

The Canada Odyssey, April 10 – June 9, 1969

This story is included with my stories of backpacking experiences, because of a major mishap on Vancouver Island in British Columbia. What happened there resulted in my friend and I having to hitch-hike, with all of our clothing and essentials in our backpacks, from a little outpost on the far western shore of Vancouver Island, all the way home to Berkeley, a distance of over 1,100 miles. This is, for me, an important “coming of age” story; it is an appropriate place to begin telling you about my backpacking adventures.

Biographical Background

Classes for the Winter Quarter at UC Berkeley in 1969 were just about to begin, when I returned to the fraternity house after visiting family for Christmas. I turned 20 that winter, and I was in my junior year at Berkeley, studying education and sociology. While at home in Halcyon for the holidays I also went out a few times with a girl who was really fun to be with. Sue Richardson had attended the same high school that I did, although in high school we didn't socialize; we hung out with different groups.

Sue and her mother maintained a residence in Halcyon for part of the year, and most of the time lived in Oregon. Together they ran a Christmas tree farm business. They owned some forested property in southern Oregon, and they would harvest the Christmas trees there and bring them down to California to sell. One of their markets was the Arroyo Grande area. Sue returned to Oregon once the holiday season was over, and then turned around a month later to come visit me in Berkeley for a few days. That visit would totally change my life.

In Berkeley that winter, the political tension was mounting day by day. The Vietnam War was raging, and there were protests on campus or near campus on a regular basis. These would be met by the law enforcement community with heavy handed tactics. Often, I would get side-tracked from my studies by the political turmoil, getting into lively conversation with my fraternity brothers about it, or attending one protest or another on or near campus.

Why Visit Canada?

My friends and I looked into various ways to avoid the military draft. There were nonprofit organizations in Berkeley helping young men to avoid the draft, including how to apply for Conscientious Objector status. For the time being we were safe from being called up because we had student deferments. But we had only two more years of this protected status before we would have to make a life changing choice. We also talked about moving to Canada.

My best friend Eric and I decided that it might help if we actually went to Canada to see what it was like. We decided to take the Spring Quarter off for our travels, then return to school to attend the Summer Quarter. We had no particular destination in mind. We thought we could simply drive to Canada, stay for a few weeks and “look around” and get to know people. Along the way we would also take in the beauty of the north coast state and national parks.

Eric's father purchased for him a brand new, white Ford Econoline van to use for our trip, and for Eric to have to use at school after we returned. It was perfect for our purposes. It was the type of van normally used for deliveries or contractors' equipment. The van had only two seats, in the front, and no side panel windows. We were able to stow enough gear in the van for all types of occasions that we could foresee. We planned to camp out each night, and cook our meals next to the van.

Our Pursuit of Educational Reform

We were both keenly interested in educational reform, so we decided that we would make our trip more purposeful by looking for and investigating alternative education programs or institutions advocating reform. We wanted to actually visit the schools; we wanted to interview educational leaders. We intended to write something about what we would learn. I kept a journal of what we did along the way, including people we talked with, and places we visited.

When our trip was over, and we had returned to Berkeley, I used my account of this trip for one of my classes. I wrote a lengthy paper, "Education for the Discovery of the Unconscious." Part One of the paper was "A Background of Existential Psychology for Education." Part Two was "In Search for Community" and was completely based upon our travels north, expounding upon what we learned about alternative education programs.

The Story – Travel by Van

April 10-14 – Oceano Beach and a Local High School

Eric and I began our trip by visiting my home in Halcyon, near Arroyo Grande. One day we drove the van down on the beach heading southward from the *Oceano Dunes* ramp. I had to explain to Eric how to drive on the hard sand, and how to avoid getting stuck in the wet sand or the soft sand. Growing up near this beach I had witnessed many vehicles stuck in the sand and lost to the sea, because of careless driving.

On our last day in the area, we visited Righetti High School, near Santa Maria, and wrote extensive notes about their Individualized Learning Program (ILP), an alternative pathway through high school for about a fourth of their student body. At the core of the ILP were Learning Activity Packages.¹ From interviews with teachers who worked in this program we discovered that all of them were very excited about their ability to reach their students with these new methods. They often said that their education was more meaningful.

¹ For more detail, please see Part Two of my paper "Education for the Discovery of the Unconscious."

April 14-17 – California North Coast

We headed north with stops in Berkeley, Lodi (Eric's home), Clear Lake, then up the coast via Highway 1 to Fort Bragg. While there we visited the Mendocino Free School, and we camped out at ***MacKerracher State Beach***, now a marine sanctuary.

Eric and I had earlier agreed that we would enhance the next day's adventure with some psychedelics that we bought along with us.² At the south end of the beach there was a large outcropping of huge rocks, jutting out into the rough surf. The rocks were covered with dozens of sea lions. I was determined to get as close to the sea lions as possible, trying to climb onto the rocks without disturbing them. I was thoroughly enjoying the sun, the surf and the animals. I used a large tube of seaweed as a horn, attempting to get their attention. Later I told Eric how I had been communicating with them.

April 17-21 – Forests of Southern Oregon

On Thursday the 17th we drove all day, nearly three hundred miles from Fort Bragg to Wilderville, a small town in southern Oregon where Sue Richardson lived. We met up briefly, and she told us she would be available to hang out with us on the weekend. So, we continued on, in search of a nice place to camp for a few nights.

We ventured east on Old Fish Hatchery Rd, then onto Highway 238 for several miles following the ***Applegate River***. Just before arriving at our destination, Jackson Campground, we came to an incredible, old covered bridge spanning the river. This was the ***McKee Bridge***, which had been taken out of service in 1956. It was quite picturesque.³

We set aside the whole day Friday for rest and reflection, and on Saturday we drove back to Sue's. They had cleaned up an old rustic cabin on their property for us to sleep in at night. That day the three of us went horseback riding in a nearby forest. We also went for a hike through a large tract of Christmas trees that Sue and her mother cultivated for a living.

On Sunday Sue guided us out to the town of Takilma and the ***Illinois Valley***, only about a half hour's drive south. The land was exceptionally beautiful: plush greenery, plentiful water, impressive forests. She told us that there were many people, young and old, homesteading in the more isolated areas of the valley, which included a few communes. She promised to introduce us to a person who could give us a tour.

Eric and I spent the whole day Monday at Lake Selmac, fishing and resting, and that night we camped there. This quiet little lake is off Highway 199 near the town of Selma, just south of Wilderville.

² One of my fraternity friends had an older brother who worked in the chemistry lab at UC Berkeley. In his spare time, he manufactured a popular hallucinogenic in his lab. He provided us with several capsules of it for our trip.

³ Today one can find collections of great photos of it on the internet.

April 22 – The People of the Illinois Valley – “Getting Back to Nature”

On Tuesday we toured through Takilma and the Illinois Valley with Sue’s friend Joe Chankin. Here’s what I wrote in my journal about the valley and its residents.

There are about 200 people in the small valley, 99% are married or “mates.” There are about three or four communes in the hills, more like large families. Most of the people live in small cabins, generally built by themselves. They have dug their own wells and planted gardens as well. A number of people, especially in the communes, live on old mining claims, or on cheaply rented land from one of the more permanent “settlers.” The majority of people have been living there for about a year or two, now, just beginning to settle; just coming together in communes, or just finishing houses; some have just spent their first winter there.

The most intriguing thing of this valley is the way the people were seemingly drawn at this particular time from different parts of the country to settle there. The beauty is that they all possess similar attitudes toward life and they express basic human values. Very popular is [East] Indian thought and religion, and their beliefs are certainly non-traditional. In fact, they are generally all anti-traditional, disavowing many aspects of western society in favor of Eastern methods of thought and [explanations of] existence.

Eric filled two pages in his journal with notes attempting to describe the people of Takilma.

We have the beautiful people of Takilma – All have come to this picture book Oregon valley as the end result of a life searching to find inner happiness. These are generally people both of wide experience and high levels of education. Gary left a \$25,000/year job to extricate himself and his family from the rat race that gave very little meaning to their lives. Bill is perhaps the youngest homesteader in Takilma. He and Donna left the University of New Mexico in search of a happier life, free of the superficial frustrations.

Denny came to the Illinois Valley ten years ago to plant his father’s 180 acres and to find his place in God’s grand creation. ... As the years passed his search became inwardly oriented. The turned-on long-hairs who came to this valley brought him knowledge of the Eastern religions, especially the teachings of Paramhansa Yogananda. They also brought a set of beliefs that expressed the idea that inner peace was more important than external comfort; and that with internal peace, the desire for external comfort is very easily satisfied.

Joe Chankin arrived in the area only seven months ago. At first he taught music at a public school in Cave Junction, but he was soon fired because he grew a beard. At 32 years old, he now works at odd jobs when money is needed. Before arriving in this area he had been a professional musician: conducting small orchestras, teaching music, and running a music shop.

April 23 – Inside a Hippie Commune / Stories of Aliens and the “Oregon Vortex”

On Wednesday, with Joe as our guide again, we went out to the Illinois Valley to meet some more people, and to visit a commune. Eric and I decided it would be fun to enhance our experiences that day with a psychedelic. My only memory of that day is the increased intensity of our encounters with some nice people with very strange ideas.

What stands out is our visit to a commune. We drove southward deep into the valley, then began our climb up the side of a mountain on a narrow, windy dirt road. Eventually we came to a small collection of cabins on the side of the hill. A few children were playing, running around by the side of the cabins. We walked past a good-sized vegetable and herb garden, then came to the entrance to the main cabin.

Joe entered first, while we waited outside. He didn't want to surprise everyone by allowing two outsiders to just walk in. Then it was our turn. The cabin was dark inside, and filled with smoke from a small fire at one end, used for cooking. A few people were preparing food for a communal meal. A few were playing musical instruments, backed up by someone on a small drum. Everyone's hair was dark, almost all black, long and disheveled. Most were seated in a large circle, cross-legged, on the floor that was covered with old rugs. The music they played was nothing like a contemporary jam session. It was rhythmic, haunting, something to facilitate meditation. The food preparers had finished what they were doing, and joined the circle. We sat down with them in the circle, allowing our voices to softly join in with the others as they meditated and slowly chanted “A – U – M.”

Following the meditation, we all enjoyed the meal and lively conversation. They were very interested in our story – that we were intending to do “research” on alternative education, as well as travel into Canada as a potential future home for us. Conversation shifted to some of them sharing their own stories, including how they came to live in this commune. It seemed that they were all completely dissatisfied with the current culture within the United States. They believed that they were part of a growing number of people who were “turning on and tuning out” of the mainstream. They believed that they were part of a growing class of peace-loving people they called “the beautiful people.”

The strangest idea we learned about that day was their collective myth surrounding the “Oregon Vortex.”⁴ They believed that a civilization alien to our world was able to make contact with human beings by sending a spaceship to earth, which was able to safely land only at the Oregon Vortex. Joe even claimed that he had been taken aboard the spaceship and been interviewed on several different occasions. They all believed that when the cultural wars and violence in our world got to be too dangerous, that the spaceship people would invite all of the “beautiful people” to come aboard and go to another world with them. In other words, that they would be saved.

⁴ The site of the Oregon Vortex is located about midway between Grants Pass and Medford, north of Interstate 5, along Sardine Creek Rd. Sometime in the mid-20th century a “House of Mystery” was opened up on the property. Since that time several myths flourished. The reader can learn more at [Oregon Vortex - Wikipedia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oregon_Vortex).

April 24–26 – Oregon State University and the Oregon Coast

We felt the need for a relaxing morning on Thursday, attempting to assimilate all that we experienced in the preceding week. We were eager to continue our journey, looking for alternative education programs. Our next stop was Corvallis, and a warm, comfortable place to stay at the Acacia Fraternity⁵ house at **Oregon State University**.

We spent a day on campus at OSU, and met up with Margie, an OSU student and one of Eric's cousins. She introduced us to some of her friends, and insisted that we join her at a party Friday night. The next day Margie and one of her friends went with us to the coast, just north of Newport. We had a fun time at the beach, swimming, dancing, enjoying a camp fire, and indulging in sour dough bread, cheese, and a bottle of Gewurztraminer.

April 27–29 – Portland and Alternative Education

We drove to Portland from Corvallis, and camped for the night in **Washington Park**. On Monday we visited **Lewis and Clark College** and **Portland State University**, and had very productive visits with officials, talking about education reform and experimental education. Monday evening was spent having fun with several students at Lewis and Clark College, and sleeping outside on campus, on a large lawn. The next day we visited with officials at Adams High School and the Metropolitan Learning Center in downtown Portland.

April 29–May 2 – Seattle and University of Washington

On Tuesday, April 29 we traveled to **University of Washington**, and introduced ourselves to the men at Acacia Fraternity there. They were quite gracious and provided sleeping bunks and kitchen privileges for us during our brief stay. We were also able to park our van in the fraternity parking lot.

Later that day we contacted our friends Nancy and Janey, who had attended UC Berkeley the previous year but had since transferred to UW. When they were in Berkeley, they lived next door to our fraternity house there. We were fortunate to be able to meet up with them while we were in Seattle.

On Wednesday the four of us went to a farmer's market and enjoyed a picnic on a beach beside a lake. The girls entertained us at their apartment that evening and taught us how to do yoga. We spent the following day with the girls again, this time on the UW campus, where almost everyone was wearing flowers, since it was "May Day." We were at their apartment again that evening, practicing more yoga.

⁵ Acacia Fraternity was our home on the UC Berkeley campus. It was quite helpful that there was a custom among all of the 50-plus Acacia Fraternity houses across the nation, that whenever an active member of one fraternity house needed a place to stay, that the local fraternity house of the college being visited would open their doors and provide room and board at no cost. Of course, there was a secret script that had to be recited to prove that the visitor truly was a member of the fraternity.

May 3–5 – Vancouver – Alice Lake / Mt. Garibaldi

We left Seattle the previous afternoon, heading for Vancouver. But we only made it as far as Burnaby, Canada, and that night we slept by the road. On Saturday, May 3 we drove about an hour north of Vancouver, to ***Alice Lake***. We spent the night in the campground, and the next day we hiked around the lake and tried fishing. We decided that this area would be a marvelous place for us to indulge in another psychedelic. Eric and I found a wonderful spot on a hillside, with a great view of ***Mt. Garibaldi*** in the distance. Here we sat and enjoyed our surroundings for quite a while. While there I wrote a couple of poems⁶, which I think are actually quite good. My journal entry later that day captured what I was feeling.

Fish, hike at Alice Lake ... lovely special day ... blue skies, snowcapped peaks, the place we sat and did yoga ... ideas and pictures filled most of the day ... camp at lake, write, yoga. Beautiful way of life, man ... loving every second of it. Travel, hike, camp, sleep under stars, fire, yoga, self-discipline, fasting, writing, reading, self-expression, a beautiful life ... natural, grubby, peaceful.

On Monday we returned to Vancouver and met with a couple of professors of education at ***University of British Columbia***. That night we went out to dinner with a Dr. Gibbens and had a wonderful discussion about education in general. That night we camped out near the ferry that would take us to Vancouver Island.

May 6–7 – Arrival at Vancouver Island

The ferry took us to Nanaimo, then we drove north alongside the ***Strait of Georgia***, in search of a beach that we heard had a prolific, wild oyster bed. We found the beach, and we also found out that to get any oysters we would have to wade far out into the water.

The ocean bottom in the shallows was rocky. Walking was unsteady. But we gathered a couple of dozen large oysters and several small clams, which we brought with us to a nearby campground, along the ***Englishman River***. We intended to enjoy a feast of oysters and clams for dinner. The only problem was that we had no clue how to shuck an oyster.

We were at our campsite, pounding away on them with a hammer, but to no avail. A couple of guys camping in a neighboring site came over and showed us how to shuck them. We cut our hands badly in the process, so we decided to try to save the oysters for another day.

The next day, after eating well and fully replenishing our energy levels, we drove 80 miles north alongside the Strait of Georgia to the town of Campbell River. We camped near there for the night, and the following morning visited Campbell River High School.

⁶ These two poems can be found at the back of my paper, "Education for the Discovery of the Unconscious."

May 8–9 – Setting Up Camp on Long Beach, Vancouver Island

After visiting at Campbell River High School, we headed for the other side of Vancouver Island to enjoy more camping and adventures. Highway 4 started near the place we had camped the previous night and headed west to Port Alberni. There the highway ended, and the road that would take us the rest of the way to the other side of the island was (in 1969) an unpaved road. But we were undaunted, and drove the 50-mile-long rocky, dirt road to **Long Beach**.

We had picked up four hitch-hikers along the way, and when we finally made camp on the beach all six of us ate the oysters we had saved. After dinner we walked down the beach to visit other campers on the beach. We enjoyed evening campfires, tea, music, and hashish.

On Friday, May 9 we took great pains to set up our campsite on the beach. We dragged as many logs as we could find to our spot, where we gradually built a sheltered camp with four walls. It was like a kid's fort. Later we explored the beach some more, and we met a friendly RCMP officer. We invited him to join us for tea that evening by our campfire.

The most interesting thing about this beach was how flat and wide it was. At a low tide the ocean surf appeared far off in the distance. But the high tide brought the shoreline up close to the top of the beach, near the many camps that had been set up on the dry sand. The beach was so flat that a little change in the tide caused the ocean to reach a long way up the beach.

The Story – How We Lost the Van

May 10 – Stuck in the Sand

On Saturday morning we did some more settling in at our camp. An occupant of a nearby camp came over and visited with us a while. It was around noon, and it was evident that the tide was going out at a fast pace, and that it might be fun to explore the beach. So we set out on foot in a northwest direction, to a distant point of land jutting into the ocean, anticipating that we would find something interesting.

About a mile or two from our camp the shoreline then made a sharp bend southward to an outcropping of rocks jutting into the surf.⁷ We continued on, to see what lay around the other side of this point. We wound our way around large rocks, sometimes climbing over rocks. We saw many tidepools, with seaweed, and little crabs scurrying about. The fine sand felt wonderful on our bare feet; the water was not too cold. We came to a beach on the other side of the point, which was protected from the surf, making it potentially a nice swimming beach. We decided that we would revisit this place another day, earlier in the day. Next, we started back, to avoid getting caught on this side of the point when the tide came in.

⁷ The curious reader may locate this spot on a map by looking up Schooner's Beach, near the Tofino-Long Beach airport, just north of Long Beach, on the west side of Vancouver Island.

That's when we met a young man (Jamie) and his girlfriend, in their car on the beach. Earlier in the day Jamie drove his car (a classic 50s era Chevrolet) around this same point where Eric and I had come from. He drove his car around the point on the packed sand, between several large rocks. But by now the tide had risen and the ocean had completely covered what was his route around the point. They could not find another way around the point, so they asked us for advice.

With my years of experience watching cars navigate between the low and high tides of Central California beaches, I thought that I could give Jamie some good advice. I told him he could make it through the few inches of water covering the sand, for the short way needed, if he drove slowly and steadily; without lurching, without stopping.

For some reason he didn't want to hear that. He was afraid he would be late returning for duty at his military base. He decided to make a dash through the water covering the sand. I tried to stop him – but off he went. He gunned the engine of his car and crashed into the patch of water covering the sand. His car sent large plumes of water flying to either side. The impact created resistance from the water, and it was like hitting a solid wall. The car stalled, and the engine got swamped. Jamie's car was now stuck in the sand.

Another man (Mac) was nearby, watching all of this along with Eric and I. He had parked his car on the dry sand, up out of reach of the tide, before walking around the point. He volunteered to go get his car and try to tow Jamie's car out. Upon returning with his car, he tied one end of a heavy rope to his car and the other end to Jamie's. He revved up his engine and gave a tug – and at that moment, the only movement to be seen was the sinking of Mac's rear tires into the wet sand. Mac knew then that he could not save Jamie's car.

Meanwhile, with each wave washing up onto the beach, the tide continued its steady rise. And because the beach as a whole was so flat, every inch of the tide's rise brought it much further up onto the dry sand. Suddenly Mac's car was stuck and in danger, too.

To my surprise, Eric shouted out that he would go get his van and come back and pull Mac's car out. So, **Eric ran** all the way back to our camp to get the van. Upon returning, he did the same thing Mac tried to do with Jamie's car. And the end result was the same. Once the back tires of Eric's van sunk in the sand, I knew it was "all over" for the van.

What Eric and I did next was critical. We quickly emptied the van of all of our belongings. We carried all of the stuff up onto the beach, out of reach of the rising tide: the large chest of mine containing clothing and supplies; backpacks; fishing gear; food provisions; cooking and cleaning tools and gadgets; cameras, and writing supplies. As we stood there watching the tide continue to rise, we realized the total folly of this afternoon. And we wondered what might become of the van.

We returned to our camp and tried to make sense of our new situation. A couple of nearby campers, Katie and Alison, treated us to dinner that night, and listened to our story of calamity.

Later, as Eric and I started settling in for the night, the full moon illuminated the beach and the ocean before us, seeming to rest there so peacefully. We decided to walk up the beach to the spot where we lost the van. I'll never forget that image before us.

There were three cars out in the water, in the high tide. Eric's van was surrounded, with the water level up to the side windows. The next car we saw was Mac's, the one Eric tried to rescue. It was bobbing in the water, only the sides and top visible; the hood and trunk were under water. Then all that could be seen of Jamie's car was a patch of metal glistening under the moonlight – it was the roof of the car.

May 11-12 – Recovering the Van

The next morning, Sunday, May 11 we walked back to the spot where we lost the van and had unloaded all of our gear. It was late morning, and the tide was out pretty far, revealing all three abandoned vehicles. An older man with a large truck was there surveying the scene. He offered to tow our van out of the sand. He explained that he was a local, and lived not far away. He had seen this happen before, he said, dozens of times.

He attached a cable to the front end of the van, and we placed large planks of wood under the tires to help give them traction. Mr. Green pulled slowly forward. Eric and I adjusted the planks under the tires. After much struggling, it worked! Eventually the van rolled free. Mr. Green told us that he would tow our vehicle back to his house and that we were welcome to come and stay with him for the night, while we made arrangements for the van.

Mr. Green also helped us immensely by collecting all of our gear that we had unloaded from the van, plus whatever we had remaining at our camp on the beach. Then we climbed into his truck and rode to his house in Ucluelet about ten miles south. He let us take baths there; he fed us a hearty dinner; and he talked with us at length about his philosophy of life, religion, and hippies. He had some fascinating ideas. We slept very well that night in an extra room in his house.

On Monday, May 12 we fussed over the van, taking the engine apart, hoping that we might be able to clean it and get it running again. Mr. Green said that wouldn't happen – so we used his telephone to call the insurance company to report the loss. The company sent a tow truck out to Ucluelet and towed it 50 miles into the town of Port Alberni, on the other side of the island.

The Story – A Long Way Home by Backpack

May 12-14 – Immediate Aftermath of Losing the Van

Now we were traveling “on foot” with only whatever we could carry in our backpacks. We didn’t want to further impose upon Mr. Green, so we decided to hike to a local park and stay at the park for the night. Our gear was still at Mr. Green’s.

The next morning, May 13, it seemed like we spent the entire morning at a local café, on the telephone with the insurance company. Eric learned that the company would “total” the van, and that they would send an insurance payout check to his home in Lodi, California. We got a ride with a man named Noel out to Long Beach; we wanted one last day to admire that stretch of coastline. We returned to Ucluelet and camped again in the park.

On Wednesday May 14 we sorted through all of our gear at Mr. Green’s, and packed as much as we could into our backpacks, and packaged up the rest to ship back home. My large trunk really came in handy; it held everything that we could not carry, minus a few things we agreed we could discard. We first had to ship the trunk via airplane to Vancouver. Again, Mr. Green helped us immensely: first by hauling the trunk to the little airport in Ucluelet, and then by driving us to a spot on the road where we hoped to hitch a ride with someone across the island to the other side. But we waited at that spot for four hours, then we gave up and instead hitched a ride to a campground nearby.

May 15–16 – The Backpacking / Hitch-hiking Odyssey Begins

On Thursday May 15, we finally made it into Vancouver. And what a delightful stay it was! But this day in itself was a mini-odyssey. From the campground on the western side of the island, we first got a ride to a corner on the main road (dirt road) that we originally came on, only a week ago. Having no luck getting a ride after a few hours, we hiked several miles down the road, thinking that surely someone would pick us up if we were already walking.

After a number of cars passed us by, we decided that we might have better luck if we split up. We thought that drivers might be more willing to pick up one stranger than two. I walked on ahead. It wasn’t long before a car pulled over to pick me up, and lo and behold ... Eric was in the front seat of this old pickup truck. The driver turned out to be the Chief of the Ucluelet Indian Tribe. I climbed in and he took us all the way into Nanaimo, where we boarded the ferry to Vancouver.

On the ferry ride Eric struck up a conversation with a man named Sam Newell, who was quite interested in our story, and our “mission” to research and write about alternative education. He brought us to his home in North Vancouver, where we met his wife and daughter. They fed us a terrific meal, and that night we watched TV (Lord of the Flies) with them. He provided us a separate room with comfortable beds. The next morning, after a shower and a hearty breakfast, Sam drove us to the airport to pick up our trunk; then he drove us to the Post Office where we had it shipped to the San Francisco Port of Entry.

May 16-18 – Outdoor Rock Festival

While at the post office Friday, we met Shelly and Bree, and we learned about a rock festival happening that same weekend, just an hour southeast of the city of Vancouver. After taking care of our business there we decided, because we really did not have any concrete plans at this point anymore, that we might as well make our way down to the festival.

We hitch-hiked south from Vancouver past Burnaby, past Langley, to the little town of Aldergrove, almost at the border with the United States. The rock concert would be staged at a large park just outside of town, and we found a suitable campsite near the park. Musicians and vendors were setting up that Friday night, and they were quite noisy.

The rock festival was heavily advertised as Canada's first outdoor rock festival. Early Saturday morning people began making their way like a large herd of animals onto the site of the festival. Many were setting up campsites for the weekend. Eric and I moved our campsite to be closer to the others, and we quickly made friends with fellow "travelers" Flash, Blair, Bruce, and a few others. We found the girls again (Shelly and Bree), and they set up camp near us as well.

That Saturday Eric and I again decided to enhance our experience with a psychedelic. The sights and sounds of the festival that day were wonderful. The music seemed to be nonstop, and pounded out the familiar beats of the rock music popular at the time. The park featured a small lake (or large duck pond), and many festival goers jumped into the lake to cool off from the mid-day heat. Eric and I were among them, and swimming to the sounds of some favorite rock music was glorious. We treated ourselves to ice cream, danced some, took a lot of pictures, and enjoyed a great sunset with our new friends. From our sleeping bags that night we watched a light show.

Sunday was equally festive. We walked around the festival grounds, thoroughly enjoying the festival food and the music the bands played. We swam in the lake some more, admiring several who were swimming in the nude. People were openly smoking marijuana, often passing around joints to share. Spontaneous dancing, in rhythm with the music, was everywhere. At one point we joined a "Be-In." Later we were joined by Shelly and Bree, and after a few more hits of cannabis, we easily "crashed" for the night at our camp.

May 19-22 – Exploring Vancouver and Victoria

On Monday, May 19 we packed up and left the park, and hitched a ride all the way to the north side of Vancouver, where there were several parks and beaches. One of the beachside parks had a nice walkway with a great view of the water (Burrard Inlet of Strait of Georgia). Here we walked, from one end of the view point to the other, trying to talk and come to some agreement about what we ought to do next. We got into a heated argument; we had to put our conversation on pause for a while. Our minds were still in shock over losing the van.

We contacted Shelly and Bree, and they invited us over to their place for coffee and conversation. We ended up sleeping there for the night. The next day we walked into the

downtown area of Vancouver, and went to the post office. We wrote some postcards and read a few newspapers. Then we walked a few blocks more to the office of the British Columbia Teachers Federation (BCTF).

We were still interested in finding out anything we could about alternative education programs in the region. All the while we continued talking, trying to adjust our attitudes to our new manner of travel and study. We allowed ourselves to have a number of "spontaneous sit-ins" to facilitate the conversation. We returned that afternoon to the girls' apartment to rest. We stayed there that night as well.

On Wednesday May 21 we said goodbye to Shelly and Brie. We walked to the BCTF Resource Center, and what we learned there stimulated some ideas on planning a course on reforming education systems. While walking through downtown Vancouver, we came upon **Intermedia**. Founded in 1967, it was a public workshop "dedicated to the collaborative exploration of new technologies by artists."⁸

We needed to find a place to stay, and wondered if we might be able to find Flash, one of our newest friends. When we met at the outdoor rock festival, Flash had given us his address in the town of Victoria, on Vancouver Island. We decided we should head over there and pay him a visit.

From the downtown area we rode a bus to the ferry terminal south of Vancouver. There we caught a ferry to Sidney, on Vancouver Island, then hitched a ride down to Victoria. Eventually we found Flash's house, and his friends were there too. We were happy to be hanging out with them again, enjoying more of their weed, and he let us stay at his house overnight. The next morning, we visited a local park and got a ride to the terminal for the ferry to Port Angeles, on the U.S. side of the border.

Once back in the U.S., our next destination was Seattle, which was only about a three-hour drive. We had walked a lot that day, and we felt lucky to get a couple of long rides into Seattle. Then a couple of bus rides took us to the fraternity house at University of Washington. The fraternity brothers were happy to see us again, and eager to hear our stories. After getting settled we met up with Janie and Nancy again, and we talked late into the night.

May 23 – Why Buy a Jeep?

By this time on our journey Eric and I were running low on funds. We decided that we should try to get some type of short-term work in the Seattle area before heading home. Purchasing a vehicle would also help us to somewhat resume our preferred style of travel.

On Friday May 23 Eric and I spent the entire day looking for a cheap used vehicle. When we found a 1949 Willy's four-wheel drive pick-up for sale for only \$500, we fell in love with it,

⁸ According to a statement by its founders, "It is our intention that Intermedia be a place where creative exploration could take place on an interactive basis between artists, between technologists and between seriously interested people. The only criteria that we have is that it is far out, creative and exploratory."

because it ignited an entrepreneurial idea. We came up with a plan to use it to start a business back home to earn extra spending money, by cutting and delivering firewood. We thought of it as an investment.

Each of us then talked on the phone with our fathers, trying to convince each of them to help us buy it. In my letter of May 23 to my parents I included a long explanation of the benefits of purchasing this particular vehicle.

May 23-25 – Luxurious Weekend in Tacoma

Late Friday afternoon we accompanied Nancy to her parents' home in Tacoma⁹, south of Seattle by about an hour. Their home was beside a small lake. There we relaxed, were treated to a wonderful dinner, and had a nice long visit with her father, Dr. Read, a dentist. We had a good conversation with him about education, too.

On Saturday we were treated to a nice breakfast, then we went for a canoe paddle across the lake. We thoroughly relaxed all day, lounging, reading, talking. That evening after dinner and washing the dishes, we practiced our yoga postures again. Sunday was pretty much the same kind of relaxing day, then Dr. Read gave us a ride back to the UW campus where we planned to stay at the Acacia fraternity house.

May 26-31 – A Job in Seattle

Back in Seattle, at the fraternity house, we spent much time on the telephone, following up on want ads for short term workers. Then we learned from Janey that her father might have an offer for us. We hopped on a bus and went out to meet him at Baycrest, a small marina where he kept his sailboat. The job was to chip and sand the outside of the hull, then to apply a coat of varnish. We accepted his offer, and then we returned to the fraternity house for the night.

That week we worked on the boat every day for about ten hours each day. We rode the bus from Acacia fraternity at UW to the marina and back each day. On Wednesday we took some time off to give the Jeep a test drive. One of its wheels wobbled at 40 miles per hour. We realized that Jeep might be more of a headache than it was worth. So we abandoned our plan to buy this particular vehicle.

Our week in Seattle was a fun one as well. We spent a few evenings with Nancy and Janey again, watching movies, eating lox and bagels, drinking beer. In the evening of our last day of work on the boat, we joined Janey's family for a great social evening, featuring conversation around the barbecue and enjoying Mr. Robinson's Scotch.

⁹ In 1969 the place where they lived was considered part of greater Tacoma. But in 1996 the area was incorporated as Lakewood. Such an odd coincidence: During my professional career I was employed in 2003-04 by the school district serving the communities of Lakewood.

June 1-4 – Hitch-hiking Home from Seattle

It was fairly easy getting rides on the major highways out of the Seattle/Tacoma area. After only three different rides we found ourselves again at Lewis and Clark College in Portland. We met up with our friends there, and had a most enjoyable evening with them. The next morning, we slept late, while enjoying the sun.

Soon we were back on the road again, with our backpacks by our side, and our thumbs in the air. At first, we got several short rides down the highway. Then we were lucky that our next ride was with Larry, who was headed all the way down to the Bay Area. We were really glad that riding with him worked out okay. All three of us got along well.

Our first stop with Larry was on the coast of Oregon near Newport, and we camped out on the beach. The next day we drove down the Oregon coast on Highway 101, stopping occasionally to relax and stretch our legs. When we came to California we entered “Redwood Country” and the three of us cooked a dinner for ourselves at one of the beautiful parks with majestic redwoods.

After dinner we continued driving down Highway 101, then turned off at Highway 1 to go to Fort Bragg, where we spent the night. Our last day on the road was down the coast, then inland along the Russian River into Forestville. Larry dropped us off at the ranch home of Neil Ferguson, a friend of Eric’s family. This is where we returned somewhat to “normal life,” and concluded our journey.

June 4 – Last Journal Entry – Forestville, CA.

At this point, it feels as though our trip is over, in a sense, but it is really just a transition. Now it is time to reflect; recall events, people, ideas, people; and write. Many ideas have come to us, and we look forward to fixing up the cabin on Neil’s property and living there temporarily.

It is a very wonderful feeling to be back ... near home. A little tired from our traveling, and now is a good time to relax. The experience has been beyond compare, extremely beneficial. I have learned a lot about people, and have become better able to relate to people on an honest level.

I have recalled very much about my life, reflected a lot, reminisced, and have looked at my life from a healthy perspective. I now feel very whole, integrated personally and emotionally.

There is a lot that I want to do; I feel that I must begin to acquire “tools” and a method of expressing myself, to not only “preach” but live what I believe. I look first of all to journalism and photography with travel. Secondly, I look at the problems in society, and want to help bring about changes through education. Canada has impressed me quite a lot, and I have serious doubts about the U.S.

Epilogue

Eric and I did stay at Neil's property for a short time, before returning to Berkeley to look for suitable housing for the summer term.

When we first returned to the fraternity house everyone was elated that we were back. I think our trip had become legendary. We spent a whole afternoon visiting, catching up on all the news. We heard stories about many anti-war demonstrations and the infamous "People's Park" riots that took place while we were gone. Several of us finished off a bottle of Tequila and several limes that day.

Since I had been president of the fraternity house before leaving for the trip, they were eager for me to return in that role. They believed that I was the only one who could mend the divisions within our fraternity between the "straight" guys and the "stoners."

But this time I had to make a decision that was in my best interests. I decided to rent an apartment on the north side of the UC Berkeley campus, along with two others from the fraternity. I suppose this action was one more nail in the coffin of Acacia Fraternity at Berkeley. It closed down a couple of years later.

That summer I received a phone call from Sue Richardson that would totally change my life forever. She said she was pregnant. She said it was from her visit with me and the night that we spent together on January 24, 1969. One of my friends from the fraternity had a girlfriend who also was an activist. She tried to encourage me to convince Sue to have an abortion. To me this seemed like very drastic action, and we eventually decided against it.

Sue and I thought that she should come to Berkeley to live with me and see how we got along. Then after a few months together we would decide our next steps. But my parents and my god-parents passionately insisted that Sue and I get married. Their pressure overcame us, and we got married on August 2, 1969.

Christian Herbert Lentz was born on November 16, 1969. That event was only one day after Sue and I had marched in a massive anti-war demonstration at Golden Gate Park in San Francisco.¹⁰

That fall Sue and I shared an apartment in Berkeley with Mike, one of my fraternity friends. The place was just a half block up from Shattuck Avenue, and we lived through the collateral damage from police action against protesters during the many anti-war demonstrations that took place.

Sue and I got our own apartment on the west side of Berkeley for the winter and spring terms. I got a part time job at the Music Library on campus, and rode my bicycle to school each day. We bought a very old VW bus that would suit our family well.

¹⁰ I wrote an essay about my experience at the rally that day. I still have it in my collection of writings.

After I completed my coursework at UC Berkeley and earned my bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences, we moved to Halcyon. Very soon after making that move, we were recruited to manage the Halcyon Health Food Store and Post Office, with the plan being that the two of us would assume full responsibility for it in January of the following year.

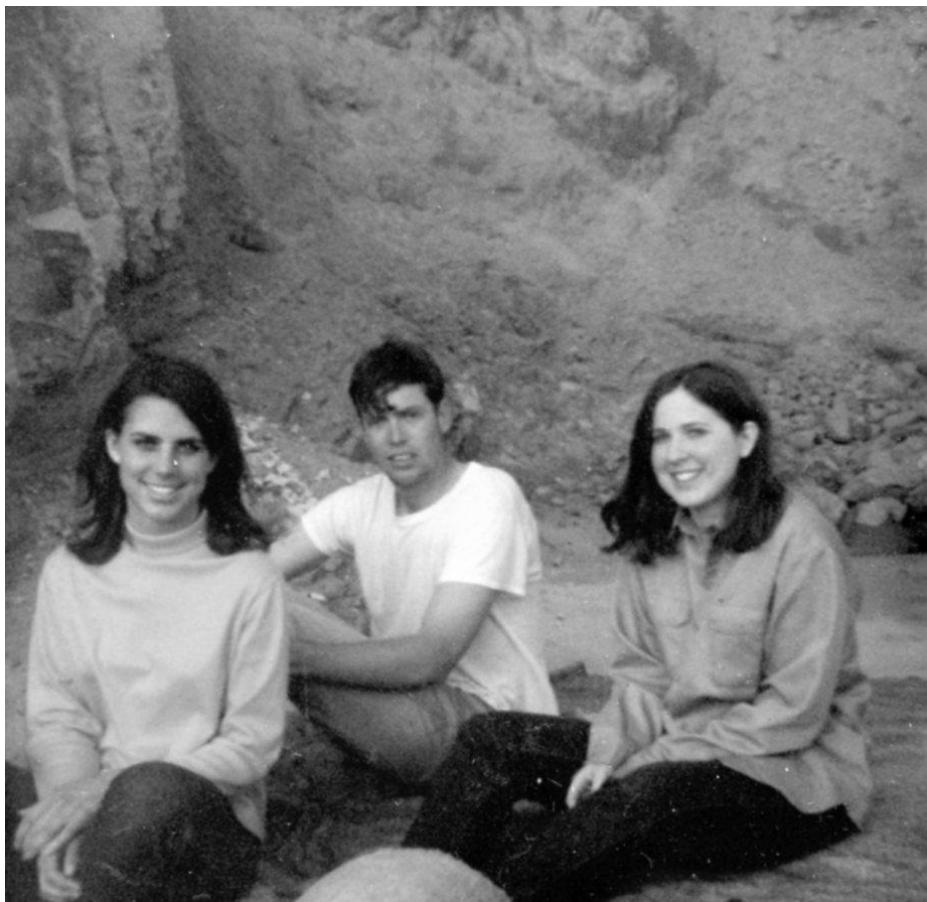
Our routine was a simple one. I enrolled in the teacher education program at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo. While I was attending classes in San Luis, Sue ran the store, with Christian set up in a playpen in the storeroom in back.

We continued with this arrangement for a couple of years, but because Sue and I did not get along, we separated in February of 1972, and eventually got a divorce. Sue and Chris moved to Breckenridge, Colorado a couple of years later.

This ended a glorious time in Halcyon as Sue and I had been instrumental in recruiting several young couples to move into town and become interested in The Temple of The People. We had a lot of fun together, exploring what the Temple Teachings and the peaceful way of life in Halcyon had to offer.



Our view of Mt. Garibaldi, north of Vancouver



Eric and me with friends from OSU on the beach near Newport, Oregon

