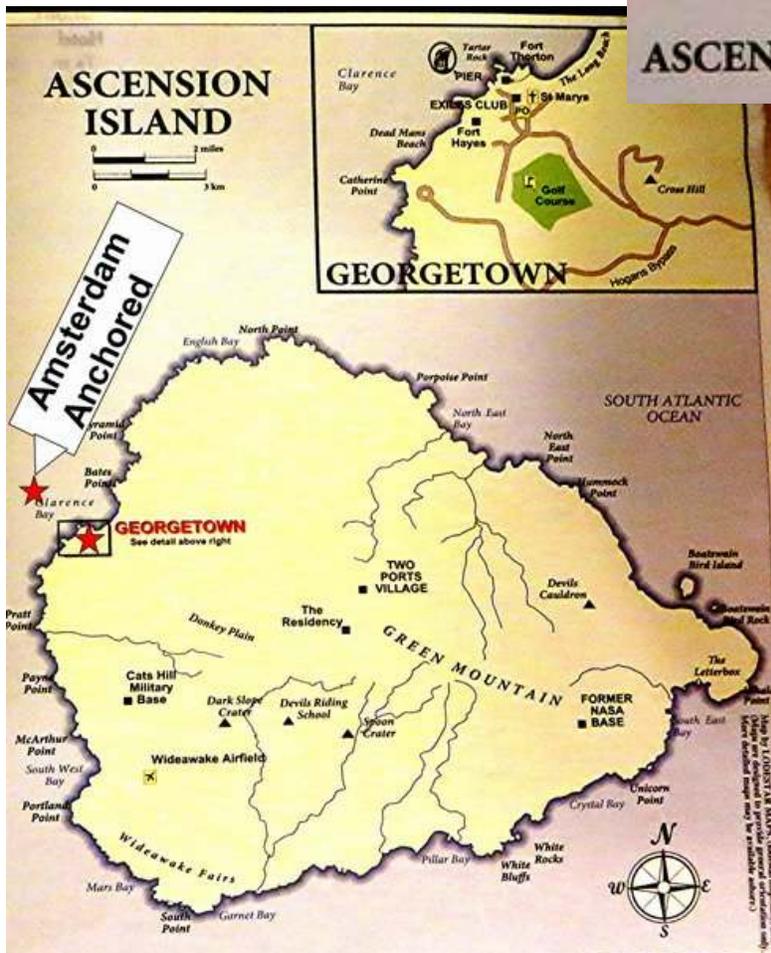
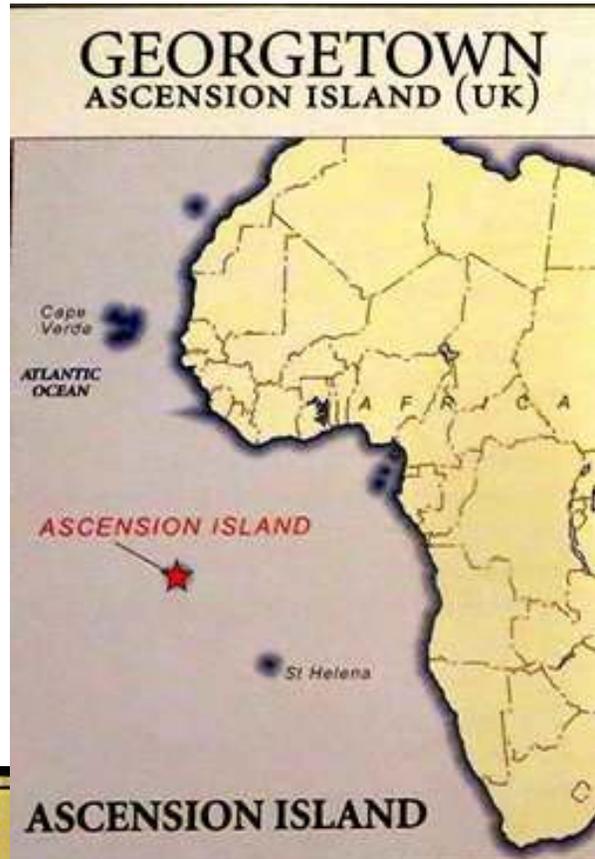


4/17/13 - Day 101- Georgetown, Ascension Island –Canceled Landing: We arrived at Ascension Island about 7am and anchored off the port of Georgetown. There are four small villages on Ascension Island but Georgetown is the largest and serves as the administrative headquarters. Ascension Island is a remote South Atlantic island like St. Helena as shown in the map on the right. The early history of Ascension Island and Georgetown is linked with St. Helena Island by the fact that a garrison of British soldiers was stationed on Ascension Island to thwart any attempt by Napoleon Bonaparte to escape St. Helena.

In recent years the island served as a communications station for the British and a vacation spot for devoted deep sea fishermen. A map showing the location of Georgetown on the island and some other features is shown below.



Since we were at an anchorage it was necessary for the Amsterdam to lower some of the tender boats to carry passengers from the ship to the landing in Georgetown.

When the initial landing party arrived at the dock with the usual equipment needed for handling tender boats and passenger traffic, they found the ocean swell hitting the landing and the small size of the landing dock made their job very difficult. They did the best they could and passengers

were loaded onto tender boats and they departed the Amsterdam headed for shore. However, there was an ominous warning that everyone should assume that their feet would get soaking wet in the process of debarking the tender boats and climbing the stairs of the landing site.

It was a sunny day and we were looking forward to the day's visit in Ascension Island. We had signed official Ascension Landing immigration type documents provided by the local government and everything seemed pointed to a nice visit on the island. Then we were in the line waiting for the next tender boat loading when Captain Mercer came on the PA system and announced that the officer in charge at the landing dock had reported unsafe conditions. There was wildly tossing tender boats, lines securing the boats were breaking and the officer in charge was wet up to the knees. There was concern for passenger safety and the captain pointed out an additional worry that the tender boats, which were a vital part of the Amsterdam's safety system, might be damaged if we continued this operation. Consequently Captain Mercer reluctantly canceled the visit to Ascension Island before any of the passengers got on shore.

As part of the arrangements for the Ascension Island visit, souvenir vendors from the Island using their own boats had boarded the Amsterdam earlier in the morning. They had set up their tables in the Atrium on Deck 4. With the cancellation of actual landing on Ascension Island the passengers descended with renewed interest on the smiling souvenir vendors. The scene that developed is shown on the right. The Ascension Island Post Office also had a representative on board and her stamp sales to souvenir collectors were brisk.



At 1pm the souvenir vendors left the ship. Their mode of transportation was well adapted to the conditions at the landing and they had no worries about that.

It was a disappointment to have the visit Ascension Island visit cancelled but the ship's staff and passengers tried to make the best of it. The Captain decided to make a clockwise circumnavigation of Ascension Island. To enhance the event the ship's Travel Guide, Barbara Haenni, provided commentary on the PA system about features we could see on the island as we passed by.

As soon as the souvenir vendors were safely off the ship the Amsterdam pulled up the anchor and began the cruise around Ascension Island. Interested passengers gathered on the outer decks or verandahs, as shown on the right, to see what they could on the shore. Water spots on the deck in the picture were caused by water dripping from the tender boat that had just been retrieved from the ocean.



Some pictures of Georgetown taken from our anchorage are shown on the right and below.

The volcanic origin of Ascension Island was



evident from the many red and black cinder cones and volcanic mountains in the background.

The following are some photos that were taken of the shore facilities and scenery that passed by on our trip around the island.

Part of the communications equipment on the island are shown in this picture on the right. There is an airport on the island with commercial flights but we didn't see it.



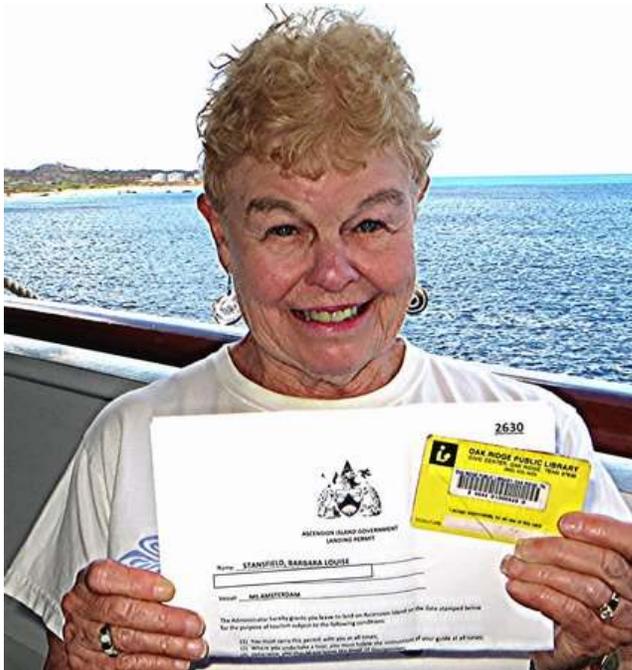
---More communication antennae---



Most of the shoreline consisted of the rugged and colorful volcanic cliffs like those of an area called Devils Cauldron, shown in this photo below.



As we finished the cruise around Ascension Island we pondered the issue of documenting the visit of Barbara's library card to this remote place on earth. In fact, the little yellow card had not actually been on shore but it was within easy eyesight and we had papers



from the local government authorizing our landing. Barbara decided that the spirit of the tradition had been met and the card's visit to Ascension Island should be documented. The formal documentation was carried out by photographing the card along with the government paper showing that landing on Ascension Island was approved, as shown on the left.

A careful observer might notice that, much like us, the poor little library card is starting to show some fatigue cracks. Luckily for the card, that can be fixed during Barbara's next visit to the library.



With our trip around Ascension Island completed the Amsterdam changed course and headed for our next port of call in Fortaleza, Brazil.

Even though our day had gotten off to sort of a rocky start with the cancellation of our visit to Ascension Island we were looking forward to the evening when we would be dining with Lee and Lorraine in the Canaletto Restaurant on the Lido Deck.

At 6:00pm we met with Lee and Lorraine for an Italian dinner in the Canaletto. The dinner was delicious and enhanced by a gracious gesture from Captain Mercer. In view of the disappointment over the Ascension Island visit cancellation he provided champagne and other drinks for our meal. We couldn't let this moment go by without a photo so we had one of the stewards take a picture of our happy group, as shown on the right. After a nice meal with enjoyable conversation the Canaletto always caps off the evening with a serving of cotton candy. It is fun to relive some childhood memories while the cotton candy melts in your mouth. Eventually we had to say goodbye to Lee and Lorraine and we brought our day to a close.



The good ship, Amsterdam, sailed on through the dark Atlantic headed for Fortaleza, Brazil. We expect to arrive there on Sunday after three days at sea.