

European Travels October 1964 - June 1965 (Paris)

Transition to Paris – After a stop in Frankfurt to box up a few items John R was holding for me and shipping them ahead via Poste Restante (European General Delivery) I arrived in Paris in October of 1964 and settled into a youth hostel in the southern part of the city, where I was to spend about a week casting about looking for a small room where I could live (and eventually do my hoped-for translating while taking the Metro into the Latin Quarter area to take French classes). Looking for a room at that late point in time (with respect to the academic year) was very discouraging, as all the cheap accommodations had already been scooped up by students, both domestic and foreign! The hostel where I had taken up temporary residency fortunately had cooking facilities (not terribly sanitary ones, but what the heck!), so I was able to scramble and survive for a few days while living there. It was there in fact that I was first introduced to the fact that all French butcher shops at that time were closed on one particular day of the week, routing all requests for meat to the neighborhood ‘boucherie chevaline’ where only horse meat was sold, catering to the French taste for ‘hippophagy’ – horsemeat eating! My French at that point was too rudimentary to realize what it was I was buying, although after having cooked it I quickly became aware of a considerable difference in taste – one I was never able to adjust to!

I spent 3 or 4 days running around the various quartiers of Paris responding to postings of various sorts for rooms, but always arriving an hour or so too late to close the deal! At some point I suddenly recalled the address I had obtained from Stew the previous summer and, after digging it out, headed for the office of the *Association France États-Unis*. After showing my passport to the very pleasant lady in the office, she furnished me with the address of a ‘chambre de bonne’ at 4 Rue Marietta Martin in the 16th Arrondissement (one of the toniest quarters in Paris, right near the fashionable park *Bois de Boulogne* with its racetrack, equestrian center, golf course, and French Open tennis stadium). Upon arriving there a very pleasant middle-aged lady escorted me up 7 floors of outside iron steps to one of a set of maids’ quarters on the top floor of the building. The room was tiny and unheated, with a sink hanging directly on one wall of the room (with a bucket underneath for catching the water) and a communal toilet directly across the hall, which was shared by half a dozen different tenants on the same floor. It was clean, however, and featured a tiny garret window looking out on the surrounding roofs (very Parisian) from which it was possible to hang a small bag of perishables to keep them cold during the winter months in lieu of a refrigerator. Because there was no heat, one was expected to buy a ‘gaz’ – a portable gas heater for which one could buy small replaceable propane tanks. The price for the room was 200 Francs a month – about \$40 at the then current exchange rate of 5 francs to a dollar, and so I grabbed it. I later found out from my next-door neighbor that she was paying 35 francs a month and that the rents were regulated by the city to the extent that the rent I was being charged was essentially usurious! At \$40/month, however, who was I to complain, as it provided me with what I needed. In addition, my income was not tied to the sort of French commercial activity which paid wages at a completely different level (fortunately much lower than my anticipated translating income of several hundred dollars a month). Hard to believe now, but such were the economic facts of 1964-65, much to my good luck!

I was ecstatic to have actually moved into a more or less “permanent” residence right in the heart of Paris, particularly after several days of a very pessimistic outlook on my chances of finding anything at all. It took me several days to collect my bicycle from the train freight station, along with the boxes sent from Frankfurt which had ended up at a remote warehouse in a neighborhood close to one of the freight train stations (one of the boxes went missing, never to be seen again with no explanation whatsoever given, and in that box were a number of keepsakes from my Russian grandfather which for some reason I had been hauling around with me).

Settling in to Paris – I soon settled into a daily routine, something that it was necessary to do to synchronize my activities with daily Parisian life. Each morning I would get up around 6 am and clean myself up a bit (not too much, as the water running out of the little sink was quite cold and also made quite a racket as it drained into the bucket under the sink and could wake other people up!). I’d then trot down the 7 flights of stairs to the local boulangerie to pick up a demi-baguette (22 centimes!) along with a copy of the Paris edition of the New York Herald-Tribune (about a franc) – a necessity for any ex-pat living in Europe for keeping up with the wider world! Back up the 7 flights of stairs to put a little pan of water onto my hot plate with an egg to be soft-boiled and eaten with my demi-baguette (avec du beurre, naturellement!), with the remaining hot water used for coffee (then put back on with a fresh fill to be used for washing my dish, cup, knife, fork, and spoon). I’d then grab my French book and notepad, trot down the steps again

and head for the Metro station Muette, which was only a block away on the Avenue Mozart(!). After about half an hour's ride across the river (including one change of trains) I'd get off right in front of the Alliance Française on the Boulevard Raspail at the Sèvres – Babylone Metro station, just across from the Le Bon Marché department store. The French class lasted about an hour, after which I'd wander around the area a bit (le quartier Latin!), checking out various shops and small book stores, including one that had a good selection of Russian technical dictionaries. Then it was back onto the Metro and across the river again, often getting off at the Metro station Ranelagh (instead of Muette) just for a little variety in the routine. About that time I'd make a leisurely shopping run up the Avenue Mozart, typically picking up 'deux cent grammes de biftek' for dinner along with any needed refreshers on my juice and/or wine supply, and a few fresh veggies in the neighborhood open-air market. On the way back, I'd stop at the little shop right next to the boulangerie and pick up 'deux tranches de jambon' and 'un berlangot de lait' along with another demi-baguette for lunch (the little bakery was only about a two-minute walk, so it was easy to always have fresh bread for each meal, something that 'real Parisians' always insisted on!). Once back in my little garret, I would launch into the translating work, take a break for lunch, then go at it again for another couple of hours before knocking off around 3 pm for an extended walk over into the Bois de Boulogne area. That part of the 16th Arrondissement was quite elegant and picturesque, and there were a number of different walks that I frequented just to enjoy looking at the grand houses with their manicured gardens and massive wrought-iron fences and gates. The Bois itself offered many opportunities for walks and included many park benches where one could sit and read, while watching the nannies overseeing the children of the wealthy inhabitants of the surrounding area. The whole thing seemed quite sophisticated and very civilized in the French sense of the word! It was one of those things that one does at a certain time in one's life for a short period of time, then moves on with the feeling, "Ah, yes, now I've done that ..." And, of course, looking back on such times always affords a great sense of pleasure – perhaps even greater from the perspective of looking back than that which was actually afforded during the time it was being experienced! Such is the nature of memory and reflection ...

The seventh floor where I had taken up residence in my little room was one amongst perhaps a dozen 'chambres de bonne' (maid's quarters) for the elegant apartments on the 6 floors below, which were serviced separately by an interior grand staircase and an elevator. As probably with any grand apartment building in Paris, the seventh floor had an interesting collection of residents: Gaby – an English girl working as a nanny for one of the families in the building; Monique – an older French girl who worked in a couture shop and was always elegantly dressed (a bit out of place perhaps on the 7th floor!); a family of Spanish maids, including a husband (itinerantly in situ), a wife, and two rather noisy teenage girls; and my next-door neighbor Renée – a 30-ish clerk/secretary with a foreign firm in Paris with whom I eventually became good friends.

The family from whom I was renting the little room was an odd mix, of whom the wife was the one with whom I had the most contact, as she seemed to be the one that managed the family's domestic affairs. The husband occupied some sort of upper-level civil-service position and would be picked up by a chauffeur-driven car each morning and whisked away to wherever it was that he worked in central Paris. They had two late-teen-age children – a son and a daughter, of whom the son was rather quiet and withdrawn and eventually ended up in some sort of extended adult care situation. The daughter was much more lively and studied languages in what appeared to be a sort of dilettante fashion. The family was quite musical, with the husband playing the cello and the daughter playing the piano. Occasionally of an evening they would get together, and the father and mother would sing classical lieder-style pieces while the daughter accompanied them on the piano. Although it sounded a bit amateurish through the floorboards, nevertheless it seemed like a wonderful way to spend an evening 'en famille.'

Like all larger Paris buildings, there was a couple in residence (in a small entrance-apartment arrangement on the first floor) who served as 'concierges' for the building – taking care of routine maintenance, sorting mail for the various tenants, watching who was coming and going (and at what hours!), and generally keeping an eye on whatever was going on in the building. Apparently this is an arrangement which originated in Napoleonic times and was intended to maintain order and keep an eye on things in the domestic sector. The couple in our building were probably typical – in their late thirties or early forties, no children, she the sweeper/housekeeper/spy and he the maintenance/handyman. The mail sorting seemed to be their way of keeping track of people's outside contacts, and they were particularly fascinated by the variety of mail I would receive from multiple foreign countries where I had friends from language school and college, as well as from friends and family in Atlanta. This probably gave me

something of an air of intrigue(!), and she would frequently hand me several heavily-stamped envelopes with a sort of knowing look (the mail was always personally handed over from one of a series of little piles into which she had pre-sorted them). I would always try and make some friendly comment in order to practice my French a bit, but she would only infrequently reply in any detail, perhaps out of fear of disclosing some important bit of trivia to which she did not feel I should be privy

Demise of the Scooter – Just as I had done in Munich and Vienna, I tried parking the scooter in front of the American Express office in downtown Paris with a “For Sale” sign on it. It was quickly tagged with a sign from the police to move it within 48 hours or have it confiscated – something that hadn’t happened in the other cities (the AmEx office in Paris was right downtown in a very high-rent district, and they apparently didn’t want a lot of semi-operational two-wheeled vehicles with “For Sale” signs on them littering the streets!). As a result, in order to keep the scooter operational, during my first few weeks in Paris I alternated between taking the Metro to my French lessons and taking the scooter, which for the most part was parked in a small alley directly adjacent to the building I lived in. The choice depended largely on the weather, since using a scooter on the crowded Paris streets could be quite challenging if the streets were wet or slightly frost-covered – especially when crossing the vehicle bridge over the Seine, which could be quite slippery when the weather was cold (Paris has quite marginal weather in the winter with a good bit of steady light rain and/or frost, perhaps because of its proximity to the English Channel and the plentiful moisture that comes from that direction!). And, of course, if the scooter weren’t ridden for a few days in the winter weather, it could get quite hard to start as moisture worked its way into the electrical system!

I also tried posting signs on local notice boards, but the fact that it was an Italian scooter of a very obscure make meant that I got completely zero interest in it. One day, while riding it back from my French class, the clutch cable suddenly gave way, with the result that I had to kill the engine and coast to a stop, then push the scooter all the way back to its little space next to the building. I had no tools, but managed to jury-rig a means by which I could start the scooter in gear by pushing it down the street, jumping on and riding until I needed to stop, then killing the engine and clunking to a halt. This was a very unsatisfactory arrangement for normal transportation, but it did allow me to get the scooter to a repair shop to see if it could be fixed. The French mechanic looked at it skeptically, then said he had never seen a scooter of that make and had no parts that would work with it (all European countries have their own unique makes of scooters, and they vary from decade to decade as companies come and go out of business!). In the end, the scooter came to rest forlornly beside the building, accumulating a considerable layer of grit. At one point a local school crossing guard (a very grumpy overweight lady in some kind of uniform) pushed it down the street a couple of blocks and left it to see if anyone would notice and/or do anything about it! When I saw it was gone, I walked around the neighborhood, found it, and pushed it back into its customary spot. It sat there untouched for about six months, and when I finally left Paris in October of 1965 it was still sitting there (I suspect it is no longer there, however!). When I communicated the details of the demise of the scooter to its owner back in Minneapolis, he was very philosophical about it (bless his heart ...). I suspect that he had by that time probably come to realize that it had not been a very well thought-out purchase! Unfortunately, my financial situation at that time was such that I had no way of reimbursing him for the occasional (although very handy) use I had got out of it.

Denizens of the Seventh Floor – Not long after I had moved into my little room, I had the opportunity to make the acquaintance of my next-door neighbor, a young lady in her early 30s by the name of Renée Alloury. She was in possession of a convenience which was not available to me – namely a “cuisine” -- a small room closet-like room directly across from her own little room (a chambre de bonne very similar to mine) that served her as a kitchen and for which she paid an additional 25 francs per month (about 5 dollars then!). Renée was from a small country town not far from Paris and, like many other French lasses, had come to the city about 10 years prior to that to seek her fortune (or perhaps a husband, whichever came first!). Because I was a foreigner, I was not really a prime candidate for such an honor (for most French people, foreigners are a rather incomprehensible entity and something to be held at arms length!), so we were able to become quite good friends without ever developing any sort of entangling complications. That was extremely handy for me since it gave me a daily contact for practicing the rather rudimentary French I was picking up each day at the Alliance Française across the river. Renée also became a valuable contact between myself and other inhabitants of the 7th floor, as well as bringing me up to speed on the intricacies of navigating the neighborhood and shopping for necessary bits of this and that. Each day she would set out, or as she said, “Je vais faire ma course!” – that is, she would go shopping in the way the French did back then – navigating one’s way from

one little shop to the next, carrying a little basket or bag in which the various articles being shopped for would be carefully placed, each in its own little individual wrapping – more often than not simply a piece of butcher paper wrapped loosely around the article. After all, there was no need to wrap things up too tightly, as they would almost invariably be consumed within an hour or so of purchase – most people lacked refrigeration (even Renée, with her little “cuisine,” did not have a refrigerator and during the wintertime simply hung her little bags out the window to stay cold). Summertime simply required one to make one or two additional trips per day – typically one before each meal! Because most people operated in this mode, however, the neighborhood shopkeepers were acclimated to it and simply adjusted their hours to accommodate the situation. And, of course, for someone like myself the additional trips meant a greater opportunity to practice a bit of French, and each day I would chalk up the use of a new phrase or two to add to my rapidly growing vocabulary of words and phrases.

Shortly after getting to know Renée, I also met Gaby – a very vivacious English girl who was working as an ‘au pair’ for one of the families downstairs. Gaby was still a teenager, loved to babble in her own particular teenager French ‘patois’ which she was rapidly picking up from a young French lad she had met and with whom she was apparently on fairly good terms (“Je suis sure, qu’elle se couche avec lui!” was the way Renée put it). She would drop by Renée’s room at our end of the hall each evening after returning from an outing with her boyfriend, and, by joining them and listening to her, I began to benefit greatly from her teenager’s take on French, which was quite different from Renée’s. Unfortunately at some point her father back in England became seriously ill, and Gaby was forced to abruptly return home, bringing a sudden end to my ‘teenage French’ lessons! Sadly, I never saw or heard from her again, nor do I believe she was able to marshal the resources to return to Paris. Triste, triste ...

Occasionally I would have a chance to encounter another somewhat older girl (mid 30s) from down the hall, by the very French name of “Monique.” The Avenue Mozart where we lived was in a very high-end part of town and featured things like perfume shops and small couturier shops which displayed quite fashionable and expensive clothing in their windows. Monique worked as a clerk in one of the small fashion shops and was always very elegantly dressed. She also wore the very smoky-lensed glasses which were in style in Paris at that time and which made her look very much a lady of the world. She was not nearly as friendly as Renée, however, and I had the feeling that her attitude towards me was much more along the familiar line that I was simply a foreigner (un sale étranger) – which seemed to be a very common attitude among the French at that time (and probably now, as well!).

At the other end of the hall lived the Spanish family – three or four people crammed into a room not much larger than mine (about 10’ by 15’). The family consisted of a mother, two teenage daughters, and an itinerant father. The mother apparently worked as a cook, while the two daughters worked as maids (the father played an undefined role!). During the evenings there were frequently very spicy smells emanating from that end of the hall. They probably spoke French at some level, but I never heard them speaking in anything but Spanish – something which would definitely limit their employability (one of the families downstairs was probably getting a lot of grunt labor for not very much). The two daughters were very lively and would bounce up and down the hall and stairways on their way back and forth to the apartment where they worked, all the while babbling back in forth in Spanish at a high rate. It’s hard to imagine how they could ever have improved their situation, although perhaps they were simply saving money to eventually return to Spain with a small dowry (Renée’s theory!).

Renée had an on-and-off relationship with the couple who served as concierges (a population which is apparently now dying out because of the expense of the small apartments they occupy, which could otherwise be rented out for a goodly sum!). On the surface she and they were on good terms, but there was always a certain underlying current of distrust on her part, as was probably the case with many of the building’s occupants. To curry her favor, the man would occasionally give her a key to use a shower on the first floor – a real privilege and a relief from having to sponge-bathe out of the little sink in our own rooms using a washcloth! In the 8 or so months during which I was actively in residence (another 4 months were spent traveling) I was never once offered the use of the key (he knew I was foreign and temporary, and there would be no long-term benefit to be had from currying my rather insignificant favor!).

Renée – Of the various 7th-floor inhabitants, Renée was the one who helped me the most to master French. Although she had a married sister living in Paris, she had grown up in the countryside and did not have a wide circle

of friends in Paris. Living in a *chambre de bonne* situation did not exactly give her an enhanced social standing either and, like many working-class Parisians, her prospects for moving up the social scale were quite limited (the French have a rather rigid social system, with education being one of the few means of moving up the ladder, and her training was purely in the clerical field). I first came to know her through the tapping sound of my typewriter while I was doing translating work late into the night. Once when I saw her in the hall while emptying my little bucket from under the sink, she commented on how she could hear me typing through our shared wall, but was not at all complaining, saying instead that the monotonous sound of it actually helped her to fall asleep – much better, according to her, than taking a dram of something or other to help her drop off. I'm not sure that was exactly a compliment, but it did help us to get acquainted. Over a period of time we got to the point where we would have a little aperitif before dinner, and eventually we would have a shared dinner together once or twice a week. It was really just a friendship, however, as she had had a bad experience with a French boyfriend who had apparently dumped her after promising much more than he delivered on. Apparently, it had been a rather bad scene which had left her very suspicious of the male species in general and their motives in particular. One of her favorite phrases was, "Les hommes, ils sont tous des cochons ...". Or, more colloquially, "Les hommes, ils sont tous des porcs ..." – phrases that roll liltily off the tongue ... Or, in a lovely, typically French, grammatical variant, one can ask the existential question "Les hommes, sont-ils tous des porcs?"

After I got to know her, on weekends we would occasionally go to a small neighborhood movie theater and take in some corny French flick, something she seemed to enjoy greatly but was reluctant to do by herself. For me it helped greatly in improving my colloquial French, although even to my unpracticed ear the movies seemed unremittingly corny. One evening she asked if I had ever seen the Marcel Pagnol trilogy, consisting of the three films *Marius*, *Fanny*, and *César*. I had never even heard of them, but in the course of a week or so we went to see all three of them at a mini-festival at the same little movie house. I was at first puzzled by the appeal of the 1930s-era films, which were among the early "sound" flicks. Very slowly, however, I was drawn in by the charm both of the characters and of the very ordinary life situations made real by the masterful storytelling translated from stage to film. To this day it defines for me a tantalizing slice of what one supposes to be "real" French provincial life in a purely fictional way that nevertheless has universal appeal. Oddly enough, the films are old and scratchy (and probably were the same when they were made), but those things label them as part of a certain era and almost seem to be a part of their appeal!

The other great insight I got from Renée involved lessons in shopping. I soon learned that her saying "Je vais faire ma course ..." was an open invitation for me to take a net shopping sack (or two) in hand and accompany her on her shopping rounds in the local neighborhood – the sort of thing one can only learn in the company of a native (in any country). The Avenue Mozart had a good-sized supermarket where I typically shopped because of my limited ability to function in the smaller shops, but under her tutelage I gradually began to expand my shopping horizons into a fascinating look at everyday French social interactions (which, of course, is one of the fascinating things about living in any foreign milieu). In particular, the open-air market which was set up each day in one of the side streets was something I had more or less skirted, feeling powerless to penetrate its linguistic challenges, but I now began to frequent it on a regular basis – quite a feeling of power for such a bumbling foreigner! (A few years later during a visit to Paris, I looked for the little open-air market in order to revisit the delights of those bygone days, but it had vanished into thin air! Ah, progress ...).

After I left Paris towards the end of 1965, I kept in touch with Renée by means of Christmas cards and birthday greetings, and in 1972, when Kathy and I were passing through Paris after our 6 months in Russia, we stopped by 4 Rue Marietta Martin to say hello to her. She was no longer there, but the same concierges were still there and told us that she had moved across the river to somewhere in the Latin Quarter. The address turned out to no longer be valid, and we stopped by the local Gendarmerie to see if we could locate her, but no luck ... I can only hope that she ended up in a good situation, perhaps returning to the little village where she had come from. Who knows!

Lydia – While still stationed in Berlin, one of my barracks buddies, who had a girl friend with the semi-exotic name of Dagmar, fixed me up with a New Year's date with her sister, Lydia, who was home from Paris for the holidays. She worked as a French-German translator for one of the big German multi-national firms (Telefunken or Siemens?) and was a very pleasant young lady about 5 years older than I was. Since that time we had kept loosely in touch and whenever I was passing through Paris I would stop by her place in the Porte d'Orléans area, a southerly suburb of Paris,

and we would have lunch or dinner. After I had settled into my little *chambre de bonne*, I re-established contact with her and we would get together about once a month for an outing somewhere in one of the outlying area around Paris. She was the only one I knew in Paris who actually possessed a car (a little German VW, of course!), which was very handy for driving out to one of the chateaux or villages somewhat out of town. One of the things I remember most about these weekend trips was the heavy traffic into and out of Paris on weekends (even in 1964-65!). After I had been in Paris for a few months, Lydia's mother (whom I knew from Berlin) showed up for a visit and, in an awkward moment asked me if I wasn't getting close to the age when I should be thinking about getting married! Oh, dear – and I thought we were just getting together as old-time friends keeping in touch (end of weekend drives to the countryside outside Paris!).

Jutta – Jutta was the German girl I had known in Berlin and visited in Duisburg on my first cycling trip after I got out of the Army in July of 1963. We had also kept loosely in touch, and one day I got a card from her saying that she was going to be making a sightseeing trip to Paris by bus (a favored means of transportation among the group-loving Germans). She was coming with a girl friend and thought it would be nice to get together again. It had been over a year since I had last seen her, and I thought it would be nice to have an “old friends” type of reunion. We met for dinner, and afterwards I took them up to the Place du Tertre area by the Sacre Coeur church with its spectacular view of the city and its somewhat ex-bohemian (now very touristy) neighborhood. It was only two years since we had been running around together in Berlin, but she had somehow morphed from a cute post-teenage college student into a rather solid-looking German Hausfrau – which was something of a shock to me! She confided that she had a boyfriend in Duisburg who about a year before had had a horrific car accident which had left him somewhat disabled. She had helped him during his recovery, and just recently he had asked Jutta to marry him! She was uncertain as to where our own relationship had gone and before making any decision had decided to made the trip to Paris to see where I was in my life! This was, of course, a major surprise to me as I was still very much in an exploratory state as to what I wanted to do and where I wanted to eventually live, and (not having seen her for well over a year) I had frankly put her out of my mind except as a good friend from former times! Things got a little awkward, but in the end she understood and we parted on good terms. She probably went back to Duisburg and married the gentleman in questions, and I can only hope that things worked out well for them!

Dietmar – During my time at the Alliance Française, I gradually became aware that most of my classmates were younger students who were aspiring to what might be called service-level careers, either in the tourist or commercial end of things, typically as translators or interpreters. Very few of these students were pursuing a separate professional education at a college level where the language would simply serve as an aid to their careers, rather than as the actual focus of their careers. After asking around a bit, I became aware of two other possibilities in my budgetary range at that time – the Sorbonne and the Institut Catholique. The Sorbonne was a much more structured enterprise with various enrollment criteria and academic requirements, whereas the Institut Catholique was similar to the Alliance Française with an open enrollment, but with a more rigorous academic curricular approach concerning grammar and the written language. Although it was tempting to try and put the fabled name “Sorbonne” on my academic credentials, the reality of my finances pushed me in the direction of the Institut Catholique, which offered a pricing scheme much more fitted to my financial circumstances. (A separate issue was the amount of time I had to devote to language studies while trying to cobble out a living supporting myself on the side!)

Thus it was that shortly after the turn of the year I bade a sad farewell to Alliance Française (and its attractive group of young *au pairs*!) and soon found myself sitting in a rather dark and austere lecture hall along with several dozen other students of various nationalities (by contrast, the Alliance Française environment was more that of a simple classroom of perhaps a dozen students, rather than a lecture hall of more like 25 or 30 students). Having already been out of college for almost five years and frankly having forgotten what a lecture hall looked like, I actually felt a bit intimidated by my surroundings and wondered if perhaps I had not made a mistake by trying to move on too quickly! In the end it turned out that my travel plans would make it impractical for me to think about actually remaining in class until the end of the semester, and so my approach was gradually reduced to simply getting as much as I could out of the class without actually being concerned about exams or grades or homework or things of that nature – obviously a frustration for the lecturer/teacher, but something that worked well for my particular needs at the time.

Having settled more or less into the role of observer rather than active participant, I tended to sit in the back row or two of the lecture hall – something that apparently tended to draw the attention of the lecturer more than towards those in the front rows – an unintended consequence, perhaps something to do with the visual accessibility of the dense collection of students in the first few rows as opposed to the somewhat scattered collection of potential scofflaws in the back row or two. Perhaps as a result, the instructor, an older (very refined looking) lady, would frequently direct her oral questions out of nowhere at me, something I was actually well equipped to deal with since I lived in an entirely French-speaking environment and was perfectly capable of quickly cobbling together a string of phrases into a coherent sentence – a matter of some surprise to the teacher (and to the other students, many of whom were not at all nimble with the spoken language). Homework was another matter, however, as I frequently had to deal with Russian translating deadlines which kept me from devoting as much time to the French assignments as I would have liked. At one point the lecturer addressed me directly in the middle of class, pointing out that, despite my nimbleness on the oral side of things, the actual final examination would be a written one and that my grade in the class would depend almost entirely on the result of that exam! I was taken completely aback by her impromptu tirade in my direction, which was of course accompanied by having the entire class turn around to stare at this infrequently seen laggard in the back row. I tried to make myself as small as possible and disappear into my seat, and fortunately after a few seconds she sighed and returned to purely academic matters. I suspect that my eventual complete absence at final exam time was no surprise to her, although I have always regretted not having made the effort to visit her office outside of class hours and trying to explain to her the scheduling conflicts I had to deal with. The dear lady is, of course, long passed away, and any reflections of guilt I experience will simply have to rest heavily on my own shoulders!

The one favorable result of the instructor's attention being focused on my person was that others in the class became aware of my presence. One of them, a very amiable young German student by the name of Dietmar, approached me and asked if I would like to get together for a cup of coffee after class. During my time in the Alliance Française classes I had had almost no outside contact with the largely au pair population in the class, something that was really not surprising since I was probably 7 or 8 years older than most of the post-high-school-age young folk. At the Institut Catholique, on the other hand, a number of the students were already well into their college years, and the average age difference was much less, thereby greatly facilitating the possibility of social contact.

Dietmar and I hit it off right away, and we soon began to socialize a good bit outside of class. He was an economics major at the University of Saarbrücken just over the German/French border. He hoped to eventually work on the international scene and had taken a year off from his studies to study French (the following year he hoped to do the same with English). We spoke to one another only in French, which helped both of us make rapid progress.

Dietmar lived in an entirely different Arrondissement – the 20th, more of a working quarter and not far from the well-known Père Lachaise Cemetery cemetery, a pleasant woodsy walking place where such diverse lights as Édith Piaf, Frédéric Chopin, Maria Callas, Oscar Wilde, and Jim Morrison (of The Doors!) are buried (apparently Father François d'Aix de La Chaise gained his renown as the Confessor of Louis XIV, who would certainly have been a most interesting source of confessional matter!). I would visit Dietmar's area once a week, where we would make ourselves dinner under the careful tutelage of his propriétaire, an older widow who was delighted to have the company of younger people. In return, on another evening of the week he would come over to the Rue Mozart where we would stroll in the Bois de Bologne and the elegant neighboring streets, then "faire la course" – picking up various items of potential cuisinal interest and returning to my little chambre de bonne where we knew Renee would be more than eager to instruct us in the art of cooking them in the French style (one of her more interesting skills was the ability to make fresh mayonnaise from scratch in only a minute or two, an art that apparently every French country maid has in her arsenal). For her it was also a great chance to socialize with two young 'porcs', something that was not much done on the 7th floor, since only a fairly young population was capable of negotiating the 7 cold, outside flights of iron stairs and still be alive and wanting to eat at the top! Only on one occasion did we venture out to an actual restaurant (our finances normally being a bit too pinched for such an extravagance) – a little restaurant Dietmar had stumbled on over on the Boulevard Raspail which served a delicious "bifteck au poivre" at a reasonable "tarif" – one of only a handful of meals I ever ate in a restaurant in France during my time there (other than during the year before with Tedi, of course!).

Dietmar had at some point struck up an acquaintanceship with a young French university student who came

from a rather well-to-do family that lived in a “grand maison” just south of the city. The family was originally of Moroccan descent, and one Saturday in the spring I accompanied Dietmar on the suburban train to an outlying part of their small “estate” where we were to participate in a “méchoui” – the roasting of a lamb in a pit dug into the ground! The family had apparently emigrated to France sometime in the late 1950s (fairly recently at that time), taking a good bit of their assets with them (as a group they were probably mistakenly associated with the pied-noir emigration from Algeria in the early 1960s). In any case, there was quite a crowd there – perhaps 50 people – and a lot of beer and wine drinking took place while awaiting the festive emergence of the cooked animal from the ground. All in all it was quite a scene, and the emergence of the freshly roasted lamb from the pit enhanced the festivities considerably. The meat was quite thoroughly cooked and more or less torn directly off the bone – a very messy and greasy business, but all in all quite good. I’ve had many meals in many venues, but this was probably the earthiest of any I’ve had, with no room for anyone who was in the least queasy about dealing with the intricacies of eating a rather freshly killed animal. I haven’t had the opportunity to do anything quite like it since that time and would probably pass if the opportunity were to be offered to me again!

Just as interesting as the “méchoui” was the young Moroccan whose acquaintance Dietmar had made. He was an unrequited idealist, who believed that people needed to come together from all walks of life at an early age and overcome the artificial differences which later in life would turn them into enemies of one another (particularly true in the European scene!). During his summer vacations, he would travel about to an assortment of youth assemblies in various Eastern European countries, which reminded me a bit of my acquaintance in Andalsnes, Norway – the one who wanted me to accompany him to a peace rally in Romania! Perhaps the two of them would have the opportunity to meet up at some future point in time, although I perhaps wisely resisted the urge to act as an intermediary in putting them in touch with one another! In any case, I never had the opportunity to see either of them again ...

Hitchhiking Trip During Class Break – As Spring approached we received a brief respite from our French language studies at the Institut Catholique in the form of a “semester” break. Dietmar had a friend from the University of Saarbrücken who was studying French just as he was, but in the Swiss city of Lausanne, rather than in Paris. I also had an Army buddy from Berlin who was doing a “junior year in Freiburg” thing in the German town of Freiburg (not the Swiss town of the same name!), and so we hatched a plan to make a hitchhiking trip to visit both of them. I’m not



sure Dietmar had ever hitchhiked before, but he was an enthusiastic supporter of the idea, so off we went ...

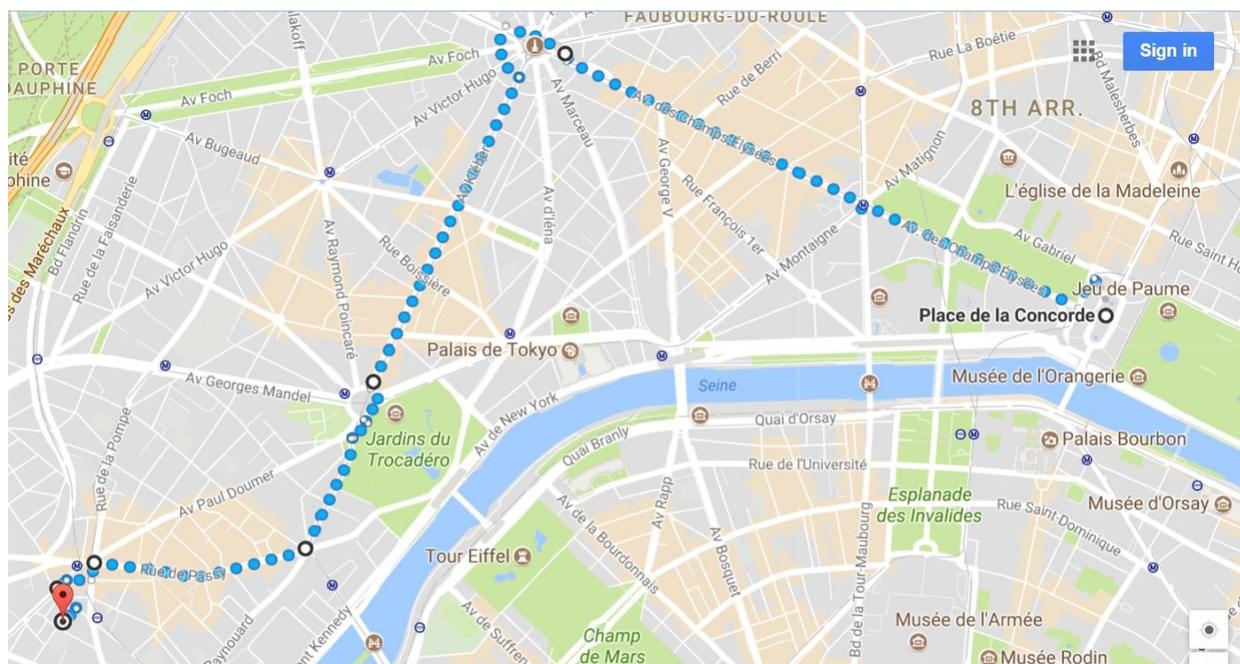
The leg from Paris to Freiburg was at that time a two-lane road which I had already covered a couple of times. We got rides fairly quickly (maybe a 15-minute wait was typical). At one point we were picked up by a gentleman in a very spiffy Mercedes sedan, who, it turned out was a Moroccan in France on business. He was a very engaging storyteller, and we were inwardly congratulating ourselves for having thumbed a great ride as we hummed along

briskly and in great comfort! Suddenly, out of nowhere, the windshield started to wrinkle in an extraordinary way, with what looked to be a crystal growing from a point slightly to the right of the driver's view out the front. In a matter of seconds the whole windshield had become almost completely opaque as it transformed itself into what look like a fine mesh of crystal shards. The Moroccan gentleman braked quickly, pulled over to the side of the road, and we all got out. He knew immediately what had happened – the Mercedes of that particular model year had small flaws in the glass which, if a window were to be struck in the right place by a small pebble, would cause the entire surface to “crystallize” in a rapid spread of the flaw. He was very matter-of-fact about the whole thing, punched an hole in the windshield with a rock, and we all got back in and continued along the road, although at a very reduced rate of speed and with a strong breeze blowing through the front window. In the next town of any size he pulled into the local Mercedes dealership, where they immediately recognized the problem, but told him it would take a day to procure a replacement windshield. He was very good-natured about it, apologizing to us profusely (and unnecessarily, of course), and we eventually thanked him and waved good-bye as we set out again on the road toward Saarbrücken.

We made it to Freiburg by early afternoon of the next day and spent a very pleasant evening with my friend from Berlin and his American girlfriend (later to become his wife of over 50 years!). The next morning we set out for Basel, Bern, and eventually Lausanne, arriving there also in late afternoon of that same day (the hitchhiking went phenomenally well!). We spent a day with Dietmar's friend and his girlfriend who were set up very cosily in a small apartment with a surprisingly good view of Lac Lemman, the large lake on which Geneva is also situated (apparently his girlfriend had found full-time work at some sort of secretarial job, allowing them the luxury of living in a small apartment). The next day we set out again headed back for Paris, this time on a back road through a long series of small French towns we had never heard of before, but in a very bucolic setting with cars coming along sometimes only once or twice a minute, making for a long hitchhiking day. It was during a long period of standing at the side of the road with no cars in sight that I had time to muse about an incident my friend Stew (from Berlin, and then Paris) had related to me about another compatriot of ours from the Berlin garrison. This particular guy, a Russian linguist from Monterey by the name of Biella, had taken a European discharge just as we had and had spent quite a bit of time hitchhiking around France. At one point he had been picked up by a local farmer driving a 2CV – the box-like rattle-trap Citroen that sold for \$700 at that time and that was little more than a collection of lightly bolted-together panels and a lawn-mower engine (the 2 CV was short for ‘deux chevaux’ meaning ‘two horsepower’!) While driving along a country road much like the one where we were standing, the car had been struck almost head-on by a much larger and heavier car, and both of the occupants of the 2CV were literally obliterated (including our former acquaintance!). I thought it best to omit the telling of that particular story to Dietmar, as we had already been picked up by one or two 2CVs! Not long afterwards traffic began to pick up without our having to get in another 2 CV, and we made it back to Paris that evening without incident.

Visits to the US Embassy in Paris – One of the more pleasant parts of my translating work was the actual wrap-up of a translating job (always a relief) and the subsequent posting of the material back to JPRS in Washington DC. There was, of course, no Internet in 1965, so the rather bulky material (both the original Russian and my English translations) had to be mailed from Paris to DC – a not inconsiderable expense had I been required to pay the postage myself! JPRS was a US government agency, however, and was able to provide me with labels which permitted me to drop the material into the US Embassy mail pouch for cost-free transfer to JPRS. The word “pouch” is an interesting descriptor which we had occasion to notice being used much later when we were engaged in guide work for USIA in Russia in 1972-1976 – the objects being transmitted at that point were typically items of food being mailed from Helsinki to Moscow for consumption by Embassy workers hungry for goods from home – things such as heads of fresh lettuce and the odd can of ham or two – perhaps a usage not envisioned by the architects of the “pouch” concept.

In my case in 1965, however, I had only to walk downstairs to the La Murette Metro, take it to the Trocadero station (almost a walk actually), then transfer from the Franklin D Roosevelt station to the Concorde station where a walk to the surface would find me almost at the US Embassy building. It always amazed me that the Embassy occupied a piece of real estate that must have been of enormous commercial value, and I always felt very privileged to glide into the foyer, take a few steps downstairs to the mail room, and slip my package into the mail slot. Back in those days the threat of terrorist attacks was low (once the “plastique” bombings of the post-Algerian era had ceased), and access to the embassy was (if I recall correctly) available to the general public simply by walking through the front door (there was a Marine guard on duty, and I may have had to flash my passport, but I don't actually recall having to do so).



Once I had delivered my translating package, I was free for about a week until another one arrived, and I would celebrate by walking from the Embassy back to my little 7th-floor *chambre de bonne* – about an hours stroll through any one of a number of picturesque routes, my favorite route being a walk up the Champs Elysee to the Arc de Triomphe, then down the Avenue Kleber to the Palais Chaillot in the Trocadero Gardens, then along the fashionable Rue de Passy back to my humble abode on the 7th floor of 4 Rue Marietta Martin! Ah, the burden, the burden ...

NY Herald Tribune (Russian conversation) – Any ex-pat hanging around Paris at that time would have quickly become familiar with the New York Herald Tribune (or International Herald Tribune -- the global edition of The New York Times, apparently renamed in 2013 to The International New York Times!). I would pick up a copy every morning to read with breakfast, one reason being to scan the classified ads, in which I would frequently find some local ex-pat-related item of interest. One morning I came across a notice from a Russian lady looking for an English conversation partner – just up my alley, I thought, as it would be a good chance knock a bit of rust off my Russian speaking ability. I dropped her a note, and the following Saturday I found myself knocking on the door of one M. Enalt at 6 Rue Clodion, within walking distance just across the river in the 15th Arrondissement! She was an older lady, perhaps in her late 60s or early 70s, and quite formal in her bearing and manner of speaking. We experimented with chatting in both Russian and English, but her English turned out to be quite rusty and so we tended to spend most of the time speaking Russian (fine with me, of course!). She had been married for many years, but her husband had some sort of import/export business he pursued (!), and she found herself spending long periods of time each day alone. Both she and her husband had left Russia right after the revolution and had now lived in Paris for well over 40 years. They had been able to take out a certain amount of money with them – enough to buy two fairly good-sized apartments in Paris, which they had occupied intermittently for many years. At some point the Paris authorities noticed that one of the apartments was hardly being used (by monitoring municipal electricity and gas usage) and had confiscated the apartment for use, as she put it, ‘pour les familles nombreuses’ that is for families consisting of two adults and three or more children. She was, of course, quite indignant over this high-handed usurpation of their property, but there had been nothing they could do about it. The apartment they lived in was quite large and comfortable, although it was decorated in a very dated style with a faint whiff of mold always in the air. It was decorated with an extensive series of vividly colored, surrealistic oil paintings – multiple heads in the form of icons, each sprouting out of snake-like bodies all merging to a central serpentine mass. She had painted these herself, although the number of them mounted on walls throughout the apartment suggested that she had perhaps found only a limited demand for their purchase!

We began a regular schedule of getting together every Saturday morning at 10 am and conversing for two hours – one hour of English followed by one hour of Russian, going until roughly midday. Most of our time speaking

English would involve my going back over various grammatical issues with her – things she felt she should correct before getting too deep into conversational waters (she had probably not spoken the language actively since she arrived in Paris!). Invariably she would soon weary of this and after 15 or 20 minutes we would shift gradually into Russian, during most of which time she would reminisce about the grand days of her youth back on their small estate outside Moscow, as well as on their purportedly grand home in the city itself. She in particular liked to tell stories that emphasized her standing as a member of the nobility, as compared to the upstarts in the ‘nouveaux riches’ merchant class which had been growing ever more numerous around them in Moscow. One favorite story of hers that I heard perhaps a dozen times over the course of the 6 months or so that we met involved the grammatical error encountered in using the Russian words for ‘ear’ and ‘fur’ with the Russian preposition ‘by’ – the example being some upstart asking her, “Could you tell my social class by my furs!” to which M. Enalt would have replied, “No, dear, by your ears!” (“no мехам?” “Нет, по ухам!” instead of “по ушам” – a somewhat catty reference to an extremely minor grammatical error (in the use of the plural dative case!) which few lower-class (or even middle-class) Russians would even be aware of and which would only be recognized by someone who had been tutored properly! This sort of reminiscing over the grandeur of the pre-Bolshevik days was a thread that ran through all of our conversations. Surprisingly, even to myself, I found such material to be of considerable interest in helping to form my view of the social background which dominated pre-Revolutionary Russian society. Since those days I’ve had very little additional opportunity for intimate reflection on such matters, but the conversational periods that I spent with M. Enalt helped me to form a much more graphic picture of what Russia had been like back in those days (the eccentricities of my very Russian grandfather, Tedi’s father, who had emigrated from Russia around 1895, would frequently flash vividly into my mind’s eye!). The whole experience with M. Enalt tended to be rather dreamlike and very much contributed to the fascination of living in Paris.

NY Herald Tribune (Employment Possibilities!) – My second significant contact made through the Herald-Tribune was via an ad I myself placed in about March of 1965 describing myself (perhaps somewhat exaggeratedly) as an MIT-trained multilingual electrical engineer seeking to work on European-based design projects. This was a bit of an exaggeration since I had not worked in my field of education for almost 5 years and, although my language skills were decent, my working knowledge of technical vocabulary in those languages was limited. To my surprise I received a response almost immediately from Parsons Corporation, the large multinational construction firm, and I set up an appointment to visit their office down in the Champs-Élysées area. The manager I talked to had a native knowledge of Russian, and we had a very interesting chat, alternating between English, Russian, German, and French! When it came time to discuss schedules, however, I had to tell him that I wouldn’t be available until almost October because of my plans to hitchhike to Greece during the summer and enjoy the end of my carefree student days in Europe. This may have seemed a bit odd to him, considering that I was almost 27 years old at that point (merely an aging student, perhaps), but he said he thought it was a great idea – something he wished he could have done himself – and to definitely get back in touch with them when I returned to Paris in the fall. The interview went so well and had such a positive outcome that I felt very comfortable about my prospects for beginning employment with them in the Fall of 1965. When I did eventually return from Greece and contacted them, I talked to the same gentleman, but he told me that the spot they were thinking about in the Spring when we interviewed had been filled, but that they would contact me as soon as something else opened up! Although I was quite disappointed, in a way it was for the better, as the engineering work would have been centered around the construction of power grids in North Africa – both a marginally attractive place to live and work, as well as being an aspect of electrical engineering I was not familiar with nor had I been trained in – my background was in electronic design, not power grids (the micro, as opposed to the macro!). Oh, well, such is life ...

Walks at Night – My habit of working late at night and even into the early morning hours required me to take breaks from the tedious work of translating directly from Russian into English, while producing finished copy at the same time. The fact of the matter was that I received almost as much for the purely clerical work of typing the finished translation out onto a formatted sheet with the correct margins and without clerical errors as I did for the actual translating work (thank goodness for “Eaton’s Corrasable Bond Typewriter Paper” – now a historical oddity!). This led me to begin acquiring a fairly intimate knowledge of various nearby Paris neighborhoods as they appeared at night.

Once or twice between the hours of about 8 pm and 2 or 3 am I would descend the 7 flights of stairs, slide past the concierge’s glass door as quietly as possible so as not to wake them, and quietly open and then shut the massive

door that led from the courtyard to the street (Marietta Martin). I suspect that over the period of the 8 or 9 months that I was living there full-time (and not on the road to and from Greece!) the concierge couple became very accustomed to my nocturnal comings and goings and perhaps even speculated a bit wildly as to what I was up to in the early morning hours! The truth of the matter is that I was simply taking long walks to stretch my legs and wake myself up a bit. At first, my walks were relatively short – perhaps 15 minutes total out and back. As I became more familiar with the surrounding neighborhoods, however, I began to increase the lengths of my walks to over an hour to include a fairly substantial part of the very upscale right-bank neighborhoods. In addition, Paris has a rather nice bridge across the Seine not far from where I lived (the Pont d'Iena built during Napoleon's time) with a broad pedestrian walkway that links the Palais de Chaillot and Jardins du Trocadero on the right bank with the Eiffel Tower and Champ de Mars on the left bank -- right about where the river makes its only real right-angle bend as it passes through the city. This, of course, makes for a spectacular walk, day or night, and, other than for a few clochards (wine-drinking tramps!), the area was virtually devoid of traffic or pedestrians during the early morning hours – although there was always a French policeman (flic) or two keeping an eye on things, as I recall. The neighborhoods on either side of the river were, of course, quite upscale, and it was interesting (and a bit eerie) to walk through them in the early morning hours when I was the only one on the street (probably always being watched by one of the nearby 'flics' who after a few weeks undoubtedly became accustomed to my nocturnal presence!).

Sunday Spiegel – One habit I formed that my 7th-floor neighbors found a bit suspicious was that every Saturday I would purchase a copy of a weekly magazine called "Der Spiegel" – a German version of Time/Newsweek, which I had gotten into the habit of reading while in Berlin, partly to broaden my German vocabulary, but also partly to keep track of what was happening in the German portion of the European political scene. This came to form my weekend reading, which was quite a jerk away from the Herald-Trib and the light French newspaper coverage. Because of my pre-occupations with the Russian and the German languages, many of my neighbors probably came to look on me as some sort of bearded radical fomenting revolt in the suburbs (except I didn't have a beard back then!). As I recall, Renée suggested I discard the foreign-language material in a trash can well away from our building so as to keep a damper on potential neighborhood intolerance – a suggestion I took to heart ...

My One and Only Haircut – Occasionally the issue of getting a haircut would arise, and Renée would oblige by taking a comb and pair of scissors to my head for a light trimming. Her work tended to be a bit impromptu, but because my budget was in a perpetual state of turmoil I was happy to let things go at that. At one point she decided her work needed a little cover, however, and coached me in the bits of vocabulary needed when going into a barber shop. I found a reasonably priced one just across the street from the local open-air market, an area frequented by a less upscale crowd than the actual inhabitants of the very upscale neighborhood where we lived. The barber was kind enough not to comment too overtly on what establishment I had been using up to that point for my tonsorial services, and I was able to trot out the three or phrases necessary to communicate to him that I wanted it cut it closely on the sides, but not too much on the top – the configuration that Renée claimed would make it easiest for her to continue providing me with her budget services! The barber was very pleasant, performing his services with real French flair, and I was able to escape with paying only a modest tip, however the whole thing ended up costing me several days meals – enough to convince me that one visit would suffice for that year's stay in Paris. After all, a certain Bohemian look is not at all out of place when living in Paris in one's twenties!

Billy Cotter Visit – Very occasionally I would receive an inquiry about a potential visit from someone that Tedi or another acquaintance from Atlanta would direct my way. This was probably a consequence of the fact that in my letters home I probably tended to talk about the many attractions of Paris, as well as of the very up-scale neighborhood where I lived, while downplaying the details of the actual circumstances in which I lived. As a result I often found myself fending off possible visits from people back home who would frankly have been shocked to have to make the trek up the 7 flights of outdoor steps in order to see the very humble surroundings in which I passed my days. Nevertheless, I did receive one inquiry which I thought it wouldn't hurt to oblige.

Martha and Jacquie Cotter were two attractive young ladies in the CSMYF church group that Kim and I had frequented at a younger age, and they had a younger brother named Billy, whom I knew from sight but with whom I had hardly ever spoken (he was probably 5 years younger than I was, so was about 12 when I was 17). I received a note from Martha one day saying that Billy was now in the service and stationed in France, not far from Paris, and

would enjoy dropping by and visiting during a coming-up weekend when he would be in Paris. Martha was now married with a very young daughter, but still living in Atlanta and actually beginning to pursue a career as a writer of romantic novels under the name Martha Kirkland! I wrote back and gave her my address, along with a suggested date for Billy to drop by. He did, in fact, show up, and I met him in a little café where we had coffee and crumpets, and afterwards I gave him a tour of the very upscale neighborhood in the nearby Bois de Boulogne area. He was thinking of pursuing a career as a writer/reporter after he got out of the service and expressed interest in seeing what a typical Paris “garret” might look like. Billy had developed into a very likable and polite young man, so I agreed to show him my place with the understanding that it was probably a bit more primitive than what he might have been led to expect! After climbing up and down the 7 floors of outside steps in the cold winter air (it was probably February!) and peeking his head into the tiny room where I lived (and worked), he nodded sagely and said he understood now what I was talking about. I told him I hoped that it might have given him some insight into things (in case he was planning a similar foray into Paris life), and we parted ways. I never saw him again, although Martha later reported that he had very much enjoyed his visit and had felt it to have been a real “eye-opener.” I was told later on that Billy might have gone on to pursue a career as a reporter, possibly for one of the Atlanta papers. His visit reinforced my feeling that it was probably better to steer visitors towards a tour of the very attractive surrounding neighborhood, but avoid the actual ascent to my “maid’s quarters.”

Music in Paris – One of the really appealing things about Paris was the extent of the musical offerings that were constantly being presented during the winter concert season. It seemed that every night of the week was packed with a multitude of offerings in various musical genres – concerts (both orchestral, chamber, and solo from many eras), opera (predominantly French – “Pourquoi non!” although with a reasonable cross-section of others), church music (cantatas, passions, requiems, organ recitals, and a variety of other liturgical offerings including sing-along evenings – “Vous qui aimez Bach, venez chanter avec nous!”).

And, of course, a number of the Paris churches had quite substantial organs, along with organists who liked to show their “chops” with a nice brassy Sunday morning postlude designed to blow the last remaining parishioners out of the church before they closed the doors. Perhaps the best-known of the Paris organ-churches I sampled are St. Sulpice (the composer Charles Widor played there), St. Eustache (the composer Louis Vierne played on its 8000 pipes!), Ste. Clotilde (where Cesar Franck was organist for his entire career), Église de la La Trinité (Oliver Messiaen played there), and, of course, Notre Dame (where Louis Vierne also played). There are many others, of course, and it was great fun to visit a different church each Sunday (slipping in towards the end of the service to catch the postlude!). (Much of my familiarity with the Paris churches came from an old Monterey comrade, Clayton Coon, who was a great organ fan and eventually spent his career as a vicar in the Episcopalian/Anglican church hierarchy, ending up in Huddersfield, England for his final assignment (where we visited him on several occasions while driving from London to Aberdeen for an SRI project). During the course of his time at Huddersfield, his enthusiasm for the organ was so great that he persuaded an ex-Huddefieldian who had emigrated to America to donate enough money to fund the installation of a brand new organ in his church – a major coup for such a small-town establishment!)

In addition to the Sunday church services, various Paris churches would sponsor concerts held on weekday evenings and oriented around liturgical music. These would frequently be simply organ concerts, or organ with a chamber ensemble, or organ with a chamber ensemble + chorus + soloists. The most elaborate of these I attended was a broadcast performance of the Verdi Requiem in the Église Saint-Gervais (on the right bank just across the Seine from Notre Dame) with its famous organ and a very large orchestra and chorus. A frequent visitor to Paris from Munich was Karl Richter with his Münchener Bach-Orchester and Münchener Bach-Chor – superb ensembles with superb soloists (I remember in particular Ingrid Bjoner, Hertha Töpfer, Peter Schreier, and Kieth Engen – many of whom also performed at the Staatsoper in Munich). They specialized in Bach, performing at one time or another in the course of that season both the Johannes-Passion and the Matthäus-Passion, along with the Messe h-moll and the Weihnachts-Oratorium – all ethereal performances and a pleasure to hear performed in the Salle Pleyel in Paris.

One day in December while walking down the street I saw a poster for a performance of a small group of the Münchener Bach-Orchester and Münchener Bach-Chor performing a program of Christmas selections with the soprano Deirdre Aselford – not a particularly well-known name in Paris, but she was Dave Griffith’s friend from Munich who had given us such a nice tour of Ingrid Bjoner’s apartment the previous summer! I had to go, of course, and she put

on a beautiful performance of Messiah selections as part of a Christmas program. I remember the lady behind me commenting at the break, "Quelle fraîcheur!" She was at that time quite young (about 25) and was in excellent voice. She later sang Barberina in Marriage of Figaro in Salzburg, but her voice, although quite beautiful, probably wasn't quite big enough to carry well singing over a full opera orchestra. I slipped over to the restaurant where they were having their post-concert supper and said a quick hello to her (surprisingly, she remembered me from that night earlier in the year!). I believe she later married a German singer and settled down somewhere in the Bremerhaven area. Sadly I recently read of her passing, although after having pursued an active singing career in the area where she settled.

I attended several miscellaneous concerts while in Paris that year – a performance of the Fauré Requiem in Église de la Madeleine where Fauré had been organist (an incredible experience!), a performance of a local symphony group in a little hall in the Place du Trocadéro (within walking distance of my room!), and (just to say I'd done it) a performance at the Paris Opera House – Carmen, I believe, although it didn't leave much of an impression – the folding wooden seats (Klappsitze!) in the balcony did, however, along with the Marc Chagall ceiling which had been painted only the year before and which, sitting in the balcony, was practically on top of our heads! One of my last concerts before heading off for Greece was a solo evening by Elizabeth Schwarzkopf singing at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, a block or two off the Seine at the Pont de l'Alma. I was curious to hear her in person, having heard Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau sing a solo evening back in 1963 while staying with John R. in Frankfurt. She was in fine voice, but the effect in a hall of that size was not quite that of Fischer-Dieskau singing in a much smaller chamber hall, which seemed to magnify his voice to an incredible degree.

In order to pursue my own modest musical activities, I inquired around the neighborhood and found a little piano store which had one or two practice rooms which could be rented by the hour for a modest sum. I would drop by for an hour each weekday and work on a few pieces I wanted to keep under my fingers, concentrating mainly on the Bach Preludes and Fugues my father had so heartily recommended to me back in the 1950s as a way to keep the fingers limber! While there one day, the attendant (an older lady who kept the place tidied up, but who was not herself a musician!) introduced me to what she described as "a fellow compatriot" – a young man (with his very pregnant wife) who had received some sort of fellowship to work in Paris while composing a piano concerto. They were both quite pleasant, and he even played a few bars for me. It seemed to be a very active work, perhaps even a bit on the pounding side, but nevertheless something that might find its way to the appropriate stage at some point! Sadly I saw them only that once and never had the opportunity to find out if his work ever made it as far as an actual performance – one of those brief crossings in life that one experiences in exotic places like Paris!

Each time I would descend to the Rue de Passy I would pass by a little music store right across the street from the boulangerie, which had in its display window a (somewhat used looking!) oboe for sale. I thought that it would be great fun to be able to play such an instrument, and that daily passage eventually led to my taking up the oboe when I returned to Atlanta at the end of the calendar year. Unfortunately my financial circumstances while living in Paris were far too modest to be able to afford something like an oboe, not to mention the fact that attempting to play it up in my little 7th-floor *chambre de bonne* would probably have fomented an uprising among my neighbors! Nevertheless it was great fun to fantasize about such things ...

Moving On – As the seasons turned toward early summer, I began to hatch the details of my planned summer foray into Southern Europe. Up to that point almost all of my travels (except briefly in Italy with Tedi) had been in Northern Europe. I had considerable curiosity as to what I might be missing in the warmer lands to the South and had spent considerable time trying to figure out a travel plan that would maximize my exposure to the more southerly parts of the Continent. I had initially planned to do a cycling trip much like the one I had done in the Nordic countries the previous summer, but I soon came to realize that a bicycle was not the optimal way to travel in the lands more to the south. My planned route south was through France and Germany to Trieste in Italy, then over the border into Yugoslavia, down the Dalmatian Coast to Athens in Greece, then taking the ferry out to sample a few of the Greek islands. My planned route back was to return from the Greek islands to Athens, then overland through Delphi to the tiny town of Ladachorion between the Adriatic and Ionian Seas, where I could catch a ferry to the town of Kerkira on Corfu, then onwards by ferry to Brindisi in Italy, then upwards and across the Italian peninsula to Naples, Rome, Siena, Florence, and Milan to Switzerland and Germany and eventually across the border to France and back to Paris. There were several questions which arose – the nature of the mainland roads through Yugoslavia and Greece, the fact that

much of my journey was likely to be by ferry, and the nature of the island roads in Greece. After going through a number of iterations, I came to the conclusion that traveling by bicycle over that route would bring on the same problems I had experienced in Norway – namely the roads in many places were just not suited for travel by bicycle and that I would run into substantial logistical problems along the way (much like Harry Mayo had, ending up marooned for a month or so in Oslo!). In the end I decided to use the means that I had come to know quite well in my travels back and forth across Europe (in particular, to Berlin and back!) – namely the use of my thumb!