



Bicycle Diaries

A MEMOIR / STANLEY SMITH

for Parker and Madeline

Bicycle Diaries

In the summer of 1973 I rode my bicycle across the United States. Thirty-three years later, for reasons that are not totally clear to me, I am compelled to revisit that summer. I recently re-discovered the journal that I kept on that trip—a journal that, over the years, I had occasionally opened, perused, and put away until the next time that I stumbled across it. This time, though, I consumed the story in detail—cover to cover. Then again. Then one more time. I dug out the photographs that I had taken on the trip; and these, coupled with my narrative, triggered a flood of memories, emotions and self-examination.

I'm not a revolutionary guerrilla fighter. I didn't ride a motorcycle through Latin America. But I took a journey in my early twenties, much like Che Guevara did, and it changed my life. I'm revisiting it today because I hope that it will help my son.

Before this trip began, I was a full-fledged member of the counter-culture. I was enrolled in school at Western Washington University as a Geology major. Geology was a passion of mine since the sixth grade. However, I also lived in communal houses; smoked pot almost every day, and had many acid trips under my belt. I believed



Stanley, start of trip, 1973

in the counterculture, which for me meant that we would change the world and that expanded awareness through chemically altering my brain was all part of the plan.

My 17 year-old son Parker is in trouble, and I have identified traits in him that were clanging with familiarity when I was absorbing and re-living this material. Parker spent this last year in a spiral of drug use, lying, stealing, skipping school, and generally being very unhappy. It all culminated in a psychotic episode which forced him into hospitalization and long-term treatment. His paranoia and crippling fear was frightening to me, but nothing compared to how frightening it must have been to him. I have watched a smart,

talented and creative kid become a ghost of his former self—struggling to just get through the basics of living. I'm sure that much of my interest in this project is fueled by a desire to see if I could remember how I overcame similar obstacles. Introspection does not come easily to me—not that I am unable—I just tend to accept myself for who I am. However, this project has propelled me into a vortex of introspection that is still spinning today.

Like Parker, I had had a major scare based on my drug use. Two summers prior to this bike trip, I spent four months in jail in Libby, Montana on drug charges. I had been working for the U.S. Forest Service in Montana as a fire fighter that summer. I needed to

find a good summer job to keep going to school, and the firefighting job fit the bill. One Saturday morning I gave a co-worker some peyote that I had brought with me to Montana. I took a healthy amount myself. We walked down to the river below our bunkhouse and sat on the shore to wait for the universe to explode.

We didn't count on quite such a big explosion. I was an old hand at psychedelics, but my friend Tom had never even smoked pot. While I was lying back watching the river turn to liquid mercury, Tom's life was falling apart. He was sure he was going to die. He could see God behind the clouds. He was ashamed, and had to call his mother to apologize. Insects took on sinister proportions, and I had become the enemy. I had done this to him. He had a severe psychotic break that, after several very tense hours, resulted in Tom running down the highway screaming that he was going to kill himself. I called the hospital, my boss called the police, and I spent the next 120 days in the county jail.

Even though I phased drugs out of my life, I was still adrift. When I returned to school I had no passion for any of my classes—even Geology. I took some art classes on a lark, and had one class in photography that completely turned my head. Everything else suffered—my grades in everything but art and photography were dismal, but I was hooked. There has



Pam Lange

never been a time in my life that I had less money, but buying film was always first priority. I couldn't afford a car, so transportation was by bicycle. From riding a bicycle every day, I became intrigued with the idea of a major bike trip.

I had friends who had done some long-distance bicycle touring—Dave Linden and Ken Rassmusen, classmates from Western Washington University in Bellingham, Washington. They



David May

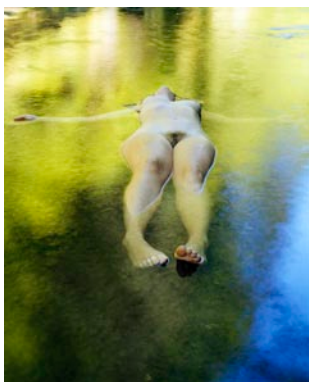
had ridden across the country and had amazing stories to tell. Dave had a wooden hand with a pointing finger attached to the front of his bike with a long piece of metal spring—always pointing in the direction that he was going. Ken had a tuba with him (so much for saving weight), and they would ride into little towns with Dave's wooden finger gyrating wildly, and Ken playing his tuba while riding behind no-hands. My trip was conceived around a campfire in the North Cascades where Pam Lange, my girlfriend, was working on a trail crew.

Pam was extraordinary. She was beautiful, smart, strong, funny and up for adventure. She let me photograph her naked. We had spent a lot of time in the

wilderness together, often under severe conditions. She had a passion for cycling, and it took little convincing to get her enthusiasm up for the trip. My best friend, David May completed the group.

David was the man that I most trusted. He and I were fairly inseparable. We had lived together in several "group" houses in Bellingham, we had commercial salmon fished together, worked on a seed farm in eastern Washington together, and planned this trip together. David could be moody, and was unsure if he could be apart from Maria Junco, his girlfriend. She had no interest in joining us, and David was torn. This uncertainty would dog David throughout the trip.

In the summer of 1973



Pam, floating



Maria Junco

I had no job, little money, but a desire to hit the road. I remember thinking that I could live anywhere on nothing. Happily. There was no situation that couldn't be turned into something at least tolerable. Nobody in America could starve (if you were willing to dive into a dumpster). Adventure didn't require a trip to Bali—it could be found in Sedro Woolley, Washington, the jumping off point for a trip across the country. There was nothing holding me back from this bike trip, and I had no doubt that it would happen.

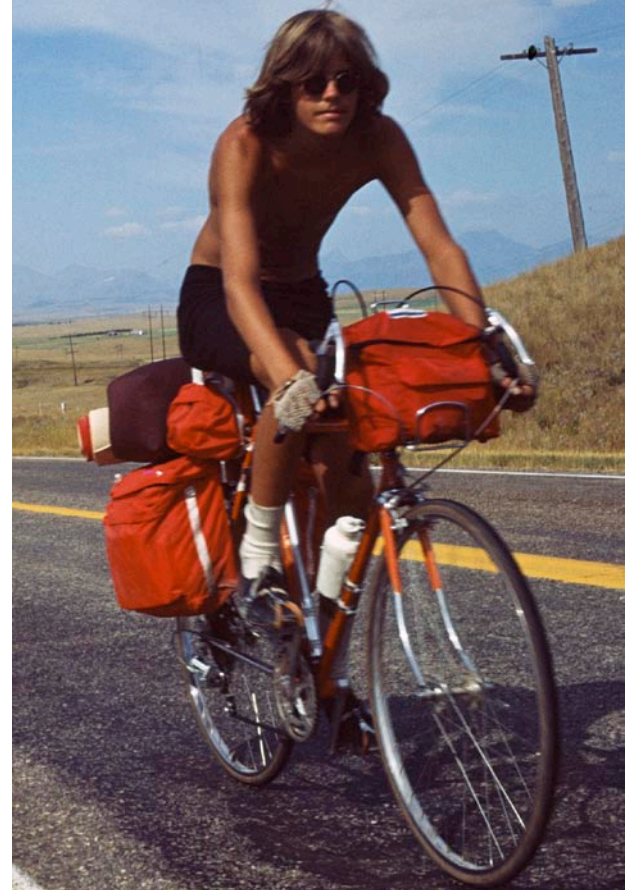
When I told my parents what I was planning, they weren't exactly thrilled, but finally became resigned to it. In fact, they asked me if I would be interested in taking my 13 year-old brother along with us. At first I was reluctant, but Doug pleaded his case, and, given my general optimism, I agreed. We would pick him up in Pullman, Washington on our way east.

I didn't know it at the time, but Doug was going through a very tough time. He had been using

drugs, and had engaged in some petty criminal activities. He was the youngest of my brothers by a margin of eight years, and he was the only one left at home after we all left for college and the Army. He felt abandoned by his older brothers. My parents thought that this trip would be therapeutic for Doug, and this helped convince me to say yes.

Clearly this summer was much more important to me than I had ever previously realized. Something happened to me that was unidentifiable at the time, but now, from this distance, has come into focus. I grew up that summer. I had a sense of what it meant to be self-reliant and to be on my own. I decided what I wanted to be (a photographer and artist)—and it was not what I had spent most of my life assuming I would become (a geologist). But mostly the trip gave me a feeling of being on the loose, with no set agenda other than to get to the east coast on my bicycle. Not having a clue what each new day would bring became routine. I discovered that doing something really difficult was just doing a series of smaller, less difficult things—things that I knew could be accomplished. The days added up and eventually the whole became bigger than the sum of the parts.

We started the trip with something like \$200 each. Jack's, a local bike shop, provided some sponsorship—mostly equipment.



Doug Smith

We planned to sleep on the ground wherever we stopped, and when we ran out of money we planned to find farm jobs if possible. My parents sent us care packages of granola, candy, and usually a little cash along the way—addressed to general delivery in some town on our route. We made our way, assisted by many people and events that we couldn't have anticipated

on that first day out of Bellingham, Washington, in the far northwest corner of the country. Two and a half months later we arrived in Booth Bay Harbor, Maine.



Top left to right and bottom left: Second day, Washington Pass, Cascade Mountains. Bottom right: Tourists, Winthrop, Washington.

The Journal

summer 1973

July 10

Left today after late night going-away party where everyone spent at least an hour hugging and kissing everyone else. Nils very drunk and confusing. Early morning final preparations, bag sewing—loaded packs for the first time—looks big but proves only to be 25 lbs. of stuff. Finally got away at noon. Bike seems wobbly at first--- but later very smooth. South on old route 99-- to a shortcut to Sedro Woolley. David asked an old couple where this particular road went—if it went to highway 9—“Ya mean the road from Wickersham to Woolly?” —laughs!

Later asking more directions from a hay truck driver, we helped load up the bales that fell off when the truck started back up. On and on. Riding very smoothly—tail wind all the way up the Skagit Valley—made very good time. Marblemount at 6:30—75 miles. Camp in abandoned park just on the other side of town. Sound of a dozen eggs finally boiling. Over the pass tomorrow. Tired.

July 12

Yesterday rode from Marblemount to Rainy Pass. A very exhausting ride. Utterly wiped out when we finally reached the pass. Pam & Dave seem even worse off than I. About 15 miles below the pass Pam's parents came up the valley. Completely unexpected. They offered to throw our bikes in the back—Dave & Pam seemed to think it was a good idea—I felt we could make it all right and was kind of against it on principal. The others said that if I didn't want to do it they wouldn't either. Made me feel kind of weird. Pam's parents were at the top of the pass and had a deluxe dinner waiting for us—and refuge from the clouds of mosquitoes. We all crammed into their camper for a really easy sleep.

Next Day—Today—short ride up to Washington Pass—Da-

vid got a speeding ticket on the way down—weaving back and forth between the center line. Only a warning though. An unbelievable descent from Washington Pass. 16 miles of steep very fast downhill grade. Hardly touched my brakes. Tears streaming down my face from the wind. Eyes are very bloodshot now. Ice Cream in Mazama, then on to Winthrop where we brown-bagged a quart of beer and gawked at the tourists for a while. Very hot—stopped 3 miles past Twisp at the Methow River where I'm sitting right now. Very nice swim with good friends and perfect water and good food. Will ride some more now.

July 13

Slept last night in the grange Hall lawn in the town of Methow. A real nice place. Drank a couple of beers and watched the moon come up—almost full. Woke up before sunrise. We planned to put as many miles in as we could before the heat. Rode down the rest of the Methow Valley to Brewster—6:30 on the bank clock. Didn't think it was anywhere nearly that early. On to Bridgeport where we ate a windy breakfast in the city park-- “No baseball playing by the order of the Bridgeport City Council.” Everyone depressed about the heat which we are all a little unaccustomed to. Bridgeport to Lehay Jct.—17 miles uphill—very hot, and gusty wind. Not really fun. Expected to find a town at Lehey—but only a Highway Dept. garage and a little park with sprinklers going all the time—and shade trees. Slept in the shade for a while then had cream cheese and real horseradish sandwiches, and plums. Sewed up my riding gloves. Finally got put out of the little grassy area by the friendly old caretaker who had spent the previous hour going around the grounds spraying the weeds that were trying desperately to make their way through the chain link and barbed wire fence to create havoc upon the orderly lawn. Man said they've been planning to make it into a park for two years but he'd believe it when he sees it.

Riding again—21 miles to Grand Coulee. Very hot and uncomfortable riding. David says he might not want to go on the full trip. Bicycling not what he needs right now. I just think the present miseries are making him think other more comfortable pursuits might be more his style. I want David to stick around—a really fine fellow. Love

him a lot. Finally into Grand Coulee—a 5-mile down grade which is very painful to my sensitive eyes. Soft chocolate ice-cream in the Tee-Pee drive in where the waitresses were talking about the big dance Friday night with the “Hash Browns” providing the music. Hot stuff. Later—swimming in the reservoir behind Grand Coulee Dam—sitting in the park sipping Rainier beer, eating whole wheat fig bars, Fritos and bean dip (very healthy food!) Several families next to us spent about an hour discussing the various cuts of beef and their merits—then the men left to water ski and left the women to gossip about what assholes their husbands are. Talked to a very friendly photographer/minister from Grand Coulee.

July 15

Next morning awoke to hundreds of swallows cruising about over our heads in search of breakfast. What an intense competition going on. Are there enough bugs to feed them all? Or is it a continual struggle to keep the belly full? Maybe we are always kind of looking at things philosophically because we really don't have to worry about gut-level things like where the next bite of food is coming from. Right then our next bite of food was coming from a cottage cheese container and several good peaches.

Long climb out of the Columbia Gorge. The grade just right for very rhythmic peddling in low gear. Hill behind us in no time—a good 5 miles long. Spectacular view of wheat country and long down grade into Wilbur. Drug store in Wilbur with an honest-to-god authentic soda fountain. Root beer made by syrup first, then soda water “on tap”. Lady says it's been bought out by a man and will probably cease to exist. Progress takes yet another soda fountain. Probably much cheaper to open a can of Hires, pour it in a glass and charge two bits for it.

Another cyclist strolls in—Bob from Philly. On his way back there on his bicycle. Very interesting character. Are all hard-core cyclists just a little but loony in a very nice way? To wit—Ken and Dave L. This guy is a real character. Calls a friend in Spokane to come and pick him up—he has a sore tendon—“well what the fuck? I'm no purist”. True, true—I begin to see Dave & Pam's point about possibly accepting rides when in dire straits. But shit! I enjoy cycling—and

have no real need to get there as fast as a car or freight train would take me. Traveling by bike requires quite a mental downshift. But yeah—when miserable, make adjustments to alleviate the misery. Witness: Rainy Pass. But when not miserable don't make adjustments for misery that isn't there. When given the choices between comfortably riding in an enclosed internal combustion engine-pod and a bicycle, I'll opt for the bike. Enough.

Spent hot afternoon lolly gagging around the little park in Creston. Beer and burgers at Deb's café. Deb being a man, by the way—apparently a rodeo has-been—mementos all over the walls. Later—very beautiful ride at

dusk—to Davenport. The moon and Sun were lined up on opposite horizons—staring each other in the face as we witnessed the cosmic event—I felt such exhilaration—colors so rich. Thought of pictures, but didn't want to for some reason—too beautiful. Camped at Lincoln County fairgrounds. Realized I'd forgotten my journal and travelers checks in Creston. I tried to hitch back, but no one would bite. Called Deb's in the morning and made arrangements to have them mailed to Pullman. On to Edwall—a small, apparently deserted little burg floating on a sea of wheat. A few signs of life. Nice place. Sooooo slow. Onto Sprague—getting real hot now—last hill down into Sprague—empty water bottle—mouth parched beyond recognition. Like a blast



Moonrise, Eastern Washington



Japanese cyclist, Coeur d' Alene



Square Dance, Bonner's Ferry, Idaho



Old Timer, Bonner's Ferry, Idaho

furnace. Tall cool ones at a little small drive-in where when I asked to have my lemonade cup refilled with water, she said she'd have to give me a new cup "for health reasons". I bet when people pass her a jug of wine (if it's ever happened) she wipes of the "germs". Didn't argue the point like I always do at the Thriftway in Bellingham when they always try to make me put my beer in a bag. So the little kiddies lined up outside the store won't see for Christ's sake.

Now at Sprague Lake—cool swim about to go have a cold one—back to the real world.

July 20

Spent the night of the 15th at St. John. Wake up on the 16th to the sound of thousands of dying bugs in the freshly sprayed trees in the park where we were staying. On to Pullman and Folks, cold beer, lots of food and a day of rest. Left Pullman on the 18th—Doug is with us. Very hot day—did 47 miles in the morning and another 10 in the evening. Camped just off the road 25 miles south of Coeur d' Alene. Lumpy pine cones under sleeping pad. Next day on to Coeur d' Alene. Spent a very hot day lazing around the park in Coeur d' Alene—swimming and sleeping. Talked to a Japanese fellow who is also touring the U.S. on a bike—to save money. In the evening we

rode to a little campground past Athol, ID. Got caught in the rain at 3AM—but at least it provided some relief from the mosquitoes.

Tailwind all the way to Sandpoint, and more to Bonner's Ferry. Really flying. 52 miles, but we'll probably stay here tonight—it's "Crazy Daze" and besides getting free ice cream as a furniture Store gimmick, we'll probably get to see some square dancers her tonight. Just now sitting under trees—looking at clouds roll in. Probably rain tonight—what a relief from all the hot weather. Full from ham & swiss sans with Coors beer, etc. Sleepy.

Fantastic evening. Camping tonight at the county fair grounds. Seems to be some sort of "Crazy Daze" going on. There is a traveling square dance club here at the same spot—really friendly folks. Dave went to get a six-pack of beer. Gave one to an old timer sitting in an old pickup. Later came over and talked to us about the old times when he used to shoot grizzly bear and cougar. A really amazing fellow. Talked about how friendly the people are here in Bonners Ferry, Getting a little drunk when a woman from the square dance club comes over and tells us about a shower in the basement with HOT water. Clean bodies with little boys peering in the window giggling and pointing at our naked bodies. Later old man telling us that he's going to get some land with cows, goats and a garden because it's going to be the only way to survive pretty soon. Felt incredibly good.

July 22

On the morning of the 21st we enjoyed a free pancake breakfast sponsored by the Bonners Ferry Jaycees. Two very large women in the past-the-knee length flower print dresses and aprons were flipping the hot cakes—jiggling and smiling. A real good turnout. Talked to several people—all interested in our trip. Talked with one man who said how it was such a shame that Americans drove so many cars and that bicycles should be used much more often—“like in Red China”—there are hardly any privately owned cars there. This from a very conservative looking middle aged American driving a camper. Later rode on to Troy MT, and then to Libby. Stopped at Kootenai Falls for some really incredible scenery & sunset. Cool spray from the falls and really wild sandstone rock with perfect ripple marks. On to Libby, hot banana split at the Dairy Queen then on a dare, split a deluxe burger with Dave. Running drippy hamburger juice on my riding shorts. Slept in Park in Libby—Lumpy ground but soft with Pam & making love with mosquito bite on my heel.¹ Today—coffee and pancakes in Libby—off to a 9:30 start. 5 miles out Pam breaks another spoke—I find myself irritated—thinking ‘are we ever going



Kootenai Falls, Montana



Pam, Kootenai Falls, Montana

to get to the point where we can just ride smoothly with no trouble and little pain and everyone really enjoying the actual act of cycling? Actually my impatience is a real flaw—what am I in a hurry for? After repairing the spoke I am much placated as we rode 40 miles very easily in spite of a slight head wind.²

Now having lunch (chocolate ice cream w/ peanut butter, sardine and jack cheese sandwich with horseradish. Great Falls beer and cold pork and beans. Delicious. Now, a nap.

After nap—hours stretching on. Shadows getting long. Getting impatient to leave. Pam says she wants to finish the chapter, and David picks up a book to read. I feel utter frustration. My impatience is somewhat of a joke—“Stanley’s always wanting to go”. Maybe it’s just now, but it’s beautiful out and I really want to cycle, but no one else is interested. No one seems to care. I can’t suggest we leave again because it’s useless—I always get ignored or indulging smiles or “oh all right—in a bit”. Right at the moment, I feel like shit.

¹ We did ride by the jail where I had spent the summer of 1969. I remember feeling very apprehensive about going there, but wanted to say hello to Sheriff John Brown. During my incarceration he had become a friend and advocate, and gave me a big hug (unusual for this macho guy, I’m sure) when my time was up. I had promised to keep in touch with him, but never did. He had been voted out of office and was not there when we dropped by. I remember feeling somewhat relieved.

² This became a curse throughout the entire trip. Pam was always breaking spokes—dozen, I’m sure. I don’t remember my irritation at these events getting better—even though this was not something that was avoidable.



Pancake Lady, Bonner's Ferry, Idaho

July 24

Yesterday rode to Hilltop Tavern in Marion MT. Marion consists of the Hilltop Tavern and visa versa. Hateful old man runs the place—wouldn't let me use his sink to find the leak in the tube of the tire that had gone flat from wheeling my bike over some barded wire in the dark the night before. Lots of downhill grade into Kalispell where we find a bike shop where we bought some spokes since Pam's going through them like hotcakes. Odd that. Stuffed ourselves with yogurt, peanut butter, cream cheese, pickle and mustard sandwiches. And peaches and milk and grapes. And grapenuts.

Hot now—planning to make west Glacier by the evening but get waylaid at the Midway Grocery under a giant 7-Up Sign in the shade. Along comes a jolly looking fellow—"Bob" on a Kawasaki120, but he had scratched out the "120" because he had it bored out to a 125, and he didn't want anyone thinking he was being carted around on a mere 120cc's. He was quite bulky—Swan Lake Montana t-shirt that he got for \$1.50 because the lettering was a little smeared. He was bulging with a truck-sized spare tire. Bought us a 6-pack of beer—talked about Montana and a fellow who had cheated him out of \$5000—he was looking for him. Said, "If I find him when he wakes up in the morning to shave he won't be able to 'cause he'll be slit from ear to ear". Also, "No, really, I'm going to get him sent up the Pen where a friend

of mine will 'take care of him'—he'd better take care of him, because I'm his only chance for parole." Also, if I could just get Tricky Dick to let me and my boys into the Kremlin, We'd clean it up—loud guffaws interspersed with trips back into the Midway grocery to buy us some more beer. Getting not a little drunk now. Bob starts talking about how he knows the Governor and Mike Mansfield himself, and "half the people in Montana think I'm crazy, and the other half is afraid I'm not". Guffaw. Then some racist, sexist nigger jokes. But later expresses his concern for all those ethnic groups except "the coloreds when they get together in groups and put the whites down".

Bob gets up to buy us another 6-pack of beer. Two bikers pull up with big beautiful chopped Harleys. Bob offers them some beer. Before that, though, he offers us 20 bucks to camp at a particular spot for 3 or 4 days to "watch something". We tell him we probably would keep traveling. He insists that we're still friends and anyway he doesn't carry any guns—his "running" partner Jim carries the guns. We don't really understand but we're a little looped by now. Then these bikers—a real funny couple—fat guy and skinny guy, kid Bob about his skinny little bike. Bob becomes very quiet, and the bikers take over—one is a Gerber baby food salesman and the other—he didn't want to tell us at first—is a condom salesman... "Well, someone's got to sell them, right?" They buy everyone some more beer—it's becoming apparent that we're not going to make it to West Glacier tonight.



Midway Grocery, Kalispell, Montana



"Bob" at the Midway Grocery, near Kalispell Montana

Finally get away after taking some pictures. Sun going down—beautiful evening. Drunk riding down the road. Pull off onto an old logging road and sleep very well. This morning ride lazily into West Glacier—Mail, got my travelers checks back and my journal. Day of rest, doing of laundry now.

July 25

Spent yesterday lollygagging around, swimming and goofing off. Went to a nice naturalist talk in the evening. Exploring all the interrelationships of the life forms in Glacier Park. I'm learning how to juggle from Pam—she says I'm a pretty quick learner. Got lost in Loup "B" on our way back to Loop "C" where we thought we were going to sleep for free because some other young travelers from back east had already paid for the spot. Actually when the Ranger came around to collect, I was the only one around and I ended up paying \$3.00. Actually, though, we came out ahead because before when I went to get groceries, the lady gave me change for a 20 but I had only given her a 10. Honesty has its limits when you're on a shoestring.

This morning I woke up feeling very rested, after dreams about David's grandmother (who I've never met). While walking to the camp, I realized how good my body feels lately—I just felt really full of energy.³

Hot breakfast—3 eggs and oatmeal. Juggle some more—getting better. Finally get away. Nice riding up to past Lake McDonald.



Biker/Condom Salesman, Midway Grocery, Kalispell, Montana

Then it starts getting steep. Feeling really good though—sweat and work—but all right. Stopped to assist Pam—installed new spoke—getting eaten by black flies in the process. On up—to the hairpin—closer to the pass—and then I'm there. While not an extremely easy climb—not really tired. Felt Great. Get a man to take our pictures by the Logan Pass

sign—For Jack. Talked to a fellow on a Raleigh—from St. Louis going to Seattle—cynical sort.

Descent—bad crosswinds, but very nice. On to St. Mary's for a squatting dinner outside a supermarket—then on to an abandoned campsite in the park, on the shore of St. Mary's Lake. Unbelievably beautiful—long soft green grass—setting sun and dark grey cumulus clouds and pastel blue sky. Lie on the shore of the lake feeling smooth stones at my side—I am truly awed (David's term—he said that he felt odd, then spelled it—awed). Feels just right—sleep, breezy now off the lake—always blows the same direction because all the trees lean that way. Good night. I love you all...

July 26

Mosquitoes ate me up last night. I put Cutters all over myself and still they came on—in droves and herds. It was quite warm out but I had to zip my sleeping bag up all the way which made me sweat like a squeezed sponge. Bites everywhere—landing in my nose, and worse even—my ears. Woke Pam up several times with frantic yells. Finally

³ I remember the feeling that I had at this moment as if it was yesterday. It was a feeling of satisfaction, peace, and joy of being alive. I remember what I was wearing (blue t-shirt and black cycling shorts), which direction I was walking (west to east), what the sky looked like, and what the mountains looked like. I remember what it smelled like. This moment, so casually recorded in my journal became a touch point in my life—a moment that I still look back on as being the one moment where everything was the best that it could possibly be.



Kids, Kalispell Montana

daylight—must have slept some—Pam had moved away from the deep grass, and David down by the lake—very few mosquitoes there. Early sun just coming up—beautiful out. Jump on bike and ride to St. Mary's cafe—drink coffee and eat blueberry pancakes and write letters and postcards and wait for others to arouse themselves.

Later—long uphill grade to small pass—then fast downhill along the eastern front of Glacier.

Blueberry ice cream at a little junction west of Browning.

Talked to a cyclist from St. Louis going to Seattle. Said he took a train across the plains.

On to Browning—absolutely fantastic tailwind—coasted up hills. Museum of the Plains

Indians is great—amazing stuff—real, too. Cleaning bikes in the park in Browning. Sleep here tonight.

July 27

Later last night went over to a big tent behind the museum of the Plains Indians in Browning. Some kind of hootin' & hollerin' going on in there. Very crowded inside—a heavy Indian man

jumping and writhing with the holy spirit—an authentic tent revival. After preaching the evangelist asked everyone to come up to receive the Holy Spirit. A very long line. An individual would come up, whisper something in the pastors ear, then have the huge hands of the evangelist clamped onto their head. The pastor would close his eyes tight and jerk and shout—couldn't hear what he was saying because the all-electric band in the background was very loud with improvised jazz-like gospel rock and roll. Some of the receivers would start twitching and fall to

the ground moaning and rolling around filled with the spirit. Others would come up; palms raised to the heavens, and then quietly walk back to their seats. Some appeared permanently enraptured. Finally when the line was done, he made a long eloquent plea for money—"love gifts". He said that he was expecting a "miracle offering—not just the change in your pocket, but \$5...\$10...someone will put 50 dollars in

the offering bucket!!" Just a few people came up and the evangelist was looking real disappointed—urged the crowd to obey the lord—and hinting that they might lose the blessing they had received if they didn't contribute. Somehow the whole scene seemed a little sad—another feature of the now almost complete Americanization of the American Indian. The old ways and religion are preserved and practiced by only a few.

Evangelistic rock and roll Christianity just doesn't seem to fit very well—seem kind of pathetic compared to the stories and teachings in Seven Arrows. Just seems kind of cheap. But actually I'm no judge of religious activity. It

appeared as though everyone was having a real good time. Maybe I just think of religious activities in terms of somber church-like services with lots of formality, etc.

Slept very well, woke with the sun. Packed up and riding by 9:30. No wind into Cutbank, but a terrific tail wind from Cutbank to Shelby. Had a blowout about 5 miles out—tire ruined—1/2-inch hole—blew a piece of tire right through the tube. Must have run over something awful. Changed very fast and riding again—just flew down



David and Stanley, Eastern Montana

the road. Lunch in Shelby, then 3 miles out of Shelby notice a dust storm coming. Anticipating a tremendous tail wind, but it turns out to be a direct cross wind from the north—very hard riding—close to being blown off the road a couple of times. Really wild out—Plains beautiful in a high wind with hazy cumulus clouds marching by and everything kind of dusty. Finally make it to Dunkirk which actually is the Frontier Bar and Café. Bought some beer and the Bartender told us to watch out for coons, when he found out where we were headed. At first I thought he was talking about raccoons, but then he said “colored persons.” “They’ll kill ya,” he says. —“Not the old ones—the young ones—gets worse the farther east ya git”. Actually a pretty friendly fellow. Said he goes to Seattle now and then but can’t stand it because he feels all hemmed in—prefers the plains where he can see where everything is.

A man at the bar buys us all a beer. Wind no better—riding out of the question. Wander into the café; order a cheeseburger and fries and watch TV—Greasy café food is always something to look at—I’d like to encase some that I’ve seen in plastic as a permanent record of our culture. Kind of oval plates with pickles and parsley arranged just right. Kind of anemic looking—but interesting. Man that bought us the beer comes back and offers to put us up for the night in the bunkhouse—hot shower and da woiks. Soft bed—roof—absolutely de-luxe. Still blowing out and lightning too. Here we are in the thick of it.

July 30

The 28th bicycled a very long 90 miles to Havre. Sitting in front of the little store eating 1/2 gallon of chocolate ice cream. Store lady comes out with a pitcher of water for us. Everyone is always real interested. After a while a farmer-looking lady in a flower print dress gave us a large

sack of cherries. Talked to a farm hand from Oklahoma with an accent so thick you couldn’t cut it with a knife much less understand it. Camped in Havre City Park—drank beer that tasted vaguely like whisky. Mosquitoes very bad. Dave is fed up with riding. “felt like I was on a treadmill”. Says he’s not riding anymore across the plains—will hop a freight train. Next morning everyone feels sort of shitty. Cycle up to the college in Havre looking for show-ers—no one around. Deserted. Sat on lawn instead and practiced juggling until I was pretty good.

Turns out we’re all going to hop a freight.

Pam’s had too much sun, I feel like shit and Dave’s just fed up with flat. Doug’s flexible. Down to the freight yards—everyone there is friendly and helpful. Train coming in about one hour—sit around and jaw with all the yardmen. Most have done freight hopping before. Nice boxcar—open on both sides. Drinking beer and wine waiting for the first jolt.⁴

Flying across the plains—too fast for me, even though hopping freights is not a bad way to travel. Fantastic sunset and then the North-



David, Havre, Montana

ern Lights.⁵ Plan wither to get off in Culbertson MT or Williston ND. Train is not so obliging and doesn't stop at either place. Didn't plan on riding that far on rails. Missing a lot of country. Dark and trying to sleep on the "rattler". Train finally slows down enough to get off. David really surprises me—says he's not going to ride across any of the plains and will take the train to Grand Forks and meet us there. I just don't feel good about it; Part of the reason I agreed to take the freight was to keep us together—a compromise. But if David wants to do it it's all right-- not really my business. Slept by the tracks—wake up in strange country in N. Dakota. No more freights for me—missed 400 miles of

country and the world's longest bar and largest free swimming pool, and the place where Sitting Bull surrendered. And more. Freights too fast. Showers in the YMCA, now laundry.

Later—lunch in the park/zoo in Minot. The worse zoo I've ever seen. Tigers trying to pace in little 10x12 cells. Very depressing. Strolling through the zoo—practicing juggling—getting quite proficient. Watched the North Dakota American Legion State Championship baseball game. Great baseball—I felt really immersed in Americana. Took pictures of the trophy ceremony. Cyclist from Minot who says



Freight train to North Dakota

July 31

Visited an amazing cheese factory in Towner, ND. Huge stainless steel bins full of rubbery curds with men in white shoveling them with stainless steel shovels. Really an amazing sight. On to Rugby—the geographic center on North America. Slight crosshead wind but riding is fairly painless and enjoyable. Sleeping tonight at Churches Ferry—nice name, clear night and good cut hay field. 82 miles today.

he's going to ride to Denver. Sharing a cherry "slush" with his girl friend who considers taking it back because they didn't stir it up enough.. Small talk until Pam comes riding up the street—then he says "she's going too...got a cork and bottle washer along for ya, huh?" Couldn't even respond to that kind of shit. Sexism is really alive and well in America. Rode to Gainesville—20 miles out of Minot. Camping on a beautiful grassy hill—nice breeze and no bugs to speak of. Sun hanging on the horizon like a maraschino cherry—watching the earth turn against the sun. Felling just right here in the middle of North Dakota.

⁴ I remember this decision to hop a freight train as being difficult. David was fed up with riding—the unending flatness of the plains was really getting to him. We had received a small sponsorship from Jack's Bike Shop in Bellingham (mostly some equipment), and I knew that throwing the bikes onto a boxcar would be regarded as "cheating". I had had several great freight-hopping trips in the past, and finally enthusiastically embraced this modification of our plan. I found out later that Jack was indeed troubled by our "lack of commitment", and changed the line tracking our progress on the map in his shop to dotted lines for this segment. Shame.

⁵ Another moment that has really stuck. Sitting in the door of the boxcar, feet hanging out—speeding across the plains with the sky shimmering with curtains of pulsating color.



North Dakota State American League Champions



Camping spot, Gainesville, North Dakota

August 1

Mosquitoes terrible last night. Didn't get to sleep until very late—two dreams that kind of blended together. 1st—sitting in a very clean room with two older women, watching TV. They requested some records and popcorn so I departed on what turned out to be a perilous mission impossible type mission. Lots of people were shouting at me and I finally had to subdue a guard woman who shot “brushes” at me when I finally escaped back to the apartment where the two women were delivering the popcorn and records—shift to my sister Geo's old apartment. We're examining an old school assignment of hers—some kind of coloring book—big letters on top that say PERFECT SCORE. Somehow Geo decides to come on the trip with us—she is riding this orange Peugeot with very tiny tires. When we first start off Pam and Geo decide to ride through a lake to cool off. Lake very clear and I can see them about 2 feet beneath the surface of the water riding along the bottom. Later we came to where the road dropped off a cliff. Pam



The middle, Rugby, North Dakota

jumps off the cliff and I watch her get smaller and smaller—like the roadrunner cartoon when the coyote falls off the cliff. She lands on her feet and is completely unhurt. Later some man pushes Geo's little Peugeot down the road, and it is bouncing off things like a pinball—finally down a ravine where it gets smashed into a little orange lump against some railroad tracks. The man was Dirwood Kirby.⁶

20 miles to Devils Lake—miserable riding—only a few hours of sleep. Strong headwind, slow hard peddling and almost falling asleep. Long rest in Devil's Lake then a miraculous tail wind that took us the 27 miles to Lakota very smoothly. Wide paved shoulder—3 of us

⁶*My sister, Geo Monson, died in December of 2005, after a brief illness. When I was 16 Geo sent me the Sierra Club book “On the Loose” by Renny and Terry Russell. It is the story of two brothers who wander around the Western U.S. with little more than the clothes they wore, yet somehow emerged with a fantastic tale of adventure and enlightenment. I have no doubt that this book, and Geo's acknowledgement and support of my own thirst for adventure figured greatly in my decision to embark on this journey.*

riding abreast—a treat. On across the plains. All cultivated here, and not as wide open as Eastern Montana. Real haystacks—some of them bear remarkable resemblance to shredded wheat. Sleeping in park in Petersburg ND—glancing apprehensively about for mosquitoes.

August 3

Yesterday rode from Petersburg ND into Grand Forks. Pam was sick during the night and felt like shit in the morning. Got up with the sun and rode through sunflower fields—bad headwinds—very un-enjoyable riding. Finally into Grand Forks. Locate David and a place to stay—a campus Christian crusade house at the University of ND. No fast-talking Jesus freak hustles though. Paid 35 cents to eat dinner there. Chow Mien, white rolls, green beans and Jell-O salad. Perfectly anemic lifeless limp dinner. Saw “Scarecrows” that night and got drunk later sitting in the lounge of the Christian house—drinking Old Milwaukee Beer. Today—free watermelon at the U of ND. Lazy morning—very windy. Start riding about noon after fixing my 3rd flat of the trip. Just shitty miserable riding. The road had no shoulder, and the asphalt had a drop-off right at the edge of the lane. Very heavy traffic. Lots of semi’s etc. No place to pull over if one got too close. Terrific headwind to fight. 27 miles into Crookston—might not do any more today.



Free food, University of North Dakota

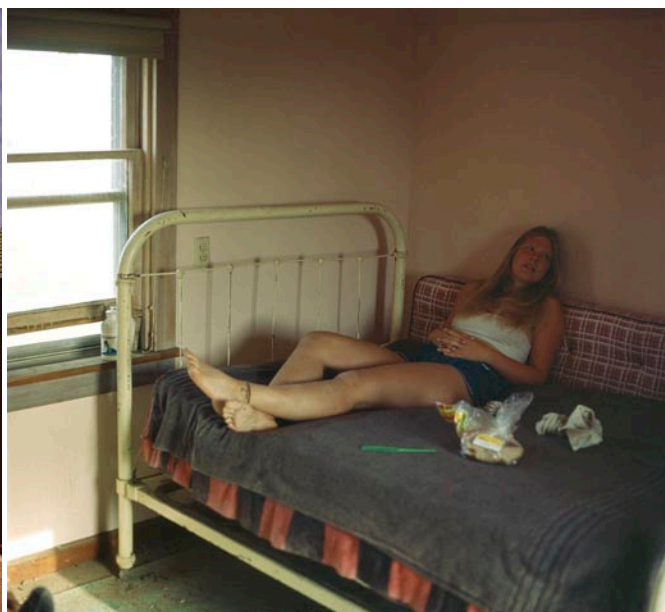
August 5

Surprise—Bob Levy is camped in Crookston. He had been trying to catch up with us for 3 days, when actually we were always behind him. Rode from Crookston to Mahanomen where it seemed as though we had gone through a time warp—back to the fifties. Went into a soda fountain shop where the banana splits were 50 cents and homemade chocolate cake was 10 cents per slice. People in the place: an enormous woman who was the cook, her hair rollers held in place with a pink scarf—aunt Jemimah style. A cop came in—just a real friendly looking man. Ordered apple pie alamode. Several old gentlemen and a teenaged waitress who seemed very bored and distracted—puberty no doubt. Quite a show. It was about the most American looking town I’ve ever seen yet.

Later went into a bar where 3 very old men in straw hats and suspenders played gin rummy. Bartender drunk—old drunk guy at the bar buys us all round and then the bartender—get drunker that I expect to—all on top of a banana split and chocolate cake. Spent a few hours in the City Park where Pam and I practice juggling and passing. Started riding—feeling sick—stomach in upheaval. Finally stop at a little intersection. David and others talking to a very suntanned man, who eventually says he has a tent, we can sleep in to escape the bugs. Very nice people—invited us all in for cake and coffee—two 6 foot marijuana plants in the back—the mother’s daughter informed us. Very damp and muggy night, rode this morning to Lake Itasca—feeling very tired and still somewhat sick, Lake Itasca is crawling with tourists families in station wagons, crying babies, etc. Not a very enjoyable spot in spite of the geographic significance—headwaters of the Mississippi river. Later rode to Lake George and watched the



Free lodging in abandoned house, LaPorte, Minnesota



show—bunch of bikers on Harleys pull up to refuel. Tough characters—also ate ice cream cones. General depression subsiding.

Finally rode to Laporte where we sat in the Green Door bar, drank beer, ate free popcorn and spaghetti, and watched Lawrence Welk on TV. Very enlightening. Pouring outside—scramble for parka, ride to Baptist church to see if we could stay there—minister says no—his congregation wouldn't approve. Tells us of a man to see—he drives us in his pickup truck 5 miles to an old abandoned house he owns. Sitting in doorway of same in fading light, contemplating bed.

August 7

Yesterday. Beautiful morning, slept very well, rode back into LaPorte, as the house we slept in was 5 miles out of the way. On into Walker where we had a breakfast of ice cream, prunes, bananas, pork and beans, cottage cheese, sardines in tomato sauce and bread. 35 more miles to Renier. On the way Bob lost it in the soft gravel on the no-

shoulder. Spilled him out into traffic where a car that was following close slammed on its brakes narrowly missing Bob's bike and his body too. Scary. Beautiful stretch of road from Renier to Hill City—green tunnel. Riding alone—very pleasant. Beer at Hill City, waiting for others. Bunch of characters at the local drive-in—very drunk—wanted to know if Pam got her “jollies off” riding on that tiny bicycle seat. Slept in the basement of the Catholic Church. Good sleep—up this morning, writing these very words over hot cakes and coffee at the local café.

Later—Just rode about 38 miles to Floodwood. Last 10 miles on highway 2 was the most dangerous piece of road we've been had yet. Really crummy because I was in a rotten mood because Pam had left Hill City ahead of everyone without telling anyone. We waited around looking for her and finally just left. It turned out that she thought we had left and was trying to catch up with us. Just a misunderstanding. Got run off the road twice and almost got hit once—really close. A grain truck was coming towards me, passing a car-trailer. I'm sure he saw me—forced me off on to the shoulder—his outside wheels missed me by a couple of feet. He was probably doing about 70. Feeling very pissed off and depressed, etc.



Harleys, St. George, Minnesota

August 8

Yesterday—decided not to ride anymore on Route 2—no use tempting fate what with all the crazy drivers behind the wheels of those grain trucks. Only other road is County route 8 which on the map shows as “unimproved gravel”. Not too bad a road starting out. Stopped to pick

a couple of pounds of wild blueberries—sweat dripping and flies buzzing. Later the road gradually deteriorates. At one point it was a mere pond several inches deep. Not wanting to get my feet wet, I tried to ride through—geared way down, spinning like mad. Almost made it but bogged down in a mud pocket. Spotted all over with little mud globs, which came flying off my wheels. Later the road improved somewhat—riding very fast fishtailing through occasional deep sand or gravel. I really dug it—scenery was really fantastic. Finally came upon a little grocery store and then blacktop road that would lead back down to highway 2 where we found out now had a good wide

shoulder. Riding past trains full of iron ore—finally into Duluth. Met up with a cyclist who lived about 80 miles north in a community of about 30 people who supported themselves by collecting wild rice and tapping maple trees. Down a long fast hill into Duluth—sun setting—smoggy big city. Across bridge into Superior, Wisconsin. Staying in a dorm at University of Wisconsin—a dollar per night per person—hot showers, clean sheets and soft bed—a real treat. Woke up this morning to pounding rain—really pouring out and looks like it might keep it up all day—really nice. We’ll spend the day here resting and cleaning bikes.



Pam replaces spokes

August 9

David says he’s fed up with cycling—doesn’t want to anymore. He decides to try to catch a grain ship going out the St. Lawrence Seaway. We parted company in the morning. Pam and I talked about it—decided that if David wasn’t enjoying himself it not only is hard on him

but hard on everyone else—so it is probably best that he is going ahead. —Sad as it is.⁷

Slept in, leisurely breakfast finally on the road by noon. Absolutely fantastic tail wind. Rode all the way to Ashland with only one short stop—just long enough to eat a drippy soft ice cream cone. Really scorching⁸—but not tiring because of the very strong wind at our backs. Rarely leave high gear. Actually feeling a dark storm front—can see the rain coming down about 10 miles back. Stay just in front of the storm and pull into Ashland dry. Staying in the basement of a dorm in Northland College.

August 10

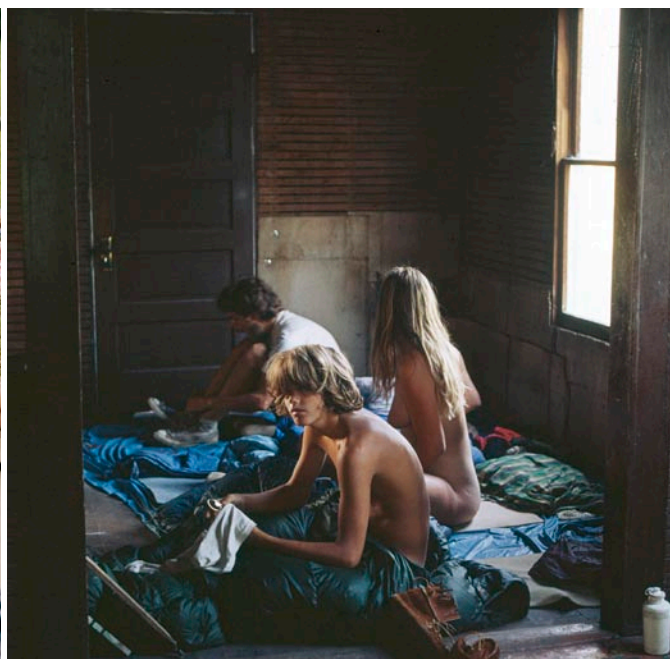
Out one month today. The man that we had earlier told we couldn’t afford \$2.00 apiece for a room came down and asked Pam and I if we wanted a room anyway—for free. Another very good sleep on a real mattress. Shower in the morning, too. Easy riding into Ironwood Mich. Where we see David’s bike propped in front of the tourist information station. Couldn’t get a grain ship, so hitched ahead to meet us—fantastic! Sat out a short rain in a sleepy little café—later very easy

⁷ David was fed up. I remember him saying that it was not just the grind of riding, but that he missed his girlfriend, Maria Junco. Maria and David had been together for several years, and being apart for so long was really messing with David’s mood—I’m sure it didn’t help that Pam was with me--- every night-- and our intimacy was not something that we could keep private, given the circumstances. When we parted, I really did not think that we would see him again until we returned to Bellingham.

⁸ Scorching means riding like hell



David



Church basement, Champion, Minnesota

riding with good tailwind—87 miles today and don't feel tired at all. Dinner of baked beans, cream cheese, tomatoes, cabbage, peanut butter, chocolate, rye bread, prunes and cheddar cheese all combined in various sandwiches and globbed together with one another. Finding that cold food is just fine—not missing the heat as much as anticipated.

August 12

Not real enjoyable cycling yesterday. Kind of a gloomy overcast day. Everyone very tired from the previous almost sleepless night because of the mosquitoes. Couldn't find a place to stay in Michagamme, so we rode on to Champion where we asked around—finally David asked the Catholic Father if we could stay in the basement of his church. Sure—he then invites us in for rum and cokes, a delicious steak dinner with salad and garlic bread, then coffee and a couple of hours of

good conversation. Really enjoyable. Actually he said it was just as much of a treat for him, since he usually eats alone. Slept really well, having dreams that I was a biologist who discovered that orange jelly mushrooms make one younger. This morning sitting on the steps of the Catholic Church in the hot sun felling very nice.

August 14

Rest stop today—in Sault Ste Marie. On the 12th we rode into Marquette—heavy traffic and no shoulder to ride on. Getting very frustrated. Decide to ride on ahead to Sault Ste Marie myself. Get some money from Dave—feels very nice to ride alone for a change. In Au Train Pam catches up, having hitched. Then Dave and Doug show, also having hitched, so we are all together again. Sleeping on the beach after some nice folks brought us a pot of fine potato soup and whole-

wheat muffins. They say they were “extras”. Sleep all right and wake up with the sun. Big orange ball as Pam jumps out of her sleeping bag and into Lake Superior. Dave and I decide to ride to Soo all in one day—125 miles. After fueling up with a short stack and coffee, we really ride—drafting each other. Only 4 stops—and only feel tired a couple of times. Crotch no problem. Last 5 miles into Soo it all caught up with us—had to stop at a fruit stand because we felt so spaced out and weak, Rejuvenated by peaches and a perfect cantaloupe, we rode on and find Doug, who had hitched. Looked for Pam for a while then drank some beer and put up the tarp in the city park—just in time to get under before it opened up and rained all night. Very damp and sticky sleeping bad—mosquitoes made it less than ideal. A good dream, though—bicycling with Dave L. and Jill—ran into some really ugly pig creatures that had little blue outfits and red bow ties and could speak English. This morning—wandered around town and found Pam in a park on the west side.

August 17

Spent two days in Soo. Only intended to spend one, but took longer for folks to wire money. Spent 15th in park playing Frisbee with a long-haired deaf mute. Later found 3 perfect bananas in the garbage can and a chocolate bar just lying on the street—everything’s free! Went back to the same park where we were staying before, Next morning crossed into Canada—no hassles at customs. Asked if we all had ID, but didn’t ask to see it. Hung around Soo, Ont. for a while. At the grocery store marveling at the French on every label. Watched the Canadian Navy Boy’s Club Marching Band march around the parking lot. Canada is really different. People look different and talk different. No familiar brand names.. In the grocery store we found cashew pecan peanut butter for the same price as regular peanut butter. Rode on to Thes-



Camping on pier, Thessalons, Ontario



Early start, Spanish, Ontario

salons, Ont. where we stayed at an old pier that also turned out to be the local hangout. Talked to some young kids—asked them if they were delinquents. Nope, “we’re dink-links”, Butch, Reg, and Blackie. One was commenting on the mentality of another—“He’s simple”. No one in the states would say that. Slept on the end of the concrete pier—good night. Dreamt I was having an incestuous relationship with my mother. I ended up feeling guilty after all my brothers found out.

Good sunrise—jumped into Lake Huron—water just right. Hazy, so sun is a big red ball—dripping wet but feeling warm. Rode to Blind River where we ate a 3 hour lunch—felt too full. Later on to Spanish where we are now. Sitting n the Catholic Church, hoping that no one comes to kick us out, because the mosquitoes are very bad outside. Just got back from the hotel, which was the only place to buy beer. Very tight liquor laws here. Only beer store closed at six. Paid \$1.95 for 3 bottles of ale. Later asked the barmaid what the alcohol content was—2%! Delicious though. Everyone’s sore and tired, and only 61 miles today.

August 19

Yesterday awoke with a huge welt and two fang marks about 1/8” apart on my chest. Apparently a very large spider. Beautiful sunrise—we got away very early as we didn’t want to get found in the church. Cool and misty out. Had breakfast near a café, and moved on when the owner told us we were a bad advertisement. Traffic beginning to get very bad. Lots of large trucks and only very soft gravel on the shoulder. Finally a Provincial Police car pulled us over and told us that there had been some calls, and that we would have to pull over for the trucks. Very friendly fellow. Tomato sandwiches for lunch—thunder ahead. Riding after lunch into very dark clouds—soon thunder and lightening. Coming into Sudbury—huge industrial horizon—smoke stacks and huge nickel smelters and factories—crashing thunder and lightening and rain—really wild out. Just kept riding through it all—soaked but feeling fantastic—really enjoyable cruising through that industrial jungle on the freeway with all the cosmic concert above our heads.

In Sudbury talked to a bike shop, then watched a peewee league lacrosse tournament in the Sudbury arena. Really exciting, but only caught the tail end. Later—to the beer store where we picked up a 6 pack of Guinness and some Labatts Pilsner—9% alcohol. Hostel 5 miles out of town—leave too late—gets dark before we’re there, But 50 cents per night for a bed and two meals. Very dangerous riding- busy

highway—pitch black and only 2 lights. Very tired—long pointless forms to fill out. Dinner of Campbell's Cream of mushroom soup and white bread with cheese whiz. Terrible. Dreamt that Dave and I were at a high school dance—went out onto the dance floor, but the song turned out to be a slow one—and we were the only ones on the floor. Crowded bleachers all around. Not wanting to look un-cool, we started doing a slow ballet, passing a juggling ball back and forth. Later we went to Bermuda.

Rode this morning (after breakfast at the Hostel of sticky oatmeal, white bread with cheese whiz and coffee) to a nice little rocky spot between towns where we're having lunch. Everyone's kind of edgy and getting on each other's nerves. Actually more humorous than anything else. Hope to make it to North Bay today. Feeling lazy. Might not.

August 20

Yesterday had a race against the dark to North Bay. Pam broke a spoke on the cluster side, so we wanted to make it to North Bay—also had a good hostel there. On the way in—very close call with a car—passing another car coming towards us. Didn't see him until he was right on us. Probably doing 70-80 mph and missed my outside leg by no more than 3 inches. Closest I've ever come to death, I think. On into North Bay. Cram bikes into a van for a ride to the Hostel, after free donuts at the drop-in center in town. Cribbage, chicken soup, peanut butter sans with coffee—cold shower and good sleep in a room with 20 other men—snoring. Breakfast is good—orange juice, cereal, hash browns, and eggs, P.B.&J—cheap at only 50 cents per night.

We'll be staying at more hostels. The people are mostly freaks traveling. Not many Americans, though. Canadians and Europeans, Sometimes sort of depressing. One woman at the hostel talking about how she can't wait to get home to start "messing up"—hitting the needle in other words. One fat fellow responding to a request for 50 cents to stay at the hostel—"shit man, I'm on the road, I ain't got no money". Later this morning, after breakfast someone tried to wake him up and couldn't.



Pam and David, Sunset

Pam's rear wheel was sick, so she took the van back into town. We rode in with a Japanese fellow who took a train across Siberia from Tokyo, then flew to NYC where he worked in a Japanese restaurant for 6 months, bought a bicycle and is now cycling across Canada. His plan? Take a bus from Vancouver to California, then into Mexico and to South America. After that—back to Europe and then overland to India, then back to Japan. A real jolly sort, though I had trouble understanding him at times.

Found Pam in a bicycle/key shop. The place looked a mess, but I'm sure the proprietor knew exactly where everything was. Feeling very pooped. Started riding out—broke derailleur cable

and had lunch after only 10 miles—bad head wind. Feels like we've ridden 30. Ride into Mattawa and decide to call it a day—Pam's rear is developing boils and blisters, Riding ceases to be fun. I keep telling myself that we don't have much more to go—probably of the way there. Riding is just becoming routine and unexciting—but not bad when stopped. I wish I could get into it a little more. Drank some Canadian ale—talked about starting to be a little thriftier. Seems we've spent \$80 in the last 5 days. Sleeping under a roof in a park, Mosquitoes here in numbers.



Canadian Man, Sudbury, Ontario

August 22

Yesterday got caught in a rainstorm between Mattawa and Deux Rivières. Sat it out in an abandoned church, where we talked to a man who had been married there 30 years before. Then they condemned it as a church and turned it into a dance hall—then condemned it altogether. Took nap, then haggled over whether or not we should ride some more or not. I wanted to go on, since the rain had stopped and there seemed to be a tailwind. Hemmed and hawed—nobody seemed to be able to make up his or her minds—absolutely frustrating to me. Finally we decide to go—everyone feeling rather soggy, inside and out. Made it to Stonecliff, where we asked the shopkeeper if there was anywhere to stay—“sure”, he said, “my own little cottage 8 miles up the road.” Arrive in the dark, and eat gallon of chocolate ice cream. Sleep very soundly and awake to beautiful blue skies. Wrestled around a while, playing leech in our sleeping bags. Ride into Deep River via a really good stiff tail wind. Breakfast with a new one—orange Marmalade. Rode the 29 miles into Pembroke in about 1- hours—terrific tailwind—in high gear—even up hills.

Lunch here now. Here’s something I just did: throw a date into the peanut butter jar, fish it out with a spoon, getting a good gob of peanut butter along with, then pop the whole shebang into your mouth.

Another fucking 2-hour stop—and only 12 more miles. Incredible—a day with a really unbelievable tail wind and we don’t take advantage of it—only 58 miles today. I feel a little frustrated. Get chips from a little wagon in Camden. Some friendly teenagers come up and

give us 1/3 bottle of Canadian club. Asked to sleep in the basement of the Presbyterian Church—we interrupted choir practice. Pastor was unfriendly. Nope, he says—tells us we’re unprepared because we don’t have a tent. Slept in the park—avoiding the \$2.00 charge.

August 23



Morning, Camden, Ontario

Woke up this morning to a fantastic sunrise—mist on the lake—everything damp. I’m the first up—to take pictures of the sleepy heads and sunrise. Standard breakfast of peanut butter—straight. After breakfast in Portage de Fort in Quebec, we ride 12 miles and sit out a mild rainstorm. The country here is unbelievably beautiful. We are taking the road on the Quebec side of the Ottawa River—much less traffic. Rolling tree lined road with little towns—all with stone churches with very tall steeples. Pam breaks another spoke on the freewheel side and punctures her tire all at the same time. Ride on with good tail wind into Hull, then across the

bridge into Ottawa. Puzzling over maps when a fuzzyheaded cyclist comes by and tells us that he is going over to near the hostel at Carlton University. Turns out he is a real scorcher with a fancy sew-up bike. We’re all real tired, but keep up with him. Hostel is in a gym at the university—huge room filled with people hanging about—travelers. Showers. Tired.



Stanley (zip up)

August 25

Spent yesterday hanging around Ottawa. There is a great public market with everything very inexpensive. Cheese for .079 per pound. Huge cukes 3 for a quarter. Stuff ourselves properly—also really good dark heavy pumpernickel bread. Then on to the National Gallery—6 floors of art—too much to see at once, but some fantastic things. Later to a small park with some good Canadian ale. Woman with a baby comes over and offers us a place to stay. Spent the evening getting rather drunk and watching a fuzzy B & W TV. She looked as if she was quite poor, but very generous. It's always the poor people who are the most generous. My lack of desire to have children was reaffirmed—what a full time job!



David, dialing for dollars

September 2

Haven't written for about a week. I got involved reading Mars, We Love You—great science fiction stories about Mars. I read at every spare moment. Spent another day in Ottawa, finally left and went to a Renaissance fair about 35 miles towards Montreal. \$2.50 to get in, but we only had to pay a dollar because it was late in the day. Would have felt ripped off if we had paid \$2.50, even though we did feast on free corn on the cob and local plums. Rode the next day through a really great stretch of Québec countryside—little farming communities with churches with tall steeples—rolling windy road with few cars. Spent the night in Oka—under a schoolhouse overhang watching the most incredible thunderstorm. A couple of times lightning struck very close and the thunder shook the ground. A friendly cop took our names and wished us a pleasant night.



David in Burlington, Vermont



Apple picking, Shorham, Vermont

The next morning on to Montreal where we spent 2 days—huge city—not really very pleasant. Went to an incredible Jewish bakery and got some great dark, heavy chewy pumpernickel bread. Slept in the park both nights and slept under some stairs at McGill University. Douglas flew home the next day and we rode out of the city.⁹

The next day made inquiries at a Christian monastery about picking apples. They had a huge orchard, but apples wouldn't be ready for another week and a half. We had a good talk with some of the brothers and monks—also a free lunch. Rode across the border—back in the USA—to Swanton, where we spent the night in a roadside pull-off. Thunder and lightning during the night, so we packed everything up to look for shelter—half asleep—then noticed that the wind was blowing the storm away from us. Back to sleep with very bad mosquitoes. In the morning headed for Burlington VT. I scorched the last 15 miles because the post office was due to close at noon—I just made it with 2 minutes to spare—picked up mail and a load of granola.

Called the Marvins—friends of dad's—at first Mrs. Marvin didn't know who I was. Sounded kind of goofy. She invited us out—her house is a beautiful 17th century house that was transported

to Vermont from N.H board by board. Hundreds of antiques in the place. Alice Marvin very nice—tended to repeat herself a lot. Later her son informed us that his mother was a chronic alcoholic, and well, she did seem a little confusing at times. She chain-smoked True cigarettes and talked and talked. Good sleep and good coffee this morning. It felt good to leave that house somehow. I felt a little uncomfortable there.

Now sitting at a gas station while Pam replaces five more broken spokes and overhauls her hub. Found out that at least one apple grower imports all of his pickers from Jamaica—to insure that they will stay all season and pick. We'll go to the state employment office tomorrow to find out about jobs—getting low on money.

September 4

My birthday today. Yesterday got talking to a fellow— took us to some friends of his in Burlington and got invited to spend the night. Spaghetti dinner and late night hike to a remote rocky beach on Lake Champlain for a swim. Water very dark and cool—felt absolutely fantastic. Slept well—

⁹ Doug was furious. He had desperately wanted to finish the trip, but our parents insisted that he return home for the start of school. We were only about one week from the coast, but we were out of money and needed to find farm work to keep going—this would have put him back in school two weeks late. While the trip brought Doug and I closer together, I remember feeling somewhat relieved to shed my “babysitter” role. Not that Doug needed a babysitter—at age 14 this trip was an amazing accomplishment for him. The only problem I can remember that Doug had was getting enough to eat—he was a bottomless pit, but rarely complained about anything else.



Angry Woman, Boston Train Station

Dave feels sick in the morning—has the flu—pukes and spends the whole day lying down, too weak to do anything. Pam and I spent the whole day just hanging around these folk's apartment. Hot and humid—made love in the afternoon and emptied all pores of quarts of sweat—slippery! Took cold shower and emerged feeling just like I'd walked into a sauna.

Fruit salad and chili for dinner—delicious. Dave feels almost fine this morning. Employment office has no encouraging news about apple picking. Lots of other jobs listed, but we have no place to stay. Decide to go south tomorrow to inquire after growers. Spending today having a birthday—beer in the park—might catch a movie tonight. Dave calls his folks today and they're sending \$150 to tide us over until we can find work.

September 6

Yesterday chased around looking for picking work in Addison County. No luck at all. All these wild rumors about lots of jobs are slowly dissolving. Turns out it's a bad year—only about crop. Also, most of the growers hire only Jamaicans—because they are such good pickers. In 6 weeks a Jamaican can make as much as he could make in a year in Jamaica.

Extremely hot and humid yesterday—took a swim in Lake Champlain and had some strong homesick flashes. Beach was entirely composed of good skipping rocks. Rode into Bridgeport where we talked to some local artists—a painter and a glass blower. Sat on their porch and drank beer until very late. Slept on the floor of their house and got treated to eggs, toast and tea in the morning—also honey that tasted like apples.

This morning got a ride to Shorham in their pick-up truck—real nice considering that it's raining. Went to the apple Co-op here. The fellow in the office called an orchard and we have a job picking up "drops"—apples blown down by the wind. Only will last for a few days, but we'll probably make a hundred or so.



End of Journal

I don't remember why I stopped writing at this point. We were all tired and anxious to get to the coast. My memories of the apple picking are still strong. We shared the bunkhouse with several Jamaican pickers—they were exotic to me—they were very friendly and the fastest pickers.

This is pre-U.S. Reggae invasion, and they played the most unusual music on their tape player. I was amazed by the differences in Washington apple picking (which I had done for spending money several times while in college) and East coast apples. In Vermont it was all Macintosh—and they were far superior to the Washington staple (Delicious). We earned enough in our eight days in Shorham to finish the trip. We left on September 15, taking eight days to traverse the Appalachian Mountains. I remember this segment as the most strenuous cycling—the roads were insanely steep going over the mountains. We finally reached the Atlantic Ocean and my Uncle Abbot and Aunt Kathleen's house in Booth Bay Harbor, Maine on September 21st. My sense of accomplishment and joy were consuming, but I remember David being in a funk—with a "what's the big deal" attitude. We were sitting in a little café, with a view of the saltwater, and I wanted to punch him.



My aunt and uncle were quite old at the time, and unaccustomed to three scruffy youngsters. They were both steeped in New England propriety, but were both amazing people. My uncle was Deputy Director of the CIA for many years—appointed by Eisenhower, and a colleague of Dulles. I had been reading the Vietnam War tome "Fire in the Lake" by Frances FitzGerald, and was quite strident in my opposition to the war in Vietnam. I expected to argue with him, but he surprised me by supporting my view. I remember Abbot making us scrambled eggs on our final morning—it seemed like they took forever (he was cooking them in a double boiler). When he sensed my impatience, he said, "Anyone who takes less than 20 minutes to cook an egg is a barbarian!"



Epilogue

Abbot drove us to Portland, Maine where we caught a train to Boston, and then on to New York City. Pam had a friend who was doing a conscientious objector service at the New York School for the Blind in the Bronx. We stayed there for a couple of nights, then David found a drive-away car destined for Seattle, and we parted company. Pam and I still had some adventure left in us, I think partially because the prospect of continuing with just the two of us was appealing. We found a drive-away car destined for Miami Beach, Florida. Neither of us had ever been to the south, so we jumped at the chance. Never mind that when we arrived there we were completely out of money.

After re-assembling our bikes, we talked our way into staying for a few days in a University dorm in Coconut Grove. We met some seemingly nice people—until one of them had an encounter with a black student. His “fuck the niggers” diatribe was a shock to me. We were in the south.

We were both lucky to get jobs in the same drug store—on Arthur Godfery Blvd. in Miami Beach. It was run by a couple of Italians, who

couldn’t believe that there were two smart, white, young adults who would want to spend days stocking shelves and unloading trucks. With the job in hand, we rented a little apartment in a seaside hotel. It had a little black and white TV, which delivered the news of Spiro Agnew’s resignation. We celebrated.

I started a photography project in Miami Beach—now only shooting black and white film. I approached the elderly—mostly old Jews from the Northeast—and asked to take their pictures. I had promised to send prints at some point, but never followed through. The resulting portraits were disturbing to me when I finally printed them upon my return to Bellingham.

At some point it dawned on me that the drug store that we were working for was involved in a lot of illegal activity. We would receive truckloads of products that had already been labeled with prices. It was often our job to remove the old price and attach our new prices. I finally figured out that much of the merchandise coming into the store was probably from hijacked trucks, and the Italian ancestry of our employers took on new meaning.

When Pam and I had finally earned enough for plane fare home, we gave notice. Our employer begged us to stay—offering a higher salary and hints of extravagant bonuses. We declined, making it back to Seattle in November.

Today

I saw David last summer for the first time in about 15 years. He is still living in Bellingham, and is married with two beautiful daughters. He seemed very much the same to me. We talked about the bike trip, and he still had a photograph that I had given him—of himself in Burlington VT—stroking his beard with the ubiquitous peanut butter jar strapped to his panniers. I think that the germs of this project came out of our conversation that day—we had been talking about Parker and his difficulties, and a light bulb switched on in my head.

I lost track of Pam, although I will try to locate her and send her a copy of this. We were together for a while after the trip, but she dumped me for Pete Templeton, and moved to Alaska. David thinks that she is living in North Dakota now (maybe on our route!).

Doug moved to Bellingham after the trip, and even lived with me for a time. When I moved to Seattle in 1982, he stayed and became part of the rather active counterculture community there. His dependence on alcohol eventually took a tremendous toll on Doug, and he still struggles today. However he has been sober for a while now and is living in Napa, California where he works as a pressman at a printing company.

I made a career of photography and art. I had my own company in Seattle for 13 years, and then worked for a rock and roll

museum in Seattle (Experience Music Project). I’ve been married twice and divorced twice. The first marriage produced my son Parker and daughter Madeline, and they are both beautiful, smart, talented people. I currently live in Los Angeles where I work in a management position at the J. Paul Getty Museum.

It is obvious to me that this trip was life-changing for me, but it has taken me 33 years to realize this. What is not clear to me is just exactly what happened to me. My journal is rife with descriptions of what happened on this journey, but little revelation of why or how my experiences were affecting me. The trip is somewhat of a “black box”—I started this trip with a very different sensibility than the one I emerged with, but what happened in the middle seems to be masked by the experiences themselves. The journal revels in the moment, and is a record of events and sensations. Maybe I found a way to substitute the intensity of the drug experience for the thrill and discovery of a real adventure.

While I undertook this reminiscence out of a desire to help my children, I have benefited the most. I have realized that decisions made while young can nudge one’s direction only slightly in the beginning, but this diversion gets compounded with time and distance from the start—until one day you are just where you want to be. Until the next nudge.

Stanley Smith
12/26/2006



Miami Beach photos

Mileage

Date	From	To	Miles	Total
10-Jul-73	Bellingham, WA	Marblemount, WA	75	75
11-Jul-73	Marblemount, WA	Rainy Pass, WA	52	127
12-Jul-73	Rainy Pass, WA	Methow, WA	71	198
13-Jul-73	Methow, WA	Grand Coulee, WA	66	264
14-Jul-73	Grand Coulee, WA	Davenport, WA	49	313
15-Jul-73	Davenport, WA	St. John, WA	68	381
16-Jul-73	St. John, WA	Pullman, WA	40	421
17-Jul-73	Rest		0	421
18-Jul-73	Pullman, WA	Worley, ID	66	487
19-Jul-73	Worley, ID	Athol, ID	46	533
20-Jul-73	Athol, ID	Bonniers Ferry, ID	52	585
21-Jul-73	Bonniers Ferry, ID	Libby, MT	50	635
22-Jul-73	Libby, MT	Marion, MT	68	703
23-Jul-73	Marion, MT	Hungry Horse, MT	45	748
24-Jul-73	Hungry Horse, MT	West Glecier, MT	10	758
25-Jul-73	West Glecier, MT	St. Marys, MT	53	811
26-Jul-73	St. Marys, MT	Browning, MT	32	843
27-Jul-73	Browning, MT	Dunkirk, MT	66	909
28-Jul-73	Dunkirk, MT	Havre, MT	90	999
29-Jul-73	Havre, MT	Minot, ND	430	1429
30-Jul-73	Minot, ND	Granville, ND	24	145
31-Jul-73	Granville, ND	Churches Ferry, ND	82	1535
01-Aug-73	Churches Ferry, ND	Petersberg, ND	68	1603
02-Aug-73	Petersberg, ND	Grand Forks, ND	47	1650
03-Aug-73	Grand Forks, ND	Crookston MN	27	1677
04-Aug-73	Crookston MN	Nay-Tah-Wash, MN	65	1742
05-Aug-73	Nay-Tah-Wash, MN	Laporte, MN	53	1795
06-Aug-73	Laporte, MN	Hill City, MN	72	1867
07-Aug-73	Hill City, MN	Superior, WN	80	1947
08-Aug-73	Rest		0	1947
09-Aug-73	Superior, WN	Ashland, WN	65	2012
10-Aug-73	Ashland, WN	Ewen, MN	87	2099
11-Aug-73	Ewen, MN	Champion, MN	70	2169
12-Aug-73	Champion, MN	Christmas MN	75	2244
13-Aug-73	Christmas MN	Sault Ste Marie, MN	125	2369
14-Aug-73	Rest		0	2369

15-Aug-73	Rest		0	2369
16-Aug-73	Sault Ste Marie, MN	Thesalons, Ont.	53	2422
17-Aug-73	Thesalons, Ont.	Spanish, Ont.	61	248
18-Aug-73	Spanish, Ont.	Sudbury, Ont.	77	2560
19-Aug-73	Sudbury, Ont.	North Bay, Ont.	83	2643
20-Aug-73	North Bay, Ont.	Mattawa, Ont.	39	2682
21-Aug-73	Mattawa, Ont.	Yates Cottage, Ont.	52	2734
22-Aug-73	Yates Cottage, Ont.	Cabdon, Ont.	58	2792
23-Aug-73	Cabdon, Ont.	Ottawa, Ont.	70	2862
24-Aug-73	Rest		0	2862
25-Aug-73	Rest		0	2862
26-Aug-73	Ottawa, Ont.	Renaissance Fair	35	2897
27-Aug-73	Renaissance Fair	Oka, Qbe.	60	2957
28-Aug-73	Oka, Qbe.	Montreal, Qbe.	30	2987
29-Aug-73	Rest		0	2987
30-Aug-73	Montreal, Qbe.	Chambly, Qbe.	12	2999
31-Aug-73	Chambly, Qbe.	Swanton, VT	60	3059
01-Sep-73	Swanton, VT	Burlington, VT	37	3096
02-Sep-73	Rest		0	3096
03-Sep-73	Rest		0	3096
04-Sep-73	Rest		0	3096
05-Sep-73	Burlington, VT	Bridgeport, VT	35	3131
06-Sep-73	Bridgeport, VT	Shorham, VT	6	3137
07-Sep-73	Rest (apple picking)		0	3137
08-Sep-73	Rest (apple picking)		0	3137
09-Sep-73	Rest (apple picking)		0	3137
10-Sep-73	Rest (apple picking)		0	3137
11-Sep-73	Rest (apple picking)		0	3137
12-Sep-73	Rest (apple picking)		0	3137
13-Sep-73	Rest (apple picking)		0	3137
14-Sep-73	Rest (apple picking)		0	3137
15-Sep-73	Shorham, CN	Middlebury, CN	16	3153
16-Sep-73	Middlebury, CN	Rochesteer, CN	37	3190
17-Sep-73	Rochesteer, CN	Lyme, VT	52	3242
18-Sep-73	Lyme, VT	Orfordville, NH	10	3252
19-Sep-73	Orfordville, NH	Lincoln, NH	34	3286
20-Sep-73	Lincoln, NH	Bridgton, ME	59	3345
21-Sep-73	Bridgton, ME	Richmond, ME	40	3385
22-Sep-73	Richmond, ME	Boothbay, ME	30	3415



