

# Ketchikan, Iceberg Playground, and Petersburg Alaska, on board the *Le Soleal*, 15-16 July 2019

Our first stop in Alaska was Ketchikan, for a very brief visit. Two huge cruise ships were docked, while we anchored in the harbor, and were shuttled to shore using the ship's shuttle boats. Ketchikan is very touristy, but we had a nice walk along the salmon stream to a hatchery and a museum dedicated to rescuing old totem poles. On the way back to the *Le Soleal*, we walked through the former red light district, and in general the area where non-whites lived, which had interesting historical markers and explanatory posters.



*Figure 1. House along Salmon stream in Ketchikan.*



*Figure 2. Sweat shirt advertising Creek Street - former fed light district.*



*Figure 3. Two mammoth cruise ships berthed in Ketchikan. These carried some 4-5 thousand passengers, compared to the ~180 on our ship.*

This morning (16 July) we were transported by jet boats through a fiord which was conveying a vast array of mini-icebergs which broke off of a glacier. It was an incredible iceberg playground. Each mini-berg had a different hue, varying between white to a deep blue.







*Figure 4. Mini-icebergs, broken from a nearby glacier.*



*Figure 5. Harbor seal swimming among the mini-icebergs.*

Around noon we arrived in the town of Petersburg on Mitkof Island. It very much was like a small town in the lower 48 about 100 years ago. We had a dock side tour of fishing boats led by a former fisher. Then we retired to the Sons of Norway Hall, where we were treated to Norwegian pastries and Norwegian dances. Then we walked on a nature trail. We were surprised to meet many of our shipmates on the trail – but that was the sort of population on this voyage.





Figure 6. Refreshments at the Sons of Norway hall in Petersburg.



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Figure 7. Dance costume.



Figure 8. Norwegian dancing.



Figure 9. A street in Petersburg.

After weighing anchor in Petersburg, *Le Soleal* headed for Sitka. The expedition leader announced from the bridge that a pod of orcas (killer whales) was passing by on our port side. We grabbed our binoculars and camera went out onto our balcony to watch:

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*Figure 10. Killer whale, observed from the balcony of our state room.*