



**Finding aid to the  
Johannes and Christiana (Ehni)  
Schock Letter & Photograph  
Collection  
2014.15**

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## OVERVIEW

**Donor:** Martin Schock

**Accession Date:** October 2, 2014

**Collection Number:** 153

**Quantity:** 2 linear feet

**Summary:** A collection of letters and photographs sent to Johannes and Christiana (Ehni) Schock from relatives in Germany sent between 1936 and 1996 with the bulk sent from 1947 to 1951. Also present are short family histories of some of the letter writers and a comprehensive family history: *The Migration of Schock from Unterheinriet, Germany and Ehni from Gutenberg, Germany through Borodino, Bessarabia (Romania) to Turtle Lake, North Dakota U.S.A. and Beyond: An Unfinished Family History, Third Edition, October 2002.*

**Languages:** English and German

### Links:

- [100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, Turtle Lake, North Dakota, 1905-2005 \[F644.T87 A15 2005\]](#)
- Letters from Bessarabien Relatives of Johannes Schock and Christiana (Ehni) Schock surrounding WWII Presentation
- *The Migration of Schock from Unterheinriet, Germany and Ehni from Gutenberg, Germany through Borodino, Bessarabia (Romania) to Turtle Lake, North Dakota U.S.A. and Beyond: An Unfinished Family History, Third Edition, October 2002.* [CS71.S35887 2002]
- [Emma \(Schock\) Whitaker Obituary](#)
- [Reinhold Schock Obituary](#)
- [Christina Schock Memorial](#)
- [Johannes \(John\) Schock Memorial](#)

- [Johannes and Christiana \(Ehni\) Schock Letter & Photograph Online Repository](#)
- [Odessa Digital Library, Genealogical data for Schock, Ehni, and Lange](#)

**Access Restrictions:** Digital access available at [Digital Horizons](#). Access to the physical collection is available upon approval. Please submit a detailed research request to [Jeremy.Kopp@ndsu.edu](mailto:Jeremy.Kopp@ndsu.edu). Copyrights to items in this collection remain with original copyright holders or are in the public domain.

**Citation:** Johannes & Christiana (Ehni) Schock Letter and Photograph Collection, 153, Germans from Russia Heritage Collection, NDSU Libraries, Fargo, ND

## BIOGRAPHY

Johannes Schock was born in 1877 in Borodino, Bessarabia; Christiana Ehni was born in 1880, also in Borodino. Johannes served in the Russian Army as his superior officer's personal attendant during the Russian-Japanese War in 1904-1905. Johannes and Christiana were married on February 16, 1906 in Kloestitz, Bessarabia. Although she was born Christiana, the family knew her fondly as Christina. They immigrated to the United States in 1910, and settled near Turtle Lake, ND, where some of their family members and friends had previously settled. They traveled with three children: Jacob, Alexander, and Gustav; Gustav became ill on the voyage and died less than a month later in Turtle Lake. They had six more children: Helena, Johannes Jr., Daniel, Emma, Emil, and Reinhold. When Johannes and Christina settled, they rented a small farm which they later purchased. In 1917, they purchased a new farmstead and moved there and repeated this process in 1932. The last farm was sold to their youngest son, Reinhold. Johannes and Christina then retired to a house in Turtle Lake in 1947.

When they retired they started to keep the letters they received. The collection contains 368 letters ranging from 1936 to 1996. The letters sent after 1960 were addressed to Emma and her family. The letters came from both Johannes' families (Schock, Füller, and Fickel) and Christina's families (Ehni, Hess, and Weber) along with some of their old friends and neighbors.

Christina suffered a stroke in 1952 which left her bedridden. In 1953, she and Johannes moved in with their son Reinhold and his family where they stayed until Christina died in 1957, and Johannes in 1961.

Emma and Reinhold, two of Johannes and Christina's children, compiled and translated the letters and annotated the photographs. The documents were organized into seven binders and labeled according to family.

Emma was the third youngest child, born in 1917 at Turtle Lake, ND. She married George Whitaker in 1946 in Los Angeles, CA, where they resided. Emma translated the letters and made notes on the content. She also continued to correspond with family overseas from 1960 to 1996. She traveled to Germany in 1985 to see family members and learn more about the family history.

Reinhold was the youngest child, born in 1921. He married Clara Wagner in 1943, and bought his parent's final farmstead which he then operated. They had three children, the oldest, Martin, who donated this collection, was born in 1944, and resided in Rapid City, SD, Pierre, SD, and Bismarck, ND, where he now lives.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT

The **Johannes and Christiana (Ehni) Schock Letter & Photograph Collection** contains 368 letters and 134 photographs. 346 of the letters are addressed to Johannes & Christina Schock of Turtle Lake, North Dakota. The remaining 32 letters were addressed to or written by Emma. Emma (Schock) Whitaker and Reinhold Schock, children of Johannes and Christina, compiled the letters. Emma completed all the translations and Reinhold annotated the photographs. The letters are separated into fifteen series arranged by the main families/groups of people from whom they were sent. These letters range in date from 1945 to 1996, the bulk being sent between 1945 and 1951.

The **Jakob Schock Family Series** contains 27 letters, most of them coming from his children, and a few from his third wife, Elisabeth. Jakob was Johannes' younger brother. The family was forced to flee their home in 1930 and lived as nomads for quite a few years. When they returned, Jakob, was taken prisoner by the Russians in 1937 and never heard from again. A few of his children met the same fate as captives in Russia. The letters mention the missing family members, the extreme poverty and malnourishment: a few members of the family were so undernourished they could not work. Some letters also discuss how they were thrown out of their home.

The **Christine (Schock) Füller Family Series** contains 22 letters from Johannes' sister Christine's family. She died in 1946, so the letters are from her husband, Martin, and children. All of her sons, but one, were drafted into the German army, a few were captured at the end and sent to POW camps. The sons wrote to their family from the POW camps; one died there of starvation. The letters also contain information about how bad the food was and the lack of it, and also notes about where the rest of the family are, as they were scattered all over.

The **Daniel Schock Family Series** contains 50 letters from Johannes' brother Daniel's family. Most of the letters are from Daniel's wife, Magdalena, and one of his daughters, Emilie. Daniel was taken by the Russians in 1945. There were many rumors as to what happened to him, as he was never seen or heard from again. Magdalena was searching for her children, and finally found most of them in West Germany, where they continued to reside. She wrote of living off of a ration card and the many difficulties they had in preparing good food. Johannes and Christina sent many packages. Magdalena wrote many thanks and described what was in them. Emilie and her children were forced to flee Bessarabia in September, 1940. They spent some time in a refugee camp before going to West Prussia for a few years, finally settling in southern Germany. When there, she was able to search for her family, and in time most came to her. She wrote about not knowing where her family was, and then of finding them, along with the extreme food rationing.

The **Magdalena Fickel Family Series** contains 18 letters, most of them written by Magdalena, one of Johannes' sisters. Magdalena wrote mostly of receiving packages. She spoke of visiting other family members and how they were all doing, along with talk of the food situation and how all of the basic food stuffs were gone. The Fickels believed one of their sons was in a Russian POW camp, they wrote about looking for him and eventually finding him.

The **Reinhold Schock Family Series** contains 17 letters, all of which are from Reinhold, or his wife Elisabeth. Reinhold was one of Johannes' brothers. Reinhold and Elisabeth had one child, a son, who died in infancy. They were forced to flee many times and in 1945, they were separated for almost two years before Elisabeth was able to leave West Prussia, now Poland, and join Reinhold in southern Germany. Elisabeth wrote about her time there, and they both wrote of wanting to come to America.

The **Friedrich Schock Family Series** contains 40 letters sent by many different people. Friedrich is one of Johannes' brothers, he married Elisabeth. This family experienced a lot of tragedy, both while fleeing Poland and continued after the letters ceased, revealed by additional research. Four of Friedrich and Elisabeth's eight children died while they were still young. They wrote of living on a man's farm until he returned from a POW camp, and how much things had deteriorated since they first arrived. The letters mention the currency change and how badly the refugees were treated. Their daughter, Erna, wrote of how she was engaged, but her future mother-in-law would not let her son marry a refugee girl.

The **Gottfried & Danny Series** contains 1 letter from Daniel, Johannes and Christina's son who lived in California. The letter is brief and mentions that they are all okay and wish that Johannes and Christina could come out to California.

The **Non-Relatives Series** contains 20 letters from five different families. The majority being from Johannes Schock and his daughters; the letters never indicate if they are related or not. They were neighbors in Bessarabia. Gustav Ehni is never mentioned as a relative either, and wrote one letter looking for some information in regards to his wife's uncles in North Dakota. The other letters came from the Karl Härter family, Gottlieb Reiner, and Otto Walker. Their letters were asking for something to be sent over as they were destitute.

The **Daniel Ehni Family Series** contains 31 letters from Daniel's wife, Johanna, and children. Daniel was Christina's brother who died in Bessarabia in 1934. When the family fled, they were scattered. There are quite a few letters from the children saying that they did not know where their mother or youngest sister were. The children who all corresponded lived in the U.S. occupied zone of Germany at the time. When Johanna was found, she was in the British occupied zone. The letters discussed where different family members were along with the conditions in which they had been living.

The **Jakob & Annette Häger Family Series** consists of 4 lengthy letters. Annette was a childhood acquaintance of Christina. She mentioned living in a refugee camp in East Germany, the Russian occupied zone, with a few other family members. She wrote vividly about their poverty, what happened to them, and also how the elderly and the young were treated.

The **Barbara (Ehni) Weber Family Series** consists of 14 letters. Barbara was Christina's sister and had four children. Barbara died of a stroke in Poland in 1942 or 1943. The family was spread out and her husband, Ludwig, moved from living with his daughter-in-law in the Russian occupied Zone, to the American occupied zone to live with his daughter Maria and her family.

The letters discussed how their belongings had been taken from them, along with money and how some of the men had been taken captive by the Russians.

The **Israel Ehni Family Series** contains 42 letters. Israel was Christina's youngest brother. He lived with his daughter Ida for a while. After his wife, Maria, died, he remarried Emma, and for a period of time she went missing. When he discovered what happened to her, he no longer wrote about it. The letters discussed the state of different family members and about receiving the many packages sent from Johannes and Christina. They talked about how there was very little food and how many other goods were very scarce.

The **Karl Facius Family Series** contains 4 letters. He was a neighbor and friend of Israel Ehni, who visited them almost daily. Karl discussed his views on the political turmoil, and how things were after the war. He also talked about the ration cards and how they were almost useless as the prices were so high. The black market was thriving at the time, but once again no one could afford to buy anything.

The **Katharina (Ehni) Hess Family Series** contains 74 letters. Katharina was Christina's oldest sister. She told about her family living as fugitives and refugees in a town in the US occupied zone. She and her husband, Samuel, lived with their daughter, Olga, and her family, before moving in with another daughter, Magdalena, and her family. The letters talked about how they were starving because there was no food. They were trying to find passage to Canada since they had relatives who lived there.

The **Christine Schock Family Series** contains 1 letter. It is not known if this woman is related to Johannes and Christina, though it seems likely she was. She wrote about her family members and how she had not seen some of them for a very long time. She also noted that they were homeless and living in poor conditions.

The comprehensive family history: *The Migration of Schock from Unterheinriet, Germany and Ehni from Gutenberg, Germany through Borodino, Bessarabia (Romania) to Turtle Lake, North Dakota U.S.A. and Beyond: An Unfinished Family History, Third Edition, October 2002*; which was donated with the collection has been catalogued as CS71.S35887 2002 and is housed in the Research Room.

## **BOX AND FOLDER LIST**

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