

European Travels July 1963 - August 1963

Why Europe – From my early days on I had a real curiosity as to what this "Europe place" was all about. My family's roots were all of European origin -- Tedi's father was born in Czarist Russia (in what is now Vilna, Lithuania), and her mother's family was from southern Ireland. Jimmy's father's side of the family was from Rheinland-Hesse in Germany, and his mother's side was from Alsace in France. My father was exposed to considerable amounts of both the French and German languages while growing up (probably with strong regional dialects!) and still had a working knowledge of it when Kim and I came along. Tedi was so strongly opposed to her father's Russian autocratic tendencies that she had little appreciation of the Russian language itself (she called it coarse and more often shouted than spoken -- not entirely wrong!), but nevertheless her father took it on himself to try and teach us bits of Russian while we commuted with him out to Beverly Hills to go to school for a year or so right at the end of the war. In any case there was always a lot of curiosity on my part as to what this "language stuff" was all about ...

People in this country, even those in the teaching community, don't always treat languages as one of the "solids" (such as the three Rs -- readin', 'ritin', and 'rithmetic). When I was in high school at Northside High in northwest Atlanta (the culturally 'elite' part of the city) I ended up with a spare one-hour period in my senior year and asked the counselor if I could fill it in by taking first-year French. Her answer was that, since I was already a senior, I wouldn't have the opportunity to take the follow-on second-year French and wouldn't be able to get credit for the course -- therefore I could not take the course at all (a lovely lopsided line of reasoning -- instead I worked in the school cafeteria during that hour at lunchtime each day selling sandwiches!). A similar thing happened in college when I signed up for French as an elective to fill a spare time slot and was told I would have to drop the class because it was not part of the engineering curriculum I was enrolled in and constituted something of an overload! So much for the importance of languages in the US in the mid-1950s ...

Going to a purely engineering school was not something I purposefully chose -- it was actually my father's choice for me! He wanted to make sure I wouldn't suffer from the lack of a technical education in the way he had, and he simply couldn't envision a liberal arts education as having much value when it came to earning a living! During my senior year in high school I had applied for and been accepted at Dartmouth, something my 4-year Lockheed scholarship would have covered. When my father found out about this, we had a tearful session during which he recounted all the difficulties he had surmounted in his career, things that would have been unnecessary had he been able to obtain a proper technical education -- a situation he wanted me to be able to avoid. In the end I reluctantly agreed to go to a 4-year technical school (good old Boston Tech, here I came!).

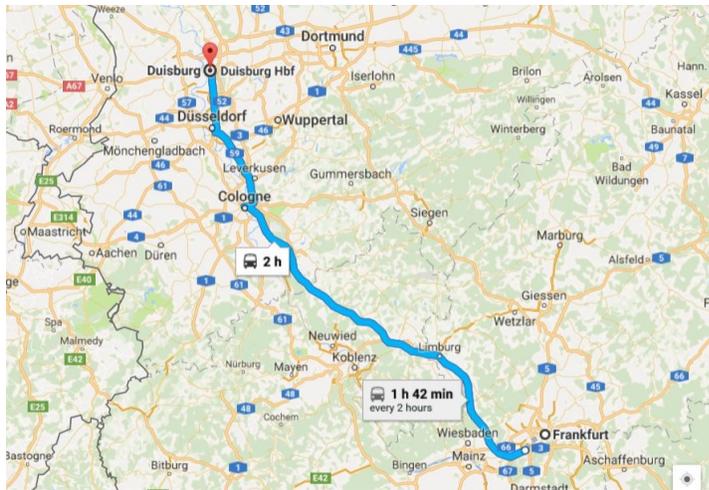
After having finished my four years at Tech, I found myself in the existential situation of a typical male US college grad in the period 1950-1975 -- either go to work at a "dee-fense" plant (with an automatic draft deferment) or get drafted into the army (as an E1 Recruit -- one level below an E2 Private!). The sage ones among my classmates had taken ROTC and emerged from four years of college as second lieutenants, but it had seemed to me to be a terrible waste of a class period for all 4 years of college -- especially at a school where the educational value of a class period was so high (not to mention the wasted time required by the various extracurricular activities of ROTC, such as "staff meetings" and arranging for the annual "Officers' Ball"). The other oddity was that, even though ROTC bestows the coveted rank of officer (rather than "enlisted man"), the actual follow-on Army military assignment is invariably in either the Infantry or the Artillery -- neither seeming to me to have very much attraction as a way of spending an additional two years of one's life! A fraternity brother who knew of my interest in languages had once lived on base at the Presidio of Monterey, California (where his father had served as a dentist, eventually achieving the rank of Lieutenant Colonel in the dentistry corps!). After hearing descriptions of the opportunities there, I decided to enlist in the US Army Security Agency (known more simply as ASA -- the military counterpart of the well-known civilian NSA), the group from which most of the students at ALS (Army Language School) were drawn. This involved a real gamble, as the entrance exam for language school was not administered until halfway through Basic Training! Things worked out, however, and within about 5 months of completing college I found myself a newly enrolled "Private" in a 47-week Russian-language course (R-12-87) at USALS in Monterey California -- quite a transition from Boston, Massachusetts (not to mention Atlanta, Georgia!). The recruiting sergeant who had recommended I enlist for ASA had also made the very useful suggestion that I request Russian (German was my preference) as my language of choice -- not only were the chances better that I would be accepted to ALS, but the opportunity to learn German would almost certainly

present itself later on after being assigned to a base in West Germany where most of the ALS grads were eventually sent (excepting for a few who were sent to ungodly places like Adak, one of the Aleutian Islands in Alaska, or to Sinop, a desert base on the Black Sea in Turkey that the U2 reconnaissance planes of that day flew out of – folks such as Gary Powers!). It was after the eventual completion of this military service three years later in July of 1963 that I found myself taking a European discharge and suddenly standing with bicycle and Kinderrucksack on the pavement of the Frankfurt Bahnhof, ready for two and a half years of travel adventures. Following is a rather abbreviated summary of my wanderings in the period from my Army separation in July of 1963 to my arrival in the San Francisco Bay Area in October of 1967 ...

July 1963 - Aug 1963 -- Cycling on the Rhein and in Bavaria, Bayreuth Festival
Aug 1963 - Oct 1963 – Tedi's visit
Nov 1963 - Mar 1964 -- Back to US (on MATS) to look for European-based translating job (and finding it at US JPRS!)
Mar 1964 - Oct 1964 -- Back to Europe(Loftleidir), 8000-km Scandinavian cycling trip, Bayreuth, Vienna
Oct 1964 - Jun 1965 – Living in Paris, studying French, translating Russian for a living (JPRS)
Jun 1965 - Oct 1965 – Hitchhiking down Dalmatian coast to Greek islands, return via Corfu and Italy
Oct 1965 - Oct 1967 – Return to US (on Icelandic) to take job at Lockheed/Marietta for two years
Oct 1967 - Oct 1967 – Return to Vienna (Loftleidir) to live and hopefully work
Nov 1967 - Dec 1967 -- Move from Vienna (TWA) to Honolulu after not being able to find work in Vienna
Dec 1967 - Now(!) – Return to San Francisco Bay Area after finding tech work sparse in Hawaii

When I finally separated from the Army after 3 years of active service on July 4th, 1963 (my personal Independence Day!) I had not really completed my military service -- the commitment was a 7-year one, with a follow-on 4-year period to be spent attending meetings in an Army Reserve unit. Fortunately, I managed to get assigned to a Reserve unit in Berlin, which was a unit that held no meetings(!), so I was off that particular hook. After having been separated (and in the process having unexpectedly received three medals -- the Good Conduct medal, the Occupation Army medal, and the Cold War medal, all handed to me rather informally in a brown paper envelope along with a parting salute as part of the separation process!), I climbed on the duty train from Berlin to Frankfurt, where I spent a night or two with my friend John Rollinson, who was now a lieutenant in Army "Intelligence" and stationed at the notorious "I G Farben Building" in Frankfurt. One of our classmates at Monterey (an ex-Yalie) had been smitten with the bug to apply for a reserve commission while still at ALS (not in the infantry or artillery, but in ASA!) and talked several of us into doing the same. Of the small group of half a dozen or so, John was the only one who actually received a commission. In addition, because the Cold War was heating up at that point (the Khrushchev era), his "reserve" commission was actually activated, with the result that overnight he moved from a barracks into a BOQ (an unexpected, but rather pleasant surprise for John, which occurred shortly after he arrived at Baumholder, right after completing language school)! The downside was that he also went on to spend 20 years in the Army (from 1960 to 1980) -- a questionable benefit, but one which, perhaps because of his academic background (a degree in Philosophy from Brown University), he felt offered him a wider range of possibilities than the normal career path of becoming a banker in New York City (which somewhat terrified him!). In any case, John was stationed in Frankfurt during my entire two-year-plus wander-period in Europe from 1963 to 1965 and provided a convenient and central place to toss my sleeping bag down whenever I happened to be passing through -- many thanks to that esteemed gentleman for such a valuable service at a time when it was greatly appreciated! John eventually married an English Ph.D. biologist (Shirley) he met while he was stationed in Heidelberg and while she was working at the Max Planck Institute in Heidelberg. After the completion of his Army service, the two of them went on to pursue careers in the Episcopal ministry, both of them receiving degrees from divinity school in Ambridge, Pennsylvania. He also completed his 20-year Army service with the rank of Major, a considerable elevation above my final rank of Specialist 5th Class and an accomplishment to which I could never have dreamed of aspiring!

July 1963 -- Cycling on the Rhein – My departure from the service was at a time when I was still recovering from a broken collarbone, and I decided to start my cycling career out somewhat tentatively by cycling up the Rhein river from Frankfurt to Duisburg -- a town I knew only as being in the Ruhr Valley of North Germany (apparently bombed to smithereens during WWII!). During my days hanging out at the Viktoria-Studienhaus in Berlin, I had met a young chemical engineering student named Jutte, who lived in Duisburg and who had invited me to visit her (she had suffered some reverses in her academic career and was temporarily working at a laboratory in Duisburg while waiting

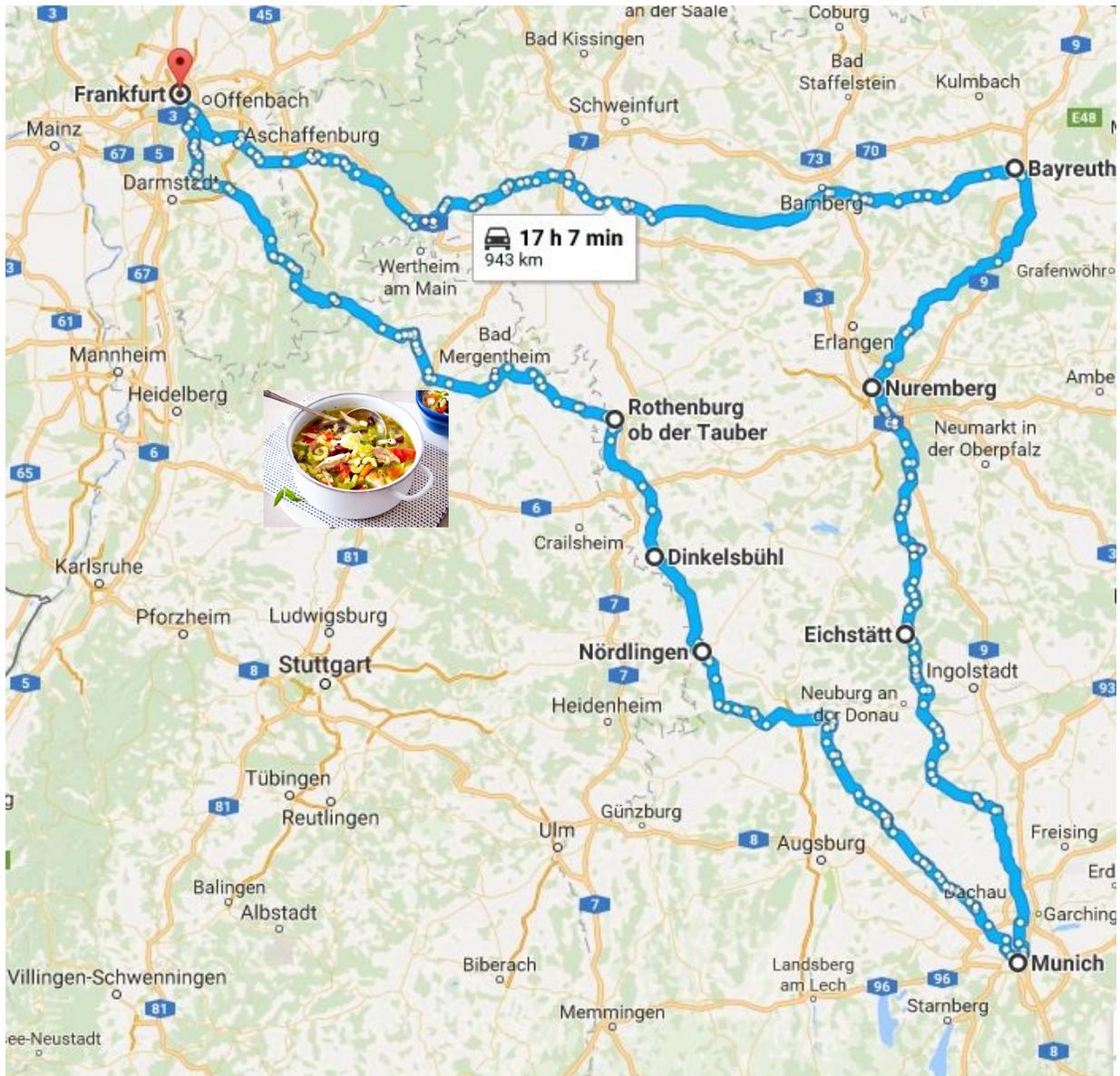


to be readmitted to the Technische Hochschule in Berlin!). The trip was initially a pleasant one, leaving Frankfurt, climbing gently up through Limburg in the Taunus mountain region, then dropping down to pick up the Rhein river at Koblenz and on to Bonn and Cologne (Köln). After that, however, to my naive surprise the area began to turn more and more industrial, and by the time I had reached Duisburg going up the East side of the Rhein I had come to realize why the Allies had spent so much effort trying to flatten the area during the war -- it was heavily industrial and not at all the type of terrain for a cyclist looking for green hills and flowing streams! My visit in Duisburg was pleasant, although Jutte's father felt my time was best spent giving him a

hand washing cars in the Esso filling station he managed, after which we would join his "Kollegen" for beer and schnaps at his local "Kneipe" (hole-in-the-wall Gasthaus!). Although Jutte's mother was a very elegant looking lady in her mid-fifties, Jutte's father apparently kept a "Freundin" on the side, which led to a considerable amount of tension between the two of them during my three- or four-day visit. One thing I did learn to my profit was the existence of the DJH "Jugendherberge" system -- Youth Hostels, where one could stay for typically one Mark a night (4 marks to the dollar at that time!). My first overnight stay had been at a very pleasant little Gasthaus right on the Rhein, but the price had been 10 marks, a sum that was equal to my projected budget of 10 marks a day and an increasing source of worry as I was struggling to figure out how long my funds could be projected to last (I had left the Army with about \$1500 in the bank, and was eventually able to stabilize my daily expenses at about \$2.50 per day, or about \$75 per month -- a very manageable amount and pretty much the same no matter where I was in Europe, although, as I would eventually learn, it was a bit tight in the Scandinavian countries of Denmark, Norway, and Sweden!).

After a surprisingly pleasant 3 or 4 days in Duisburg, I bade "Tschüss" to Jutte and her family and hopped on my bike for a very pleasant ride back down the West side of the Rhein, overnighing at my first ever Jugendherberge in the picturesque riverside village of Sankt Goar -- a place I have returned to on many subsequent occasions, its being an easy place to overnight either by car or when taking one of the Rhein ferries. The rest of the ride took me down through Bingen and over to Wiesbaden to return to Frankfurt. John was waiting for me with a nice Whiskey Sour and dinner of Beef Stroganoff (two of his specialties, the recipes for both of which I usurped from him for use on many subsequent occasions over the years), along with a piano duet or two played on the little German spinet he rented for his small BOQ room. John's friend, Felix -- later also to become an Episcopal priest and eventually to be elevated to become the Bishop of "Upper South Carolina" -- was also frequently in attendance for both dinner and a hand of bridge afterwards. We had previously made plans (along with Felix) to attend a full performance of Wagner's four-opera Ring cycle at the composer's self-designed theater in Bayreuth, and, with John's help, I laid out a scenic route for cycling down to Munich, then up to Bayreuth to meet him there in about three week's time. The route would take me down the so-called "Romantische Strasse" through the scenic towns of Rothenburg, Dinkelsbühl, and Nördlingen and on to Munich. After spending a few days in Munich, I would then cycle up through Nürnberg to Bayreuth, where we would spend a week enjoying the entire Ring cycle (along with a performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony as an mid-week intermission at the Margravian Opera House in downtown Bayreuth-- quite an appealing venture, all in all!).

July 1963 - Aug 1963 -- Cycling from Frankfurt to Munich -- I set out from Frankfurt on a warm sunny weekday morning, warm enough that a passing garbage truck saw fit to cool me off by directing its power hose at me as it passed and giving me a blast of probably not very clean water! Sporting cyclists are frequently the target of mischief from passing vehicles -- not just in Frankfurt, but throughout various cities in Europe -- something that one quickly gets accustomed to! The trick in getting out of a major urban center like Frankfurt lies in avoiding routes that direct one onto one of the many multi-lane autobahns (large freeways with no speed limits!). My only guidance was a map of Europe as a whole, along with abbreviated local maps I would pick up at tourist bureaus along the way. As a result, I would frequently have to stop and make sure that the route I was taking had an alternative to the Autobahn. This



gave me frequent opportunities to stop and practice my German, something that I didn't mind doing and that passers-by seemed to take in good humor (Germans are always ready to give advice!).

My second Jugendherberge in the little town of Erbach im Odenwald (just outside the tourist destination of Michelstadt) brought me face-to-face with a surprise – the Jugendherberge system in the State of Bavaria at that time accepted only people under the age of 26! In July of 1963 I would be turning 25, putting me on the suspicious edge and presenting a problem in the not-too-distant future if I were to continue to expect to depend on the youth hostels for lodging. The importance of the youth hostels to my prospective budget was underlined by my introduction to my first 50-pfennig (about 15 cents!) Eintopf – a delicious and very filling bowl of steaming meat, potatoes, and vegetables which, along with a free German roll (Brötchen) nicely filled me up! My youth hostel stay that night cost me a total of 25 cents for lodging, 15 cents for dinner, and another 15 cents for breakfast next morning – about 55 cents out of my allotted daily total of \$2.50 – things were starting to look up!

Over the next day or two I cycled along the so-called Romantische Strasse, making the obligatory (and quite pleasant) pilgrimages to the well-known and picturesque little medieval towns of Rothenburg, Dinkelsbühl, and

Nördlingen. This is an area now criss-crossed by Autobahns, but back in the early 1960s it was a much quieter and less accessible part of the countryside and quite a pleasant cycling experience.

One of the difficulties I encountered very early on in my cycling career was the necessity of rationing one's appetite for taking what seemed to be quite short excursions off the main road, but what in reality could turn out to be several-hour round trips! That was brought most particularly to my attention by my diversion a bit later on to visit



the Wieskirche – one of three well-known Baroque edifices near the tiny little town of Steingaden, a bit to the west of Munich. From the outside the church looked fairly typical for a Bavarian church, but the

inside contained the buoyant, wedding-cake architecture so typical of the Bavarian rococo with layer after layer of sculpted whipped cream! The diversion off the highway was only about 3 kilometers, but it was rather hilly and the trip was about a half an hour each way, which, along with about an hour of sightseeing, clipped more than two hours off of a carefully planned schedule for the day (interfering with the hoped-for arrival at a youth hostel for the evening with its prospect of a shower, good cheap meal, and an actual mattress -- rather than having to find a place to camp that involved intruding on some surly, local farmer's domain!). Oddly enough, commercial campgrounds, although plentiful, were a bit difficult for me to use at that time, since I had not yet acquired an actual tent, something that German campgrounds required – all part of a long learning experience (which my life at that time certainly was!).

Arriving in Munich, I checked into the very large and bustling Jugendherberge very close to the downtown part of the city, and then spent a couple of days looking around the town (where Kathy and our family later spent a very pleasant year on an SRI project in 1978-79). I had received a postcard from my Yosemite hiking companion, Dave Griffiths, telling me he was working in Munich for the summer as a news translator for Radio Liberty, and so I dropped by the Pension (Angelika) where he was staying, only to be told he had left for the weekend to visit Berlin! Bad timing, but I very much enjoyed my first visit to Munich anyway and eventually set out on the road north to Nuremberg and eventually Bayreuth.



July 1963 - Aug 1963-- Cycling from Munich to Bayreuth –



As the days passed, I acquired a fairly decent set of "cycling legs" which allowed me to maintain my nominal 100 kilometers of cycling each day, while still having time to stop and enjoy scenery along the way. The route from Munich to Bayreuth broke up nicely into three 100-km stretches, with the unexpectedly interesting town of Eichstätt being my goal for the first evening. Although Eichstätt was said to have been largely destroyed (during the 30-years war in 1634!), it still contains a remarkable collection of large and impressive buildings (used for what?), churches, castles, and cloisters from various eras and even features one of the few all-Catholic universities in Germany (perhaps not out of place in largely Catholic Bavaria!). After another short cycling day I arrived in

Nuremberg – also a fascinating historical collection of buildings from many eras, including more recent Nazi times – something that is mercifully suppressed in present-day Nuremberg. I took a day off to do some sightseeing and arrived at the Cathedral downtown just in time to hear the summer mid-day organ concert. As I was sitting in a pew looking around at the magnificent woodwork and enjoying the impromptu concert, who should come walking up the aisle but John Rollinson and Felix (the future Bishop!) – on their way to Bayreuth as well, but taking a short stop in Nuremberg between trains! Our modes of travel were too different to allow for much more than a quick exchange of greetings, but it was an interesting crossover. My third cycling day brought me to Bayreuth itself, where I settled into the local Youth Hostel for a prolonged stay of over a week – enough to include the entire Wagner Ring and just stretching the maximum length of time one could stay in any given hostel!



July 1963 - Aug 1963 -- Bayreuth Festival – The hostel in Bayreuth was a very pleasant one and within easy walking distance both of downtown and of the Wagner Festspielhaus theater where performances were held. I settled into a very pleasant schedule of spending each morning in the hostel’s day room, coming up to speed on that day’s Ring offering using John’s copy of Ernest Newman’s classic “The Wagner Operas.” We would then meet for lunch at the local Bahnhof restaurant – German Bahnhof restaurants are typically quite good, very reasonably priced, and often feature an outdoor area where one can sit on an a terrace overlooking the train tracks, and the one in Bayreuth

qualified in all of these respects (unfortunately since replaced by a McDonald’s John recently reported while on his 10th year of attending Bayreuth performances!). About mid-afternoon I would dig my jacket and long pants out of my Kinderrucksack – a rather shabby set of apparel for such a magnificent setting, but it was the best I could manage in my reduced circumstances! One day a passing American news agency photographer snapped one or two shots of the three of us and handed them to us the next day, saying he thought we might enjoy seeing a copy before they hit the International press! Highlights of the week-long visit were – the four Ring performances, hearing the brass section announce the start of each Act with fanfares played from the outside balcony, mixing with the international crowd, the elegant tables of expensive food during intermission (as contrasted with my carry-along brown bag of pastries), seeing the Begum Khan sweep in with her entourage each day, strolling downtown for a late-evening dish of ice cream after each 4-hour-plus performance,

and the off-day Beethoven Ninth performance in the Margravian Opera House in downtown Bayreuth. The Ring performances were staged on what was then a very modern set (Eurotrash was not yet in evidence!), consisting of a large disc filling the stage which became sheared at an increasing sharper angle with each performance – indicating the impending fall of the Gods!



The orchestra was completely recessed in front of the stage, both to remove it as a distraction, as well as to improve the balance between singers and players – an effect enhanced by the fact that the entire theater was built of wood. The theater was surprisingly small (with no box seating) and very close and warm in the heat of high summer – jackets tended to be shed as the evening progressed (over the intervening 50+ years, this and the hard wooden seats are the features of the 4-hour-plus performances I remember most vividly!).

During the normal day off between the second and third operas of the four-opera Ring, I cycled out along the Königsallee to the neighboring Eremitage Palace – a royal retreat to the east of Bayreuth. The trip was a pleasant one, highlighted by my unexpected passing of a road crew of convicts digging a large ditch with picks and shovels, of which one yelled out to me as I passed, “Oh, Du, Du schönes Ding ...” I suppose the contrast of my sleek Polrad bike and cycling shorts awoke a brief moment of regret in him as to his wasted life (or something along those lines!). It also very much reminded me of my recently completed Army service, although the occasion didn’t seem an appropriate one to

probe his receptiveness to my thoughts on such matters.

August 1963 -- From Bayreuth to England – My week in Bayreuth drew to a regrettable close, with the next item on my agenda being to cycle back to Frankfurt, deposit my bicycle into John's hands for safekeeping in his BOQ basement storage area for a month or so, then head for the Autobahn-West to hitchhike first to Paris, then North to Calais, across the English Channel to Dover, then further on up to London, my eventual goal being to meet Tedi at Heathrow Airport to accompany her on several weeks of train travel around Europe. But that's another story ...