The writing of this chapter mainly from memory was aided by the diligence of my mother in preserving and numbering approximately 70% of all the letters I wrote regularly to my parents during my two years abroad, 1937-1939. If additional letters turn up during this writing and editing, I shall be able to affirm or amend various points. In those cases where I offered only partial news in letters, I shall try to provide more complete information as to what I did and what I thought at the time. In all truth, letters to one's parents may be of only selected material, but I tried to keep them abreast of everything I considered new and important. My mother and father had not traveled in the United States and never abroad; my eyes had to be their travel vehicle. They had only one child whom, although grown, they were accustomed to seeing frequently. Thus, I readily assumed the duty of writing to them often. I enjoyed the feature that they would be able to appreciate my new impressions and experiences vicariously. I also enjoyed keeping in touch with them.

The two years at Oxford, including vacations and travel, were the happiest years of my unmarried life. How could that be, when the world was in turmoil and there was already great destruction and great suffering, when military aggression was unopposed? Each of us must lead his own life in the best possible way under whatever circumstances are given. The major difference of the years 1937-1939 was that I was being paid to study and to travel. In all previous years, I had to work, to try for scholarships and prizes and, fortunately, to be blessed with occasional gifts. Each course that I took in high school and college had to be taken for a high grade in addition to appreciation and absorption of the material therein. At Oxford, the only expectation was that I would attend lectures, read the scientific literature, and do research. Until September of 1937, the summers had meant opportunities to work in order to store up a little cash for each following school year. The will of Cecil B. Rhodes specified that the stipend of the scholarships should be sufficient for the recipients, Americans and Colonials, to learn something about Europe in addition to pursuing a degree at Oxford. Thus, our quarterly payments of 100 English pounds, then equivalent to 500 U.S. dollars, continued...
through the vacations and were expected to be used for travel as part of our education.

There were other obvious gifts of those two years. Everything was new: places, people, food, customs, music opportunities, politics, sports, travels, lectures, books, discussions, plays, and movies (foreign). Everything was to be experienced. There was time to think, time to understand, and time to develop my own philosophy of life. There was time to develop strong friendships. There were emotional surprises, not the least of which was meeting and falling in love with Nell and deciding jointly upon a life partnership, which, due to the advent of World War II, threatened to be evanescent.

The first new experience was the crossing of the Atlantic on the S.S. Statendam from New York to Plymouth, England. The sailing date of September 28, 1937 was approached with many “good byes.” As the only son and only nephew of my father's sisters, I had many family goodbyes. Travel abroad by ship in 1937 was a rather limited experience, at least for my parents' friends and for my own friends from high school and college. As a unique voyager, then, I had to say goodbye to all of them and to the odd acquaintance of the day whom my gregarious father brought by the house to see his “famous” son. A sailing party was also a novel enough experience that, in addition to my mother and father, Uncle Louis and Cousin Virginia, and family friends Mr. and Mrs. Morton Sultzer, a large group of my Lehigh fraternity brothers appeared aboard the Statendam. Everyone came with gifts, which embarrassed me because I was uncertain as to when and in what order to open the gifts; moreover, my suitcases were already full. The gifts were duly listed and thanked for. I spent some time with each of those who had arrived unexpectedly, but I am sure that I didn't provide the refreshment that was expected. I was too naive. I was actually quite relieved when it was time for visitors to go ashore, and goodbye-waving could take place impersonally and without emotion.

Many factors contribute to the joy of a sea voyage, especially of a first sea voyage. I spent a very large part of my time just gazing at the sea and the sky in wonder and awe of the beauty and of the power of the waves. Walking the deck was supplemented by ping-pong, deck tennis, shuffleboard, bridge, swimming, working out in the gym, taking movies and attending movies, and meeting the other Rhodes Scholars on shipboard. My cabin mate was Henry Hicks of Nova Scotia. At the time of selection, he was a chemist, but he went into law instead and eventually had a successful career in Canadian politics. Harvey Wellman of Cornell University and I had appeared before the same district selection committee
in the previous December and had become friends. He eventually ended up in the U.S. diplomatic service, and his daughter, whom I met in the 90s, became a staff member at the University of Illinois. James Egan of Trinity College, Hartford, was to be enrolled in Exeter College, the neighbor of Lincoln College in the Turl Street. We were indomitable bridge partners. My thirst for bridge was generated by envy of my Lehigh fraternity brothers. Those who studied Business Administration rather than Science always seemed to have time to play bridge in the late afternoons when the science students were still in their laboratories. I was making up for bridge deprivation during my Lehigh years.

Robert Harmon of Yale and Norman Davidson of the University of Chicago were fellow chemists. When Norman discovered that I was also a chemist, he suggested that we have a discussion of the relative merits of Bohr Theory and Quantum Theory, which would have been beyond me. I countered with the excuse that I had never been on an ocean voyage before and that I was enjoying being in limbo, without a care for chemistry. I suggested that we play ping-pong instead. What I did not know was that Norman’s sport was tennis and his prowess carried over into ping-pong. We were more evenly matched when we played shuffleboard. Norman and I were laboratory partners in the Dyson-Perrins laboratory for two years, we overlapped when I was studying at Columbia University and he was on the Manhattan Project, I visited him when I was at the University of Illinois and he had returned to the University of Chicago, and he has been a mainstay in Chemistry and in Biological Sciences at Caltech, which is now my professional home. Leslie Epstein had been an undergraduate at the University of Illinois and had spent two years in Medical School at Washington University, St. Louis. More mature than the rest of us, Leslie had clearer opinions on the world and science. He was a suitable contestant for Norm Davidson in ping-pong. Les and I were both headed for Lincoln College, and we also shared lodgings (“digs”) in Oxford during a portion of the vacations (“vacs”). Two of the other passenger-scholars shared my interest in joining the Oxford Bach Choir. Others of the Rhodes group became good friends while frequenting the various bars on board. I barely knew of the existence of bars because I did not drink any alcohol, not until I was 26 years old and at the University of Illinois.

First impressions carried over from sea to land: sailing past the Scilly Isles, sighting the coast of Cornwall, arriving in Plymouth Harbor, being piloted into the actual port by tender, prowling the streets of Plymouth at midnight, climbing up to the Hoe and thinking of Drake’s conquests (along with the weather) of the Spanish Armada, figuring out the currency, fearing for one’s life during the first taxi ride (on the left side of the road), viewing
the English countryside and the rugged sea coast, loving the trains, seeing London for the first time, and seeing the spires and domes of Oxford following the train ride from Paddington Station.

Lincoln College, founded in the 15th century, was to be my home in Oxford. The choice of a college, at least from my side, had been made because of Neville Vincent Sidgwick, who was the resident Professor of Chemistry. I had read his publications during my senior year at Lehigh, and I loved his book on *The Organic Chemistry of Nitrogen*. My attachment to the subject was actually prophetic since I have spent most of my professional life doing research on organic compounds that contain nitrogen. Lincoln was then one of the smaller Oxford colleges, although it has had remarkable growth in the last 50 years. My rooms on the ground floor consisted of a large sitting room or study and a small bedroom. Through the tall windows of the study, I looked across the back quadrangle at a group of trees hiding the opposite high wall. I had a small fireplace in the corner where I burned coke from my own coke bin. Old Ted, my “scout” or servant, a Lincoln employee for 45 years, regularly waked me in the morning, supplied me with a basin and a pitcher of hot water, and started the fire. I crossed one quadrangle to reach the toilets and three quadrangles to reach the bathtubs (no showers). The facilities have been modernized satisfactorily since my time at Lincoln! My scout cleaned once in a while and would deliver tea in the afternoon if I requested it. He also produced a very simple lunch from the buttery, consisting mainly of a large whole wheat roll with cheese and butter plus a piece of fruit. Breakfasts and dinners—by candlelight—were taken in hall. Chapel, which I came to enjoy attending on a regular basis, preceded breakfast. In order to combat the permeating cold, it was advisable to jog for about an hour after rising. This had the desired result of keeping my body warm for the day and the added benefit of helping me prepare for crew. My first-year room faced south. In the few sunny days, especially during the spring, my room became warm and stayed warm into the evening. It became a gathering place for those who knew that cookies and tea would be available and that discussions could extend to the late night hours.

Rector Munro, a classics scholar, was the nominal head of Lincoln College during my years. He did not have much contact with students outside his field. We saw him mainly in the hall, where he officiated at the high table and administered a 20-second-long grace in Latin (I timed it) each night at dinner. My dealings were mainly with Professor Sidgwick, whom I saw from time to time, although he turned me over to Dr. Leslie Sutton, his former student who had become a Don in Magdalen College, for the direction of research. Together, they suggested a list of chemistry
books for me to read and chemistry lectures that I should attend: Cyril Hinshelwood on physical chemistry, Robert Robinson on organic chemistry, Neville Sidgwick on inorganic chemistry, and Leslie Sutton on atomic structure and valency. Both Sidgwick and Sutton had spent time in the United States and were friendly toward Americans. They were critical but patient with me and became strong supporters when I had finally proved myself (or improved myself) after two years. The Bursar of the College, Keith Murray, became a very good friend. He also liked Americans and took Leslie Epstein and myself under his wing. Keith took me to an Agricultural Fair, and he drove several of us up to London to see Gilbert and Sullivan performances. After World War II, he became the Rector of Lincoln during a period of very effective growth. I kept in touch with him until he died—he was 10 years my senior—and eventually all of our family members became Keith’s friends, as later chapters will reveal. He was a great supporter of music in Lincoln College. John Hough, who was the organ scholar, i.e., organist, in Lincoln had me singing for him on the first evening we met. We happened to be seated next to each other at dinner in hall when he asked, “Which of you is Leonard?”, for he had ascertained from the admissions officer who among the incoming students had musical interest and experience. I produced some sacred music I had brought to England, and we had a brief audition in the chapel. He did not appreciate my selections, however, and he suggested some Handel, Bach, and Purcell solos for sight-reading and study. John sang tenor and counter-tenor and could play any instrument. He had a virginal, a viola da gamba, a viola d’amore, and recorders in his room, where there was always the opportunity for music. Through performance, I absorbed baroque and early renaissance music as well as church cantatas and sections of oratorios. John was a thorough musician and a subtle teacher. He raised his “pupils” to performance level before they knew what was happening.

Since mention of Lincoln personnel had introduced the subject of music, let me continue with it, because music became an important part of my life at Oxford. John Hough organized a first-time choir in Lincoln, consisting of eight male voices. We assisted in evensong and occasionally gave Sunday evening recitals as well. These became more popular as our enthusiasm and competence improved, and the audience, who sat in the candlelit chapel stalls, swelled when early instruments were used in accompaniment. The choir performed from the organ antechamber of the chapel. Our choir also performed in the Brasenose College chapel on several occasions. I became a regular soloist, learning the literature for solo baritone thereby. I joined the Oxford University Opera Club to sing in the chorus for the end-of-first-term performances of Purcell’s “Dido
and Aenaeus.” At dress rehearsal, I was called upon to substitute in the title role. Opera is never a financial success. In February of 1938, the Club presented a French play to try to make up our deficit. I had the role of a silent waiter, which I played in black face. At a concert late in 1938, the men in the Club sang the “Liebeslieder Waltzes” of Schubert. I became the “Hon. Sec.” of the Opera Club for the 1938-1939 academic year. The Hon. Sec., unlike the President, does all the work. My job was to arrange for the performances of “In Windsor Forest” by Vaughan Williams and “Father and Daughter” by Percy Grainger in concert. In retrospect, our activities were not very ambitious. They were circumscribed by lack of funding and the shortness of the terms—eight weeks—for rehearsals.

By contrast, the Oxford Bach Choir practiced during two terms for a performance. Dr. Thomas Armstrong was the conductor. In our performance of the Bach “St. Matthew Passion,” there were about 300 in the chorus and 100 in the orchestra—not exactly the army of performers that Bach had in mind—which did not leave much room for the audience in Christopher Wren’s Sheldonian Theater. It went very well (twice) and all of the occupants of the Theater were pleased. I would go so far as to say that the pleasure could be equated with enraptured enthusiasm. Edward Manning sang the tenor recitatives most clearly and expressively. I had started singing lessons with Mr. Manning at the end of January, 1938, and would continue to study with him until it became time for me to return home. From the Bach Choir’s performance of the “St. Matthew Passion” until today, this Passion is my favorite piece of music. I appreciate it most when it is presented in two parts, consigned to morning and afternoon as it was there in Oxford. The second major Bach Choir concert that I remember was one that included the “Sancta Civitas” and “Benedicite” of Ralph Vaughan Williams. Dr. Armstrong (later knighted) prepared us, but Vaughan Williams himself conducted. He was a gruff, amusing man who became visibly pleased when we responded well to his direction. It was a memorable occasion for me. I mentioned my singing lessons with Edward Manning which, incidentally, cost about $16 for 10 lessons. He was a tough task master and an excellent teacher. He was not too enraptured with either my voice or my repertoire at the outset, but he produced desirable improvements in both. I appreciated his musicianship, and I was called upon for more recitals and concerts as I progressed.

One of the most satisfying musical experiences occurred when John Hough and I and four others went to entertain in the tiny village (300) of Little Compton, in the Cotswolds. In the little kerosene-lit village hall, we gave them everything from a penny-whistle solo to operatic arias. The audience took it all in and were more genuinely appreciative than
any other audience I have known. We were treated to dinner at the antique-
filled home of the lord and lady of the dominant manor. That dinner
produced one of the most ludicrous experiences of my life. When we had
assembled for dinner, we stood behind our chairs at the table for the
saying of grace. I took the opportunity of testing the back of my chair
for stability since all of the antique furniture looked fragile. The other
guests apparently did not. After grace, they pulled back on their chairs,
but the backs of the chairs were all that moved! Imagine the scene in
which half of the people at the table were trying to put their chairs
together again so that they could sit down. Imagine, too, that all of the
action was proceeding silently, the guests in embarrassment and the hosts
in undemonstrated concern. I chuckle as my mind recreates the scene 60
years later.

Musical life in Lincoln College improved in the fall of 1938 when a
Rhodes Scholar from North Dakota, Leigh Gerdine, came into residence.
He had a baby grand in his room, was most gracious about playing for
anyone who stopped by, and was willing to be my accompanist when I
was trying to learn new music. He was, like John Hough, an advocate of
making music for music's sake. He and I had also ample opportunities for
doing more music together later when he was at Miami University in
Oxford, Ohio, and then when he was Head of the Music Department at
Washington University in St. Louis, Missouri. On May 15, 1939, at an
evening of music at Rhodes House, Oxford, Leigh Gerdine played piano
(Rachmaninoff) and I sang three selections (Bach, Grieg, Schubert)
accompanied by John Hough, as the saved program indicates. My last
selection was "Der Erlkönig," which I had practiced for weeks and weeks
with Edward Manning and by listening to Alexander Kipnis on the
gramophone. According to a letter to my mother, it went "quite well" and
John Hough's accompaniment was "marvelous." We performed Liszt's
"Du bist wie eine Blume" as an encore, from the favorite love poem of
Heine. The same letter (of 5/16/39) indicates that I had started to learn
the "Four Serious Songs" of Brahms, which Leigh and I finally performed
years later in recital in St. Louis. Back in May of 1939, the second part of
the musical evening included syncopation and songs at two pianos by
Steve Bailey and Frank Taplin and a funny and clever burlesque of opera
called "Saust," for which Frank was the "Chorus and Orchestra." Both of
these scholars have had distinguished careers, Steve in academic life and
as sometime mayor of Middletown, CT, and Frank as a director of
companies and, for many years, a board member and then president of the
Metropolitan Opera Association. I now see Frank at meetings of the
American Philosophical Society, and we reminisce. He has maintained his
pianistic skill to the extent of playing Beethoven piano sonatas for select audiences.

There were ample opportunities for listening to music in Oxford: organ recitals, chamber music, baroque music (the Dolmetsch family), concerts (including Fritz Kreisler), musicals, Christ Church Cathedral and New College Choirs, and records borrowed from the Gramophone Society. Related to the musical offerings were those of the theater. The Oxford University Dramatic Society (O.U.D.S.) had a full season of well-executed drama. Traveling troupes of actors frequented Oxford. Some college clubs presented melodramas, in particular one in Magdalen College, in which my very good friend Tony Hugill was involved. Stowe School, an exclusive preparatory school, put on Christmas plays, e.g., A. A. Milne's "Fourth Wall," in good style. I was introduced to Shaw, Ibsen, Priestley, more Shakespeare, and the Gilbert and Sullivan operettas. There is frequent mention of movies in my letters, including those of France, Germany, and England which provided new experiences. The Hollywood films that found their way to England were usually presented in two parts in those days, separated by an organ interlude. Smoking was permitted in the balcony, with the result that the second part of the film appeared through a bluish haze. Due to the shortage of women in Oxford (actually, ladies, to draw the distinction), we usually went with one or two male friends after having had dinner together in one of the colleges as host or guest. The "flicks" were much more part of my life than they had been at Lehigh.

At Lehigh, I had carried out simple chemical research as a senior using small-scale, ground-glass, Pyrex apparatus in the private laboratory of Professor Vahan Babasinian. At Oxford, I was to carry out complex chemical research using medium-and large-scale, soft-glass apparatus on one section of bench in a large, poorly-lit, unheated laboratory. We kept the Bunsen burners going on the coldest days, which was hazardous because of all the organic chemicals that were being used. Fires we had, and small explosions, but we became adept at dealing with these. There was good comradery in that ground-floor room in the Dyson-Perrins Laboratory on South Parks Road. Norman Davidson had the greatest thirst for knowledge and prowled the laboratory to make sure he knew what everyone was doing. Antony Hugill, who was also skilled in mathematics, enlivened our work with quotations from drama and melodrama. John Hunter invented the mock-heroic "all for science" pose that became the signature of the laboratory. I entertained myself by singing until objections called for a halt.

There was no place to sit down in the laboratory. This situation stimulated an intensity of labor, but not the prolonged concentration that
is necessary for real accomplishment. I struggled with the first project that Leslie Sutton had assigned me. It involved organic synthesis which, if successful, would be followed by electron diffraction and mathematical calculations—excellent training. My letters home in which I repeated that research was not going well must have been distressing to my parents, who had no notion of this phase of science. The difficulties were indeed distressing to me but provided good, and not unusual, experience. One learns to persevere and eventually surmount such difficulties. In retrospect, the first problem could not have been solved with the conventional apparatus that I had available. With mentor wisdom, which I learned to apply in later life, Dr. Sutton added a second problem. The home-bound letters indicated that laboratory work was going better in the second term, but continuing letters revealed that there were more “downs” than “ups.” I was experiencing the general trend of most original research. It was not until my second year that I modified the second assignment when I discovered its potential sources of error, assimilated the parts of the problem, and found time to work uninterruptedly in the laboratory. The word “exciting” to describe the research was first used in March 1939. The experience is a common one and was to be repeated over and over by the graduate students who came under my charge at the University of Illinois. I qualified for an Oxford B.Sc. Degree, which was like a master’s degree in the United States, but I did not have enough residence time by September, 1939, to qualify for a D. Phil. The research work was published after the war when the article was composed in the summer of 1947 during a brief visit of Leslie Sutton to the University of Illinois. The Oxford D.Sc. degree awarded in 1983 had to compensate for the D. Phil. made impossible by the onset of war.

The lecture courses were given in term, and additional reading was expected in the vacations. Visiting lecturers included Professors Debye and Pauling, both Nobel Laureates. Seminars were notable for the free interchange among all attending. Some socializing with the chemistry professors and dons was possible. They were all friendly and interested in students, not only their own. I recall tea at the Suttons’ home, especially one in which Mrs. Sutton, who was an accomplished organist and pianist, and Tony Hugill played a Haydn Symphony transcribed for four hands at the piano. I also recall a luncheon with Keith Murray and Professor Sidgwick during which we were seeking a definition of “culture.” The Professor decided that it amounted to total immersion in one subject. This was an intriguing comment from a person who had “gone down” from Oxford with a degree in Chemistry, had found his scholar-father unimpressed, and had returned to Oxford to take a fast degree in “Greats”,

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i.e., Classics, obtaining a first (highest rank). I felt there might be some personal implication to Sidgwick's definition, since I was dividing my time among music, chemistry, and sport.

My **sport** at Lehigh had been soccer for all of my four years. I had thoroughly enjoyed it, although neither my playing nor Lehigh's team playing was distinguished. I did not continue playing soccer (football) at Oxford because all the British players were too good. There was only one time that I was dragooned into playing—with the chemistry students versus the chemistry service staff in March of 1938. I managed to kick one of the goals that enabled us to end with a 2:2 tie score. A fortunate outcome of the event was that my legitimate requests of the service personnel received more polite and prompt responses, even with some joviality. Up until that time, I had perceived the requests of another bloody American to be a nuisance to the staff.

The idea of working while sitting down appealed to me. Shortly after my arrival at Lincoln, Jack and Devereux Milburn, from a famed Long Island family and themselves accomplished oarsmen, convinced me that I should try out for the Lincoln crew. First, they would coach me. As beginners, we rowed up and down the Charwell in "tubs," heavy boats carrying two oarsmen and the instructor. It was very pleasant to be on the river in the late afternoon, for by that time the sun had usually appeared from behind the mist. After three weeks, I rowed in an eight for the first time, but we "freshers" were not able to keep it very steady, and there was no increase in steadiness in the course of that first afternoon. However, four days later, Lincoln's would-be crew paddled approximately seven miles on the Thames. After two weeks, we were up to 14 miles and practicing racing starts. The possible conflict with the Opera Club activity was resolved when the director, Bernard Naylor, excused me from afternoon rehearsals for the chorus and ballet. The next stage was rowing about seven miles at a good pace, e.g., up to 34 strokes per minute. I was moved up to #7 position, the leading oar on the bow side. The next exercise was rowing a 1.5 mile course on the Thames between Iffley Lock and Folly Bridge and learning that no one in the boat can give up. This was a kind of "graduation." We lost our side-by-side race to Christ Church by about five feet after leading them substantially over the first part of the one mile-plus course. My next rowing came in the third term, but we started practice earlier in March in a shell. Until that time, we had been rowing torpids, the heavier boats. I had become addicted. The afternoons on the Thames became an important, pleasurable part of my life. I also practiced rowing in a pair with Ronnie Tomlinson in order to improve balance at a higher stroke rate. Neither of us had the time for additional
hours of practice; otherwise, we might have entered competition. The same was true in 1939 when I rowed with Jack Milburn (he died on D-Day) who was a more accomplished stroke. In the May, 1938, Eights Week races, I rowed #5 and enjoyed the nickname they gave me, “the engine.” Bumping races are very exciting. It is a question of catch or be caught, or neither. We were bumped once during the six-day period (Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday). I received a huge scarf for rowing in the Lincoln first eight, and the Rector invited us to dinner. He was forgetful and did not know what to do when confronted by eight crewmen and one coxswain, all dressed in tuxedos, on the appointed night. Mrs. Munro rescued the situation by informing us that the dinner was really scheduled for the following night.

We reappeared, determined to enjoy ourselves. To encourage conversation at the dinner party, a stimulant was devised that may have been used on other occasions. A neutral party wrote down statements of unusual content on nine separate pieces of paper. After these had been scrambled in a hat, each of us drew one and kept the statements secret from the others. The object was to try to incorporate the selected statement as a direct quote into polite dinner conversation. In practice, as we listened to each other, we tried to guess whether an individual’s conversation was leading in the direction of his possible quotation. Then, we would interrupt as politely as possible with something like, “That reminds me of . . . .,” whether it did or not, aiming in the direction of incorporating one of our own quotations. The conversation was animated all through dinner, and several ridiculous statements made their way into the general hubbub. Mrs. Munro was beaming. Finally, Rector Munro won the day with “Have you seen my daughter’s bust?” We felt that he might have been playing the game also! The three boisterous Americans on the crew found it difficult to contain themselves, myself included. However, the Rector’s statement was in reality an invitation to go into the lounge for coffee following the dinner. There was the bust by the famous sculptor, Jacob Epstein. When I speak of boisterous friends, I am reminded of a night when several of the crew returned to Lincoln from a beer party and, finding only my light on, they paid me a visit. Their hilarity continued as they played “shipwreck” with my room, swinging the lamp and tilting the table and chairs in ever increasing arcs, corresponding to the growing intensity of the imaginary gale. I looked on in consternation, attempting to quiet the storm. The ship wreckers proved to be contrite, however, for they provided me within the week with an attractive overhead lamp and a new table and chair. The newly outfitted ship encountered no further storms.
The Lincoln crew improved by the second term of the 1938-1939 academic year. We sat at a separate table in dining hall and enjoyed an improved menu that included frequent offerings of steak. We bumped successfully twice during the six days of racing and thus improved our standing on the River for the future. In the spring term, we did even better, bumping whichever boat was ahead four times in six days and moving up accordingly in standing. The pleasure of displacing the boat ahead was an experience to be savored. I again rowed #7 behind a new, very steady stroke. I was offered the opportunity to tryout for the Oxford University crew, but that was not to be. I gave up my chance (one was afforded to Lincoln College) to the stroke, who was second on the list. Unfortunately, the onset of war in September removed all such pleasant possibilities. I was in great physical shape at that time. Now, in 1998, I have about the same weight, but the proportion of muscle to fat, etc., has decreased. At the end of Eights Week in 1939, our crew and the crew of the second Lincoln College shell were given a luxurious dinner by our Bursar, Keith Murray. The location was the Fellows’ private dining room. The seven courses were served on the beautiful 16th and 17th century college plate and service. We were all most grateful. If we had made six bumps, that is, bumped each day, the whole college would have celebrated in this manner, according to tradition! During the terms when I was not rowing, squash and cycling filled the need for regular exercise. The Lincoln College squash court, completed in January, 1938, was close to the Dyson-Perrins Laboratory; accordingly, ducking out of the lab was possible when some chemical reaction was being stirred for a reasonable length of time. The first bicycle I had was second-hand, three-speed, and frequently repaired. The replacement bicycle was new, also three-speed, and it had a racing handlebar of which I was very proud. It traveled...
many happy, picturesque miles. It only suffered two minor accidents, one from being walked into by a pedestrian and the other from being run into by another bike.

How did I make friends in England? There were those with whom I became associated in music, chemistry, and rowing. There were neighbors who had rooms in the back quadrangle of Lincoln College and with whom I shared tea and food and late night discussions. There were some English student colleagues who were amused by Americans and went out of their way to be hospitable to us. Chief among these Lincoln friends was Rodney Parsons, with whom I forged a life-long friendship that became extended in time to our wives and children as well. My first visit to an English home came about through a friend and near-neighbor of my mother, a Mrs. Monks, in Mount Vernon. The invitation came from her second cousin, Mrs. Cumber, who lived in Theale, a town just west of Reading. The distant connection between host and invitee says something about both friendship and trans-Atlantic travel in the 30s, or perhaps my late October weekend was just a balance for the hospitality the Cumber’s oldest daughter, Ellen, had received during a visit to the United States. In any case, I welcomed the time away from my captivity in Lincoln College, obtained by permission from the Senior Tutor. Theale, reached by train from Oxford to Reading and local bus, was a beautiful village of a thousand inhabitants in those years. “The Chestnuts,” which was the home of the Cumbers, was a remarkable English country house that derived its name from the row of chestnut trees which flanked the front rose-trellised wall. The gardens were extensive and beautiful, with a grass tennis court in the midst. A stream separated the rear garden from the meadows where sheep and cattle grazed. Mr. Cumber was an alderman of Berkshire County and owned innumerable tracts of farm land all around Theale as well as the village meat marker that had been in the family for 300 years. The family itself could trace its residence in Theale to the 11th century. John, the only son and a graduate in agriculture from Glasgow University, took me on a tour of the pastures and of the scientifically-run dairy farms. He remained in charge of the enterprise until he died sometime late in the 1980s, at which time his sister Ellen took over the operation. The farm-family tea was in the form of a regular meal set in the dining room and was served when Mr. Cumber came in at the end of his work day, a Saturday. Before supper, the younger group consisting of John and the two younger sisters was augmented by a brother-in-law, Leslie Strang, a chemical engineer who worked for one of the British-foreign oil companies (later, BP), and a cousin, Kitty Sparvell, who had completed a course in domestic economy at Reading University. I wrote to my mother, “Kitty is a blonde, very attractive—I really hope to see her again because she is one of the most
attractive English girls I have seen thus far.” Leslie must have thought so as well, since they were married after the war began. Leslie and Kitty were to remain good friends of mine for many years from the time we met again after the end of the war. During supper, which consisted of meat pie and salad, Ellen Cumber arrived from London, and afterwards the “young people” played the English version of Monopoly. Somehow, the conventional game became more exciting because the wild American suggested all manner of trades and sales of property on the side. I think the others were a bit baffled.

I am writing in detail about this weekend because it describes the habits and mores of a segment of the British population at the time, as well as my own personal experience and one origin of lasting friendships. It was a new experience for me to place my shoes outside the bedroom door and find them polished on Sunday morning. It was also a new experience for me to go down to breakfast and not to see the family in the dining room. The table was set for breakfast, but I saw no one until my gaze rested on the chairs that had been drawn back from the table. A family member was kneeling beside each chair. I slipped down next to the only empty chair and listened to Mr. Cumber’s lengthy prayer. Leslie Strang told me later somewhat irreverently that the prayer had to be long to atone for the high prices charged at the meat market during the week. We all went to the Chapel for a children’s day service and returned to what I called “the best dinner I had had in England.” After dinner, I took a walk with John through the meadows, where he showed me the prowess of his sheep dog, “Mac”, and he extricated a sheep from the brook behind the house. Then, Ellen took me for a ride in her little MG (there were four cars in that family) all around the countryside near Theale, returning to the house for tea. It was then back to Oxford for me in time for “hall.”

I hosted a theater party in Oxford two weeks later as a response to the Cumber hospitality. Ellen and John Cumber, together with Kitty Sparvell, came up from Theale for a tour around Lincoln College, dinner at the Clarendon Hotel, and the comedy, “French Without Tears.”

I was invited to Theale again, this time for Christmas, 1937, before I departed England for a skiing vacation in Seefeld-in-Tyrol, Austria. When I arrived at The Chestnuts, I found Ellen to be engaged in gilding radiators because they had just installed central heating. I had had plenty of experience at this when I was an underclassman living in the fraternity house at Lehigh, so I took over the chore. The house was decorated with ivy and pine and some wreaths, but no Christmas tree. Stockings were hung by the fireplace, but John used an old potato sack and Ellen a pillowcase, with predictably unhappy consequences. We exchanged small gifts, but I was most content with the loan of a pair of John’s ski boots that
fitted me perfectly. After a Christmas sermon and service in the Chapel, followed by a light lunch, Mr. Cumber took John and me to a very good professional soccer match between Reading and Swindon Town, won by the former 2 to 1. We returned for tea, at which Kitty and her father and mother were guests, along with other members of the family. After a suitable time interval, we had a traditional Christmas dinner: turkey, stuffing, sausage, vegetables, potatoes, pudding, fruit, nuts, and strong cheese, all with second helpings. Then, after dinner, the minister and his wife, who played organ and piano, arrived, and we sang carols all together for the rest of the evening. I felt welcome and so enriched by this Christmas experience!

There were new friends to be met on the Ski Club Tyrol's outing to Seefeld, Austria. Assigned to Chalet Artus, I was put in a room with two others from Oxford, David Harris and Adam Curle of New College. They were good pals and were not happy to have a stranger crowded in their room, especially an American of unguaranteed behavior and habits. Nevertheless, when they discovered that I behaved myself and tried to be considerate without interfering with the life of their ski group, they accepted me and began to include me in their evening parties at cafes where there was dancing. David and I were on the same learning curve as beginners in skiing. He was an exceptionally fine person, and we became good friends during the 1.7 years that remained for us both at Oxford. My youngest son is named after David Harris, who lost his life while a tank commander during the conflict in North Africa. The Ski Club members, although assigned to sleeping quarters in various chalets, came together for lunch and dinner in the Hotel Karwendelhof, thus providing opportunities to meet and talk with others in the group. Bob Harmon and Bruce Waybur, Rhodes Scholars of my year, were also in the Club. Later in January, we had a reunion of some of the Seefeld "veterans", complete with Austrian recordings and with some of the girls in Tyrolean costume. The evening was so enjoyable that we decided to have regular get-togethers. In order to justify our existence, we (about ten of us) decided to adopt a Basque child (in France) at ten shillings per week. It will be
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remembered that in the ongoing Spanish Civil War, the German Air Force “assisted” Franco by bombing civilian targets in the northern, Basque territory, e.g., Guernica. We then became the AAFTSOOBC—Anglo-American Association for the Support of One Basque Child—at dues of one shilling per week, and we had many agreeable meetings in the name of our orphaned child, for as long as Austria (our ski home) remained free. Of that group, it was David Harris who remained the closest friend. Other friends were made during subsequent vacations, and their names will be found in appropriate sequence in this narrative as the contacts developed.

There were serious attempts by the Rhodes Trust and the friends thereof to help acquaint the Rhodes Scholars with Britain and the British. At the end of Michaelmas Term, December, 1937, we were treated to “London Week,” a series of social engagements that now almost certainly belong to a bygone era. That is exactly why they are worth recording—for a taste of London social life before the second World War. Les Epstein and I took up lodging in a private boarding house in Kensington Gardens Square (bathroom down the hall). Our first event was a soiree in the home of Miss Macdonald of the Isles. There in Cadogen Square, we were entertained by a soprano soloist, violinist, and several people who recited. All this was interspersed by group singing and followed by a light supper. Morning was set aside for the British Museum, where Les and I spent all our time looking at the products of archeological expeditions to Egypt and the site of ancient Babylon, while telling ourselves we would have to make many return visits. We took luncheon with those of the English high society and friends—a Mrs. Anstey, deaf but a very interesting conversationalist, and two young misses who kept us “entertained” with tales of hare and hound. After luncheon, we were guided all around Parliament by Sir Francis Freemantle, who had been a member of the House of Commons for 18 years. He was an interesting guide and a jolly fellow, and he invited us to tea.

After tea, we rushed off to dress for dinner at the Clothworkers Company. This is one of the twelve London City companies. It was originally a trade union of clothworkers, but is now a society of sons of sons, etc., of clothworkers; that is, inherited members. It is a tremendously rich organization, the chief functions of which are to give away money and to entertain. There is a master or president, and said master always gives the Company a beautiful piece of gold or silver plate upon completion of his term. Since the Company was started in 1528, there is a terrific amount of gold and silver lying about and being used in the serving. The honored guest of the evening (there were always “honored guests”) was Princess Maria Louise, cousin of King George V. There were over 200 guests, of whom probably 120 were Rhodes scholars and dominion
students, at the feast. According to the preserved menu, there were oysters, clear turtle soup, lobster, sweetbreads, saddle of mutton, mousse of ham and truffles, iced souffle praline, petit fours, cheese savories, dessert, and coffee. Among the six accompanying wines or liqueurs were a Madeira of 1877, a sherry of 1899, and a port of 1912. The lady to my right was holding forth, complaining about teetotalers during at least three courses, when she suddenly and belatedly noticed that my wine glasses were all turned over. I enjoyed the shocked, unbelieving look on her face, but I let her off the hook by stating that I was in training for crew. We were entertained following the dinner by speeches, a soprano soloist, and a mental telepathy demonstration.

The letter written to my mother on December 10, 1937, describes a walk through Hyde Park on the next (foggy) morning and taking Kitty Sparvell to see a rugby match at Twickenham, Oxford 17—Cambridge 4, in the afternoon. We sat with a group of Lincoln boys who murmured sporadically, “Well played, Oxford” or just “Oxford.” I yelled very worthwhile encouragement, such as “Come on, boys,” or “Let’s go,” but I didn’t indulge in “Kill them,” a sometime accompaniment of American football. After tea and seeing Kitty off at Paddington Station, Les Epstein, Farny Fowle, and I went to the Royal Opera House for a production of “The Barber of Seville” in English. The next day included a visit to the Tower of London; lunch in the home of a wealthy philanthropist, a Mrs. Henderson, a collector of Chinese antiques; a visit to the General Post Office and the tiny postal subway 80 feet below street level, where mail is whisked around and bags are set off at all the principal postal district stations, and the International Telephone Exchange center; a formal dinner with a Mrs. Nauheim, who provided three young ladies for Epstein, Fowle, and Leonard to escort to the Goldsmith’s Ball (another ornate City Company); and a visit to Covent Garden to watch the arrival of flowers and vegetables at 3 a.m. Les and I were in bed by 4 a.m., rising in time for lunch and a bus trip to Windsor Castle, guided by Mr. Morehouse, the King’s personal librarian, and to Eton, concluding with tea with Lord Hugh Cecil, Eton’s Provost. Dinner in the Strand Corner House and then a variety show at the Windmill Theater owned—or at least partially owned—by Mrs. Henderson concluded the strenuous London Week.

Then, it was back to Oxford for the strongly contrasting period of laboratory work during the vacation. For non-science students, the two six-week vacations and the three-month summer vacation were generally used for reading at home plus some travel. For laboratory science students, some three to four weeks immersion in practical work was necessary in the short vacs, and two to three months in the long vac. The college
facilities were not available during the vacations; accordingly, I moved into “digs,” generally into a small house in Tackley Place, North Oxford. The rooming house that I favored was run by a Mrs. Brucker, widow of a highly thought-of preparatory school teacher who had died much too early to have provided an inheritance income. With limited kitchen facilities—an English problem in those days—she managed to provide hearty breakfasts, hot meals at noon, and suppers consisting of soup, cold meat, fruit, crackers, and cheese. The charge for room and board was 35 shillings (about $9) per week for the four regular boarders and the two students who were boarding during the vacs. The very proper menage was run on a punctual schedule, for there was only one bathroom. When I caught a cold that developed into laryngitis, Mrs. Brucker was very motherly. There was a hot Ovaltine provided at bedtime, and I would find my pyjamas wrapped around a hot water bottle that was placed in my bed. When I finally had to remain in bed, hot lemonade and meals and the usual medications, aspirin and Vicks, were brought to me.

There were two other members of the household who became my friends: Spot, an overfed terrier, and Tobias, a tiger cat. When I occupied the single bedroom on the first floor, Spot could detect when I would lie down in bed. He would push his way through the weakly latched door for his nightly back scratch. I didn’t have to do anything, however. The sagging springs of the bed with me in it were just the right height for his back as he walked to and fro underneath until he was satisfied. Tobias used me in a different way. He normally slept quietly in the garden, but especially on moonlit nights he seemed to adopt a different persona. He would leap up onto the sill of my open window and pose silhouetted against the full moon. From there, he would pounce upon my bed, knead a spot to curl up, and settle down purringly for part of the night. He was always gone by morning.

As I have been reading through the letters after these many years, I have been analyzing the character of one NJL almost objectively. From 1937 into 1938, he seems impressionable, unfocused, and even uncertain as to what he is supposed to accomplish at Oxford. I am a little impatient with him because he is not being selective among all of the opportunities, among the people with whom he spends his time, about the English habit of taking tea, about a political stance in a crumbling world. Perhaps he is in the process of sampling everything and everyone and will soon make up his mind on major points. I should be more patient with him. A letter of February 10, 1938, included the following:

"Oxford must be growing on me. I thrilled at the sight of the towers and spires under the beautiful moon this evening—white clouds
MORE THAN A MEMOIR

skipping across the silvery sky. I am truly a fortunate boy (sic, at 21!) for I do appreciate everything about this place.”

Later, in the month, the February 22, 1938, letter stated:

“... I feel I have found my place, for I am kept busy with my own circle of interests and friends.”

“For such is the source of research; I am merely testing myself to see whether my interest withstands difficulties and disappointments and plain laziness. I think it shall (sic)!”

“My politics are becoming more socialistic in proximity to... Europe’s dictators.”

Finally, a letter of April 10, 1938, gave me reassurance that NJL was acquiring purpose:

“I feel now as though I am putting behind me pride in small honors and happiness in the praise of friends and relatives—and modestly, earnestly attempting to build a pattern and a purpose for my short life on earth. I feel that I am a grown man in that I now realize that the problem that confronts me is the problem of life—not temporal and varied problems of temporary aims and successes—but the problem of using all the scientific knowledge that I can gain for the benefit of people—for you and Dad, and for people in general. All my time now must be spent in building up that knowledge, in building up, then, more strongly my spiritual and moral character, and in determining helpful political and philosophical convictions to guide me in relations with people.”

Well, now we are getting somewhere! In the meantime, there was a spring vacation to be taken for pleasure after living the first half of it at Mrs. Brucker’s and in the Dyson-Perrins Laboratory. Jean Harris, David’s sister, drove down from Staffordshire, to return with David, who had also been studying after term, and me. I met their parents and saw their wonderful house, named “Washdale,” in Stone, Staffordshire. We toured and hiked in Staffordshire and in neighboring Derbyshire. Then, we took the train to London to see the Oxford-Cambridge boat race on the Thames River (about 4.5 miles). The race is probably important to view once in a lifetime, which we did on this occasion from the glass-enclosed roof of a house situated advantageously just at a bend in the river, with good visibility
to both east and west. In 1938, Oxford won by two lengths in very rough water, so rough that both crews had water up to their ankles by the time the race was over. After seeing a play in London with four members of the Cumber family, John Cumber drove us to Theale for a quiet weekend. I sang a solo in the Theale chapel as a kind of payment for the continuing Cumber hospitality. From Theale, it was on to London and thence to Harwich by boat train for the overnight crossing of the North Sea to Hoek-of-Holland. It was arranged that I would stay as a paying guest in Naarden with Bob and Grace Vermey. I referred to Grace as “Aunt Grace.” She was the daughter of one of my mother’s good friends whom I had known since early boyhood. Bob and Grace had four daughters, of 13, 11, 10 and 1½ years, and there was help in the house, especially for the “baby.” Our common language was a mixture of Dutch and English, although Bob spoke German, French, and Spanish as well.

Should a reader be interested in such details? Probably not, but patience will be rewarded since this Vermey family proved the means whereby my destiny—or a good part of it—would be fulfilled. It was in my romantic nature to approach everything and everybody with an open mind and open heart. Impressions of my two weeks with the Vermeys were concentrated on the beauty of the towns and countryside, the food, the people including friends and in-laws of Grace, bicycling, inventing games for the girls, movies (French), the Dutch Reformed Church on Palm Sunday (very serious, two sermons), and, finally, Henri Vermey, Grace’s brother-in-law, and two of his daughters and their mansion in ’s Graveland, North Holland. In my letters to my mother, at first I did not even mention the names of Grace’s nieces, Louise Cornelie (Nell) and Hilda, the youngest. The oldest sister, Els, was in Paris at the time, learning Russian in the home of some émigrés. In the successive letters to my mother, I spoke of “the nieces,” “the very attractive niece,” then “Nell” and “attracted by that lovely niece again,” and, when I had returned to Oxford, “Nell, the blue-eyed, captivating niece.” I suspect that mother was capable of reading between the lines. When I left home, she had expressed the fear that I would marry while I was abroad and would never return to the U.S. I was probably breaking the news of my attraction carefully so as not to alarm her. However, my attraction really occurred more precipitously. Here is my best recollection of what happened.

Henri Jacques (Hein) Vermey had shown up in Naarden for a lunch, I believe, to size up the American who was visiting from Oxford and to see if it would be agreeable (and safe) to introduce him to his daughters. I was invited to Westerveld, the name of their house, to play tennis. I cycled to ’s Graveland—I had rented a bicycle for my two weeks—and I
was invited in and asked to wait in the library for the family to appear. Nell was the first to enter. She was in a tennis costume and had played a set already. I was overwhelmed by this figure of healthiness: a tall, beautiful blond with rosy cheeks and deep blue eyes that seemed to peer into your soul. Her English was perfect; her manner, most gracious; her lips, sensuous. I had never been so affected by seeing anyone for the first time. I thought, “Oh, no, this can’t be happening to me! I’m too young! I’m only 21! This is the girl I’ve got to marry! I wanted time to look around, to travel, to explore, but now I have to spend all of my vacations with Nell, trying to convince her that I am worthy of her.” And that is what happened. It was also early in life for her. Nell was only 18.

Hilda was a good tennis player for her age, Nell was excellent, and her father was a real pro. Hein played to win at all sports. I was a tennis amateur, but I loved the game. I did better at ping-pong, and Hein taught me some of the finer points of billiards. Nell and I walked and talked along the canals, in the beechwoods, and among the heather. We took long bicycle rides in the beautiful region of Het Gooi. The tennis morning had stretched to two days or more and Hein drove us to see the bulb fields, the new airport, and an animal billed as “the fattest pig in the world” on one of the many surrounding farms. In the evenings, we listened to Nell’s records and the old music box that was (and still is) a family treasure.

When I was back in Naarden with Bob and Grace, Hein asked me to go with him for dinner and an evening of bridge at his parents’ house in Bussum. Luckily, my bridge was up to Hein’s expectations, along with the simple Dutch that I was taught as the game progressed. He took to calling me “old boy” by the time the evening was over, and we were good friends from that time onwards. Portraits of Els, Nell, and Hilda graced the wall of the grandparents’ living room. The portrait of Nell, even at a young age, probably 13 or 14, was captivating. When Nell came to Naarden for a traditional performance of Bach’s “St. Matthew Passion” (in two parts) in the old church, she had lunch at Grace’s. Since I had just sung the work in Oxford, we had pleasure in going over the score, especially where Dr. Thomas Armstrong had shown the choir members the figurations in the musical notes as they appeared here and there, imaging the words as they were sung.

What other contacts did we have? We went to see Greta Garbo in “Maria Walewska”; the whole family was together at Westerveld for the traditional egg hunt in the garden; I met a crowd of young people also at Westerveld, friends of the family, for an evening of fun and games; and there was a goodbye visit when Nell drove to Naarden and we planned how we would meet in the summer.
Nell was far from realizing that I was the man she was going to marry, but I was gratified that she liked me. She wrote to her mother Anna (Theodora Caesarina) about the young American she had met. Her mother, in a protective mode, suggested that I was probably interested in Nell only because of the fine house, the garden, and the tennis court, or at least that these symbolized wealth, which probably had been the attractant. “You know about those wild Americans! Didn’t he misbehave?” When Nell was unmoved, even amused by her mother’s reply, Anna countered that my father probably sat around the house in his undershirt. This class-conscious rejoinder, which Nell described to me, was made even funnier by my contemplation of my father, the fastidious dresser. He never allowed me to appear in a vest (waistcoat). I had to have a suit coat on as well. An undershirt? Not even to be mentioned!

Back in Oxford, I seemed to concentrate better on the trio of chemistry, rowing, and music during the spring term. There was some visiting and some entertainment as well. Rodney Parsons, a Lincoln student in chemistry, invited me for a weekend to his home in Hazlemere, Kent. The family consisted of his parents, an older brother, Tony, who was away at the time, and a younger sister, Rosemary, who was at school. Rodney’s father was a gruff, practical fellow who had been a mining engineer in Rhodesia. His mother was very sweet and kind. She assured me that I would always be welcome in Hazlemere whether her sons and daughter were there or not. I did visit on several occasions, and I did get to know Tony and Rose and kept up with them until this time. The Parsons family had a manservant who unpacked my bag, hung up my suit, and placed the other clothes in drawers, all directly upon my arrival. It was a new experience for me. I remember walks and drives, meeting Rodney’s friends, and visiting his aunts who always moved about in pony carts. They had no car or bicycles. I remember being coached by Rodney about what is appropriate to be said about a pony, so that this American would not make a gaffe. After all, what would you say about a pony to people who spent their lives professionally with the little animals? You do not want to appear to be utterly naive or to admire them only for their cuteness.

In May of 1938, I wrote of going to a formal dance together with Jean and David Harris and Adam Curle. It was necessary to be back in College by midnight, so there was always a mad scramble for taxis when such affairs were held during term. I had a luncheon party for this group plus our hostesses in my room on the following Saturday. My “scout” did the serving. The food was provided by Lincoln’s kitchen according to my requested menu. This procedure proved to be a very impressive way of entertaining that I used on special occasions. In the afternoon, there was
punting on the Cherwell, the little river that flows into the Thames. Partyng continued with a drive down to Pirbright, Surrey, where we distributed ourselves in the houses of some of the people with whom we had been in Austria during Christmas vacation. There were about 30 young people in all. We danced to gramophone and radio until the early hours of the morning. The house party ended on Sunday after tennis, ping-pong, walking, and eating—lots of eating.

We drove back to Oxford in David's car, about 50 miles. When we were about three miles outside Oxford, we were the first to arrive on the scene of a motor accident which had occurred just in front of us. One car had overturned, its wheels still spinning, and one car was in the ditch. Both were almost completely wrecked. David and I began extricating people from the upside down wreckage. First, there was a man who had bad vein cuts in his head and wrists. These I bandaged with four clean handkerchiefs I had with me. Second was a woman who was in shock and was a bit bumped. Third was a man uninjured. When we asked how many there had been in the car, the answer "four" made us dive in again to pull out the last one, unconscious. We thought he might be dead, but he was only bruised. His false teeth had cut his mouth and throat. To add to the general melee, a drunk from the ditch car—or perhaps he was just a passerby—was rolling about in the gutter. In addition, a motorcyclist ran smack into the wreckage. He was only shaken up, but he moaned a lot. David and I took two injured to the hospital, the hysterical one home, and we left the rest to cope with the constable. We reached our respective colleges just before midnight. I was useless in the inquiry about the accident when the judge determined that I, as a witness, did not even know the kinds of cars that were involved. I did try to make the point, unsuccessfully, that the dynamics of the collision could not be determined by the final resting places of the vehicles. The upside-down vehicle that was still on the road was judged at fault. I can't remember whether the direction the ditch vehicle was really traveling had been determined.

After I had spent five or six weeks of the summer vac at Mrs. Brucker's place, while working hard in the Dyson-Perrins laboratory, I was ready to travel. My mother had written to me early in the year along the lines of "Wouldn't it be nice if you could arrange a European trip with Ed Meury when he comes across the Atlantic this summer?" I had spent a lot of time finding out what sights we had to see, how we would move about, and where we would stay. The goal was to see the maximum at the lowest cost and still be comfortable. I shall record only the highlights. First, I ensconced Ed and his friend, Earl, a lawyer in study and later a judge, in our favorite (cheap) bed-and-breakfast in Knightsbridge, and I left them
to see London on their own while I returned to Oxford. I was their guide for the City and University and, by rented car, we caught glimpses of Oxfordshire and Warwickshire, including Stratford and Shottery for the cottages of Shakespeare and Ann Hathaway, Kenilworth for the remains of the castle of John of Gaunt that had been destroyed by Oliver Cromwell; Warwick Castle, the home of the Earl of Warwick; and Banbury Cross, made famous by the nursery rhyme.

After all that, we were off to the continent, crossing Newhaven to Dieppe and then by boat train through family farm country to Paris, where we stayed in the Hotel Liberia in the Montparnasse section. We saw everything one is supposed to see in Paris and then more! The same was true in Geneva, Switzerland, where we stayed at the International Student House. I felt the long arm of my father reaching out because, while we were in Geneva, we were invited to hear a lecture (to students) by Salvador de Madriaga. He was an anti-Franco émigré author who had been the former Spanish ambassador to the U.S. and then to France. When he was in the U.S., he bought his specially tailored shirts—you guessed it—from my father in Saks Fifth Avenue. Señor de Madriaga was most gracious, most welcoming, and together we agreed that my father was an unusual gentleman.

Ed Meury and I were having a great time together, but Earl was in that "comparison with America" mood that seems to afflict some U.S. visitors when they are first confronted with Europe. They are unwilling to accept the differences, to relate to the history, and to enjoy the new experiences. Fortunately, Earl's mood began to change in Geneva. At first, he thought the International Student House was a dump. I had only promised him that it would be cheap. He objected to the generally agreed-upon custom of speaking only French in the hostel. Some of us did not say very much, but we tried! Was it the attractive young ladies who were also staying in the hostel with whom we ate at the long tables? Or, was it the fresh experience of traveling around the Lake of Geneva on a ferry that docked now on the Swiss shore, now on the French shore of that beautiful lake? Whatever the answer, Earl mellowed, and the threesome became more unified in their approach to further travels. In Lausanne, early on a Saturday morning, we hired a boat and rowed out a mile or two from shore. There was a slight mist hanging over the clear, deep blue water. There was only one thing to do under those ideal circumstances. We took off clothes and dove in for an invigorating dip. Travel around Switzerland was reasonable because of our 8-day Swiss tourist tickets (cost, about $10) which allowed us unlimited travel on the railroads and lake steamers. We continued on to Vevey and Montreux, with a side trip up the Rochers de Naye, then by
Bernese Oberland Railway to Interlaken and the Lakes of Thun and Brienz, and further to Luzern and Zürich.

During the overnight train trip to Vienna, we were the only people in the compartment. I slept (fitfully) in the baggage rack while Ed and Earl were stretched out on the wooden seats. Everything was fine until we stopped at Innsbruck, when three other people entered the compartment and all five had to sit up for the rest of the journey. I continued to sleep in the baggage rack. Any suitcases that the new passengers tried to place on my rack slid back down rather abruptly. We went on tours in and around Vienna, saw an out-of-doors presentation of an operetta, complete with coaches and horses appearing on the open-air stage, and spent a late evening on the Kahlenberg, the hill above Vienna, and at Grünsing for dancing, ending up in an all-night cafe near the opera in Vienna. The trip from Vienna to Budapest was by Danube steamer. One of my reasons for going to Hungary had to do with “currency equalization.” My Lincoln College friend, Alidar de Balla, a Hungarian, had gotten into trouble in Oxford and had to borrow the equivalent of $50 from me. Because of Hungarian currency restrictions, there was no way he could pay me back except within Hungary. I was thus on my way to a “free” vacation. Ali was the host and kept track of my expenditures. He was well off when in Hungary, so I felt he would be accurate in the accounting.

Our arrival in Budapest at about 10 p.m. was the most thrilling part of the whole journey. Budapest was beautiful at night and vibrant, with people walking about, especially along the Corso. The popular saying at that time was “Paris by day and Budapest by night.” Ali gave us a memorable Hungarian meal and the proposed itinerary for seeing all of the important sites of Budapest, which we did in the days that followed. He even arranged for us to go tea-dancing at the Hotel Palatinus on St. Margaret Isle in the wide part of the Danube. The mother of one of the two charming girls came along as a chaperone, as was the custom at that time. On the next day, we all went swimming in an outdoor pool that had artificial waves: twenty minutes of waves, then twenty minutes of quiet. The swimming was sandwiched between lunch and tea. In Ali’s mother’s apartment, we were treated to a wonderful dinner. The final course really surprised us. After the ice cream and cheeses, we were served a huge platter of corn on the cob. It was eaten with sugar or honey.

The unusual things that we saw in Budapest included Ali’s gymnasium or prep school, workers’ flats which his father had built about ten years earlier, and villas and gardens on János Hegy, the hill overlooking the city—all of these in addition to the usual tourist sights. Leaving Ed and Earl to fend for themselves in Budapest, Ali and I went by train down to
the Lake of Balaton for a short but memorable stay in a quaint cottage on the lake shore with friends of his. The strongest impressions retained relate to the home-cooked food, the fresh-caught fish that was served differently at each meal, sailing, swimming just as the moon was rising, having dinner with moonlight sweeping in through the open side of the cottage, and listening to gypsy country music. Ali’s debt to me was amply paid. When we returned to Budapest, we found that Ed and Earl had been spending their available funds too fast. Accordingly, they were going to have to shorten their stay in Salzburg.

The Anschluss had taken place between my winter visit to Seefeld and the summer visit to Salzburg. Nazi flags were hanging everywhere, which gave the impression that some great athletic contest, with political overtones, was being celebrated instead of the traditional, cultural music festival of Salzburg, Austria. The town was full of soldiers, marching youths, and German tourists in guided flocks. There were some changes in the program that had originally been scheduled, for example, the substitution of the play “Amphitryon” by von Kleist for “Jedermann.” However, it was still possible to be absorbed completely in the music. The range went from organ recitals and a very agreeable “Te Deum” of Joseph Messner through orchestral music of Franck, Brahms, Debussy, E. Porrino, and Nicola Porpora to “Don Giovanni” (the fabulous pair, Ezio Pinza and Elizabeth Rethberg, were the soloists) and “Tannhäuser” (the soloists were not as accomplished as those heard in the U.S.). The final performance during my time in Salzburg was Goethe’s “Egmont,” with the great actor Ewald Balser as the lead. I could follow the play because I had waded through the German during the afternoon preceding the performance. Staging may have been the most impressive feature of the Salzburg Festival as I experienced it.

I was now on my own. I traveled by train through Rothenberg ob der Tauber, Nürnberg and Frankfurt to Mainz, by Rhine steamer from Mainz to Koblenz, and by train again to Utrecht. My destination was Katwijk aan See, which I reached by train, trolley, and on foot. Aunt Grace had taken a small apartment there with the four girls, and I had a rented room across a narrow street in this small Dutch village on the North Sea. The crowd of children with whom the girls played on the beach (all under fourteen) adopted me as an extra kid and as a kind of scoutmaster to dream up new and crazy things for them to do together. I was also a volunteer lifeguard for swimming and a tour leader for hikes up and down the beach. The week passed quickly while I waited for Nell and her family to return from a trip through Norway. Their house in ’s Graveland was to be the site of my second week in Holland. The departure from Katwijk
was touching. All of the children with whom I had made friends, some twenty of them, came to see me off and marched alongside the trolley as it was leaving Katwijk aan See.

In Naarden-Bussum, the railroad stop for 's Graveland, I was met by Nell and her sister Els, whom I was seeing for the first time. Nell was "as lovely as I thought when I saw her at Easter time and have been imagining ever since" (letter of August 30, 1938), which was reassuring. Els had studied extensively and was a great conversationalist on any subject. Their father's sense of humor was delightful, as I had observed earlier. Their mother evinced a somewhat harsh impression, but, for me, she appeared very sweet and generous in her inner feelings. I never had any reason to alter that opinion while she lived. My twenty-second birthday was celebrated in great style on September 1st, but not as impressively as that of the Queen, with fireworks on August 31st! My letters declared that I had enjoyed the finest week of the vacation and of the year. A skiing holiday was suggested for the next time Nell and I could be together.

When the new term started in the fall of 1938, I moved into new quarters in Lincoln College, a very cozy suite above the Wesley Room. The latter was made famous by the earlier occupancy of the founder of the Methodist denomination. I gained an instant library of wonderful old books that were really on loan, in safe keeping for my Lincoln colleague Heinz Arndt, who was off to spend a year at the London School of Economics. Heinz's father was well known to me for his chemical reputation. He had been a Professor in Germany, but had left the country shortly after Hitler came to power to become a Professor of Chemistry in Istanbul and certainly Turkey's most distinguished academic at that time. I enjoyed being surrounded by Heinz's books. They stimulated me in my own purchases. From that period onward, I was never without a growing library of my own unrelated to my science. Other influences appeared in the form of university lectures. Simon Flexner spoke on the changing character of research institutes. Reinhold Niebuhr spoke on what Christianity could find acceptable in capitalist and in socialist economic theory and practice. The Bishop of London spoke on moral guidance for young people. In the realm of chemistry, Professors Debye (Germany the Netherlands, Cornell University, U.S.) and Pauling (California Institute of Technology) astonished us with their brilliance. Discussions with fellow students in the laboratory, in the hall at dinner, and in my room late at night provided a wonderfully scholastic atmosphere. On the political side, I became the Honorary Secretary of the Lincoln College Labour Club, which provided a venue for topical political discussion. One had to be careful not to spell this as the "Labor Club" in posting notices of meetings because then it
would be nicknamed the "American Club." Incidentally, my fellow Rhodes Scholar Howard K. Smith was running the parent University of Oxford Labour Club. The to-be-famous correspondent and writer speaks about this political activity in his autobiography. The related British Labour Party was the only effective anti-Hitler organization operating in England at that time. The Liberal Party was only as effective as its small representation allowed.

October of 1938 brought two Rhodes Scholars into residence who had been examined with me in the district selections of 1936. Chadbourne Gilpatric, a philosopher from Harvard who had not been selected for the 1937 class, tried again and "came up" in 1938. James Gardner, a lawyer in the making, was selected in my year but was diagnosed with tuberculosis and had to delay matriculation until 1938 when his lungs were clear. I enjoyed seeing Gil and Jim again, and I was able to share their company from time to time during my final year. In describing music at Oxford (above), I have already mentioned Leigh Gerdine, the musician, who arrived in Lincoln College with the 1938 class of scholars. Chemistry was my chief occupation. I concentrated on research and skipped most of the lectures. Music and sports filled the rest of my time. October again was the most beautiful month of the year and the best period for bicycle rides on the weekends. The pattern of moving into "digs" at the end of each term in 1938-1939 was unaltered. I was invited to the Harrises for Christmas. David Harris' father was the director of one of the Staffordshire potteries and kindly gave me a tour of his very modern works that made diversified products. David, Jean, their younger brother and sister, and I sang Christmas carols tolerably well together, and the "boys" brought in a yule log that had been cut and aged in the woods nearby. The Harris Family "dressed" for dinner each night. That is, the men wore tuxedos and the women, long skirts. It was a new experience for me. One of their horses tolerated my riding, which is saying something for the horse. As a family, we trekked across the snow-dusted fields to the village church to attend the service on Christmas Day. Mrs. Harris was most generous and hospitable. We kept in touch long after she had lost all the men in her family. She was always interested in my progress with "my Dutch girl."

After Christmas, David, Jean and I took the train to London to join with others, including Angela Priestley, the daughter of J.B., for a skiing holiday in Switzerland. I was to leave them in Basel and join them again on the way home. The train from Holland connected with ours in Basel; accordingly, I could transfer my luggage to the compartment occupied by Nell and Els. I could also introduce David to Nell, if only briefly. Nell and I were both tired from our long, separate journeys. It took some time to
become reacquainted and to remember that we had come these many, many miles in order to be together. I think it was the last time that there appeared to be a glass wall between us when we would meet again after months apart.

Our ski destination was Parpan in the Graubünden, which was reached by train to Chur and connecting bus. The girls, including a friend of Els from Basel, Margaret Holliger, and I stayed in rooms in a small pension and took our meals in the adjacent small hotel. At the start of the skiing vacation, I found that tolerance and patience could be added to the list of Nell’s sterling qualities. I was eager to show her how well I could ski after last year’s experience in Seefeld by demonstrating on a small hill with bumps. At the first bump, one ski went up in the air and descended on the opposite side. I managed to stay upright with legs crossed until I crashed at the bottom of the hill, breaking one ski but no leg. When Nell was assured that I was uninjured, she simply helped me gather the pieces together and escorted me to the ski shop, where she assisted in the rental of new skis. Imagine my chagrin and embarrassment, together with my thankfulness for her calm behavior. Snow fell heavily for three days; then, there was sunshine. The tree branches were heavily laden with snow. My boyish temptation was to shake the branches when Nell walked underneath. She vetoed such action with a simple statement, “I trust you completely.” The phrase became our watchword. What could, in fact, be a better guide to a loving relationship during all our lives?

We took ski lessons, toured cross-country, climbed (on skins) with a guide, and descended—with occasional interruptions—through the crusted, deep snow into Lenzerheide, where we had tea and took the bus back to Parpan. We also went skijoring behind a sleigh. The Parpan ski teacher who guided me on special excursions and private ski tours was R. Capadrutt. He had been the Olympic single bobsled champion (luge) at Lake Placid in the 1932 Olympics at only eighteen. We got to know each other quite well and became good friends. He was very kind in taking me on some excellent and fairly difficult tours. Imaging my shock and sadness when I read, only one month later, that on the first day of the St. Moritz games, racing for the grand prix, he had crashed off the bobsled run and had hit a tree. It seemed impossible that he was gone. He was such a fine fellow, always smiling and enjoying life with great enthusiasm. That was probably the last occasion in competition when anyone used a hand-and-rope-steered luge, which had been his specialty.

We had some days in January when rest was necessary to mend bruises and twisted knees and ankles. On these days, covered with blankets, we basked in the sun and talked about “life.” We also frequented the
ubiquitous cafes and tearooms in Parpan and talked about “life.” We were exploring, getting to know each other better and better. Nell asked deep questions, such as, “Do you believe in eternity?” and “Do you think that different generations can really understand and appreciate each other?” There were dances at our little hotel and, on New Year’s Eve, at one of the larger hotels in Parpan. We tried to learn the swirling, fast waltz of the Swiss—Nell with one of the ski teachers—and we invented our own version of the tango, amusing everyone including ourselves. My habits, speech, or appearance seemed to have changed because I was not taken once to be an American, but instead an Englishman, a Hollander, or even a Swiss. I did not want that holiday to end. However, the girls stayed on in Parpan, and I joined David Harris’ party in Chur for the return journey to England. David and I were able to stretch out because the others had sleepers, which left us with the rail compartment to ourselves. We tramped the streets of Paris after breakfast and endured a very rough crossing of the channel in the afternoon. I was not sick but had to remain prone and silent throughout the crossing. David’s uncle met us and drove us to Chalfont St. Giles, where we spent the night, refreshed by dinner and a bath. It was back to Oxford the next afternoon. Movies of the Parpan holiday turned out very well. When I heard from Nell in February, she sent me a tin of homemade applesauce, “really delicious.” She had remembered my stated wish that I would find a woman who could make good applesauce. Happy nonsense!

The world situation was deteriorating rapidly during 1939 while Nell and I were discovering personal happiness. With retreat and slaughter, Barcelona fell to the fascists, completing the conquest of Spain’s duly-elected government by Franco with the help of the Italians and Germans, who were testing new military weaponry. Fears and premonitions following München (1938) were being substantiated. Czechoslovakia was allowed to fall to Hitler without military conquest. Grace and Bob Vermey and the four girls left for the United States, partly because of the worsening situation in Europe and partly because of Bob’s poor business prospects. I am certain that Nell’s father and mother paid for their trip across the Atlantic and for their resettling in the United States. It was a very wise move and well timed. I anticipated that France would be Hitler’s next point of attack but it was to be Poland’s turn instead from the Polish Corridor “agreement” to the start of World War II in September. In Oxford, meanwhile, the Jooss Ballet performed “The Green Table,” a macabre ballet of war and temporary peace that was most effective. I found that well-performed ballet with a social theme is capable of drawing one right into it and eliciting the same intensity of emotion experienced in watching a good play.
I thought I should learn something about the industrial north of England, which I did painlessly in March by joining a tour, sponsored by the Oxford Society, of Newcastle-on-Tyne and Tyneside. On the way north, the train passed through Nottingham and Sheffield. The London-Northeastern Railway also afforded glimpses of the York Minster Cathedral and Durham Cathedral and Castle. I stayed with two Lincoln College friends, Michael Sharp and Mark Green, in one of the hostels attached to Kings College, Durham University. At dinner, I was the guest of the Archdeacon of Northumberland as we listened to several speeches devoted to the problems of the Tyneside region that embraced about 800,000 inhabitants. On the first day, we saw, from the launch of the Tyne Improvement Commission plying the first twelve miles from the mouth of the River Tyne: the Vickers factory; many ships old and new, including the Mauretania, which was being broken up and scrapped; the battleship George V, Britain’s newest and recently launched; and the Walker and Neptune shipping yards, with ships in various stages of production. On the second day, we inspected the Ashington Colliery, or coal mine, both above ground and underground at the 500-foot level, where we rode the donkey trains and watched the coal veins being dynamited and the coal being collected and loaded. We also visited the Stothwood Colliery, where an aluminous fireclay was found in veins along with the coal and a fireclay works had been developed. There followed a discussion with Trade Union Leaders in Newcastle on attempted improvement in the conditions of the workers. The final day was busy, too. It included a before-breakfast inspection of a fish trawler, distribution and sale of the fish; inspection of slum clearance schemes; and finally, the viewing of a new trading estate where light industries were being started. I have no idea what happened to all of this when Hitler started the blitzing of England’s cities. At the time, it all looked encouraging in an area that had been badly depressed. I was lucky to have seen a cross-section of life and work that was not usually visible to university students and especially not to foreign students. I returned to Oxford with a greater appreciation of the working class and of the friendliness of the people in Northern England. It was all part of the “awakening” that was occurring during the Oxford years and that I was trying to relate to my parents in my regular letters. The letters might prepare them to receive a different person when I was to return home. I recommended that my parents read “Betrayal in Central Europe” by G.E.R. Gadye and “The Mortal Storm” by Phyllis Bottome in order to understand somewhat better what was going on in Europe.

David Harris and I had been planning a bicycle tour of Ireland during the latter part of the vacation. However, he decided he had to study, and
Nell, whom I had invited to visit me in England, convinced her father to come along as a chaperone, which made it possible. In those years, it was considered improper in good European families for a young lady to visit a young man, both unmarried, and especially in another country, without family being present on one side or the other. The dates selected for the visit were April 5-13, 1939, and they were to be mighty full, according to my planned schedule. Hein was kind and diplomatic enough to leave us alone from time to time; also, when he was with us, he paid the bills for meals, lodging, and admission tickets. The arrangement couldn’t have been better, and Nell and I had a marvelous time, cementing a relationship that we hoped would last forever. She had never been to London. A general idea of its layout and the major points of interest were best obtained by riding on the tops of buses that traversed the city. There was the requisite visit to the British Museum to see the Elgin marbles, the Rosetta stone, the Magna Carta, and Greek and Roman statuary that interested Nell because of her study of muscles and anatomy. We observed Parliament in its last session before Easter adjournment, courtesy of Sir Francis Freemantle. I had to show Nell the Tower of London, St. Paul’s Cathedral, Westminster Abbey, Madame Tussaud’s Wax Works, Covent Garden Flower Market at 6 a.m. (Hein said, “I don’t believe I can make it!”), Kew Gardens, St. James Park, Hyde Park, and Hampstead Heath. On the occasion of Nell’s next visit to London in 1960, with all the children, she admitted to me that she had been nearly exhausted by the pace 21 years earlier, but she didn’t know how to reign in the enthusiastic guide. We had dinners, for example, in the Cheshire Cheese, the restaurant made famous by Boswell in his “Life of Samuel Johnson;” Adendino’s, a continental restaurant off Piccadilly Circus; and a Spanish restaurant. We went to a musical in the Drury Lane Theater; J.B. Priestley’s “When We Are Married,” a farcical comedy that takes place in a Yorkshire village; Handel’s “Messiah” performed in Albert Hall by the Royal Choir and the London Philharmonic Orchestra; and, finally, an ice hockey match and figure skating at Earls Court. I wrote to my mother, “We are having a fine time and we get along very well together. Nell is really perfect.”

We were lucky to have sunny weather for the Oxford part of the Vermeys’ visit. I enjoyed showing them the colleges and the most beautiful gardens. Edward Manning and Leigh Gerdine joined us for a dinner, which was followed by a short recital that I arranged for the visitors. Keith Murray loaned us his room and grand piano for the “concert,” which included some lieder sung by Manning, Chopin and contemporary Spanish music by Gerdine, and three songs by myself. “The evening was thoroughly successful,” I wrote to my mother. There was more sightseeing on the
next day, luncheon served in my Lincoln College room, and high tea at Mrs. Brucker’s. Hein was a bit uncertain about why he had to meet my “landlady,” but Nell realized that I was trying to acquaint her with a cross-section of my Oxford life that included my friend and provider during vacations. Supper was unneeded, and we went directly to an Oxford Repertory Theater production. On the final morning, Nell and I cycled along the Thames and through Wytham Village. In the afternoon, we joined her father, who had had business in London. I saw them off on the boat train for their crossing to Rotterdam. Nell and I were in love but concluded that we would probably not be able to marry until she could come to the United States and I had a reasonable job. We considered that it might take several years under the “unsettled” international conditions. How about eight years, which became the reality? Nell had anticipated from young girlhood that she would spend most of her life outside the Netherlands, which no doubt helped her conclude that it could be with me in the U.S.A.

The final Oxford term started well enough. Sidgwick and Sutton returned from trips abroad. They were satisfied with my work but puzzled by some of the results, which suggested additional experiments, luckily definitive. Early crew practice presaged promising results in the end-of-term bumping races. We were veterans, accustomed to synchrony and hard pulling, which made late afternoons on the Thames delightful. The other Rhodes Scholars were returning from adventuresome holidays with tales of coming conflict. As a group, we concluded that Britain would be at war within a year. As individuals, we shared ideas about what each one of us would do under the circumstances. For the immediate present, there were weekend parties that carried over into the summer vacation: at the Carringtons, who were David’s aunt and uncle; at the Parsons, which included the races at Henley; and at the home of the J.B. Priestleys, whom I met at the Carringtons’ party. Their house on Hampstead Heath was the scene of an elaborate bash that included great food, theatrical games, and dancing to an orchestra. There were starlets of stage and screen imported to match the number of extra males. I felt lucky to be a part of the exotic scene. I was an overnight guest of the Priestleys, and my roommate was a young cartoonist whose drawings appeared regularly in Punch. I saw my first small television set in that house. When the Priestleys heard that I was going on a trip to the U.S.S.R. later in the summer, they asked me to stop in after I returned and to report on my impressions. Priestley had royalties due in the U.S.S.R. relating to translation of his books and presentation of his plays. The royalties could be collected only if he would come to Russia. Parenthetically, he was unable to do this until well after the war.
After a stay at Mrs. Brucker's and intensive work in the Dyson Perrins Laboratory, I joined a student tour of the U.S.S.R. sponsored by the Labour Club. The trip, which included passage on a Russian freighter (limited passenger accommodations—four bunk beds to a cabin) between London and Leningrad, lasted from July 22 to August 15. I had signed up for the trip because I doubted that I would ever have another opportunity to see that country and because it was inexpensive. The voyage through the North Sea and the Baltic and then through the canal into Leningrad (now, once again, St. Petersburg) was notable because of all the traffic in those waters. We had time to become acquainted with our fellow passengers and tour guide and to become accustomed to the Russian fare that we were served and would be served throughout the trip. We toured the city's historic and architectural sites, visited the famous Hermitage and the University of Leningrad, and talked, through a translator, to groups of students, trade unionists, and local government officials. Travel by train overnight to Moscow was interesting in that no distinction was made as to sexes in the assignment of bunks, six of them to a compartment. My chief remembrance is that the conversation went on much too long. Fully or partially clothed, we were awakened in the morning by the car porter with a glass of tea.

Moscow is an impressive city, with the Red Square as its centerpiece, broad avenues that challenge pedestrian crossing, and the river that gives it a universal appeal. Once oriented, we found we could roam the city on foot and by the subway that was Moscow's pride. We were less conspicuous as visitors if we wore our shirts outside the pants, like a short-belted tunic. The Agricultural Fair, with its vast exhibits of equipment and produce, represented the very best relevant to the cooperative and state farms. There was no way for the innocent traveler to discern what was ideal and what was real. An event in the Dynamo Stadium left no doubt as to what was really the national sport—football (soccer)! We went to a play (was it Chekhov?), but even though we had read an outline, we were lost in the performance that was well appreciated by the rest of the audience. We visited a camp of young Comsomols who sang for us, and we sang for them. A segment of the Red Army Chorus sang for us in concert. I was strongly affected by the deep, deep notes that their bases were (and are) able to reach and by their high tenors singing in an unrestrained manner. The overtones that one hears from an unaccompanied chorus in perfect harmony provide an emotional musical experience. Small army groups paraded about the city. Traffic police were clearly in evidence and were strictly obeyed. While we attended a garden reception at the British Embassy, we happened to see a flight of large airplanes, probably bombers,
overhead. I counted seven groups of three. Others in the party were skeptical of my count, but I do not know why. How would one have a preconceived notion of the number of military aircraft to be seen over Moscow in the end of July, 1939?

Our Intourist hosts brought some university authorities to talk to us about higher education in the Soviet Union. They even produced students who represented the disciplines of our own group; for example, I was able to talk with a chemical engineering student about curricula and work goals. We were advised strongly to do our shopping in the official tourist stores that accepted only foreign currency. The only bargains there were books that had been translated from Russian into English. The alternative (illegal) was to sell used clothing to someone who approached you on the street and offered rubles in exchange. Everyone in the Moscow hotel in which we stayed seemed to be selling clothing. Possession of rubles meant that you could shop in the large department store (Gummi) for records and for real souvenirs to take home. After a farewell dinner, we returned by rail to Leningrad for the boat trip to London. The most memorable part of the trip was passage through the Kiel Canal. German stukas were practicing their dive bombing technique. I had never seen such frightening activity before. It foreshadowed the war to come. The second most memorable part was the rough weather. Our 5000-ton vessel had great trouble with the waves from time to time. We were trying to put on a skit in the main salon. It was a “musical” based upon our experiences, part serious and part parody. When the going was too rough, we—the cast—would claim an intermission and would lie down on the stage for five minutes or until we regained equilibrium. “The show must go on” was our motto; however, with frequent intermissions it went on and on! Upon reaching London, I stayed overnight with the Priestleys and reported to them on my trip, as requested, while they were enjoying breakfast in bed. It was a story of pluses and minuses and of doubtful portent for the future (the Kiel Canal factor).

I spent the remaining two weeks of August in the Netherlands, part in 's Graveland and part in Leiden. I had signed up for a short course in glassblowing at the University of Leiden. It was a technique that was a necessity for a physical chemist or for any chemist interested in vacuum systems. Nell's mother suggested that Nell should stay in Leiden with me so that, if she was indeed serious about me, she could sample housekeeping for me while I went to “work” each day. Nell and I were delighted to have Annie’s approbation. Nell stayed in the small suite that Els occupied when she was attending Leiden. I slept in the room that Jaap Versteegh, her fiancé, occupied during the University year. We spent most of our
time in Els' suite, where Nell cooked for me and we tried to plan the future. I went off to the laboratory each day. We took trams each evening, to sample different resorts on the North Sea coast where we could listen to music or walk along the shore. Our stay in Leiden was idyllic. I was semi-serious about the glassblowing. My best work was done at the end of each day when I fashioned designs in glassware for Nell, mainly of flasks or little vases. If they were less than perfect, my instructor added the finishing touches.

Back in 's Graveland, there were bicycle rides, visits to Nell's two favorite aunts, walks along the canals and through the beechwoods, some tennis, and long talks and embraces in the garden. As war came closer when the expedient Nazi-Soviet agreement was made public, the earlier notion that we might be apart from each other for a period of unknown length of time became a reality. We promised that we would wait for each other and that we indeed would marry. The Germans and Russians invaded Poland on September 1, 1939. It was only a matter of time before England and France would have to honor their commitment to Poland. I left Holland on September 2nd to sad goodbyes. Hein drove me to Utrecht, where I took a bus to Rotterdam and there boarded a ship to London. We were steaming up the Thames estuary at the very time the tolling of bells and the hooting of whistles were announcing the declaration of war, that is, at 11:20 a.m. on Sunday, September 3, 1939. The vision, the dream of again coming up the driveway of Westerveld, the Vermeys' house in 's Graveland, had to sustain me for many anxious years.

After two years of residence in college, students at Oxford, or at least Lincoln, could move into digs in town. In anticipation of a third year, Leslie Epstein had found suitable lodgings for us if we could add a third tenant. We found an English student of astronomy who was willing to join us. He was a very quiet member of the household even though he liked to play his clavichord (very quiet for a keyboard instrument) early each morning, "to chase away the cobwebs," as he said. The house at 7 Canterbury Road, Oxford, was the home of a Professor of Physiology. His family occupied the first floor, which allowed the second floor (two bedrooms, sitting room, study, and bath) and the basement (kitchen with table and chairs) together to serve as an apartment. Breakfasts were provided by the owners. We prepared all other meals that we took at home, and these turned out to be very tasty. We were even successful at entertaining. For me, however, the residence that was supposed to be for one year served only two weeks.

Our position was this. All of the U.S. Rhodes Scholars reported to Dr. Allen, the Warden of Rhodes House, each morning to receive information
as to the possibility of continuing our study, of doing useful work while waiting, and of obtaining safe passage to America. "Safe" meant passage on a ship of neutral or U.S. registry. It was impossible to continue my own work toward the D.Phil. degree. The government took over the laboratory. If I were to find some "useful work" to do, it would stretch out my time in unsafe England without any professional advancement. Moreover, I had little faith in the Chamberlain government's engaging in a war successfully. (The same was my opinion of the French government at that time.) I opted for returning to Oxford at some future date for a deferred third year and traveling home immediately when passage could be obtained. I spent the waiting time in straightening out my affairs: paying bills and gathering together my belongings. We had to be packed, or nearly packed, because we were placed on a 24-hour alert to respond to any possibility for passage home, which was to be paid for by the Rhodes Trust, plus a generous allowance. I wrote on September 8, 1939, "It will be the saddest day of my life when I leave England, with my work unfinished and Nell in Holland, still in the danger zone." It will be recalled that Holland was a neutral country, a status that Hitler did not recognize on May 10, 1940, when the country was invaded.

I started making goodbye visits, e.g., to Leslie and Catherine Sutton at tea. Catherine would go to Canada and Leslie would become involved in war research. I took Keith Murray to dinner. He was going to work on the Agricultural Production Board and would in due course be in charge of food provision for the British troops in North Africa. Professor Sidgwick took me to dinner in the Brasemore College Senior Common Room with dons from Brasenose, Lincoln, and Exeter. I considered him a great man who stood out even above other great men. He continued writing his impressive treatise on Inorganic Chemistry. During World War I, he had designed the altimeter that was used in military aircraft. I believe it was my observation of his work habits that influenced me to invest long hours in chemistry when I rose to an academic position. I had dinner with the Peters family. The connection was the Oxford Society that had sponsored, for example, the tour of Tyneside. The daughter, Cynthia, and I had been partners at Rhodes House dances. She was an art student but shifted to nursing when the war began. Rodney Parsons went into his final officer's training and saw service in France and in the Near East. Tony Parsons went into the Navy, where he served eventually in some headquarters capacity. Jean Harris came to visit me in Oxford and brought very, very kind letters from the other members of the Harris family. They had been wonderful to me, without any sentimentality. Tony Hugill reported for Army service and eventually ended up in Intelligence. I would see him.
again in 1945 in Germany. The other chemists of Dyson-Perrins Laboratory dispersed or shifted from degree programs to essential war work. Lincoln College was converted to a nurses’ training center but was otherwise left unchanged. My name was still over the door of my room when I saw the college again at the beginning of October, 1945.

Upon notification of day-after-tomorrow departure, sixteen of us Rhodes Scholars were transported to Southampton for sailing on the American Farmer, a small ship of the United States Line. Our luggage was limited to one trunk and hand luggage. I managed to add a gramophone and records, which entertained us when my colleagues were in the mood. We were actually very close colleagues because all sixteen of us slept on carefully arranged cots in the main salon. It was lucky that the crossing was smooth because, in a high sea, the salon would have been transformed into a jumble of cots. It was also fortunate that none of the scholars slept noisily, so that rest was possible even under the crowded conditions. When we were not solving the world’s problems and our own in busy conversation during the journey, we were lounging outside the radio transmission office, gleaning information about the progress of the war.

The reality that there was a war in progress was brought home to us rather dramatically only about 100 miles off Britain. Suddenly, our ship altered course. It was announced that we were answering an SOS call and were on our way to pick up survivors of a British freighter that had been sunk by a German submarine. The freighter, which was en route with a cargo of sugar from the West Indies to England, had departed prior to the declaration of war and had thus been caught. Two lifeboats with crew were floating when we arrived; one boat with about six crew members had been swamped when the freighter went down. The U-boat had remained on the scene to ascertain the nationality of the ship that would answer the rescue call. While we were in the process of swinging the lifeboats aboard the American Farmer, a British navy bomber appeared and passed low over the submerging submarine, all within eyesight. The plane passed over several times, dropping depth charges, and then flew overhead, wagging its wings. Bubbles and an oil slick appeared, but as one learned later in the war, this release might have been a subterfuge. The drama was not yet over. A British radio announcement later on that day indicated that a navy plane had returned from a successful mission of the sinking of a U-boat only to have its parent aircraft carrier sunk by submarine action: an incommensurate loss.

As each day went by and we came closer to the United States, the general mood improved. We realized that we were truly on our way home after two years abroad, that we would be seeing families again, and that
we were beginning a new phase in our lives. We prepared ourselves to
face new challenges. At the dock to meet me upon arrival were my mother
and Aunt Kate and Uncle George and our friends the Sultzers. My father,
probably in his excitement, had dropped a glass in the bathroom and had
cut his foot. He had to sit with his foot elevated for several days until the
cut had fully healed. I sold one of my still photos of the freighter crew to
the N.Y. Daily News; however, my 8 mm movie film of the freighter, U-
boat and bomber episode, which the News developed for me, lacked
sufficient definition to be used in any commercial newsreel. It is still worthy
of home showing. With exciting commentary, it can still evoke “ohs” and
“ahs.” In October, 1939, I began a new chapter of my student life. “Now,
after six years of college life, you’re going to work,” said my father. “No,
Dad, I have to continue in graduate school to obtain a Ph.D. degree,” said
I, “but I can be self-supporting.”