

# Old, New Hitchhikers Reveal Experiences

## GRADUATE STUDENTS

All Graduate Students who wish to have their portraits made for the Aggie-land '66 should do so before Feb. 21.

## NOTICE TO CIVILIAN SENIORS JANUARY GRADUATES CORPS SENIORS

Civilian Seniors will have their portraits made for the Aggie-land '66 according to this schedule. Portraits will be made at the University Studio. Coats and ties will be worn.

January—18 - 19 Q - T  
January—20 - 21 U - Z

Attention Corps Seniors: All corps seniors are urged to have their picture made for the Aggie-land '66 during the final make-up schedule from January 10 - 14.

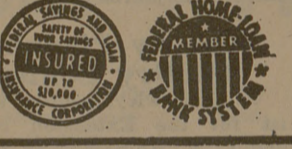
NOTE: January graduates should have their portraits made before leaving school, disregarding any conflict in schedule dates.

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EDITOR'S NOTE: The following story on a famous Aggie hitchhiker of a quarter-century ago originally appeared in the San Antonio News.

By CLARENCE J. LaROCHE  
The world champion hitchhiker who figuratively hung up his thumb 25 years ago, has a few ideas to help New Yorkers overcome their transportation strike.

Keyes Carson, who as a Texas Aggie traveled 251,000 miles in 6,680 automobiles, said the solution is signs.

"People in New York trying to get to a specific area should hold out signs noting their destination," suggests Carson.

"People who work, for example, at Macy's, should stand with a sign labeled 'Macy's.' If they're going to the Bronx area, or other sections, they should hold up signs denoting where they hope to go."

Carson is an expert on "signs." As a college student in the golden age of hitch-hiking, he caught rides all over the United States, Canada and Mexico.

"I really didn't hang up my thumb," Carson recalled here Friday. "I never used it. I used signs."

It was depression, and students in those days didn't have the cars they have today.

"Many of us at A&M had to get home to help out with work over the weekend — the only way we had to come and go was by hitch-hiking," recalled Carson.

Without a peer as a hitchhiker, Carson worked out a scientific, systematic procedure for obtaining rides.

He always wore his Aggie cadet uniform. He rigged up a special suitcase in which he carried not only necessities, but all his signs for key cities on his route.

Inside the suitcase was a small radio. He rigged up dials with map rolls that instantly told him



CARSON WITH TOOLS OF TRADE ... sign, suitcase from college days.

(Photo Courtesy Express Publishing Co.)

where he was on his route. A pair of strong binoculars also was included.

"When I saw a car coming I could check it at a distance to see whether I wanted to solicit a ride or whether there was available room in it for me," Carson explained.

He also worked out "rules of the road," which included a detailed log of all rides—name and address of the driver, make and model of car, miles traveled, education, age, and background of

the driver, business of driver, average speed, time of beginning and end of ride, and topics of conversation.

Carson, each year, memorized indexing of Texas license tags and could tell at a glance what county an approaching car was from.

His record-keeping, one day literally bit the hand that gave him a ride.

During the ride, the driver told Carson he was from West Texas. "That's odd," replied the Aggie

hitch-hiker, "your license plate is from Wharton County."

Shortly after that, the driver stopped the car, telling Carson he had to turn off on another road.

"Next day I read where a Hal-lettsville bank had been robbed. I gave a description of the driver and the license and the man was arrested. He turned out to be the bank robber."

Before World War II halted his activities, Carson had formed a nation-wide Collegiate Thumbers Club, complete with rules and printed releases for riders in the event of an accident.

One of Carson's greatest exploits came in the fall of 1940, when the Aggies, No. 1 in the nation, went to Los Angeles to play UCLA.

Carson waved goodbye to the team at College Station, and was on hand to welcome them mid-way to El Paso.

He was at the station to greet them in El Paso, and promised the team he would have some girls lined up at Union Station in Los Angeles for their arrival.

"And I did. I found several girls from Texas and they went with me to welcome John Kimbrough and the team."

At the game and at the banquet afterward, Carson was with two famous Texas girls—movie stars Mary Martin and Linda Darnell.

Returning from Los Angeles, he made even better hitch-hiking time.

"I left the banquet at 11:30 p.m. Saturday and walked in for my first class at A&M Monday morning at eight," he remembered.

In 1940, he hitch-hiked to Washington with a live Cuero turkey for President Roosevelt in 2 1/2 days.

He went to the New York World's Fair in 1939 and 1940, and twice to the San Francisco Fair—all hitch-hiking.

His hitch-hiking career started when he was a senior at San Marcos Academy, en route to San Antonio.

"I was to meet my parents here, and took a taxi to the bus station in San Marcos. It had gone. So, I had the taxi take me to the highway. I beat the bus to San Antonio."

His last hitch-hike was a trip to Mexico in 1941, to take another Cuero turkey to President Manuel Avila Camacho.

"I hitch-hiked from San Antonio to Laredo, then took the train to Mexico City."

Since then, he hasn't hitched rides.

Carson says his education was furthered by his hitch-hiking career. For one thing, he says, he learned not to get married.

"I caught many a ride with a husband or wife who was either disenchanted or, at that moment, trying to get away from it all."

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## Aggie Who Spent Summer On Greek Cargo Vessel Claims Thumbing Crown

EDITOR'S NOTE: Last week The Battalion published a four-part series on the experiences of Larry Jerden, who purported to be the Southwest Conference hitchhiking champ. The following story was submitted by senior Everett Lindstrom, who disagrees with Jerden's contention. The second part of Lindstrom's article will appear Thursday.

By EVERETT LINDSTROM  
I would like to challenge Mr. Jerden's claim to "champion hitchhiker." Although traveling under very different circumstances, I believe my summer's experience will easily qualify as hitchhiking. Let me describe what happened, and we can let an unbiased judge tell who is the real champion hitchhiker.

About Easter of last year, I met the captain of a Greek cargo ship. He was the husband of my sister's Greek ex-roommate in college and was docked in Houston for a few days. In our visiting, I managed to get an invitation to go with him sometime on a voyage. There was nothing very certain or definite about the whole thing, but I applied for a passport and took shots for any place in the world, just in case.

That was the last I heard from him until the Friday I got home from final exams. That's when my hopes began to fade. A letter from him explained that his ship, the SS Olympos, would be in Coatzacoalcos, Mexico but that there was no way for me to go. The next morning, as soon as the Olympos got into port, I called. But, it was no use; arrangements could not be made and there was no way for me to go. The ship was going to South Africa and might not be coming back to this side of the world for a couple of years. Even if I went, there would be no way for me to get back in time for school.

All seemed to be lost, and without even unpacking from school, I began preparing for a summer of teaching swimming. Then at 5 p.m. that same Saturday, the captain called and my hopes took a jump. I could go, but I had to be on ship in Coatzacoalcos which was nearly 1400 miles into Mexico and I had no plane reservations. The captain stressed that the ship could not wait, and that I had to be there by 6 a.m. Monday. The race was on, and I grabbed a few books and clothes from my still unpacked bags from school, and made a few other last minute plans.

Twelve hours after the "go signal" I was leaving the house and on the way to the airport. The only plane for Mexico City was leaving Houston at 7 a.m., but I could only get on if someone else decided to cancel his ticket. No one did. Finally, after driving to San Antonio in three hours flat, I did get on a plane for Mexico City. Once there, I had 13 hours to make a 12 hour bus ride to Coatzacoalcos. It took 14 hours. This meant that I got to the little port town one hour after the ship was supposed to have left. However, the machine that was loading the ship's cargo of sulfur had broken, causing a slight delay. When I scrambled by the gangway of the Olympos, I think captain Tsevas was as surprised as I was relieved.

On board, I had my first chance to catch my breath and relax a bit. I began exploring the ship and getting acquainted with the ship's 30 very Greek crewmen. It was an old liberty ship and carrying 12,000 tons of sulfur to

Capetown and Durban, South Africa. A few hours after I got on, the Olympos left the little Mexican port and I got my first taste of life at sea.

My only obligation was to keep happy and talk to the captain and few officers and crewmen that could speak English. They treated me as a special guest, which, of course I enjoyed. Sometimes, to get a better knowledge of all the activities on the ship, I helped the deckhands, the engineers, the carpenter and other details. However, most of the time was spent reading, teaching English, learning Greek and relaxing in general.

We stopped in Barbados for bunkers (fuel oil) and I spent the few hours walking into the little port city of Bridgeport. It was a dark Saturday night and I was glad to be with Demetrios Grigoriadis, the ship's carpenter. After a few hours of nightclubs, we got back to the Olympos and were soon headed for South Africa.

It was a long voyage, 38 days, and as we got a few days out from Capetown, the weather became a little cooler. The southern hemisphere was in its mid-winter season and I was more comfortable in a sweater. The closer we got to land, the more excited the crew seemed to get. And I'm sure I wasn't less excited.

My first view of Africa was the historic Capetown with its Tablemountain and modern buildings flashing in the sunlight. It was 9 p.m. before the ship was docked and I could get off for a much needed walk on solid ground. I walked, alone, toward the lights of the city and got a small preview of the sights I was to see in the following week. Later, I found out it wasn't safe to walk alone after dark in Capetown.

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