

San Diego, California

I added a few more details based on photos and notes to this journal in April, 2008.

I left Albuquerque on August 8, 1987 at 7:13 AM and touched the Pacific Ocean at 11:22 PM on August 15, 1987. I biked over two 3000-foot mountains, survived 115 degrees Fahrenheit heat, heavy winds and a rattlesnake.

Saturday, August 8, 1987

The first day was an easy 141.7 miles. About 30 miles out of Albuquerque, I found an opportunity to use my tools. I helped a hot looking lady fix her truck. Shortly after helping her fix the truck, someone through a cup of ice at me. I guess some people just do not like people on bikes. On the continental divide I stopped to take a photo and a drunken man came over to talk to me. I then took off on my bike. I ended up biking on Interstate 40 three times. There are signs that say no bikes when entering the highway, but there is no other route. For this reason, I always rode as fast as I could when I needed to get on the Interstate. I had lunch at the Lota Burger in Grants. It was a real good day for riding; I did however encounter some rain and a little head wind (about 10 M.P.H.) for about half the day. That night, I arrived in Gallup, New Mexico at about 8:17 PM and stayed in a \$12.95 per night motel. The motel was run down and a very low-end motel; no towels, low water pressure and only limited hot water in the morning (no hot water that evening). While in Gallup I ate at Long John Silvers. (Day 1, 141.7 miles)

Sunday, August 9, 1987

In the morning, I left Gallup at 8:15 AM and ended up going the wrong way. At 10:20 AM I was back in Gallup and had already rode 26 miles. On the way out of Gallup (the second time), I had a major tire blowout. I ruined my tire, tube and tore a hole in my Mr. Tuffy (glass proof tire liner). I had enough spare stuff to fix the tire. A man drinking a Budweiser asked me where I was headed. When I told him California, he asked why. I told him I needed something to do! As I was leaving Gallup, I noticed about 50 people walking out of town after a weekend in Gallup. Most of the people where in groups of two (largest group was 4 people), somewhere hitch hiking. I guess they had spent the weekend at the bars and were headed back to the reservation. They have no alcohol for sale on the Indian reservations. Outside of Gallup, I rode up a long 8-mile hill. In the afternoon it started raining and the road got very slick and caused me to fall. This was the first time that I had fallen in 4 years; luckily the only thing that was hurt was my Halogen headlight (it shattered on the pavement). Soon after this I arrived in Ganado, Arizona and stopped to see Hubbell Trading Post (a historical site). This is a tourist trap, it is a group of old stone buildings where Indian souvenirs are sold. I was chased by dogs 2 times on this day. I continued riding it was getting

dark and I was almost out of water. At about 9:00 PM, I arrived in Keams Canyon and found a \$30.00 per night motel (I did not stay it was too expensive). There was no place to eat in town and the grocery stores were closed. I asked the motel clerk if there were any churches in the area and he told me about a church up the hill. I had read that you could sometimes sleep at churches, so I went to that church and talked the priest (he lived in the house next to the church) into putting me up for the night. It was the priest's dinnertime and he invited me in to eat. I showed the priest my route and he told me about a 30-mile paved short cut to Flagstaff. (Day 2, day miles 126.9 miles, Total Miles 268.6 miles)

Monday, August 10, 1987

I ate a piece of cake at the store and saw the Priest. The third day started out very nice and the sandstone formations were spectacular. I stopped in a small Indian town called Second Mesa and asked someone to take my picture with the town in the background. I was informed that picture taking was prohibited on the reservation. Then an Indian policeman pulled up and I asked him about picture taking. He told me it was prohibited in the village, but it was OK to take pictures with the village in the background. Then I had him take a picture of me. The road between Kykotsmia (Oraibi) and Leupp was hilly and hot. The road was smooth with a wide shoulder and the traffic was very light. The head winds reached about 20 mph at the end of this stretch. I saw a coyote near the road. From Leupp to Flagstaff the winds died down and the road was mostly uphill (for about 45 miles). I arrived in Flagstaff at about 9:00 PM. I went to the Weatherford hotel hostel and it was full and they did not allow bikes, so I stayed at the De Beau Inn hostel, which was \$9.00 a night. That night, I went to a Big Boy's restaurant to eat. They had an "all you can eat" salad bar and I ate three large salads, three soups, and a chicken fried steak dinner. It was the first real filling meal I'd had in two days. I mentioned going to Yuma to a person in the restaurant and he, like everyone else, warned me about the heat. I almost finished my peter pan peanut butter. While in Flagstaff someone offered to buy me a beer, but I said no. (Day 3, miles 129.6, Total Miles 398.2 miles)

Tuesday, August 11, 1987

The fourth day, I bought a new halogen light, tire and tube at the bike shop on San Francisco Road in Flagstaff. When I was ready to leave, I had a tough time getting good directions to Highway 89. This highway was a beautiful wooded road out of Flagstaff. The only problem is that there was no shoulder and lots of traffic. When I arrived at Oak Creek Canyon viewpoint, I asked a couple of people to take my picture. None of them seemed to speak English. There were Indians selling jewelry and I thought that they could probably speak English, however I did not talk to any of them. The scenery at this viewpoint was overlooking a beautiful wooded sandstone canyon (Oak Creek Canyon). The road down Oak Creek Canyon was a curvy,

downhill road with no shoulder and lots of traffic. On the downhill I could easily coast 30 MPH while breaking on the corners. Halfway down the canyon, I saw several people walking up from the river and asked where they had been. They told me they had been swimming at "Slide Rock." Since I had already heard about Slide Rock before, I decided to hike down there with my bike. I found people sitting in the stream and sliding down the algae. I tried it and found that in parts even your head goes under the water. It was a very nice day, I ended up taking enough photos to use up 3 rolls of film. After Oak Creek canyon, I went through a section of the desert to the town of Cottonwood. I then started to bike uphill after a 55-mile downhill trip from Flagstaff. Next, I biked up Mingus Mountain; there is an old town, Jerome, on the side of this mountain. This town is built on a steep hill and has large old homes. Jerome was established in 1887 and is built over cooper mines. It is one of the country's best preserved ghost towns. I had to ride 3000 vertical feet to reach the top of the mountain and it was getting dark. I arrived at Potato Patch Campground, elevation 7032 feet, at about 9:50 PM. I had not fixed my Halogen light yet and saw some campers at the campground with a bright light turned on. I asked them if they would mind if I sat by their light and fixed my headlight. Before I finished fixing my light it started raining. The campers fed me and lent me a sleep bag (I did not bring a sleeping bag; I figured I could sleep in my coat). They had a trailer and a truck with a camper shell. They let me sleep in the truck's camper shell. They slept in their large trailer camper. The campground was on Mingus Mountain and was named Potato Patch campground (7,023 feet altitude). (Day 4, miles 70.5, Total Miles 468.7 miles)

Wednesday, August 12, 1987

The fifth day, I left Potato Patch Campground at 5:55 AM. It was cold in the morning and had to wear my coat at first. There was a lot of downhill and I was able to take the coat off at the bottom of the mountain. On the way down Mingus Mountain, I saw the first and only dead rattlesnake of this trip. On this trip I did see several other dead snakes and one live rattlesnake. Prescott was the next town. I came to and it was a neat old town and was the last stop before the Mojave Desert. About halfway between Prescott and Congress I started seeing the large Saguaro cactus. From Mingus Mountain to Congress, it was about 50 miles of downhill traveling and then it became flat. It also started to get very hot. My front tire was showing threads and I ended out getting a flat about 4 miles past Congress. I replaced the tire and tube. I made it to Aguila at 9 PM and went in a store to buy food. The temperature was cool, so I continued toward the next town, Wenden. Four miles before I arrived in Wenden, I found a rest area and took a nap. The bugs were keeping me awake, so after a while I decided to leave. I packed up my stuff by flashlight and noticed that there was a black widow spider next to the spot where I was sleeping. It was about 11:30 PM and a beautiful night. I could hear coyotes howling and there was a bright moon (between a half and full moon). It was an excellent night for riding. I saw 3 shooting stars that

night. I arrived in Wendel at about midnight. (Day 5, miles 120.0, Total Miles 588.7 miles)

Thursday, August 13, 1987

The sixth day was a continuation of the fifth day. I left Wenden shortly after midnight. It was a beautiful night for riding quiet, very little traffic, a great shoulder and bats swarming around the streetlights in Wenden. In the moonlight I could see Saguaro cactus and deserted ghost town as I traveled the highway. The temperature was just right. About 1:30 AM a northbound car stopped and turned around. My first thought was trouble. It turned out to be a police officer who just wanted to make sure I was all right. At about 2:00 AM I got on Interstate 10, I found it was permissible to ride on the Interstate in Arizona as long as I stayed on the shoulder. The shoulder was terrible; every 20 feet there was a small groove. I guess this was to wake up the motorist if they started to doze off. Just before Quartzsite, I saw an off ramp (gold something road) and assumed this was a frontage road. I took the off ramp and it turned into a dirt road. I decided to take a shortcut back to the highway. About 15 feet before the highway. I heard a rattling noise. In the moonlight about 10 feet in front of me was a rattlesnake coiled up and ready to strike. I darted back down the hill. When I reached the bottom, I could still hear the snake rattling and could feel my rapid heartbeat. After this I carefully took the long way back to the Interstate. I arrived in Quartzsite at about 4:00 AM and had to make a decision, go through Yuma or Blythe. Since I was told that the towns are closer together if I go through Blythe, I decided to go through Blythe. I stopped in a restaurant and while reading my map I heard an officer on the telephone reporting to his superior. He had found a car on fire and looking inside he saw some green leafy substance. He searched the car and found 350 bricks of marijuana. I continued on and arrived in California at 8:50 AM on August 13, 1987. This was 655 miles from my home in Albuquerque. On the way to Blythe I was very tired and was having trouble staying awake while I was biking. I took a nap, lots of bugs. After my nap I continued biking on highway 190, it was hot and a bumpy road. In Blythe I stopped at Alpha Beta to get supplies and thought I had lost my wallet, I got help finding it and then I found out I just spaced it out. After Blythe I stopped at Palo Verde, California. This is a farming area where gas costs \$135.8 per gallon and the temperature at noon is usually about 115 Degrees. There was a hot wind that made it bearable to ride for a little longer. I saw some neat birds in a soaked field. It got too hot to continue, so at 2:10 PM I stopped at Palo Verde Park and slept until 4:30 PM. It was still hot and the head winds were getting very strong, but I continued biking. An hour later I felt faint from the heat and had to lie down. While lying there I redefined the word misery. Misery is being in the desert at 105 degrees with head winds that are so strong that you cannot coast downhill on a bike. Almost running out of water, and being exhausted, about 9 PM. I finally came to an isolated trailer (it was a Mexico-US border patrol trailer) in the desert and started drinking the water from the outside tap.

Then the border patrol showed up and told me that the water from the tap was not good drinking water. Then he invited me into the trailer and let me fill my water bottles with some nice cold water. I was hungry and out of food. I ended up getting a flat in the middle of the night. That night, I stayed in the exclusive part of the desert. That was on the ground near a gold mine. It was cold since I did not bring a sleeping bag. Now to recall this 13th day of August, I was almost attacked by a rattlesnake, nearly suffered heat stroke, almost ran out of water and got a flat tire in the middle of the night. (Day 6, miles 126.7, Total Miles 715.4 miles)

Friday, August 14, 1987

The seventh day, I started out at 6:30 AM toward Glamis. I bought a meal and asked for water in the town's only store. The cashier (a young man) told me that water was normally sold in gallon jugs and that they had run out. As I left the store, I noticed two water tank train cars sitting on the railroad tracks. A woman, seemingly the only other inhabitant of Glamis (other than the cashier (probably her son)) was on the porch folding her laundry I asked her if the train tanks contained water. "Yes," she said, "but if you touch it I'll call the sheriff and he'll throw you in jail." There was also a hitchhiker at the store and he started walking down towards the train tanker car carrying a towel. The inhabitants of Glamis (the lady and the cashier) were worried that he might try to use some of the water. At this point, I commented to the woman that she didn't seem to like anyone, but she disagreed. After talking to her for a while she brought me into a back room and let me fill my water bottles. She told me that the temperature gets up to 130 degrees in that area. At this time, it was only 75 degrees (about 7:00 AM). Leaving Glamis there was no vegetation and sand dunes for the next 4 to 5 miles. At 9:30 AM, I arrived in Brawley and the winds started to pick up again. This day I encountered my heaviest head winds yet. It was a fight to reach El Centro. As I entered the town, I noticed that the Motel 6 was only \$19.39 (\$17.95 + tax) and even had a swimming pool. Tired of fighting the winds I ended my shortest day of biking only covering 47.7 miles. I could hear the heavy winds blow until I fell asleep that night. (Day 7, miles 47.7, Total Miles 763.1 miles)

Saturday, August 15, 1987

The eighth day, I left Motel 6 at 5:58 AM and there was no wind. A half-hour later the winds started to pick up, it was my 3rd Day of winds that were so strong that I could not coast downhill. As I entered Ocotillo, I saw a sign saying possible high winds next 63 miles. Oh no!! The ride was really tough not only were the winds strong, but I also was riding up a steep mountain. I ended up walking my bike for the first time on this trip, I walked it for about 2 miles. Around 9:30 AM I stopped under a bridge for a couple of hours. The wind did not seem to want to stop, so I started riding around 11:30 AM and then about a half-hour later the winds became only light gusts. I was riding hard and climbed 3000 vertical feet towards Laguna Summit in 2 hours. For the

first 12 miles (3000 vertical feet) there were 55-gallon drums of water every 2/10ths of a mile on the side of the road for car's radiators. The water was not safe to drink. The heat and the steep hill could cause the cars to overheat. The next 25 miles I went up another 1000 vertical feet. From El Centro (-45 feet) to Laguna Summit (4055 feet) I gained 4100 vertical feet and was at the top of Laguna Summit at 4:54 PM. From Pine Valley to San Diego, it was a beautiful forest ride and mostly downhill riding. I entered the outskirts of San Diego at about 7:30 PM and did not make it to the ocean until 11:22 PM. I had to ask about 30 different people how to get to the ocean and people kept thinking I was joking. I stayed at the YMCA, but did not enjoy the location (\$19.12 per night). At the YMCA this guy in the shower was giving me looks, I didn't like it, I think he might have been gay. I walked around down town and came up behind this lady that looked like a hooker. She gave me a funny looked, screamed and said she had heard about me. Either she had me confused with someone else or I'm a very popular dude. Know all the way from Albuquerque to San Diego! (Day 8, miles 139.0, Total Miles 902.1 miles)

The next 5 days, I stayed at Point Loma Hostel in San Diego, which was much nicer than the YMCA and only \$12.00 a night.

Sunday, August 16, 1987

I cycled from downtown San Diego to Point Loma view point. I spend the night at the Point Loma youth hostel.

Monday, August 17, 1987

I went back to the YMCA and found it was the only place in town that I could find to store my bike. They only allowed one day of storage. After storing my bike, I took the train to visited Tijuana, Mexico. I went to a grocery store in Tijuana to buy a soda and it was so crowded that I decided to put the soda back on the shelf and leave the store. The store security guard stopped me outside the store to search me. I guess he saw me with the soda and did not see me place it back on the shelf. A large group of people watched as the security guard searched me. When he did not find anything, he let me go. I gave a boy that was looking for handouts part of my granola bar and it seemed to make him happy. While walking around Tijuana I saw a pipe gang, nice mission and a few nice houses (most of the houses were small and run down). The US border security searched me, the biking shirt made me look like a smuggler. After Tijuana I got my bike and cycled to Mission Bay to watch the fireworks and then I cycled back to the Point Loma Hostel.

Tuesday, August 18, 1987

I cycled around San Diego and visited beaches. I checked out Pacific Beach, Oceanside Beach and Blacks beach. Black's beach is the nude beach, mostly men and one nice looking lady. At 5:30 PM my bike registered 1000 miles since I left my

house in New Mexico. I had some women take my picture near one of the Ocean Beach (might have been Pacific Beach). I also told them I biked from New Mexico and asked if I could take their pictures. They laughed and said sure.

Wednesday, August 19, 1987

Found that the airport did not have any bike boxes. I ended up getting a bike box at a bike shop. I went snorkeling at La Jolla cove. The visibility in the Murky water was close to zero.

Thursday, August 20, 1987

As I was entering the gate at the airport, they opened my carry-on bags and did a thorough search.

The entire trip was not dangerous. I thought the riskiest riding was through Flagstaff and San Diego. The only pain I suffered was numbness in my little fingers for about 6 months. I believe a lot of people would be afraid to make such a ride. Originally, I felt that way, but after that ride I felt much more confident and at ease about long distance cycling.