

This is an eBook version of a self-published (extremely limited run) photo travelogue.

It is optimized for viewing on a computer or tablet screen (rather than printing) and is presented with the following caveat:

There are three photos in this eBook that were presented in the printed version as two-page spreads. In this version of the book, however, each printed page is presented as a single page image, thus those two-page spreads are shown in the same way. Since it is fairly simple to click back and forth as needed to see both “sides” of the image, this presents only a minor inconvenience. Unfortunately, one of those spreads has text that is also carried over between the two pages, significantly raising the inconvenience factor when trying to read it - for which I apologize.

2016 Northwest Adventure

**of
Billie & Ced
and
Louise & Lew**



Denali, Denali National Park and Preserve, Alaska



Our Great Northwest Adventure

On the 1st of July of 2016 Billie and Ced began a trip that had been on their bucket list for some time – a visit to that extremely rugged and scenic area purchased from Russia in 1867 for \$7.2 million (about two cents per acre), at one time called “Seward’s Icebox,” and ultimately admitted to the Union as our 49th state in 1959.

They were joined on this trip with their very good friends, Louise and Lew - a couple that had tried to cruise Alaska in the past but because of cruise-line failures had only succeeded in visiting some of the inland parts of the state.

The adventure consisted of several parts:

- a week-long, small-ship (100 passenger) cruise to the inland waters of southeast Alaska, beginning and ending in Juneau;
- a time when Billie & Ced visited Denali National Park, while Louise & Lew visited the Portland, Oregon area;
- and a final piece when Billie & Ced rejoined Louise & Lew for a brief exploration of Oregon’s Columbia River Gorge and Mount Hood areas before we all returned to our respective homes in California and Florida.

We’re all looking forward to our next American Cruise Lines adventure together when we explore the Columbia and Snake Rivers in 2017.

Juneau and 1st day of cruise



We'd been watching the weather patterns before leaving home and saw that Juneau was expecting quite a bit of rain. As it turned out, while Juneau did seem to live up to predictions, it fortunately was not a very good harbinger of weather for the rest of southeast Alaska.

You can see, from this shot from a window of the hotel (toward Douglas Island, across the bay), our first day and night in Juneau was quite wet.



In preparation for the cruise, we all had our luggage in the hotel lobby early for the ship's crew to pickup and deliver to our shipboard cabins.

While that was going on we took a bus tour just a few miles out of town to the Mendenhall Glacier and found that while it was very cloudy, there was no rain there. Apparently, Juneau has a fairly wet micro climate all its own.

This building is the very modern Mendenhall Glacier Visitor's Center.



As you'll see in the photo on the following pages, this glacier is receding. Compare the photo on this sign, taken in 1952, with the 2016 image of the glacier, only 64 years later. In particular, notice the position of Nugget Falls (upper right on the sign) with its current position relative to the face of the glacier.

Once we'd finished exploring the glacier, we were taken to the pier where our ship was waiting. We boarded, checked out our cabins, unpacked our bags, and headed to the dining room for lunch. The graphic on the right provides an overview of the route for our 700+ mile cruise and tour.





You can see how much Mendenhall Glacier has receded from the 1954 photo and drawing. That's Nugget Falls on the right of the photo. In addition, the massive scale of this glacier becomes more apparent when you realize that those tiny little black marks in the water (on the lower left) are kayaks exploring the glacier up close and personal.





The above photo is a view of Mendenhall Glacier taken several hours later from the ship after waiting for it to travel south, then west, and finally north (in order to clear Douglas Island) toward the towns of Haines and Skagway.

After dinner Ced went up to the top, open deck to look around. Off in the distance he saw this very fast-moving double-hull ferry, probably coming from Skagway, heading south. He quickly grabbed an image of it and then took his camera and himself off the deck before getting drenched by the spray coming off that boat.





As you travel farther north in the summer months the days get longer. Before finishing up this first shipboard day and getting ready for bed, Ced stepped out onto the room's small balcony (think "very tiny") and shot this **10 PM sunset**.

Day 2: Visiting Haines



Arriving at Haines in the morning, we stopped cruising for much of the day in order to enjoy a land-based wildlife tour along the Chilkoot River and Chilkoot Lake (facing page). On our first stop along the river we spotted a nesting pair of Bald Eagles taking care of their young.

Later, when we reached the lake, we saw several other Bald Eagles.





We also visited a local museum where we enjoyed a presentation about some rescued eagles.





After the wildlife tour (and after lunch), we were able to spend some time just wandering around the town visiting local stores, looking at the outside of the **Hammer Museum**, and just enjoying the ambiance of this very small Alaskan town.



On the way back to the ship, we saw this restored Keystone Driller; a steam-powered machine used for gold prospecting in the early 1900's.

Later that day we said goodbye to Haines, this time heading for Skagway.



Skagway, the "Gateway to the Klondike"



Early morning, July 4th image of our ship, the **American Spirit**, docked at the Skagway pier.

We arrived after dinner on July 3rd and the town of Skagway was definitely planning a big Independence Day celebration. But because the sun sets so late this far north, their fireworks event was planned to start at just before midnight on the evening of July 3rd so it would be dark enough to see at midnight - the very beginning of the 4th. We heard the beginning sounds of the event and later learned that it was a great display. Unfortunately, that was one firework event that occurred well past Billie & Ced's bedtime.

The next morning (the 4th), we took a self-guided tour around the town and enjoyed the local city parade, including civic groups, fire engines, dog sleds, and especially some singing of “America, the



Broadway, Skagway's main street getting ready for the parade.



Beautiful” by the adorable children of the local day care centers.



After lunch that day we took a bus tour up the Klondike Highway paralleling the White Horse Trail into Fraser, Canada.



Just a couple of years after the start of the gold rush, the **White Pass and Yukon Route** narrow gauge railroad was built to make the trip to the gold fields easier. At Fraser, after a very quick and simple immigration entry check by Canadian officials, we boarded the current incarnation of that line for an even more scenic ride back to Skagway. Once there we were greeted by U.S. Immigration and Customs for a much more rigorous passport inspection before we could leave the train and return to our ship.





That evening Ced managed to grab his only other sunset photo taken on this cruise (at close to 11 PM) as we sailed south through the northern portion of the Favorite Channel before turning west on our overnight passage toward Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve.

Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve



Sea lions near South Marble Island

Early on the morning of the 5th of July the ship stopped briefly at the National Park headquarters' pier to pick up a National Park Interpretive Ranger and a Huna Tlingit Cultural Interpreter. These two joined Todd, our shipboard naturalist/historian guide, for our day and a half Glacier Bay tour. The ship then headed toward the northern most point of Glacier Bay to visit the Margerie and Grand Pacific Glaciers.

Whenever our tour guides spotted something interesting, particularly examples of local wildlife, the ship would pause in its journey to allow time for discussion (and photos). We had our first Grizzly Bear sightings (two different ones) near Gloomy Knob and lingered for about an hour. While watching the bears, a Hump-back Whale surfaced between us and the shore for a quick breath before disappearing below the surface again (next page).



Map of Glacier Bay marked with key stops



Mama Grizzly Bear and her three cubs





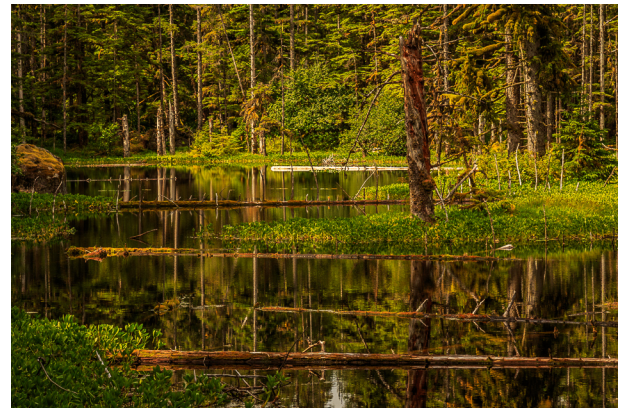
Margerie Glacier (above) and calving a small iceberg into the bay (right)



Grand Pacific Glacier

When we reached the two northern-most glaciers in the park a little after lunch we were able to see the significant difference between an advancing versus a retreating glacier. The Margerie Glacier is still rapidly advancing, and even treated us to a calving display as it dropped a small iceberg into the bay. The Grand Pacific Glacier, on the other hand, has been retreating for years and shows an almost completely dirt and rock face; it looks as if it will not be long before it crosses the border into Canada.

On our way south we stopped at, and examined, several other glaciers as we were on the way to an anchorage for our overnight in the park. Given the 1,000 foot depth of the bay, places to drop anchor while still staying clear of the cliffs are difficult to locate. Ultimately, we anchored somewhere around North Sandy Cove for the night.



The following day we sailed to the National Park's visitor center at Bartlett Cove, dropped off the two park-and-culture-oriented tour guides, and stayed in port for a few hours to replenish fresh water and other supplies. Passengers went ashore to either take an organized hike, visit at the Visitor Center, and/or otherwise take advantage of the brief stop.

Ced visited the lodge, the Visitor Center, some outside exhibits, and then took a solo photowalk around a portion of the Forest Loop Trail and enjoyed shooting these very pastoral scenes.



Petersburg



Soon after leaving Glacier Bay we were heading southeast toward Petersburg - a fishing community with a strong Norwegian heritage. Off of Chichagof Island we spotted Orca Whales and slowed down for a time for more discussion and photos. We sailed for the rest of the night and arrived in Petersburg early in the morning of July 7.





Some took a walking tour of the town while others of us (including Ced) took a narrated hike on the **City Creek Trail**. Billie took her own, self-guided, town tour (and captured the image at the top, right). Later that day, the city educated and entertained us with some Norwegian dancing and some special dessert favorites.



Tracy Arm and then back to Juneau



The ship departed Petersburg in the wee hours of the morning headed for the fiord known as Tracy Arm for our last day of cruising southeast Alaska.

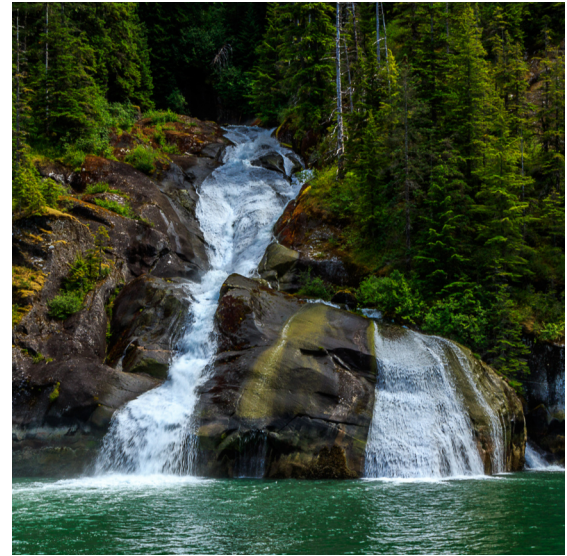
We sailed deep into the fiord toward Sawyer Glacier. The deeper we sailed into Tracy Arm, the more icebergs we saw. Although most of them were relatively small, a few were a bit larger (but not anything like the size of the Titanic incident) and it was clear that the Captain of the ship took great care to avoid them all.

Everyone on board knew that only one tenth of any iceberg is visible above the water; no one had any desire to meet the other 90% of any of them. While observing Sawyer Glacier (and participating in an amazing 'chocolate fountain' on the top deck) we were lucky enough to see another example of glacier calving (next page).

Once we had exited the fiord, we continued up the inland waterway known as Stephen's Passage on our way back to Juneau where we eventually docked early the evening of July 8. The following morning passengers disembarked to where ever the next step of their journey took them.



Sawyer Glacier (left) and closer view of 'iceberg calving' (top)



Other images from Tracy Arm, including a waterfall and a large iceberg reminiscent of a submarine.

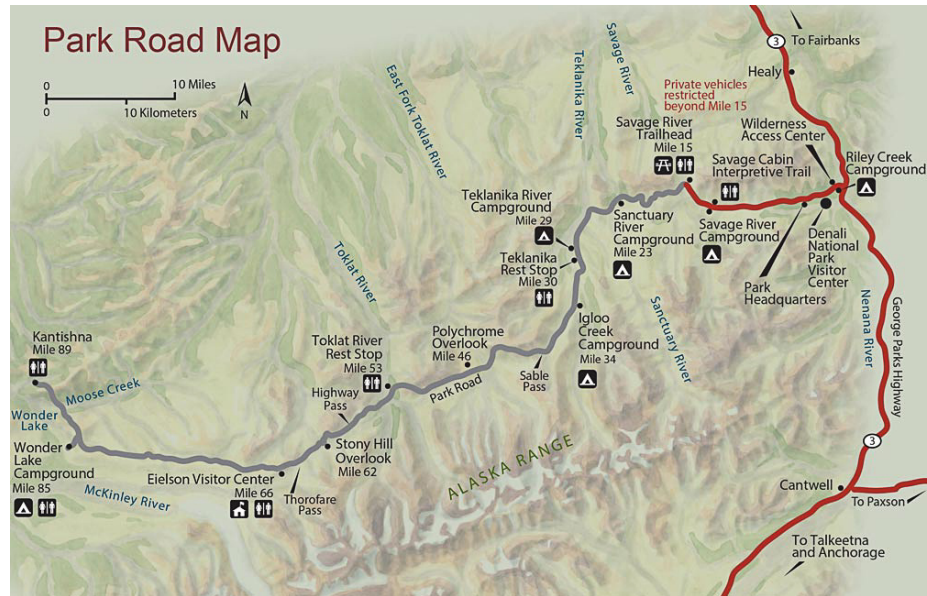
Denali National Park and Preserve

Once we had all disembarked the **American Spirit**, we spent a bit of the morning wandering around Juneau, stopping for breakfast, and then heading for the airport; Louise & Lew flying to Portland, Oregon and Billie & Ced flying further north to Anchorage, Alaska.

We* stayed overnight in Anchorage and then drove north about four and a half hours to our lodging at Denali Village, a few miles south of the entrance to Denali National Park and Preserve.

Private cars are, for the most part, not allowed to drive more than about 15 miles into this three million acre wilderness park (done in an effort to absolutely minimize traffic and maintain its amazing wilderness quality). One of the few ways to see the park is to take a bus tour that crosses it using the only developed road available. We signed up for the eight hour tour which covers about two thirds of the road.

* Note: In this section “we” refers only to Billie & Ced.



Map showing the roughly east-west Denali Park Road and various landmark points

One of our first (pit) stops was along the Savage River. There are a couple of things to notice from this photo. One is that the sky is very overcast. Apparently, this is the more-often-than-not state of the sky during the brief summer season. We were told that it is highly unlikely that we would actually get to see Denali (the actual mountain) because of the constant



clouds. The other thing you should notice is that this part of the park is actually well forested. That is another difference that is obvious when you see that much of the park visible from the bus tour is Alaskan **tundra** (defined by Wikipedia as “a type of biome where the tree growth is hindered by low temperatures and short growing seasons”).



This panoramic scene, as well as the closeup of a nearby mountain (top, right), definitely reinforces the notion of constant cloud cover as well as the mostly treeless “Alaskan tundra” biome.



As it turns out, much of this tour is also about spotting wildlife. We did see, and photograph, Caribou (AKA reindeer) and Grizzly Bear. We also saw some interesting birds and some Doll Sheep (too far away to look like much more than tiny white shapes on the mountain-side - upper-left image). The birds we saw were too fast for Ced to catch a decent shot but Billie captured a great image of a Willow Ptarmigan (the Alaskan State Bird - bottom, left).





During our return we were delayed briefly by some road construction/repair and Ced noticed that what had been a solid overcast all day was breaking up into defined clouds (it was after 10 PM by this time and there was the beginning of a sunset). He managed to get a decent shot of it before we returned to the bus to complete the tour (getting back to our cabin close to midnight when it was actually starting to become dark).



On our last full day at Denali Park we wandered around a bit to explore the area, stopped at the park's Visitor Center, and drove out the unrestricted portion of the road. The sky was much clearer with broken clouds (what our home town TV weather-person would call

The next day we left Denali Village. The sky was incredibly clear and we enjoyed wonderful views on our way back to Anchorage. As we drove on the highway. We pulled off and took a few minutes to capture some (apparently rare opportunity) images of the mountain and park.

Denali actually has two peaks, cleverly named, **North Peak** and **South Peak**. In this photo you can see both of them (near each other is the highest mountain in the U.S.) while its shorter sibling is **only** 19,470 feet. We particularly enjoyed that the river visible in the foreground is the Denali River. We could not find out the origin of the name (why it is "troublesome" but it's fun to speculate on possible scenarios that might have



into the park again. That drive was limited to even less than 15 miles because of an issue with a bear near the end of the
("partly clearing").

At about the halfway point of the drive we noticed that we could actually see a southern view of **Denali** (the actual mountain) from
parts of the **Alaska Range** of which it is a part.

On the right-hand page of the spread). The closer South Peak, on the left in this southern view, is the highest at 20,320 feet (and
one of these images is called **Lower Troublesome Creek** (which *correctly* implies that there is also an **Upper Troublesome Creek**).
I brought it about).

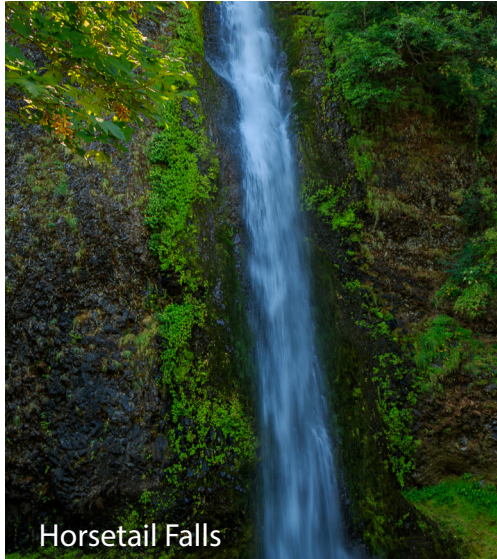


Near Portland, Oregon

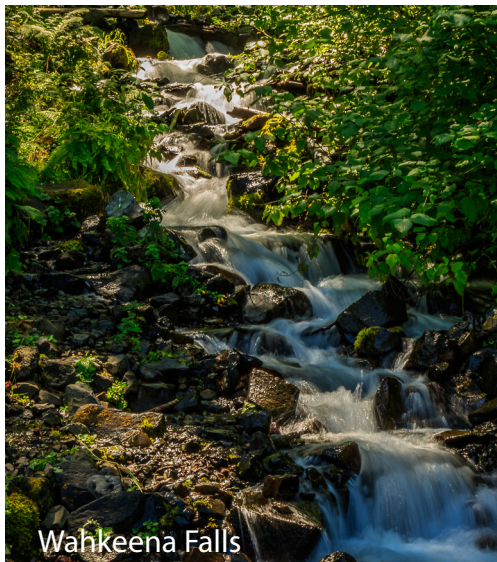


Our visit to the Portland, Oregon area was the last stop on our North-west adventure – included so we could spend just a bit more time with wonderful friends we see too infrequently before returning to our respective homes in California and Florida. L&L had already visited Denali on prior trips and so had opted to stay in the west by checking out Portland while B&C spent time getting their additional taste of *the-land-of-the-midnight-sun*.

Taking advantage of a personalized tour they arranged for all of us, we visited a couple of the very scenic overlooks of the **Columbia River Gorge**, spent some time photographing several of the beautiful waterfalls that seem to line the river, explored a fish hatchery, had lunch at a popular outdoor eatery by the river, and viewed many of the bridges that cross the natural border between Oregon and Washington.



Horsetail Falls



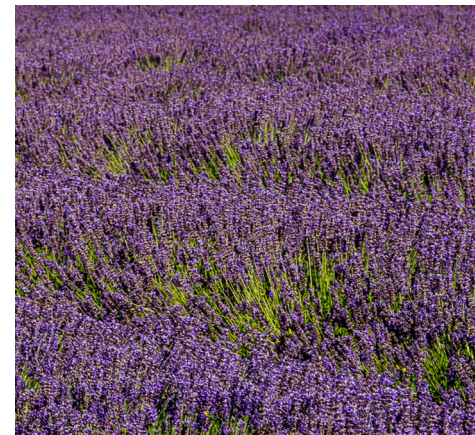
Wahkeena Falls



Multnomah Falls



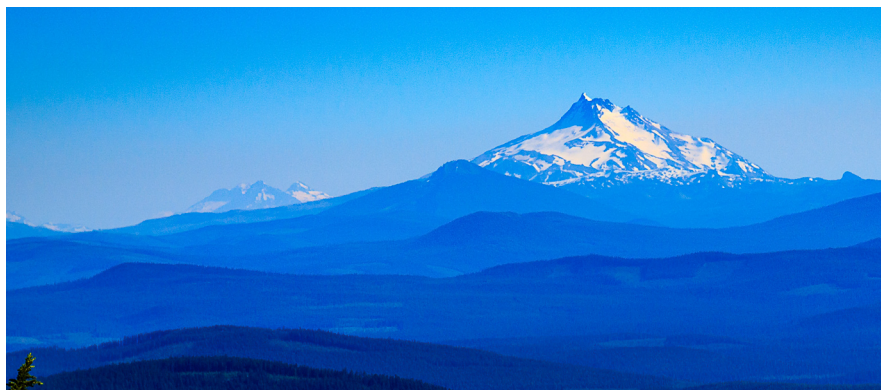
We even stopped at a lovely little winery in the town of Hood River for some afternoon snacks and some wine tasting (the snacks were okay but the wine not particularly to our taste). After spending about half the day exploring the Gorge, we turned toward Mount Hood. Along the way we got a fairly clear photo op view of the mountain (above) and also came across an unexpected lavender field.



Eventually, we reached the Mount Hood Lodge, perched very close to the top of the mountain. The lodge itself was a magnificent example of WPA-era architecture and artistry.

The location offered amazing views of the surrounding countryside. We then returned to our hotel in Clackamas, ending the full day tour. We spent another day exploring around Portland (sans camera). The following day we headed for the airport and said our goodbyes (until next time).

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Mount Jefferson (about 50 miles south) and nearly 40 miles beyond that, South Sister (as seen from Mount Hood)



Reflecting pond, Bartlett Cove, Glacier Bay, Alaska

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But, of course, because of the above note,
it is no longer blank. A conundrum, to be sure.