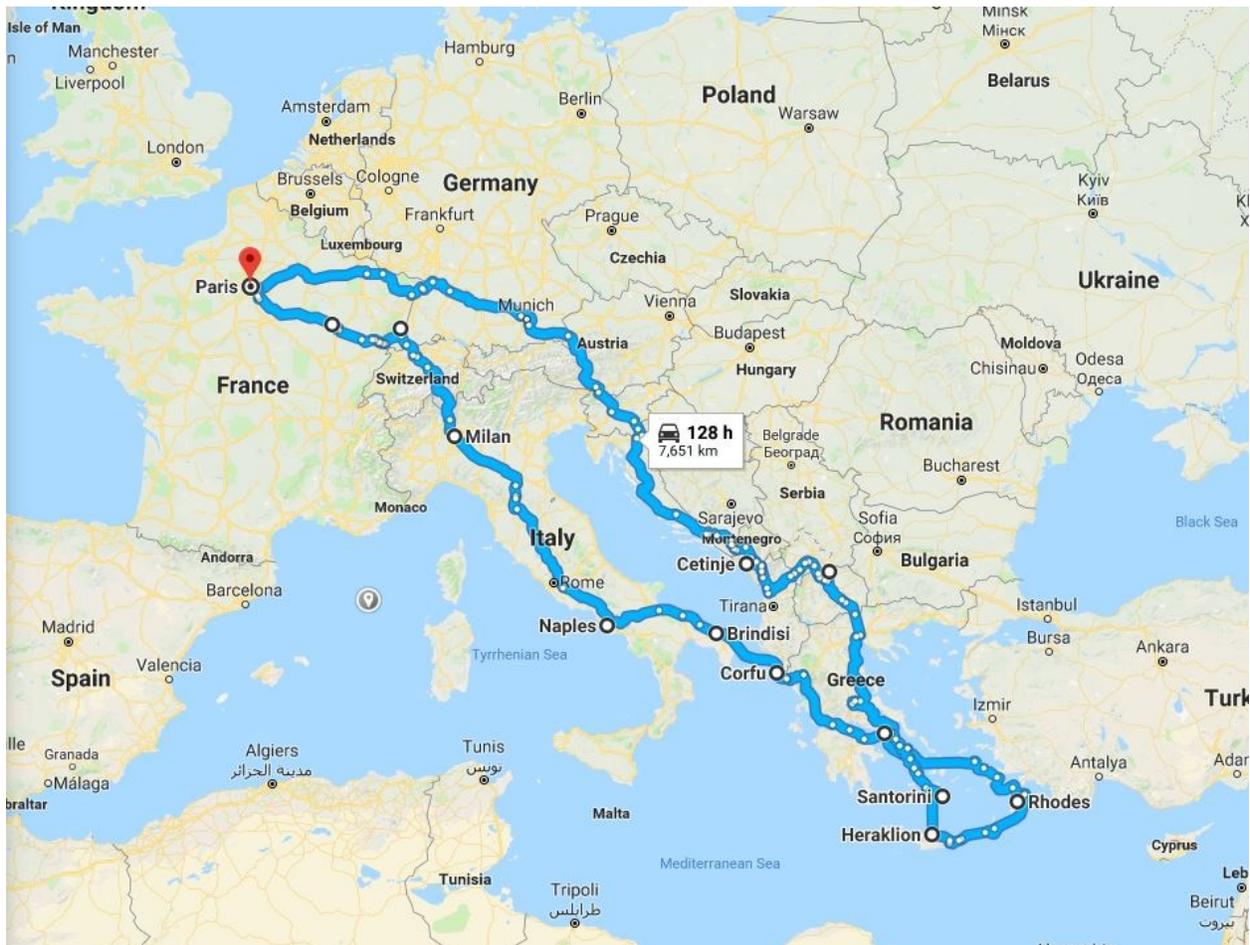


## European Travels June 1965 - October 1965 (Dalmatian Coast and Greece)

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 somewhat less traveled lands more to the south. My planned route was across France and Germany to Trieste in Italy, then over the border into Yugoslavia (as it was then called), down the Dalmatian Coast as far as Kotor, then inland to Skopje, then south again to Athens in Greece, and finally spending a few weeks using the Mediterranean ferry system ferry to have a look at 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 important issues which immediately 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 where 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!), i.e., the skilled use of my thumb!



I set things up to keep my room in Paris for the 4-plus months I planned to be gone by slipping an envelope with four months rent in it (800 francs) in it under my landlords' door along with a note telling them I'd be back by the first of November to pay them again! I said goodbye to Dietmar and Renée and, after practicing using my thumb in front of the mirror a bit (wait a minute, I didn't have a mirror!), I set out one morning to take public transportation

as far out on the road East toward Germany as I could get. It was a beautiful day in early June, and the prospects looked good for a great trip (which it certainly turned out to be!). There is always something about sticking your thumb out for the first time when starting a long hitchhiking trip that makes you feel like you're starting things all over again. And, of course, although I had no way of knowing it, I was starting out on what would be my last long hitchhiking trip – the end of a personal era!

**Paris to Trieste** – I decided to take the road to Trieste over territory I hadn't covered before, which meant I would largely be eschewing the Autobahns and traveling on more rural roads, much as I had when hitchhiking with Dietmar to Freiburg and Lausanne. With this in mind, I took the metro out to Porte de Vincennes, a large park in the very southern Arrondissement close to the Château de Vincennes, then took the road to Mulhouse and back up to Freiburg for another quick visit to T Francis, who had not yet left to return to Ann Arbor. From there it was across to a little town where two old friends from Berlin had settled after getting their nursing credentials – Dorle Weiss and Ute Einfeld. We had a pleasant visit, including taking a ride on a little roller coaster set up by a traveling circus (one of the most dangerous roller-coaster rides I think I have ever taken!) after which I hit the road again, going over the Brenner Pass south of Innsbruck, then down to Trieste (on the border between Italy and Yugoslavia). I had to spend a day in Trieste in order to obtain a transit visa through Yugoslavia, and I went to the local youth hostel to see if they had room. They didn't, but as I was waiting in line there was a little excitement outside. Another American had arrived on a motor-scooter, parked it, and gone inside to see if they had any room left. The motor-scooter was on the street, only about 10 yards away from the door of the hostel, and the American had left his pack securely strapped to its rack. Nevertheless, in the few seconds between the scooter and the Youth Hostel office, a group of Italian kids quickly surrounded the scooter and, with a single swipe using a very sharp knife, sliced his pack off the scooter and took off with it – never to be seen again! The pack had all his documents and money in it, and he was almost in tears with disbelief – at least he still had the motor-scooter! I eventually ended up in a small campground close to downtown where transportation wasn't a problem, sharing my tent in a pouring rain with a young German I'd met at the hostel who had no tent of his own (and being sure to keep money, travelers' checks, documents, etc. in a doubly hidden money belt tied tightly around my waist!).

**Trieste to Athens** – Once I had my transit visa in hand, I walked up to the border crossing in what was then called Yugoslavia (since then taking on a handful of names like Slovenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, and Serbia – all sounding like something out of World War I, which in fact they were!). The border guard gave me an odd look when he saw I was on foot, but waved me through with a shrug. I stuck my thumb out and after a fairly ominous wait of a couple of hours was picked up by a very affable young Austrian couple on their way to spend a few days camping and vacationing in Opatija/Rijeka, a beach-front area only a few miles south of the Austrian border. I camped there for the night in the hopes they would be driving a bit further, but the next day they told me, "Wir fahren nicht weiter, wir bleiben hier!" The area was pleasant, with a beach and a little hotel with a terrace overlooking the ocean (with incredibly cheap food!) and that was all they needed. She was a Süßbäckerin (a sweets baker), and he was a Zimmermann (carpenter), they had only been married a short time and were on sort of a second honeymoon. He described his attraction to her as "wie eine Biene, zum Honig angezogen! (a bee attracted to honey!). I was sorry to leave them, both because they were very pleasant, but also, because from what I had already seen, the prospect of getting a ride was beginning to appear somewhat ominous.

The next couple of days were very l-o-n-g ones, with my short-term goal simply being to get to the little town of Split, about 350 km further down the coast. There was virtually no traffic on the road – only a small Eastern European style car every few minutes, usually packed with three or four passengers. I literally stood or sat by the road all day long without getting more than a short ride once every couple of hours or so. Most of the traffic was local – rides of 5 or 10 km in crowded little cars, although the people were more than willing to pick me up if they had room. I did get a lot of odd stares from people wondering what the heck I was doing out in the middle of nowhere with my thumb stuck out – the kind of thing where people would stare open-mouthed and unbelievably out of the little car windows as they passed, then turn around and look out the back windows as they continued down the road. I began to wonder if perhaps I had made a very bad mistake and was going to literally spend the rest of my life standing on the side of this road. Around evening I started looking for a place to throw my sleeping bag down (and maybe even set up my tent), but the ground was so rocky that it looked impossible to sleep on! As I was poking around in the brush looking for a possible spot, a rather bedraggled farmer came trudging up the steep hill from a little hut further down

toward the ocean, with his wife and a couple of little kids trailing behind. I made some gestures about sleeping and used a few Russian words that he seemed to understand, and he offered to let me sleep there for a few dinars and even offered me some water for washing. In the end though the situation looked very sketchy, and I could see myself being robbed in the middle of the night (even though I didn't have much worth taking, it was a whole lot more than these people had!) In the end I made my way back up to the road and found a place close enough to whatever traffic there might be that if something were to happen I would at least be within yelling distance of a passing car. It was really a very sketchy situation, and I began to wonder if I hadn't overplayed my hand a bit.

In the course of the next day I actually managed to get enough short rides in a row to make it to Split – a very pleasant surprise after my having despaired of ever getting a ride of more than about 10 kilometers. Split is a real tourist attraction right on the water with beaches within walking distance of the city. In the 4<sup>th</sup> Century AD the Roman emperor Diocletian built a sort of “summer get-away” fortress comprised of what looks to be underground caves in what is now the center of the town. It now houses over 200 “buildings” including houses, tourist accommodations, shops, and even a church. Most surprising of all is the fact that it presently houses a population of close to 200,000 – perhaps a good bit more in 2017 than it was back in 1965 (apparently there is even an airport now!). I stayed in Split only one night, having begun to become very concerned about the possibility that I might spend the whole summer just getting through Yugoslavia (as it was still called then!).

My next destination along the coastal road was the tourist town of Dubrovnik, perhaps only about half again the distance I had already traveled from Trieste to Split. At that time a good bit of the tourist traffic to both Split and Dubrovnik was by ferry and by small Adriatic cruise ships (today probably very large cruise ships!). The roads were very much a secondary conduit of tourist traffic from central Europe, largely because they were two-lane, roughly paved and marginally maintained, and with few places to overnight along the way. In addition, Yugoslavia was still very much a Communist country, although not under Stalin, but rather under a WWII partisan leader with the military title of Marshal Tito. In addition, the road from Italy to Greece dead-ended into the then Communist Chinese satellite country of Albania, requiring a detour from the coast over to the inland town of Skopje to bypass it (a much less scenic bypass on rough roads through dry, rocky, and hilly terrain). In addition Skopje had been flattened by an earthquake just two years before and was half-Muslim – what turned out to be a very unnerving experience in what I had expected to be a completely European country.

Dubrovnik turned out to be a relatively large and very interesting town – an old fortress city right on the coast which was even large enough to have streetcars (a single pair of tracks with pullouts for the trains in opposite directions to pass each other – something that required fairly precise timing). It also had a youth hostel, where I stayed for a couple of nights. Another surprise was that they were in the middle of a summer music festival, and one evening I was able to take in a concert mass sung in the main cathedral – an interesting 600-year-old Romanesque-style structure which had been destroyed at least once by earthquakes and subsequently rebuilt (and which contained as reliquaries of both the head and one arm of one St. Blasius -- the patron saint of Dubrovnik, a name which recalled to me my Catholic-raised father's favorite saint – St. Swithen!).

Back on the road again after two very pleasant days in Dubrovnik the terrain was initially flat and I was soon picked up by a retired academic couple from Ohio who were driving a very upscale Citroen DS sedan. They had driven all the way from Trieste and were hoping to get to a small offshore island in Greece (somewhere near Lesbos) where they had a foster child they had been supporting through an international program and whom they wanted to visit. They had underestimated the time it would take them to get there, however, and they still had to go inland to Skopje to bypass Albania. They were in the process of giving up on trying to get there and somewhat unexpectedly asked me if I would stop and say hello to the child as I passed through the area (about halfway between Thessaloniki and Athens), and of course I said I would (in appreciation of the excellent and comfortable ride with which they were in the process of providing me!). Later I realized that I would have had to hitchhike well off the main road, as well as taking a ferry to the island, and I was eventually forced to abandon the plan! They turned around to head back to Trieste just as we were leaving the flat coastal area and starting to climb into some very rugged hills (all hills in Yugoslavia are rugged!). My next ride was with a local couple in a VW bug and we wound up driving up a little mountain road while the lady practiced her French on me! After we had chatted for a few minutes, her husband somewhat unkindly remarked to her he could tell that her French was very rusty, although of course he had no way of knowing that I was

not French either, but American (a fact that I tended not to broadcast too much, since people would think I was wealthy and could afford to pay something for the rides!). After several more very short rides, I made it to the little fortress town of Kotor, a very interesting old walled city, but one that was too small to offer much in the way of accommodations. It was only a short distance past Kotor that the road left the coast at a little town named Budva and headed inland in order to bypass Albania (a closed country, at that time allied with Communist China!) toward the larger town of Skopje. The road turned very rough as it rose into the dry, rugged hills, and my prospects for getting a ride started looking very ominous. Surprisingly though, I got what turned out to be my second-to-last ride(!) to the little town of Cetinje, way up in the rugged foothills, arriving there just as the evening dusk began to fall.

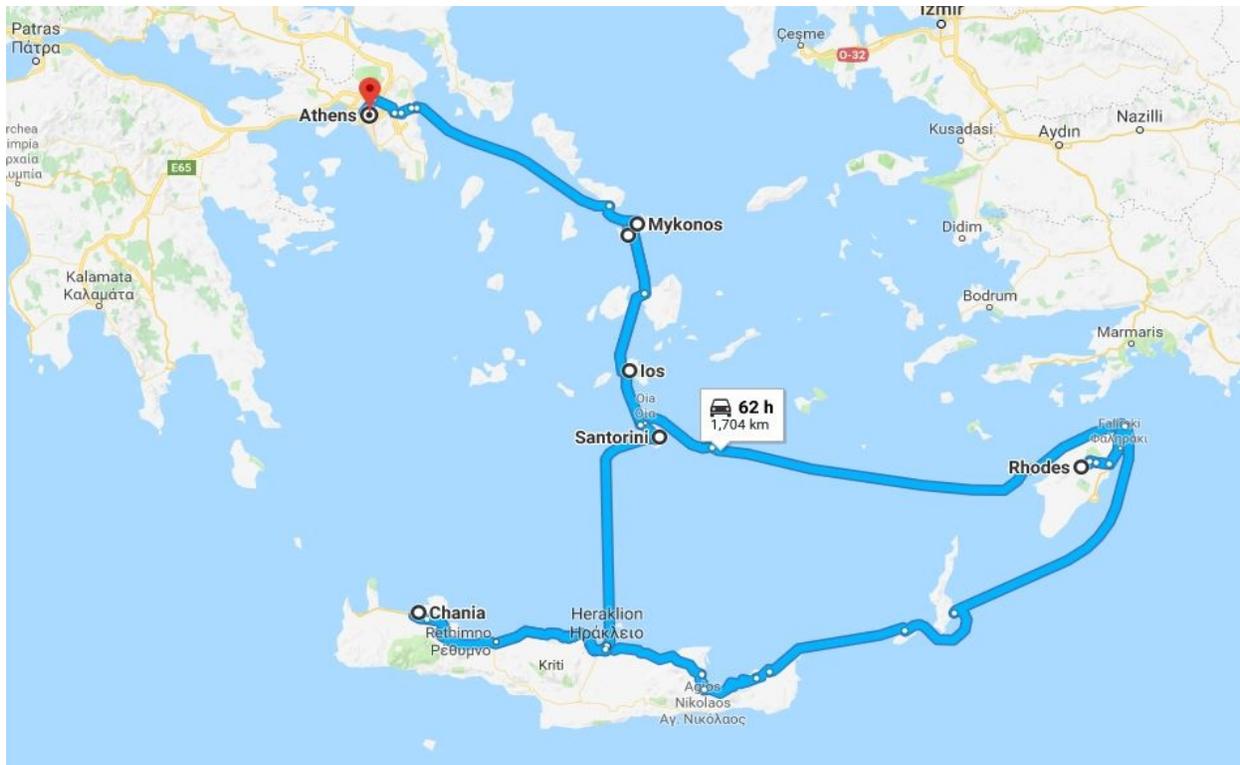
My stay in Cetinje turned out to be almost completely surreal! After being dropped off about mid-evening just outside of town, I started walking toward the little village, all the while looking for a place off the road where I could throw down my sleeping bag. The terrain was so rugged though that everywhere I looked the ground was covered by rather large and in many cases very sharp rocks! As I walked along the road surveying the situation, I came alongside a little girl (no older than 10) carrying a small milk pail who was walking down the road in the same direction as I was toward the little village. She turned and smiled at me as I approached, and I gestured in an offer to help her with the milk pail. She handed it to me and we walked on toward the village, with the only word she said being "Vojka!" while pointing to herself – which turned out to be her name! As we walked into the little town, she took my hand and led me off into a side street, then down a little alley that led to her house. As we approached, an older couple came out of the house to meet us, and she babbled something in Croatian to them. I handed them the milk pail and turned to leave, but they gestured insistently for me to come into their little house. I wasn't quite sure what I was getting into, but I went inside where they pulled up a chair for me to sit down and offered me a glass of water, which I was more than happy to accept. Meanwhile, Vojka had left to go somewhere, but soon returned with a couple of guys about my age who actually spoke some English.

It turned out that one of the guys was Vojka's older brother – Slobodan Karadjic – and the other guy was his good friend – Zlatko Topolski. They both spoke quite serviceable English and proceeded to fill me in on their background. They were both in their early twenties (about the same age as myself) and were both natives of Cetinje. They made a living by assembling very attractive and realistic "wooden paintings" from small scraps of wood placed on a larger background piece of wood which in turn was supported in a carefully finished frame. The wooden paintings were assembled in a manner which formed a "painted" scene and had a not inconsiderable appeal. The two of them were able to make enough money (by selling them to Westerners driving through during the summer tourist season) to support themselves in a somewhat marginal manner for the rest of the year. They were, however, very frustrated by life in Cetinje, which was, of course, under a Communist government system (all of Yugoslavia was Communist under Marshal Tito). They themselves were not members of the Party, but other members of their family were, something that led to considerable inter-family strife. One of them, Slobodan, had at one point traveled to Northern Yugoslavia and then made an attempt to slip illegally across the border into Italy. He had been caught, however, and spent several months in a very cold, dirty, uncomfortable jail in Northern Yugoslavia before eventually being released and since then was required to remain within a certain distance of his home town of Cetinje. Both of them very much wanted to leave the country and try to find some Western European country that would accept them as refugees. We talked a great deal both that evening and the next day, which I also spent there, in the process meeting one of Slobodan's relatives who was a Party member and who regarded me with a great deal of suspicion. I also had lunch with the two of them in a little workers' cafeteria, which was a very graphic reminder of how grim life under a totalitarian system can be. An interesting sidelight to my visit was the fact that I never saw Vojka again – being a girl she was regarded as not being of importance, even though she was the one to have guided me to meet them! I asked about her several times, but they always said she was off working somewhere (probably milking the cows!) and would be back that evening. I stayed there for a total of two nights – the evening I arrived there (when I met Vojka) and the following evening as well. Early on the third day I bade the two of them farewell, promising to keep in touch, and walked down the road through town to the far side to stick my thumb out again. (I corresponded with them for about a year after that and, at their continuing behest although against my better judgement, eventually sent them a hundred dollars in twenties to help them try and finance another effort to leave the country. I suspected at the time that it was a terrible idea as the money would probably be intercepted in the local post and could easily lead to their being jailed again. The fact that I never heard back from either of them again made me fear the worst. Needless to say, I also never heard from Vojka either, something I greatly regretted as she had been a very sweet little girl and was the source of the whole adventure

...). The whole thing was, as I said, a surreal experience, the sort of thing we would experience repeatedly during our later stays in Russia in 1972 and 1976.

My next ride was a propitious one, as I was picked up by two Cambridge University students driving a VW bug, and they took me all the way to Athens (bless their hearts!!). One of them was an American, and the other English, and, like myself, they were headed for Athens, followed by plans to take in a few of the Greek islands. We got along famously, although the American was a bit of a blusterer who liked to talk about riding big, fast motorcycles and how he had put a Porsche Spyder engine in the bug he was driving! The drive through Skopje was a haunting one, as there had been a 6.9-magnitude (Richter scale) earthquake there two years before (in 1963), that had destroyed three-quarters of the city and killed over 1000 people. In addition, the population (now over half a million) was (and probably still is) about 1/3 Muslim, which made for a startling sight as we drove through the half-ruined town. I had never before been in a city with such a concentrated Muslim population, and it was a real eye-opener for me to see a part of the Western world that was at the same time so near-Eastern. Other highlights of the ride after Skopje including sleeping in an olive orchard just off the road and being awakened at about six in the morning by peasants with their goats arriving to pick the olives, then stopping at the first little "taverna" we could find after crossing the border from Yugoslavia into Greece to have breakfast – which consisted of a Greek salad with tomatoes, cheese and lots of olive oil, a cup of thick black Greek coffee, and big slices of white Greek bread. In general, food in Yugoslavia had been of a very poor quality unless one was in a tourist area like Split or Dubrovnik, and it felt good to get a meal with decent vegetables and fresh bread. When we eventually arrived in Athens we headed for a sort of hippie flop-house they had heard about called something like "Maggie's" where we threw our sleeping bags out on a roof area and crashed for several days. We split up at that point, as they had plans to visit other parts of the Greek mainland for a few days, while I was preparing to go over to the port city of Piraeus and hop on a ferry for Mykonos, the first of the Greek islands I had planned to visit. As we said our good-byes, I gave them the address of my place in Paris as a sort of "crash pad" they could use if they passed through Paris on their way back to England. Later on, after I returned to Paris, Renée said they had indeed come by and used my place for a several nights, making a terrible amount of noise each night when they arrived back early in the morning after carousing around Paris at night. This may have contributed to my being "politely" asked to leave after I returned to Paris in mid-October, although I was never quite sure! The ride was such a good one, however, that it would have been hard to complain, as I might otherwise still be standing somewhere in Montenegro with my thumb hanging forlornly out ...

**The Greek Islands** – After having spent several days touring the sights of Athens (including hanging out in local tavernas in the early evenings at the foot of the Acropolis learning what Ouzo and Retsina were all about!), I packed up my gear and headed for the port city of Piraeus, where one could hop on an Island ferry “last class” -- which involved sleeping on the open deck with a large number of young, like-minded travelers! The islands I eventually visited (south of the Aegean Sea) were Mykonos (and its smaller sister island Delos), Rhodes, Crete, Santorini, Ios, and (later on) Corfu in the Adriatic Sea off the coast of Albania. The whole island thing was a dream-like, once-in-a-lifetime experience one can truly only do when still young – ideally in one’s early twenties after having had enough in the way of college humanities courses to understand what it is one is seeing and experiencing! (N. B. – All of the photos shown below are informational only and have been cut-and-pasted from various Internet sources, as I had no camera with me – it was just too bulky to carry along back in those days!)



**Mykonos (and Delos)** – Mykonos is arguably one of the best known of the Greek islands, partially because of its proximity to Athens and partially because of its well-known night life during the summers (lots of cheap ouzo, retsina, and dance clubs open almost all night). Back in 1965 this phenomenon was just getting underway, and the island was still a quiet backwater with some fairly decent skindiving spots and a great Esplanade area along the port where one could sit and watch the ocean (and the action!). Whenever a ferry docked, there would appear a crowd of little old ladies in long black dresses and shawls who were always looking for folks getting off the ferry who needed to rent a room for a night or two for not very much – I seem to remember 25 or 50 drachmas per night, with 25 drachmas to a dollar! The rooms were quite bare with typically a bed, a table, and a washstand with a bowl of water (no running water) and a common outdoor privy (basically a hole in the floor!). I stayed there for about 3 days, doing a lot of skindiving and wandering around the island during the day and sitting on the esplanade during the evening. My chief reminder of my skindiving days on Mykonos is the still remaining presence of small black bits of sea urchin needles which steadfastly remained in my hands for many years after my departure from Mykonos.

Mykonos itself didn’t have too much in the way of Greek historical sites, although the little neighboring island of Delos was loaded with temple sites from Greek antiquity. Getting there required taking a fairly nauseating ride on a little open caique – a sort of Greek fishing boat with a small motor that the locals used to ferry tourists to and from the island and typically capable of holding about a dozen people.



Mykonos – view of town and port



Delos “Terrace of the Lions” circa 600 BC

During my stay on Mykonos I met a number of young folk doing the same thing that I was, and I got to know one of them quite well – a young New Yorker who had shucked his advertising day job to bum around for a while. His name was Lou Borgia, and we used to sit on the Esplanade for several hours each evening sipping a 5-drachma glass of ouzo and the free dish of squid and other bits of fish that came with it. After that we’d have a 5-drachma glass of retsina along with whatever the non-meat specialty of the day was (very good vegetarian lasagna-style dishes were typically 5 to 10 drachmas, while meat or chicken would cost as much as 25 drachmas, way over our budget!). We’d usually finish off with a dish of loukoumades (honey dumplings) for another few drachmas, bringing our bill for the evening to less than a dollar! Whoa! No wonder people liked to come to Greece in the mid-1960s ... When I left Mykonos on the ferry for Santorini I gave Lou my address in Paris. I never saw him again, but about 6 months later I received an invitation from him to be Best Man at his wedding in Stockholm! It turned out he had met a Swedish girl while hitchhiking out of Greece, and the two of them had gone to Paris where they stayed at my *chambre de bonne* for several days. He returned with her to Stockholm (the island of Lidingö) where they got married a few months later (late 1965 or early 1966). He didn’t know anyone there, so thought it would be nice to pay me back for the use of my room in Paris by inviting me to be his best man (Renée had reported that they had both been very quiet and respectful while staying there for a few days, as opposed to my hitchhiking friends!). Unfortunately, I had already returned to the States when I received his invitation, and I never saw him again. One hopes that all went well with both of them ...

**Rhodes** – I could easily have holed up in Mykonos for the whole summer, but at some point I realized it was time to move on. The island ferry shuttle stopped in Mykonos at least once every day and soon I was on board headed for my next destination – the island (and city) of Rhodes. Rhodes is the largest and the only one of the Dodecanese Islands (meaning “twelve islands”) off the coast of Turkey that I visited. The city of Rhodes is an old walled enclave with narrow alleys for streets in the downtown area, making it a very attractive area to prowl around in (unfortunately, the Colossus of Rhodes – a huge statue that once straddled the entrance to the harbor, is no longer there!). The city of Rhodes also had a hostel in the downtown area where I stayed for several days while exploring the island.



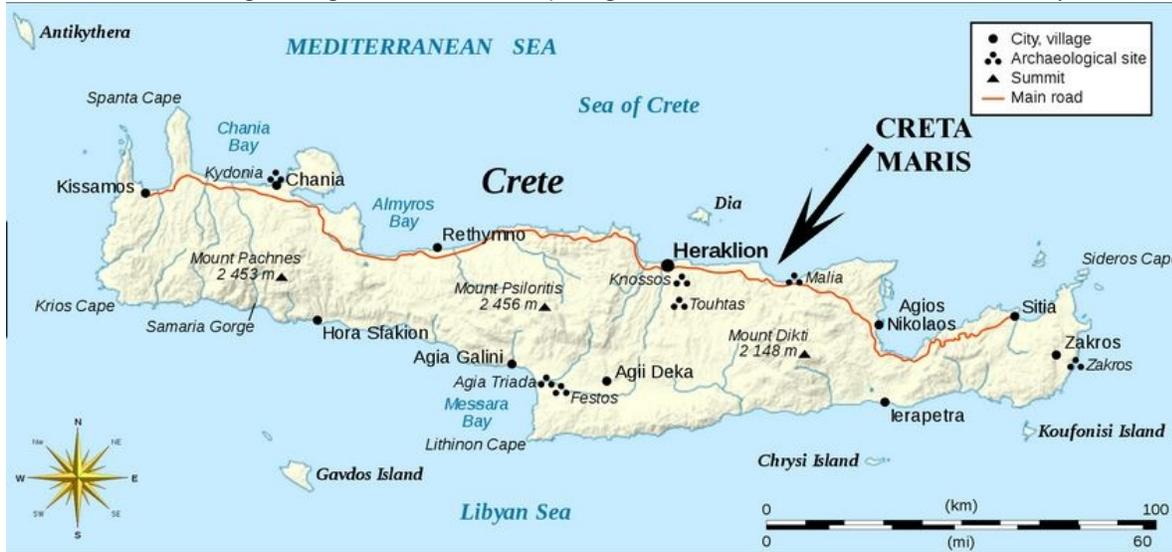
Harbor at Rhodes



Lindos on Rhodes

Mykonos had been sort of a beach-and-skindiving sort of place, while Rhodes was more of a “historical Greek” tourist destination. My first morning there I hitchhiked out to the old port city of Lindos, getting a ride in an Austin-Healy 3000 (just like Malcolm’s later in Atlanta!). Lindos was a small port city with spectacular temple ruins on a cliff overlooking the harbor, and it was there that I met a young SUNY math professor named John Frampton from Long Island who had taken the summer off to travel around the Greek islands on a motor scooter. He gave me a ride back to town and later took me around with him on the back of his scooter to visit various places around the island. We spent a couple of days touring, and he gave me his address in NYC as a place to stop by when passing through, although regretfully I never had the chance to take him up on it! Traveling on a motor scooter was definitely a good way to get around on Rhodes (as well as on Crete), but many of the islands were too small and the roads too primitive to make a motor scooter that useful. Nevertheless, it was great on Rhodes! Another spot of interest we visited was called Petaloudes, also known as the Valley of the Butterflies – a place much like Santa Cruz and Pacific Grove in California where large populations of Monarch(?) butterflies descend for a few weeks in mid-summer. After a couple of very enjoyable days, I saw John and his motor scooter off on the ferry one evening as he departed for Crete – a place I had on my list to head for next, but for which I wasn’t quite ready. Meeting people, getting to know them, enjoying their company, then moving on and never seeing them again was an experience which very unexpectedly became a sort of mode of travel for me in the Greek islands! Fortunately there always seemed to be an abundance of interesting people to meet, even if only for a short period of time ...

**Crete** – Between arriving, seeing folks off, and leaving myself, the ferry terminus on a given island soon became a sort of entrance and exit from any given island. After having spent several days on Rhodes, I once again boarded the ferry late one afternoon for an overnight ride to Crete. Compared to the other Greek islands (including Rhodes), Crete is huge and actually has paved roads and truck traffic connecting the main city of Heraklion with Chania and Agios Nikolaos, the two large cities to the extreme West and East of the island. Although there are extensive beach areas, they are not right in Heraklion and require transportation to get to, making it not as informal as Mykonos as far as walking to and “hanging out” on the beach. There are extensive archeological digs on the island, however – principally from the Minoan civilization of around 2600 BC to 1100 BC before it was destroyed by an eruption from the volcano on the neighboring island of Santorini (thought to be the actual location of the lost city of Atlantis).



From Grolier Atlas – major cities (left to right) are Chania, Heraklion, Agios Nikolaos (Knossos right by Heraklion)

There are lots of names from Greek mythology associated with the archaeological site at Knossos which is identified with the Minoan civilization (from King Minos) and which prominently features the monster known as the Minotaur. The Minotaur had a man’s body and a bull’s head/tail and was confined in a structure known as the Labyrinth (built by local craftsmen -- Daedalus and his son Icarus) before he was eventually killed by the hero Theseus who then left with the king’s daughter Ariadne headed for the island of Naxos! Lots of material for future operas there ... As far as getting around on Crete, it was difficult, if not almost impossible, to hitchhike on the small roads across to the more rural hills

and back of the island, but I did hitchhike to the two outlying towns on the main East-West road – Chania to the West and Agios Nikolaos to the East. Agios Nikolaos was a somewhat interesting port city, but on the industrial side at that time and not of great interest to a tourist, although there were a number of very appealing looking, although very lightly visited beaches along the road (when we visited in the early 1990s, that had all changed with lots of beaches opened up for tourist traffic!). Chania was an appealing looking town once you got past the industrial parts outside of town, but tourist traffic (the principal source of my rides!) between Heraklion and Chania was very light and I finally ended up being picked up by a truck driver to get back to Heraklion. It was probably the only island where I felt I had wasted a great deal of time just trying to get around, and later on in the 1990s we discovered that I had missed a whole very interesting side of the island by not having easily accessible transportation to get to the mountainous, rural interior (John Frampton's motor scooter from Rhodes would have been very handy!).

**Santorini** – After several days of wandering around Crete (with very little skin-diving or beach activity, almost atypical for a Greek island!), I once again boarded the inter-island ferry, the time headed for the volcanic island of Santorini – the purported source of the ash that is rumored to have buried the Minoan civilization on Crete back around 1600 BC. At that time Santorini was apparently called Thera, and the main town (on the rim of the ocean-filled volcano) and/or the island are still alternatively called by that name (or was when I was there!). As can be seen from the photos view, the island now consists of what remains of the volcano walls projecting up through the surface of the ocean. The small pieces to the left on the overhead view are cinder beds which are uninhabited. Back in the mid-1960s there was a very active cement factory in business right under the town which poured out vast quantities of a fine powdery substance into the air, which probably consisted of air-borne bits of cement powder!



The ferry arrived sometime around mid-morning at the bottom of an extremely steep path leading from ocean level at the bottom of the visible volcano wall up to the town at the very rim of the volcano, and we were immediately confronted with a horde of donkeys being offered to provide rides up the hill! The donkeys were apparently normally used for transporting goods around the island, which at that time had no visible motor transportation (or infrastructure to support it). Whenever a ferry or tourist vessel arrived, however, the donkeys were pressed into the apparently rather lucrative service of carrying passengers up and down the steep trail, being constantly prodded by their handlers with sticks having sharpened points (which were apparently detachable and taken in and out of the pocket of the herder when the tourist wasn't looking!). I joined a group of backpackers at the rear of the donkey column and trudged up the hill on foot. (The tale at that time was that the donkeys were actually the souls of island residents who had gone to Hell and ended up as donkeys on the cinder trail up and down the volcano wall – a good story for keeping the island ragamuffins in line!). A more audible presence of the donkeys was the loud braying one would hear each morning at about 4 or 5 am just as the sun was peeking up over the horizon. No one who has heard that noise even once will ever forget it – like souls being awakened in Hell each morning and being told to get up and brush their teeth...

At the top of the volcano was a narrow road that led into what was then the village of Thera (which has apparently been considerably expanded in the interim 50 years!). As half a dozen or so of us walked along the little path up into the village, I heard the voices of three animated young ladies conversing in French. They were sitting around a table in the courtyard of a small house right on the road, and I stopped to ask them if they had any suggestions as to where one might find a reasonable lodging for the night. They quickly replied, "Oh, monsieur, on est

tres bien ici!" implying not only that they were very satisfied with their accommodations, but that there might also be room for an additional guest! Oho -- I quickly bade farewell to my backpacking companions and knocked on the door to see if they might indeed be right -- which fortunately they were! Within ten or fifteen minutes I had moved in and found myself sitting on the terrace with three charming young Belgian demoiselles, all of whom were unfortunately scheduled to take a donkey ride out to a monastery starting at 5 am the next morning and then depart early on the following day. I was invited to join them on the donkey ride, but after learning it would cost some \$25, I was forced to reluctantly decline. Nevertheless we shared a glass of retsina both that evening and the following evening, after which they departed on next day's morning ferry. Just as I was sadly reflecting on the loss of such attractive companions, the daughter of the host showed up to serve the usual appetizer (a plate of squid -- rather good, actually!). She was a very striking young Greek girl of about 16 with a classical Greek profile such as one might see on one of the pottery dishes from Knossos -- not beautiful perhaps, but very attractive in the classical Greek sense one rapidly comes to appreciate after spending a few days in situ! She spoke no English whatsoever, but her father quickly noticed that I was taking a certain interest in her and moved in to supply any linguistic support that might be required! His English was geared toward the tourist trade (he ran a little tourist shop in the center of the village) and he sprinkled his conversation with phrases like "My brother -- he live Chicago!" "People in Chicago -- very rich!" "Money -- plenty!" and so on in that vein. He was actually very engaging in a Greek merchant sort of way, although our conversational material tended to drizzle out fairly quickly. I visited him in his shop occasionally during the next several days, and we had the opportunity to continue our conversation (again, much in the same vein!). During the time I stayed with them, I visited as much of the immediate area as possible by foot (at that time there was no vehicular traffic on the island), but after two or three days I felt it was probably time to move on (perhaps my fascination with classical Greek beauty had also somewhat run its course ...).

**Ios** -- I had talked to several passers-through who had mentioned the nearby island of Ios as an interesting place to spend a day or two -- both from the excellence of its skin diving offerings as well as from the fact that it was rumored to have been the birthplace of Homer! That was more than enough incentive, and so it was that after several very enjoyable days of poking around Santorini (although without having strayed too far from town as there was no cheap transportation available back in those days!) I descended the long trail to the ocean (by foot!) and climbed aboard the next ferry.

The ferry hop to Ios was a short one, and I arrived around mid-day at a little harbor settlement, which consisted of one or two small tavernas and which turned out to be sort of the outskirts of the town itself (which was up a hill a short walk away, although by now it's probably all morphed into a single town). I stopped to have a quick fish snack for lunch in one of the tavernas, which turned out to be so oily that immediately upon leaving the taverna I had to make a quick run for the nearest ditch to empty out (actually not an unusual experience in Greece for those unaccustomed to mountainous quantities of olive oil on their meals, be it breakfast, lunch, or dinner!). Because there had been no group of little old ladies in black shawls to meet the ferry (looking for boarders), I wasn't quite sure what to do as far as finding a place to stay, so I walked up into the little town which also bore the name of Ios. It turned out that there was quite a good youth hostel there with plenty of room to stay in their little dormitory. One of the oddities of walking down the earthen main street of the town is that there was a huge ditch where one might expect cars to be moving. It turned out that there were no cars on the island at all (no roads to speak of either!), and the ditch was part of a construction project to bring electricity to the little settlement of Ios through the use of generators. Since the town couldn't have had more than a couple of hundred residents, that didn't actually seem to be that ambitious a project, but it sure did tear up the main street of town (possibly the only street, but with the arrival of development things have apparently changed a great deal since then!)

The group of people at the hostel was a very friendly one, and I quickly made the acquaintance of three Canadian girls who were traveling together and with whom I hung out a good bit during my three or so days on the island. There was a regular get-together of an Aussie group on the little town square each evening, accompanied by copious amounts of ouzo and retsina and ruled over by a very loud and boisterous Aussie accompanied by a statuesque German girlfriend (although one who looked a little the worse for wear!). The walk back to the hostel from the square was a short one, fortunately, because the unlighted street was lined by the aforementioned ditch, which made for very perilous walking in the pitch dark after several hours of retsina and ouzo. It was quite a merry scene, however, and one that most folks in the hostel participated in for at least an hour or two until the Aussie contingent became a little

too enthusiastic in their drinking activities. One evening as things begin to get a little out of hand, I walked down to the beach with one of the Canadian girls and, as we were sitting on a little wall talking about our travels in the Mediterranean, I decided to hop down onto the sand which I estimated to be only about a couple of feet below us. It turned out to be almost 3 feet, and I came very close to sustaining a really bad injury, avoiding it only by sheer luck and the fact that the sand was very soft. It made me realize how vulnerable I was out in these places and served as a warning to be far more careful in the future if I wanted to make it back to Paris in one piece!

There was a little beach (possibly Koumbara, although I don't remember the exact name) on the next harbor to the north of where the ferry docked, and just offshore about 50 or so yards was a large rock formation with at least a 15-foot depth of water around it – ideal for casual skindiving or simply snorkeling to watch the many varieties of fish in the lagoon at different depths. The lagoon was buffered in some way from the open ocean, and the waves that came and went were quite mild in the morning, although considerably more aggressive in the afternoon! It was a fascinating place and probably the single most accessible spot for seeing a wide variety of fish where I have ever paddled around.

After a couple of days of hanging out with the Canadian girls, they decided it was time to leave for their next stop along the way, which unfortunately was back in the direction from which I had just come! We promised to correspond, but in fact never did – again a seemingly inevitable consequence of the brief passing-in-the-night type of contact one makes when navigating the Greek isles! That afternoon I hiked to the back of the island with a French guy named Pierre with whom I had conversed several times in the evenings at the hostel, but had never gotten together with due to my other preoccupations! Supposedly the grave of Homer was somewhere over the hills, and it seemed like an interesting idea to hike over and pay homage to the old dude! Back at that time (over 50 years ago) the island was quite off the beaten path with no development whatsoever (not even electricity!), and there were no real markings for how to find the Homeric gravesite. It was quite an interesting afternoon, however, and we managed to reach the other side of the island by following small unmarked trails over the hills until we reached the ocean again. We never did find the gravesite (possibly a touristic invention?), but we did stumble onto a number of barriers that had been left on the beaches by the Germans to foil any landing parties that might have wandered by during the Second World War. In particular there were a number of large chains that had been strung across the beach both in and out of the water, apparently to stymie any boats that were attempting to land. In 1965 the war was only 20 years back, and there were apparently still a large number of such relics left rusting all over the Mediterranean, pointing back to what had once played out in that area.

**Ios to Athens, Delphi, and Corfu** – As the season moved toward the late-September mark, the water developed a noticeable chill, and it was obviously time to think about heading back to Paris. I had no illusions about trying to retrace the lightly traveled route up the Dalmatian Coast and so plotted out a route that would take me through Athens and Delphi over to the West coast of Greece to catch the ferry to Corfu and eventually over to Brindisi on the Italian coast. I bade farewell to Ios, which had become perhaps my favorite of the Greek islands, and one fall morning sadly climbed on the ferry to Athens to start the long journey home (or at least back to Paris!). Once off the ferry and on the road out of the city of Athens the hitchhiking went reasonably smoothly, with only the occasional wait of an hour or two. Rides were frequent as far as Delphi, but after that traffic dropped off considerably – it was late in the tourist season, and after passing Delphi the only real tourist attraction where I was headed was the island of Corfu just off Albania between the Adriatic and Ionian Seas – a bit off the beaten track when one considers all the options available further south between the Aegean Sea and the open Mediterranean! I managed to make fairly good time after spending a morning in Delphi (checking out the Oracle chicks!) and arrived in the little coastal town of Ladochorion mid-morning just in time to catch the ferry over to Kerkira, the Greek name for Corfu. Once in Kerkira, I hitchhiked to the hostel – I can't remember exactly where it was, but at that time it was the only really cheap place to stay and was frequented by the usual backpacking crowd, making it a good place to pick up tips of where to go to eat, beaches, etc. While there I ran into another group of three Canadian girls on their way from Greece to Italy (three seemed to have been a magic number for hitchhiking Canadian gals – perhaps safer that way!), and I hooked up with them for what it turned out would be all the way to Naples, Rome, and Florence, making for some interesting rides! I spent several days on Corfu, which was a longer than unexpected stop, but it was hard to pass up those cute Canadian chicks! For some reason we really hit it off, and we enjoyed swapping stories about our travels up to that time (they hadn't done the Mediterranean islands, so were prime suckers to listen to all my war stories!).

Corfu is a real contrast to the other Greek islands I visited (other than perhaps Crete) in that it has a great deal of “normal” green foliage. Most of the Greek islands are essentially desert islands, consisting mainly of sand, rock, and scrubby foliage, while Corfu actually has bushes and large green trees! We spent a couple of days on the beach and walking around the little town of Kerkira before heading for the ferry and an overnight passage to Brindisi on the southern coast of Italy. As I recall, sleeping on the deck was not as easy on that passage, and quite a few of the outside passengers actually found it necessary to pay for a deck chair for sleeping (that was over 50 years ago, however, and I can’t remember if I was one of them, although my pocket was getting pretty empty by that time!).

**Brindisi to Naples** – Once the four of us arrived in Brindisi, we split up for the trip to Naples, mainly because it was safer for the three girls to hitchhike together and also because it would have been awkward trying to fit four of us in a single car. The route was basically up the coast to north of Bari, then over the central hills to Naples itself. My first ride was a quick one in an Alfa Romeo sports car -- a large powerful one with the Italian guy at the wheel doing 90 mph up the coastal road and dropping me off in Bari (Google sets the trip at about 50 minutes, but I swear we were in Bari less than half an hour after he picked me up!). I should have arrived in Bari well before the Canadian girls, but they got picked up almost immediately and it took me almost half an hour just to get that first ride! Needless to say, I didn’t see them again before Naples, where they arrived at the hostel half a day ahead of me! One interesting part of the trip was the ride over the small range of mountains between Bari and Naples, where I got picked up by an older Italian guy driving a brand new Chevy Impala he had picked up in the States and had shipped back to Italy. The car was so huge in contrast to Italian Vespas and Cinquecentos that it dwarfed everything else on the road, and it looked almost the size of a small Italian school bus. The guy was extremely proud of it though and was pleased he had picked up an American who could appreciate its size and comfort ...

Once having arrived in Naples I headed for the hostel and hooked up with my Canadian travel companions, and we soon set out to take a look around the city. Unfortunately, Naples was experiencing one of its frequent garbage strikes, and the streets were full of uncollected garbage. Yuck! We decided to look for something out of town that might be a little more appealing and soon were headed for Pompeii, in the hills south of Naples. Naples, Mount Vesuvius, and Pompeii form a triangle along the coast, with Vesuvius being inland and both Naples and Pompeii being pretty much right along the water, and Pompeii lying only about 20 miles from downtown Naples. Our transportation was, of course, our thumbs and, with my attractive companions standing alongside the highway with me, we had no shortage of offerings. After turning down several that looked a bit dicey, we were in Pompeii within half an hour (far from my usual style of standing forlornly alongside the highway for several hours on end!). Pompeii is a fascinating place, but like all archaeological digs the initial fascination begins to wear off after an hour or two, and we began looking around for more touristic fare! It turns out the Amalfi peninsula (with its spectacular views of the coast, including the island of Capri) is only a few minutes away. Soon we were back on the road with our thumbs out once again, this time headed for Sorrento and Amalfi.

It wasn’t long before two young Italians in a somewhat larger sedan Fiat stopped and picked us up. The driver was a loud, beefy Italian guy named Joe Piccolo (Joe Little!), and his friend was a more normal sort of accountant-looking type of guy. They were out sort of cruising around and offered to take us on a tour of the Amalfi peninsula, even stopping to have pizza with us! It was a very colorful ride for a couple of hours, although Mr. Piccolo kept accusing me of being selfish by having three girls all to myself (implying they would be glad to take two of them off my hands, something my companions didn’t seem to be overly enthusiastic about!). In addition, the pizza – which we had expected to be excellent in Italy – was quite marginal, even a bit doughy. It was getting late in the afternoon when we finally said a reluctant (on their part!) goodbye and hopped on a bus to get back to Naples. It was a situation which was starting to get a bit dicey, but we had the advantage of numbers on our part, which was probably fortunate.

**Rome , Florence, Milan** – I stayed with the Canadian girls for a couple of weeks altogether, hitchhiking to Florence, then to Rome, both of which I knew reasonably well from my trip with Tedi the previous summer. They felt a little more comfortable getting around in Italy with a male companion, and of course I had no objections hanging around with them. We had a lot of fun, but eventually we each had our own ways to go. They had plans to go to an American base in Germany where they had a friend stationed and try to get clerical jobs for the winter, planning to tour around central Europe again the following summer. They did, in fact, do just that, and I corresponded with one of them for a few months before she decided to head back to Toronto (where she quickly got married!). After a couple

of weeks of such engaging company, I felt a bit lonely making my way out to the Autostrada on the edge of Florence and sticking out my thumb with a raft of other hitchhikers headed North towards Milan on their way back to central Europe. I've stood in a number of crowds of hitchhikers in a number of places (chiefly on German autobahns!), but I've never seen a place quite as crowded as that road north out of Florence – there must have been 20 or 30 singles and pairs standing along an extended stretch of highway with their thumbs stuck out! It was, of course, towards the end of September, and the tourist season was coming to an end. Nevertheless, this seemed extreme, and the chances of getting a ride anytime soon seemed very slim! Eventually I moved up the road a bit from the main pack, and was standing next to a German guy chatting when a large car transporter unexpectedly pulled over and the driver jerked his thumb toward the back of the transporter. We at first hesitated at taking a ride in such a breezy and potentially dangerous setup, but after having stood there for more a couple of hours already we were getting somewhat desperate, so we both jumped up on the open back and tucked ourselves into what seemed like reasonably sheltered spots. It turned out the guy took us all the way from Florence to Milan – almost a 3-hour ride on the Autostrada! It was quite a ride, both noisy and windy and also more on the dangerous side than we would have liked to admit, but, hey, it was a ride!

Once off the transporter, we thanked the guy as he headed off to the East towards Venice. The two of us continued hitchhiking together a while, just for the company, but a light snow started falling, which rapidly turned to slush, and rides began to get very hard to come by! We eventually decided to split up and, after realizing that I was running the danger of getting a very bad cold, I made the decision to hop on the Swiss train as I walked by a station in one of the little villages I was passing through. Getting on a Swiss train after having stood out in the wet and cold for many hours seemed like an ascent to heaven itself. The trains were lightly peopled, warm, and rode very smoothly on the tracks. I stayed on the train the rest of my way through Switzerland, perhaps saving my life from the winter cold which had so suddenly descended (I must have been under the delusion I was still in the Greek isles, thinking I could hitchhike my way through Switzerland in mid-October!).

The weather improved considerably once I was out of the Swiss Alps, and soon I was back on the road with my thumb out. As I crossed the border from Germany to France, I was picked up by a sporty-looking German in his 40s driving a Citroen DS, the classic, rather odd-looking, but luxurious car from the 1950s-60s that I always associated with Citroen. It turned out he was an architect on his way to Paris to present some plans to a client, and he gave me a ride all the way from the border right to the Gare du Nord in central Paris – what a way to finish out my journey! As a hobby on the side, he drove an Italian Alfa Romeo in car rallies, including the Monte Carlo Rally, an event designed to promote Monte-Carlo as a tourist destination, with competitors starting from different European cities before finishing up in Monaco. He drove very fast, doing up to 70 mph on the French back roads, something that definitely made me nervous, but he seemed to know what he was doing – wheeling around the sharp curves at breakneck speed. I had had some hairy rides before (including having been picked up once in England by a guy who was talking about committing suicide before I managed to jump out of the car as we came to a stop in a row of cars at a traffic light – being careful to thank him profusely for the ride as I scrambled out the door!). As we approached Paris, the roads flattened out and the rally driver kept the car at a flat 130 km/hour (about 80 mph!). Suddenly, the left rear tire blew, but remarkably, just as the car seemed about to freewheel out of control, it stabilized itself -- with the hydraulic system automatically raising the body up over the left rear axle to allow us to come to a controlled stop. It was a remarkable thing both to witness and to feel – like a hand had come down from heaven to guide us out of disaster. We sat there by the side of the road for a few moments catching our breath, as he pounded the wheel and said, “Ach, zu lang, zu schnell!” – too fast for too long, basically implying he had allowed the tire to get too hot. He jumped out of the car, grabbed the jack, placed it under the car, and I watched as the car pumped itself up over the jack without his having to do anything (a Citroen special apparently!). He quickly changed the tire, and we were back on the road within 15 minutes, although doing a much more sedate 100 clicks (60 mph) the rest of the way! I paid him back partially for the ride by guiding him to where he was going in the city (right by the Gare du Nord), then hopped on the Metro back to my little room in the 16th Arrondissement. It seemed like I had just returned home again from my own Odyssean voyage (well, not really, but it seemed like an appropriate thought!).

It felt great to be back in Paris, almost like returning home! As it developed, however, there was one little hitch – namely, my landlady wanted my little *chambre de bonne* back so her daughter could use it while pursuing her University studies (oddly enough in Russian!). It didn't actually seem like that big a deal, since I wasn't really planning

to continue my rather Spartan existence living there, and had in fact been hoping to snag the job I had interviewed for (before leaving for the Greek islands) and possibly finding some digs a bit more comfortable! I called the Russian-speaking engineer at Parsons with whom I had interviewed in May, and he invited me to drop by and chat some more. When I did, however, it turned out that the project they had in mind at that time had gone through some reductions and right at that moment they had nothing they could offer me! He said they were still very interested, however, and that he hoped I would still be available after the turn of the year when other opportunities would be developing. He described some of the possibilities, and it turned out they would be field jobs, very probably in North Africa (places like Algeria or Morocco), something that really made me start thinking twice about the whole thing! My focus in school had been much more along the line of electronics, as opposed to the area of power generation, and I really had very little training (and truthfully even less interest) in pursuing electrical engineering in that particular direction. In addition, the thought of leaving Paris (or even France) for North Africa was something that really set me back on my heels. The separation of Algeria from France was still very recent history with much publicity over the separatist practice of setting off *plastique* bombs in the Paris Metro! I spent several days thinking it over, then called Parsons and told them that regretfully I had decided to return to the United States to pursue more familiar opportunities there. It was a tough decision, as up until then I had not even been considering that option, but at some point I had to come to grips with the fact that I had been out of school for almost 6 years and had had virtually no contact with the world of electronics since graduation! I wasn't even sure I would be able to get a job back in the States, and so eventually I stumbled into the realization that I would probably even have to return to Georgia to take a job that I knew would be offered to me because of my previous contacts with Lockheed. Sigh – oh, well, at least I had that option – things could have been much worse!

And so it was that in late October of 1965 I packed up several boxes of dictionaries and other miscellaneous materials and took them to the post office to be mailed back to Atlanta. I then said various goodbyes (including to the little motor-scooter still faithfully sitting in the alley downstairs gathering dust) and put myself and my bike on the overnight train for London with the goal of dropping by Manchester in Central England where my old cycling buddy Harry lived and where I could drop my bike off for him to find some use for! He was very surprised to see me, but we had a really nice visit during which I met all the family he had talked about when writing his letters from Bogstad campground in Oslo (including his future wife, Ann, to whom he is still married over 50 years later!). We even did a little cycling together, but, as I had not been on a bike more than once or twice in over a year, I was definitely flagging as far as keeping up (at that time, before starting his own commercial art business, Harry commuted to and from work on his bike every day!). As I prepared to leave, I counted what I had left in the way of coin and decided that, what with the prospect of a real job in sight, I could afford to take the train the rest of the way from Manchester to Glasgow to catch a Loftleidir (Icelandic Airlines) flight back to New York City. Also the weather had started to turn nasty in a very English sort of way, and the prospect of standing alongside the roadway with a heavy pack on (with all my remaining possessions from my year in Paris!) was not at all inviting! Within a day of having left Manchester I was sitting on Icelandic airlines headed for Reykjavik, then on to New York City. After having arrived in New York I headed for a phone booth and started calling the auto-drive agencies where one could almost always find a car to be deadheaded (“driven”) to within reach of most major US cities. I quickly found one right in downtown New York City which had a VW bug “waiting for me” to be driven right to Atlanta, which I counted as a real bit of luck. I took the bus downtown, picked up the car, and started down the Jersey Turnpike headed for Washington DC, feeling very chipper and self-congratulatory at my good luck. I very quickly came to realize that the car had a fairly major problem -- namely a very badly slipping clutch! Things were OK on a flat stretch such as a freeway, as long as I didn't try going over about 55 mph, but that was about it. Highways tend to be flat north of Washington, DC, but as one heads further south one encounters rolling hills – death for a car with a failing clutch. I soon got in the mode of accelerating up to about 75 or 80 mph going down a hill in order to be able to get up the next hill as the car's speed dropped to about 40 mph – a very nerve-wracking (and potentially ticket-prone) way of driving! At some point, it occurred to me that, were I to head over a little closer to the coast, the terrain might be a little flatter. I took a look at a map and realized that Fort Bragg, North Carolina was a possible target – a place where my old Army friend from Monterey and Germany, John Rollinson, was currently stationed. Fort Bragg, near Fayetteville, North Carolina, is actually one of the largest military installations in the world by number of troops (named for Confederate General Braxton Bragg, suh!). It is also well-known among Army types as the place where one can “go airborne” – that is, train to become a parachutist, something I have always considered to be a particularly dangerous form of military service (I was fairly sure John was not involved in any such activity!). In any case, I showed up at the gate, obtained the number of his BOQ, and was there to greet him (to his

astonishment!) when he arrived back from duty that day. He had assumed I was still in Paris, but in celebration of my return to the States we enjoyed a delicious (although perhaps not completely authentic!) meal in a little “French” restaurant in downtown Fayetteville. I spent the night on the floor of his BOQ, and, after bidding farewell to him once again the next day, set out on the road for Atlanta. Things did, in fact, go better on the somewhat flatter, although at that time still quite rural roads (no Interstate Highway system in those parts at that time!). I rolled into Atlanta about a day later – to the astonishment of my parents, who had no idea at all I was coming, but who were nevertheless quite welcoming (bless their hearts!). I returned the VW to its owner, who was quite surprised to see it again – apparently a “friend” of his had borrowed the car after a drinking spree one evening, driven it to New York City, and left it at the car transport agency to be somehow or other transported back to Atlanta (having never driven a clutch car before, the “friend” had managed to completely denude the clutch of its lining). The agency had taken the cheapest way of getting the vehicle back to Atlanta – namely waiting for a “deadheader” such as myself to show up and drive it back for free! In any case, the guy was very happy to see his car back in one piece and thanked me for my care and patience in shepherding it from New York City back to Atlanta – one more adventure on the road – not quite my last one, but getting close to it!