamber. At Oxford we were reminded that organized teaching existed there in the 1100s and at Cambridge, where we punted on the Cam, we learned that in 1209 a split in the Oxford community resulted in a migration of students and scholars to start the University of Cambridge. We were duly respectful of universities that antedated our own by over 500 years.

Leaving England we crossed the channel by boat to Ostend, Belgium and entrained to Cologne, where we "did" another famous cathedral.



*Bill Powell & Bill Skelly with the Hillman Minx in England*

Here we got our first taste of Germany's National Socialist Party as hordes of brown-uniformed Nazis testified to the take-over of just about everything: music, books, travel, and even the youth of the country - for here we witnessed a parade of young boys only.

One late night in Cologne I got lost and had no idea of the name of our hotel or how to find it. After an hour of increasing panic, I saw Bill Powell across the square in the distance. Luckily he was not lost and Eberhardt didn't have to seek help from the Nazi polizei.

One of our few advance plans was to visit Elsie Langenstein, the sister of my freshman year's roommate, Dutch Leuthauser, class of '32. Elsie lived in Coburg, a small town east of Frankfort about 75 miles west of the Czechoslovakian border, so from Cologne we took the boat up the Rhine 100 miles to Mainz and the train east 150 miles to Coburg.

Elsie treated us royally during our two week stay with her family, consisting of her no-nonsense husband, who owned a machine shop, and two fine boys, one of whom was later

killed in the war. They lived in an attractive brick home, modern in all respects except for one puzzling plumbing anomaly: the outlet of the toilet, which operated without the benefit of water, went straight down into the cellar. We never did have the nerve to ask what happened down there.

We enjoyed sausages and beer at the town carnival, took hikes in the country, and visited one of the ever-present castles - more armor, swords, guns. We noted that here as in all Germany the friendly hello in passing had been replaced by the more militant "Heil Hitler", and yet we were very much aware that most Germans at that time were strongly supportive of programs initiated by the newly appointed Chancellor which were generally considered to be peaceful and constructive reforms.

Switching our mode of transportation to bicycles bought in Coburg, we pedaled south 150 miles to the



*Ez - outward bound on the Ile de France - July '33*

Austrian border at Passau where the Germans, not wanting to lose three bicycles, let us cross into Austria only after leaving a deposit and pledging to bring the "wheels" back to Germany. We boated on the Blue (spelled b-r-o-w-n) Danube for a brief stay in Vienna and returned to Salzburg where we crossed back into Germany, picked up our bike deposits and headed north to Munich.

At this point we tested our growing proficiency on two wheelers by steering with one hand and hitching rides behind slow moving trucks. This saved energy and hastened our arrival in Munich, but it was dangerous and we became separated as three slow-moving trucks seldom came along at the same time.

In Munich we gave much of our business to the Lowenbrau Beer Garden with its brass band, good food, congenial young people and plenty of beer. We visited the homes of several young German acquaintances and watched the glockenspiel perform at the rathauskeller, with life-size mechanical dancers and jousting knights. We were awakened one Sunday morning by a parade of brown-shirted Nazis which continued in the rain until 1 P.M.

## GLIMPSES OF CLASSMATES

When it came time to move on, we sold our bikes and by agreeing to visit Mussolini's Exposition in Rome we bought railroad tickets from Munich to Venice to Rome to Genoa to Switzerland for 37 marks - 12 dollars - a 70% reduction.

The first leg, to Venice, took all day as we crossed the Alps and we arrived late at night. A few evenings later with five of our friends we hired a gondola for the Water Festival in which every gondola and house along the Grand Canal was lighted with candles, a lovely sight, unmarred at night by the reality of the floating filth revealed by daylight. Daytimes we frequently went to the Lido beach for a delightful swim in gorgeous water and real spaghetti meals a la Italiano.

On to Florence where we got rained out hearing Il Trovatore in an open air theatre. In Rome as promised we went to Mussolini's 10th Anniversary Exposition containing the history of the Facist movement - all in Italian - hence unappreciated by us, except for the reduced train fare that got us there. Like true tourists we pulled some strings to get an audience with the Pope, kissing the Pontiff's ring as he passed by.

We toured the Colosseum and descended into the catacombs with candles in hand. This was a horrible mistake - except for those who like dark, damp, claustrophobic, subterranean

spaces. We climbed the Leaning Tower of Pisa, our next port of call. It leans to this day, and probably more so, for it is no longer climbable. The train took us along the Mediterranean Riviera and through many tunnels to Montreux, Switzerland, where we engaged a nice room on the shores of Lake Geneva, gambling in the lake and gambling in the Casino.

Early in September we entrained to Paris and walked and walked until we found a hotel for 25 francs, about \$1.40 a day. This was just my speed as the summer came to a close. After doing all the tourist things including the Folies Bergère, I had spent my last red cent and needed more francs to continue. Fortunately I had the name of my Dad's Sales Representative in Paris, so I was able to borrow enough to get back to the U.S.A.

This we did aboard the French Lines' DeGrasse on a ten day cruise via Lisbon to New York. We arrived September 27 after an unforgettable 80 days to face the real world, broke, with the depression still in full swing and no job.

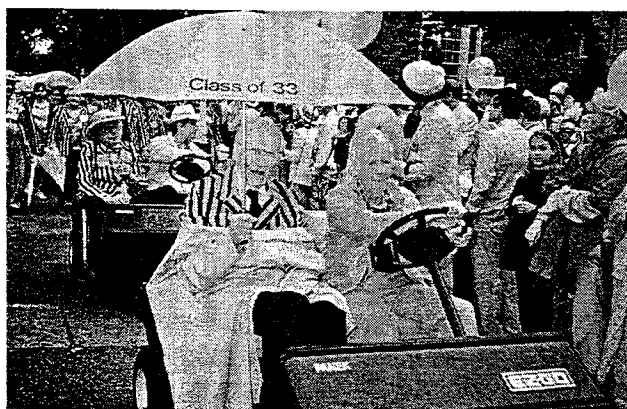
Six weeks later I got a temporary job with the Prudential starting at \$65 per month. Forty years later I retired from that job, too old to seek permanent employment.



*Charlie Davis at Sunday brunch*

### 60th Reunion Snaps

*Editor Curly Marsh in the P-rade with Norm Riley, Bill Lafean & Bud Wilson*



*Les Herzog, Mavis Marsh chauffeur, in P-rade, followed by Tom Ballantine*



*Another "brunch" shot - Dubie Morris and Bootsie*