

## ALBERT KEMPTON, CONRAD D'OSSCHÉ

Once it was all simple and straightforward. But at eleven, I was living in California and was sent to study in New England; at eighteen it was college in North Carolina, and at twenty-two it was to be law school. But somewhere along the way certain things began to make increasingly more sense as others made less, and as nature abhors a vacuum, dulcimer playing began to occupy more of my time.

I left North Carolina diplomaed but dulcimerless. My first instrument (a three-string “flat-land tourist special”) found its way into my life while I was living in self-induced exile six miles from the Canadian frontier in northern Vermont. After a few months of solitude, and the prospect of an intense Vermont winter, I decided to take a hint from the migrating geese and head south where I belonged. This notion was dramatically confirmed one morning when I woke to find my dulcimer’s strings resplendent with tiny icicles and my old convertible covered with more than a foot of snow.

It was to Washington, D.C., that I went, and at just about this time, Bob and I careened into each other’s lives and found that our techniques and music were somehow forming along similar lines.

I began adding to the ever-enlarging pack of notes and was seen lugging parts of them around in a backpack. Later we went to Munich, where we wrote the original manuscript, built dulcimers in a friend’s kitchen, and lived the emigré life.

While Bob continued his travels, I lived in north-west Connecticut building dulcimers, teaching dulcimer at a local school, and reworking In Search of the Wild Dulcimer. But now that this book is in your hands, I’ve hit the road again, too...and so it goes.