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*My Return*  
*To Russia*

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By JACOB HIEB, SR.



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MY RETURN TO RUSSIA

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# Forword:

**T**HE ABDICATION of Nicholas II, Czar of Russia in 1917 and the Revolution that followed left Europe's greatest country in a pitiful plight. A large number of South Dakota people hail from Russia and as soon as hunger and want reports reached here they organized a movement to help their stricken friends and relatives over there. Mr. Jacob Hieb, pioneer merchant of Marion, South Dakota, took a leading part in this relief work. During the year 1923 a shipload of clothing and provisions was collected from South Dakota and neighboring states and shipped to Riga, Russia, for distribution among the needy and destitute people. Some time thereafter private letters reached many of the donors that their packages did not reach them. More complaints came pouring in until it became evident that there was something irregular about the distribution of these goods. Interested friends began to look around for some one to make a trip to investigate these charges. Mr. Hieb volunteered to go and made this trip early in 1928. Upon his return he wrote up his experiences in serial form in the Marion Record. His written story proved so interesting that before it was finished a large number of demands came to the Record to have this narrative polished in book form.

In the following pages Mr. Hieb's story is re-printed in his own language and it is hoped that it will supply to the reading public first hand information of conditions in ill-fated Russia written from personal observation. May this work not only enlighten our people but also enlist their sympathy for this suffering country and inspire them to a better appreciation of our own land.

—THE PUBLISHER

## My Return to Russia

IT WAS the second Christmas Day, 1927, when I left my dear family. Mr. Kessler of Eureka, S. D., came with me on my trip. I left over the Milwaukee road and stayed two days in Chicago to close out the balance of our storage eggs and check up with our Commission Houses there and some other business which I had to clean up.

We left Chicago in the evening for New York, via Washington. We passed through the mountains and later on our road took a turn on the branch for Washington. On our arrival at Washington we found that the depot was of very fine construction and up to date. We went to the Hotel close by the depot.

### Our Beautiful National Capital

The first thing in the morning I went to the Passport House and got our passports and papers all O. K. The Passport House is a large building and a fine architect work. From there I went over to see Representative Christopherson but he happened to be absent. Then I went to the Library building and made a fast trip through the building and found some very fine work. From there we hired an auto, which took us over the whole city and showed us the most important Government buildings, and then we passed the capital which is an immense structure whose tower I saw from my hotel, as the tower is lighted by many large side lights, and it looks beautiful in the night.

Then he took us past the White House, which takes in fully two blocks. The White House is surrounded by a beautiful park, and the President's office is on the west end of the building.

Taking it all around, I think Washington is a beautiful city, but our train left at 10 o'clock A. M. so we had to hurry up to the beautiful Union station. We would have been glad to have seen more of the Government buildings and of the town but time would not allow it. One thing of interest to me was the number of officers and detectives around the city.

### New York Celebrates

On our way to New York, there was quite a nice country along the line. We arrived at New York at 4:00 P. M. at the great central station. I think the Central Station is one of the finest in the world. We were an hour late at New York; we expected to get to New York in time, on Saturday, so that we could get in the bank and get our passport Visaed from the German Counsel because our boat left at 11 A. M. Tuesday, and we had quite a little work to do in New York before we could go on the boat, as New Years was next day and Monday and it wouldn't hardly give us time to do all that work. But there was nothing to do but wait until Tuesday to finish our work.

We got our room at the Commodore hotel next to the station, on the 22nd floor. We wanted to get up high enough so we couldn't hear the noise going on New Year's night, as I had experience in New York on New Year's night before.

When we went down the street in the evening after supper the whiskey was already floating in many places, at 60c a drink, but that didn't make any difference for New York men for New Year's evening, as New York is bound to have all the whiskey they need for New Year's night.

When the clock struck 12 o'clock in the night all the big churches rung their bells, the factories blew whistles, and after the church bells and factory whistles and boat whistles stopped then the terrible noise commenced on the streets. They blew all kinds of horns, the cars blew their horns, and singing and shouting—there was hardly no end to it until 5 o'clock in the morning, and it didn't help us a bit to be up in the 22nd story—the noise reached us fully up there and we didn't get a bit of sleep all night. As a rule a New Yorker is bound to be full on New Year's night. Otherwise he wouldn't call it a New Year's night.

We got busy and moved our baggage over to Hoboken side. We took the underground street car which runs under the river Hudson. This was the nearest we could get to the landing place of the boat so we would have our baggage near the landing of our boat, Dresden. After we got to our new location we had just about time enough to get to church. After dinner we took a trip over to New York through the Hudson tunnel, the under road, and they shot us through in fifteen minutes. We came out of the subway hole on forty-second street, which was many miles away from Hoboken, our starting point, and we were in the heart of the city.

### Just a Glimpse of New York

I used to think that Chicago was a big city but the city of New York beats it by far. Of course, everything was



closed up on Sunday except the hotels and soft drink and whiskey shops. They were open. The restaurants also were open, but I heard more singing that afternoon from the upper stories than I ever heard in my life time.

We looked over the different skyscrapers there and went up the tower of the Woolworth building and the men would look like little dolls on the street below and the cars looked like toy cars. They are now building a skyscraper and they told us that it would be almost twice as high as the Woolworth building. So the rich are building one ornament after another. The cost of such buildings is enormous.

Monday morning was a busy morning for us as we had to get our Visas from the German Counsel and the Visa from the Polish Counsel, which took quite a time, and then I had to go to the Commercial National Bank and get a credit letter there so in case they should hold me up in Russia I could bail myself out. At any rate it is always necessary for a person when he is going such a distance to be prepared for money in case he should have to draw on a bank from Russia.

We were fortunate enough to get all our work done and get fifteen minutes on the boat before it left, and at 11 o'clock our boat blew its big whistle. There were thousands of people gathered on the wharf, and when the boat commenced moving the music commenced playing, there was such a shouting of good bye and waving flags and handkerchiefs until our boat got out of reach. It was a nice clear day when we passed through the seaport and by the great city of New York with all its skyscrapers and it made a beautiful appearance.

### Out on the Great Atlantic

At last we passed the Statue of Liberty and soon got out to the big sea. About four o'clock in the afternoon all the land had disappeared and we didn't see any more land until the seventh day, but only the sky above and water, until we reached the coast of Ireland on the eighth day. The first four days on the sea we had very nice weather, that is I mean to say no storm or heavy winds, although it was raining almost every day. We passed a few boats, the first and second day, but we didn't see anymore boats until we got almost to Ireland.

We did not see many fish coming up on top of the water as I did on my last trip, but on the fourth day in the afternoon we had a lot of fun for about two hours when a herd of small fish from about 25 to 50 pounds in weight came near our boat and were making a race with us, by jumping out and jumping ahead and they did this for about two hours. Then they must have got tired of it as they left us.

On the sixth and seventh days we were on the high seas, about the middle of the ocean, where the sea is from four to five miles deep and in some places more than that from what our officers on the boat told us, and our boat commenced rocking some, which is always the case on the high sea. On the seventh day we had some north wind and our boat was rocking pretty strong. It is surprising how those waves on the high sea handle those mighty big boats like a nut shell. Our tables were not so well filled with guests on the sixth and seventh days, as many of them were seasick.

The people on the boat were all happy the first few days and of course there is plenty of liquor on the boat, such as wine, beer and whiskey of all kinds. The doors on the bar room were opened up about three miles out of New York and the place was kept pretty busy for the first two or three days, especially by the American people, who have kept dry so long in this country, and they are using the liquor pretty freely and on the table nearly everyone has a bottle of wine for himself, and especially for supper.

There are the big concert rooms where music is given all afternoon and all kinds of liquor served during the concert. In the evenings after supper there would be a concert again and also a dance given every other night, and also the picture show opens up every third night and no end of amusement, day and night, but promptly at 12 o'clock the lights are turned down so everyone has to go to bed.

The tables on the second cabin are fully as good as the best hotels in the country.

#### **We Stop Briefly on the Coast of Ireland**

On the seventh day in the afternoon we reached the port of Ireland. Our large ship could not land at the landing place on the Irish Sea Port and so a boat came over and brought over the passengers and mail, also four or five old Irish ladies came along who had a number of silk shawls and souvenirs of Ireland; and while they were taking on the passengers and the mail into our boat, these women displayed their goods on the boat and sold quite a lot of silk shawls and Irish souvenirs.

It took about two hours while the boat unloaded the mail and also the passengers, so the boat continued its trip toward the English Channel. Our boat did not stop at England at all. The next stop was at Cherburg, on the French sea port where they took on passengers and mail again and also delivered mail and passengers, and also at this point were met by a boat which brought the passengers and mail as our boat could not land at the landing place. It didn't take much more than an hour and a half when our boat sailed again and we soon got into the North Sea where there were many boats to

be seen all the next day, crossing from England to France, and we also met many fisher boats.

And on the eleventh day at eight o'clock in the morning we arrived at our destination, at Bremer Haven, where there was a large crowd gathered at the port waiting for their friends.

The throng of people got heavier and heavier when the gang plank was attached to the ground, there was a shouting of "hello" and no end of jubilee. The music on the ship commenced playing and kept on playing until every passenger was off the boat. Every passenger was glad to get on land again. When we got into the building we went to the custom house, which went very fast as the officers were not at all particular about examining our goods.

On the other side of the building there was a special train waiting to take us from Bremer Haven, up to Bremen. It took us only about two hours to get to the city of Bremen. The land was rather a low land which we passed. The city of Bremen is quite a big city and we stayed over there from nine o'clock until three in the afternoon and took in the city and found many old buildings going back 200 or 300 years, such as the City Hall, and the Ratskeller. They showed us big vats of wine that hold as much as 1000 gallons.

### We Reach Berlin

At three o'clock in the afternoon we took the train out to Berlin, and we passed many fine landscapes. The farm buildings through the country were mostly out of brick and very nice small farms. In some places they lived together in small villages. About seven o'clock we reached the big city of Hammar. It was dark when we got there and we could not see much of the city, and about half past ten in the night we arrived at Berlin. The city was still full of life and lighted very nicely. We only had to go about four blocks to our hotel and so we had men carry our baggage and we walked up to the hotel—the name of the hotel was Staudt. We had a very nice room there and had a good nights rest. In the morning we arose early and took the double story omnibus, to the Russian Consul underneath the Linton and the place was very close to the French Consul.

When we got to the office of the Russian Consul we found that the Russian Consul was not yet at his office and a little later he arrived and we went to see him at once as we were very anxious to find out if our Passport Visa was there sent from Moscow. After he looked through all the papers he told us that our Visa had not yet arrived from Moscow, Russia, which was a hard blow to us, as we had already made application in this country on September 1st. And our Visa was to

be sent to the Russian Consul at Berlin, and here we were and no Visa yet; so we told them that we were waiting for our Visa at Berlin, but they had no answer that day so we went there every day but did not get an answer from Moscow. So I went to see Dr. Reige, the City Mayor of Berlin, the one we sent the carload of provisions right after the war and some clothing for the refugees and the poor of Berlin. I was figuring that I would try to get the City Mayor to influence Russia so that we would get our Visa quicker. But I soon found out that he had already died and his successor was absent, so we had no show.

So the next morning I went to the Democratic Senator in the Reich building, who was lately in Russia and made a contract with the Russian government there for a lot of timber for the German government.. He promised that he would do the very best that he could do for us; but he said it may take a few days to get an answer. So every morning at 9 o'clock we went to the Russian Consul to see if any answer was received from Moscow, but always "No."

In the meantime, I went up every day in the afternoon to the Reiterstrasser where the manufactured merchandise was displayed. Here I bought quite a lot of goods and did not feel lonesome at all waiting for our Visa from Moscow, Russia. My companion felt awful lonesome and was disgusted as he wanted to go to Russia to see his father and he was counting the hours and felt awful lonesome. After I was through buying goods I went to the many places of Art Galleries and Libraries.

There was no end of scenery in Berlin, and if I had stayed another month I would not have seen everything there. But my companion did not take much interest in the scenery and of course, he was still counting the hours and waiting for our Visa. One morning after we had waited 18 days in Berlin for our Visa from the Russian government we were in a dining room when we were called to the telephone and to my surprise it was the Russian Consul which called me up and told me that our Visas were there for us from the Russian government. It was certainly a fine feeling for us, especially for my companion.

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### The Start for Russia

**W**E THEN prepared ourselves for our trip to Soviet Govt., Russia and went to the Freideich Station and got thru tickets from Berlin to Odessa, Russia, and we left on the evening of Jan. 28, for the dark Soviet Russia. Many of our

friends from Berlin who accompanied us to the Station did not want us to go to Russia but we had our Visa now from the Soviet Russian Government so we took our chances. When we reached the Polish Frontier which is a new Frontier since the World War and took us about two hours to have our baggages examined and all the red tape that we had to go through. There must have been at least 22 benne in the custom house to help examine baggages, two could have done the work easily.

Our train left the Pole Fronta at three o'clock in the morning and reached the capital of Warsaw at 11 A. M. and we had to lay over till 7 P. M. Arriving at the city of Warsaw a young fellow came into our car and wanted to take our baggages to the depot and we allowed him to do so and followed right behind him and when we got in the depot we handed him 25c for carrying the baggage about 40 ft. but he said "No" in Polish, I must have 20 marks." We told him that we would not pay that but he insisted on it so I called on the police so got it settled for 10 marks, which was \$2.50. We did not want to fool around too much so we gave him the 10 marks. Then we had our hand baggage checked at the depot and asked the Police where we could get a hot meal and he told us to go to a place two blocks from the depot. It was snowing very heavily at the time—there was a lot of snow on the ground—and it was very cold as Warsaw lies in the North.

When we came to the middle of the first street there were two beggars came up to us and I told my companion that we must help these fellows, so we gave them each \$1.50 as we were prepared for it on the train when we were told to put money separate for that day and keep our other money in a hiding place as Warsaw was a very dangerous place for getting robbed. By the time we had given those two fellows their part there were 2 or 3 more there and a lot still coming. Before we knew it we were surrounded by a whole lot of beggars, with terrible looking clothes and mostly barefooted walking in the snow. Some of them had rags tied around their feet. When our small money was all gone we did not give to any more as we would not dare to start in our vests and get our bigger money. So we told them that we had no more money and they all left, but they insisted that we give them some more money. We tried to get away but they simply would not let us break through and when we looked at their faces we saw hunger sticking out of their eyes. I got scared and called the policeman at the station who was standing on the platform and he came over and helped us get through the beggars and took us to the restaurant.

The Police told us when we went out we must go through

the back door and around a different street so that they would not see us coming out. We were thinking of taking in Warsaw as we had about five or six hours time as our train did not leave until about seven o'clock in the evening but with the expense that we went through, we gave up the idea of seeing Warsaw, and went around and came out a different street toward the depot, and got safe to the depot. As soon as we entered the depot which was a great large room, we saw that there were hundreds of people in there trying to warm themselves and when you looked at them it would scare a man. The restless people continually walked around the depot so we went back to the baggage room where we had our baggage checked.

The Policeman told us that we had to go back to that Restaurant which was inclosed instead of staying there until the train went out, so we did. We took a table there and the same table until evening. It was a long afternoon for us and when the Policeman came around which we had told him before that he should come and get us and take us to the car when the train came. When the train arrived the policeman came and took our baggage and took it to the train so that we got out safe in the car.

We had a second class ticket and second class fare and the cars were pretty good, they were German cars. Our train left promptly on time. From Moscow our train ran South to the Russian Frontier Sheprtofka and we traveled all night and while we had a good chance to sleep as there were not many passengers in the car we could not do so on account of the excitement we had gone through the day before, and the fear of what might happen to us when we got to the Russian Frontier. It was nine o'clock in the morning when our train got into the Russian Frontier, Sheprotofka, which laid in the Northern part of Russia. There was two feet of snow on the ground and surrounding us was all timber and very cold.

I do not think that it was less than 40 degrees below zero the way I felt it, but no wind. When our train stopped in front of the Custom House we got out and went inside immediately. The room was not very large and had benches all around the room so we set our baggage on the top of the bench or table. There were three men in the room who looked over our baggage and we were very careful in the first place not to take anything which would interfere with the Russian government, so it did not take very long to look it over.

#### The Russian Custom Officials

I had many letters with me also quite a few copies from Berlin of goods that I bought there and a special man was

called to look over my papers. I noticed they were more interested in the papers than in the goods. He looked them over very carefully in a slow way and said, "You have no right to bring this along with you." I was prepared for it as I was advised in Berlin when I bought it that I would be unable to get it through the Russian country unless I had papers with me from the Russian Consul, that is a permit to carry same with me, so I had the papers on hand and got the camera through safe.

The next thing they asked for our passports. I handed them mine and so did my companion and he took them in the next room. In the meantime we were looking over the room and there were photographs on the walls of Lienna, Trotsky and other officers.

It did not take over five minutes when the officer returned with our passports and said "Koresho." I felt much lighter when we got our passports so soon as the last time that I went into Russia, the time that the Czar was ruling that country yet, in the year 1894 about 35 years ago, I brought over my father at the time. It is so much different now than at that time. At that time our passports were collected from us in the car by the policeman and taken in to the room where the big man was who examined them carefully and in about 3 or 4 hours he appeared in the front room and called the names, and when my name came on the roll I appeared in front of the big man with more than a dozen medals hanging on his breast and he looked down at me and treated me like I was a dog.

He asked me in Russian "Stote hoshe sa rossey" I told him that I wanted to visit friends and take my father back with me; but that was not satisfactory to him and he kept on asking questions, one after another, and instead of getting my passport so I could go out with the next train, he told me to come tomorrow about ten o'clock after my passport. Of course, if I had only known that time to give him a big tip I would have got my passport the next minute. So the next day I appeared in the room at that time and it took another hour and he appeared and asked me questions again and I repeated the same so he at last gave me my passport.

By getting off so much easier this time from the officer of the new government we felt rather surprised over it and we had confidence in the officer. The soldiers and the officers were all dressed alike, with heavy gray, long overcoats and gray caps. It seems that there was no difference in the clothes of the officers and the soldiers, they were about alike, except the rank of the officer was shown on the side of the

shoulder where they had either a piece of red flannel or blue or yellow which showed the rank of the officer.

So when we were all through with our papers I asked one of the officers where we could get our dinner as it was about dinner time and he said right next door at the Government Restaurant. Later I found out that everything belonged to the Government, so we asked about our baggage and he said to leave it stand right where it was; but we did not feel that we liked to let our satchels stand there as the people were going in and out from every direction, so I asked again and he told me that they would be perfectly safe here, so we went to the dining hall. It was only a medium sized plain room with two long tables in the center of the room and plain benches on each side of the table.

There were two men that came with us a couple of high toned fellows, who were from Rumania. We sat down to the table at once, I and my companion, but the other two fellows went to the waiter and asked where the first class rooms were. The waiter told them "all of serowno stes," which means to say "all alike here, no difference." So they sat down by side of our place. On the table were 4 plates of rye bread about a foot high on each plate. The waiter soon brought us broth which was a vegetable soup, with a few small pieces of meat in it.

We returned then to the room where we left our hand-baggage and found everything OK—just as we had left it.

#### The Start for Odessa

Our train was about ready for Odessa, or to our destination in Soviet, Russia, Ukrania, and as we had our tickets bought from Berlin to Odessa, second class, we asked the main depot agent where the second-class car was and he gave us about the same answer as the other man did in the morning and told us that everything was "serovno" which means everything alike, and they had no second-class, or first-class, but he said that they had hard beds and soft beds. So we took our baggage into the "soft bed" car, and it was simply on the same basis as was on the third-class.

There are always two seats partitioned off and on each side would be three long boards, long enough for a man to stretch out on and on the side would be a small narrow hall to go through the car. On our soft beds, we found a piece of carpet nailed down on the boards with some kind of filling in it so it was really a little better than the plain board and a man could use his overcoat in case he wanted to lie down.

Otherwise the car was fairly clean, but of course as a rule the cars are smaller there and there is a door that can



be closed, making a sort of room for yourself, and in case you have a full house, or not many passengers in the car, to take up all the vacant places in the car.

Our train left about noontime so all that afternoon we saw nothing but timber on both sides of the track, mostly all spruce trees that grow very tall.

It was a pretty fair train and ran about twenty miles an hour on an average. The conductor was very friendly to us which was a great surprise. In the evening about supper time he came around and asked if we wanted some "Chai" which means tea. We told him "yes" and later he came in again and asked if we also wanted some "Sachery Silva" which meant sweet bread, with our tea. We told him "yes." When we stopped at a big station instead of inviting us to go out to the station restaurant, he brought in the sweetbread and tea for us, which he continued for about three times during the night. Then he brought us some cigarettes and we must say we really had a good waiter, and something unusual in Russia, that the Conductor would bring in lunch for a man in the car. When I was over in 1894 the conductors then were so high-toned that you had to take off your cap for them and if you had then asked them to bring you in some "chai" or lunch I think they would have knocked you over, instead of doing what this Conductor did now for us. He wore a long gray coat and a gray cap, very plain. Really all the officers wear their clothes alike. The only way you could see the rank of an officer, was they had a small piece of red, yellow or green flannel on their shoulder. This is the only sign of rank that a man could see.

### Another Night without Sleep

It was nearly twelve o'clock when we retired to our soft bed berth and the train was not at all crowded that night and so with the permit of our Conductor, we closed the door for our place and made it like a room, and we locked it on the inside. While I needed a rest very badly, as I had no sleep for two nights before, towards 3 o'clock in the morning I woke up as I felt that the soft beds had taken an effect on me. I felt more like I had slept on a stone than a soft bed. It was also quite a little colder in our partitioned off room but, of course, this was nothing new to us to ride cold on the train.

At last daylight broke and I was glad of it. Also my companion had slept fairly well until morning. Our conductor did not forget us in the morning and soon appeared at our door and asked us if we wanted some "tea." We told him "yes." Later on he brought us some more tea and dark sweet bread.

Our train came nearer and nearer to our destination, to the station of Satishe; but on account of the cold weather which reaches away down to the southern part of Russia, the conductor told us they had not had such cold weather for 15 years in South Russia, as they had this year. I and my companion had made up our minds the night before not to get off at our station, Satishe, as we had not arranged for a team or warm clothing for us at the station, so our plan was to leave a message at Satishe as there was a telegraph line all through the German Colonies. The message would be that we would leave at Satishe for Neutorf, which was about 35 miles away from the station of Satishe.

The country around us was very level and where the snow wasn't so heavy we could see the landmarks, how the land was laid out in small strips. On my last trip I saw on both sides of the track, about 8 feet wide on each side, some very fine trees which were planted many years ago to protect the track from snow blockade. But I could see that all these fine trees were now cut down and nothing left but small bushes. We could also see that several of the fine stations were badly damaged which was all done by the Revolution.

**T**HERE was no law and everybody did as they pleased.

Later our conductor came in and told us that we had only three more stations to make until Satishe, but I told him that we were going straight through to Odessa, as far as our tickets called for and we were to return from Odessa again the day after, when our friends would have sleighs there and warm coats. Of course, we had quite a bit of work sometimes to make him understand everything but we could not talk Russian all the time so we tried to talk with our hands and explain to him.

My companion did not say a word for more than an hour, but I could see that he was very excited, and the nearer we got to Satishe the more excited he got. When the conductor came in and told us that the next station was Satishe, he told us he would take care of our message and take it to the station for us, and notify our friends to get us next Monday.

My companion did not say a word but I saw the tears run down his cheeks and when the people hollered Satishe, my companion broke out and said, "I am going home, I am going home to see my father." So I saw that he put his overcoat on and arranged his satchel so I saw there was nothing else to do but follow him, so I also prepared myself to leave the train.

When the train stopped, the conductor helped us put all our satchels out and helped to take care of them at the sta-

tion. Of course, we were only too glad to give him a few rubles as a present and we thanked him very much, as much as we could explain to him.

We found the depot a very cold place as there was no fire whatever in this large building. The building was also quite badly damaged and looked very rough. While we looked around the station there came a Russian and asked us where we wanted to go and we told him we wanted to go to Neutorf. He said he could take us there, so he went after his team and we told him to be sure and bring some good fur coats along.

### A Cold Sleigh Ride

It was only a few minutes when he came in and said he was ready for us and when we came out on the porch we saw the sleigh which looked to us that it would not last very far on account that it would break down with us. The two small horses were so poor that I didn't believe that they would make a mile with us. We were both disgusted but what else could we do as we had to move? It was Saturday morning and we wanted to get home for Sunday. The Russian said we should get on the sleigh and he would bring us over there safely. We asked him where the fur coats were, and he said that he did not have any. He only had a small piece of a grain bag that is what it looked like and he himself was very poorly clothed.

We took a seat on the sleigh and away we went. He kept the whip going, and going, and talked very loud to the horses, but with all the motion and hollering that he did he could not get the horses out of their ordinary steps. That is the way we kept going. The wind blew harder and harder and drifted some snow against us which made it worse than ever for us with our light overcoats. We asked him if there was a place that we could stop and warm up, but he said "no." Not until we got to Srcherifka, which was a distance of five miles from the station of Satishe.

With all the whipping and hollering at his horses, it did not have any effect on them. Every once in awhile they would stop entirely and he would have quite a time to get them started again. There was one lucky thing that the road leading into the little town of Srcherifka was down hill, and so the poor animals did not have to pull and we were fortunate enough to get into the small town of Srcherifka, a little after eleven o'clock.

We were trying to find a warm place so we could warm up. So we went in the saloon as the store was cold but we did not find any fire in the saloon either. There was no one in the saloon except a woman with a baby in her arms

so we bought a small bottle of vodka, which means whiskey. But we were not allowed to drink it in there, so we asked her if she would allow us to go to her house which was right next to the saloon. She said she had a fire at her house. As we entered the house we found a large stove built of mud bricks, but it was hardly warm as straw was the only fuel they had.

We asked her if she would make us some hot tea and she promised to do so. The room was in very bad condition and the tea was very poor, but the way we felt, so frozen up we would drink anything to warm us up. After we got warmed up some we left the room as there were about 4 or 5 children there that were almost naked. It was a wonder that the children were not frozen.

This little town had a big Russian church and there were also many Jews in the town. They had two little stores which belonged to the Government but there were not enough goods in them to make one small wagon load in the whole store. This small town must have been over 125 years old and it is just as small and poor as ever; no improvements were seen anywhere whatever since the last time I was there, but saw many buildings that were going to pieces.

By looking over the town we found at last one man from the German Colonies who came after some stuff there and we were lucky enough to find him. He promised to take us over to the nearest German village, Bargdorf, which was only about four miles away from the colony Neudorf. All these German colonies are within the line of the Black Sea region. There are four colonies in one big valley. We were mighty glad to find a man who had a good team and we left immediately. He also had some good covering to spare for us, which helped us a whole lot. The weather remained cold all that day as the road happened to be very good that way, we made very good headway. On our way we passed the former estate of Dumanner Edelmann.

I used to be acquainted in the valley where big timber was on, but now all the timber is cut out and there are no more trees left. His land was also divided up in small strips and given to the poor, he and his family had to leave for either France or Germany to save their lives, as when they find a rich man at Revolution time they kill him, unless he gets away in time.

I have no idea how much land this man owned but I heard very often in my boyhood days that you could ride all day with a wagon on his land, so he must have had several hundred thousand acres. The great large barn that he had built was built on the north part of his land and also a few other large buildings, were all torn down—but his castle and his

fine buildings were at the small city of Dumann where he lived with his family. He used to have hundreds of families working for him.

**C**OMING closer to the German colony Bargdorf I saw that there was a Russian village, a new settlement, close to Bargdorf. I also saw a lot of the highland was fenced in for vinyards. Of course, on account of the snow you could not see the fields very plain. At last we struck the deep valley where Bargdorf lay. There are quite high mountains around the valley and the roads were leading down the deep valley. Our driver was driving rather fast the last hour and I asked why he was driving so fast. He said we will soon have darkness breaking in on us, and it is always our rule to be in the village or at home when the darkness sets in to be on the safe side. He said it is nothing new that a man caught out in the prairie or out on the road in the dark, that the clothing is stripped off him and let run naked. So I found out the reason for going home so fast.

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#### Home at Last

It was just getting dark when we reached the village and I told him to bring me to Dr. Yesser's house, my brother-in-law. When we reached the house we found them all well except the doctor, who had died; only two of the boys and the wife remaining. It was a great surprise to everyone of the family to drop right in on them without expecting us and the news spread over the village like wildfire that Americans were there. It wasn't over thirty minutes when the house was filled with people. I had hardly time enough to warm up in the meantime. My companion, Mr. Kessler, only took a small lunch and went right to his father's place.

There was a large crowd of people there and they stayed until about 2 o'clock, all anxious to hear from America.

#### Attends Church Services

Next morning was Sunday, and at nine o'clock the first church bell rung and later on two bells rung and when church started, three bells were rung. When I entered the church it was filled with a large crowd of people, and it looked as though everyone wanted to see the Americans.

We had a very nice service, preached in German, the big pipe organ played very nice, and some very nice songs by the ladies choir. After the services, the foreman of the church showed me all around the inside of the church, and showed me the wall of the building, which was three foot thick, and all built of stone. The building was about ninety years old and will easily stand for the next two hundred

years. It is nearly as strong as the Egyptian pyramids. Of course, the building is plastered outside and then white-washed, and the roof and tower are painted green, and it is a beautiful building with its large windows.

On our way down to my friend's home we walked down the street and the buildings all looked almost alike. They are nice large buildings, built of stone, and plastered and whitewashed. Most of the roofs are of tile.

When I reached my friends home, we were called to the table for dinner. Our dinner consisted of chicken, potatoes about the size of a hazel nut, rye bread with barley mixed, as white bread was not to be seen in the colony, and coffee which was made out of chicory, as sweet coffee is too expensive for them. So I always preferred tea in place of coffee.

Of course, if they have company they give them the best there is in the village, but I heard said at the table that there were many families that were without bread and cannot see their way clear to get along until next harvest, unless the government will help them, as it isn't like it used to be in Russia when there were rich people in the country, now they are all poor, and no one to help the poor like there has been in the past. They only had a half crop last year and the government collected all the wheat and almost all the rye and corn that was left and shipped it up in the northern part where they were entirely out of bread and had no crop at all. I hope that the government will be able to help them out until harvest time.

#### Visitors Come to See the Americans

After dinner the house soon filled with a lot of people, more than the house could hold, all anxious to hear from America. About four o'clock I had to leave the large crowd to go to my former home, Neudorff, which was about  $4\frac{1}{2}$  miles from Bagdorf, in the same valley. Everything looked different than it did when I was over last, in 1894. The large timber where Neudorff used to draw their timber from, was all cut down. The nice row of trees which appeared so nice to me the last time that I was over, were all cut off. The big dam that used to hold so much water was ruined. I could see the big mountain across from the village of Neudorff and within twenty minutes we were there, and before sundown.

Neudorff has three streets. We took the upper street, which is the longest and when we drove through the village the people must have known that we were coming and it seemed that most of the people were standing in the door yards. It was quite a sight and hardly an end to the welcome.

My nephew's house, to which I wanted to go was nearly

in the middle of the upper side street and when we drove in the yard there was a large crowd of people gathered, and by the time I got through shaking hands my hand was nearly shook off. It was certainly a great welcome I got from my nephew, in his house. We sat up that night until one o'clock. Monday morning the first thing was to go to Gregoriopel, which was a government town, which was on the large river, Denester, as I had to report to the government officers there.

We had to go through the village of Glushstal, which was four miles from Neudorff in the same valley. It was a very large village, of about 1,000 inhabitants. There I met my companion who had left me Saturday to go to his old home. I also met his old father and we took lunch there and had some homemade wine, which came in handy in the cold drive. From there it took us about two hours to go to the Government town of Gregoriopel.

When we entered the town these people, which they call Woldewaner, are a different class than the Russians are, and even less educated than the Russians.

#### Curious to see Americans

It was market day in the Government town of Gregoriopel and there were quite a few people there at the market on the main street. When they heard that Americans were there they wanted to see them as some had never seen an American. They came running over to our wagon before we got off and when we went to the government building they followed us like a herd of sheep. They circled around us and looking our clothing over as they had an idea that the Americans were different looking people than they were. At last we got into the government building and reported to the officers there. They received us very friendly and we handed them our passports and they looked them over and examined them and did quite a bit of writing on them.

It did not take over fifteen minutes when they handed them back and said "horaha," which means "good." Of course tips are not necessary anymore like they used to be. The officer wore the same kind of clothing, that is the long overcoat like all the officers of Russia. After we were all through with our passports, we took in the town for a little while, and the people followed us. To escape them we went to the Woldowanner Restaurant. This was a private house. This was the first time I was ever inside a Woldawanner house, although I had heard so much about them when I was over before. We called for a small dinner and got some dark grape wine. The meal consisted of vegetable soup and dark bread. While we were eating our meal, I sized up the rooms and they were well decorated and nice and clean, and had a

lot of famous pictures on the walls. One picture was a photograph of a nice young man with a large gold chain around his neck, such as they had given out from the Czar of Russia, in his time.

There was a piano at one end of the room and a mahogany buffet in the corner. It was deeply carved with all kinds of hand work, and on it was a nice setting of jewels. It was one of the finest buffets that I have ever seen.

#### Another Pathetic Story

I got so interested in the house that I had my interpreter ask the lady about all those pictures there and also to explain about that fine piece of work, the buffet. She told my interpreter that she was a widow and had four nice small children and that the picture of the man with the gold chain around his neck was her husband, that they had been big land owners and very rich and he was the City Mayor at the time when the Revolution took place, but when the new government took place her husband was shot because he was rich and held a high office and everything was taken from them except the seven acres. Also all the furniture and everything else was taken out of the house, except one bed and the piano and buffet, a table and a few chairs. All their fortune taken away from her, leaving her very poor, and now running a small restaurant to keep herself and her children alive.

I asked her whether she would sell the buffet, but she said she didn't like to because she wanted to keep some of her furniture until she was entirely out of money and had to sell. I really felt that I had better not buy it because in the first place she should keep it, and the next thing I didn't know whether I could get it through with so many frontiers to cross and the duty would be terribly high. So I said "good-bye" to the lady.

#### Many Families left Destitute

This is the way that many thousands of families have been ruined through the revolution and the new government, and no one would have an idea of how some of these well-to-do people suffer now.

But before I left her I told her that if she would get so poor financially that she could not take care of her children, that she should write to me and I would send her a few dollars. We then drove down the street of Gregoriopol and passed two large Woldewaler churches. One of them was taken away by the government and they made a picture show and a theater house of it. I would have liked to have gone into one of these churches as I have never been inside of a



Woldewaler church. They are a very large structure with high towers.

When we came down the street farther there was another government building which was very fine. But many of the buildings in the city were crumbling and none of them are being rebuilt now. Then we drove down to the Denester, which is fully as large as our Missouri river, and I saw no end of vinyards and fruit trees on the bottom lands and hill sides. It is a very rich valley and they told us that they raise all kinds of fruit there.

### In Sight of Rumania

**J**UST across the river was the frontier of Rumania. You can see the houses on the other side of the river. I wanted to go across there very badly and see some acquaintances but it was impossible for me to do so. The officer told me there was no way of getting across to Rumania from the Russian side, as both governments were fighting and that neither allows one to go from one side to the other. Rumania took a large strip of land away from Russia and when I was over there in '94 I was all over that country and it was a beautiful place, and the finest country to raise grapes, and of course, wheat and corn. The officer told me the only way I could get into Rumania was to go back to Berlin and get a Visa from the Rumanian Consul, which would mean almost 3000 miles traveling to get into Rumania. So I had to give up my plan to go there.

On our way home we went a different road, a few miles east, to take in the small German village of Glien Bergdorf. As soon as we got up on the highland we would pass pyramids about twelve or fifteen feet high. They are built out of ground and they are probably hundreds or thousands of years old, and have settled so they do not look as high as they were when built. We called them, when I was over the last time, cannon hills, but that idea was entirely wrong as there were no such things as cannons hundreds or thousands of years back. I was told, since the war that many of those pyramids have been opened and they found human bones and war relics and all kinds of things of old ages. They are not cannon hills by any means, but are burying places for that race of people that existed at that time.

The land where these pyramids are built is all level land and you can see for many miles over the country, and also can see one of these pyramids from as far away as fifteen miles.

Some of the neighborhood told us that the intention is, if the government makes allowance, that they will dig down

on more of them and get further evidence, as they think there must also be some gold hidden among them. When you pass by them very close it is very interesting to look at those pyramids. All these people know about the history of these pyramids is that Russia has taken all that land away from the Turkish government probably fifty or a hundred years ago, and how long the Turks were in possession is more than I can say, but there is no question but that the Turks must have had a very strong Empire a hundred years ago as the stretch of land extends clear from the Black Sea to Kieff, really all South Russia.

At last we got to the village of Klein Bergdorf. We stopped at Fredrick Kramerer and we were soon welcomed by a whole lot of people there. The place is a nice little village. They have a fine church and a nice school house there and many of the houses are large stone houses with tiled roofs. We had a lot of company that night but I noticed that the big impression the late special tax that the government put on every family through the whole of Russia just two days before we arrived at the first German village, had made an awful sorrowful feeling for every family. Of course no one was prepared for a tax at that time of the year and it was such a large tax. The people were not at all prepared to meet that heavy tax that came on them so unexpected and many of the poorer families in the village had to sell their last cow to pay up the taxes which spoiled many a pleasureable hour for us.

We sat up very late that night and did not get away until the next noon. The roads were very bad and it was a very hard drive with those large wagons. It was all right until the snow had melted some and then they could use only wagons except sleighs. The ground was badly frozen so it made the drive very hard for me. Very often I thought I wouldn't have a whole bone left in me by the time we arrived at Nidorf again, but before we got to Nidorf it got late and already dark and the driver began to use his whip pretty strong on the horses and I asked him why he was in such a hurry as it was hard on those animals. He said he had to make better time because he said we had to be in the village before it got dark because it is dangerous to be out on the highway in the nighttime, as it happened every once in a while that people had been held up and the horses taken away from them and the clothing stripped off their bodies.

When we arrived at my nephew's house there were quite a few people waiting there for me, who were anxious to hear from their friends in this country. We sat up very late that night. In our conversation whenever it touched

the government the men before they said anything about the government affairs would always look around the room first and see who was in the room. That showed that the people were afraid of each other, to say anything about government affairs and I saw that there was no confidence among themselves.

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### The Relief Goods from Marion

The next morning was Tuesday which was the day I had planned to start for the city of Odessa to investigate the very large shipment of relief goods, consisting of clothing, shipped by the Marion Relief Committee, as we had sent along William Rieb and Jacob Schempp from Glenullen, North Dakota, who were men that were to go along with the clothing to Odessa.

These relief goods were put up by their friends in this country right after the war and the clothing was so prepared by the Marion Committee each package being addressed and numbered so that a child could almost turn over the packages the way they were numbered and marked to the owner over there. Every package was tightly pressed by machine.

So we sent Mr. Rieb about a month before the clothing was shipped and Schempp was to go along with the clothing on the freight ship from New York to Odessa, but Jacob Schempp already broke his promises at New York. Instead of going along with the clothing on the freight ship he let the clothing go alone on the freight ship and took a passenger ship from New York to Germany against the instructions of the Marion Relief Committee. After he got over to Russia at last, the freight ship Saucus already had arrived at its destination, the city of Odessa, and when our man Jacob Schempp was not there with his papers and documents, the clothing was put temporarily in the government warehouse, and after Jacob Schempp arrived in Russia he got the other man, Rieb, to go home. So he took out the clothing from the government later on and told all the people that had an interest in the clothing that he only received half of it from the government and gave many of them only as much as one-third of their clothing instead of the whole package. Afterwards we received hundreds of letters from the people of Russia who had clothing out of that shipment saying that Jacob Schempp was beating them very bad and only giving them about one-third of the clothes of the very poorest ones and kept all the best for himself.

Of course the Marion Relief Committee was unable to do anything on this side, so we made up our minds at once to investigate the matter. So I went over twice to Berlin, trying to get a visa into Russia and always failed to get one un-

til last January when I tried it again and got a visa at last to get into Russia. This was my main object in going to Russia—to find out about how Schempp delivered the goods to those people and whether he only got half of the goods as he claimed when he returned from over there or whether he got it all. I had Rev. Herin from Neudorf go with me to Odessa.

#### Not a Matter of Choice

My nephew had already arranged to have Mr. Sauter, who was the only man that had a carriage left in all the villages around. There wasn't much of the carriage any more—the top and everything was off, only the springs were left under them. We started out early in the morning and we had a hard day's drive to get to the station of Wiseliegut and we were fortunate enough to get in there in the daytime. The train did not go east to Odessa until 1 o'clock in the night, so we went to a Jew hotel. The building was very small but not far from the station, and it was not at all sanitary, but very unclean, but it was the only salvation we had—it was the only hotel we could find. They had benches in the house with a sheet on, and that was our bed for that night until the train came in. Of course we could not sleep at all and besides I wouldn't think of sleeping in a place like that.

About 9 o'clock in the evening there were at least 20 Jews came into the little house and made it very unpleasant. Our supper consisted of some rye bread we had taken along and a small piece of bologna and the Jew had his "sonnewar" up and made some tea for us. So we drank tea on a slow scale for about two hours just to keep awake. A little later we laid over on those benches and the Jews, of course, were also complaining about their high taxes. Some of them had to pay enormous high taxes, those who had stores outside of the government. We understood them saying as they talked the Jew language, that some of them paid as high as a thousand rubels taxes to the government at this last tax. We heard one of them saying that they could already feel that their father, Trotzke, was condemned and sent to Siberia.

The mother of the hotel was sleeping on the floor behind the large brick or mud stove and she had such a bad cough that it made me nervous, she was coughing all the time. The air at last got so heavy in the room, it must have been about 11 o'clock in the night, that I could not stand it any longer and I told Rev. Herin, my companion to Odessa, that we had better start for the depot. So we paid for our beds and the tea and had the boss go along with us to the de-

pot. At the depot there was light but no fire and it was rather cold. But we bought our tickets to Odessa, of course, there as only one class, and we managed our best to keep going until the train arrived. There were quite a few other people came in after we did and when the train arrived there was quite a rush but we managed to get a good place in the car, as we had one side of the partitioned seat and I stretched myself out on the lower bench and my companion on the upper bench and we used our overcoats for cover although it was not cold in the car. It was heated fairly well. While the bench was rather hard, it was much better than the hotel. About daylight we reached the city of Odessa which has a population of at least a million, if not more.

**W**HEN we got out on the platform or end of the depot there were about three cars of Russians got out and the soldiers behind them. There must have been at least eighty or ninety men whom the soldiers took to the jail in the city of Odessa because they were unable to pay their last taxes.

#### The Bread Line

We went into the large room at the depot where the restaurants were and here they also had tables and chairs to sit upon while you ate your lunch and as it was too early yet to go up town, we took our breakfast in the depot. We managed to get some cooked eggs and "chai" or tea, and some dark bread. After we got through with our breakfast it was fully daylight. Coming out of the depot to the outlet of the street there were any amount of trotske who wanted to haul us to any part of the city, but I did not see a single car there. We walked down to Mr. Shuller's residence, whose address we had and when we reached his place he himself, was out to get some bread but we found his wife and children in the house. They welcomed us and soon afterwards Mr. Shuller got back from the bakery complaining that it had taken him a half hour to get a loaf of bread and, of course, pay for same. He told us that all the other bakeries were cut out by taxing them too high so the government is running the bakeries alone now, in Odessa, and to get bread you have to stay in line and very often it takes more than a half hour to get up to the place where you get your loaf of bread. They invited us to breakfast again and afterwards Mr. Shuller went to his writing room and we talked everything over about the clothing deal. Mr. Shuller knew all about it.

The first thing we had to do was to go down to the custom house, down on the seaport, to find out whether Jacob Schempp only received half of the clothing, as he told

us when he arrived here. When we got in the street, we got a trotske to take us down to the seaport, which is quite a distance down and after we arrived at the seaport we walked over to the custom house. It is a large building made of stone. When we entered the building we registered and soon were allowed to come into the office. The officers were very friendly towards us as Americans; they had not forgotten yet what America did for them right after the war, and we told them we wanted to find out whether our man, Jacob Schempp, who was sent over with the clothing, received all the clothing or only half. They told us that we would have to return in the afternoon as it would take at least four or five hours to get all those books out of the vault since it was five or six years ago, but they sent a boy along with us to show us the seaport where the clothing was unloaded by the steamer Saucus, and also showed us the warehouse that the goods were put in, because Jacob Schempp was not there when the clothing arrived at Odessa. But the clothing was all checked by the government and also by Mr. Shuller and checked O. K.

On our way back to Shuller's residence we walked quite a ways to see more of the city. It was a surprise to me that there were hardly any new buildings built in the city from the time I was over there in 1894, about 33 years ago, and in many places you could see the buildings crumbling. I know the city of Odessa very well as I was there a year attending high school in my boyhood, just before I left the country, so I know part of the city very well.

#### The Biggest Man in Odessa

At last we got on the Pobroschenke street, which was the main street of the city, and here we came to the finest hotel in the city where Mr. Shuller told me Jacob Schempp stopped. So this was the man that promised the Marion Relief Committee instead of going out to the villages as he said at that time that he still knew how to eat dumplings and drink sour milk, but Schempp failed to go out to the country villages as he promised and eat dumplings and drink sour milk. The people said that he lived like a Lord in the big hotel there and a carriage was always waiting for him at the front of the hotel to take him and his friends to any pleasureable place. Mr. Shuller said that Jacob Schempp was at that time when he received all the clothing from the government which he moved to his warehouse, and he was then the biggest man in the city.

It was about dinner time when we at last found a trotske and he drove us to Shuller's place where we had our dinner and we then started right after dinner for the Custon

House again. When we arrived there the officers were ready for us and they showed us all the papers and records and showed us that they delivered over to Jacob Schempp 478 bales pressed clothing, weighing 72,080 pounds without any duty charge whatever, and they furnished me a copy of same with their seal attached to it. Which showed very plain that he delivered all the Relief goods over to Jacob Schempp. And all in good shape, except two bales which were torn open, but after they were examined they found that everything was there and must have torn the wire in loading or unloading. So the officer gave up the matter in black and white and signed his name to it and with the Government Seal. So we were sure that Jacob Schempp got everything which was shipped over there from the government and there was no reason why he should not have delivered the same as he received it from the government.

From there we went to the Red Cross building, but they happened to be too busy, just then, and told us to come tomorrow morning and they would do all they can for us. The Red Cross building is still kept open and they had four people working in the office. From there we went to the Government Bank and I cashed a couple of traveling checks there, one from the American Express Co., and one from the Chicago bank. They accepted both of them and paid us 193 roubles for \$100 traveling check. So it was a little less than two roubles for a dollar. This used to be the biggest Company bank in the city and it was a very rich bank in 1894. But the government has taken the bank away like everything else, and the government runs everything now.

I sized up the building inside while I was waiting for the money, as it takes quite a little while, while they went over it very carefully. I noticed near the ceiling there was a kind of a cage on each side of the ceiling near the walls and I saw a soldier in each cage with a gun in his arm looking down to the bank business, and it is so arranged that they can see over the whole room, which is very large. I thought to myself that this is not a bad idea, having the soldier stay there with his gun ready to shoot at any moment, and it would not be a poor idea to have some of them in our banks, so that they could not be held up in daytime.

#### Not Much Time to Spare

From there we went to the Government building, that is the City Building, where you buy your transportation tickets and I wanted to know if he could furnish me a ticket from Odessa to Berlin. He said he did not have them on hand but he could have one there in a few days. But I did not have time any more to come back to the city, as the

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government only gave us 30 days time to stay in Russia and it took about one-third of that time away from us to report ourselves at the government stations when we leave and when we come back again. So I had to take care of every hour that I had in Russia to get around as much as I could.

We then walked towards Mr. Schuller's residence and we passed the great City Park, which only took in about a block right in the heart of the city, which used to be magnificent with the finest trees and the finest statues with a very fancy steel fence around it with wide open gates. I saw that this very fine park was all about ruined. The statues were broken to pieces, the fine trees cut down and the fancy buildings in the park were partly crumbled and Mr. Schuller told me that Odessa, especially, had at different times had a revolution in the city and suffered terrible from the revolution.

So about five blocks more we came to the Lutheran church which is a great structure. This was still in good shape and a few blocks away from that was the German Reformation church, also in good shape.

When the sun was about going down I hired a trotske which brought us to the residence of Mr. Schuller. I saw all different races of people in the city, but of course mostly Russians and the next were Jews. I saw a few Turks on the streets and the next were Germans. The people more or less were dressed poorly and the Russian women wore the felt boots. Still I saw a few ladies there that wore short dresses and silk stockings, the same as in our country and also had bobbed hair.

So at last we reached the house of Mr. Schuller and the price we paid for the trotske was 30 kobak for three men, which was about 18c in American money. That evening at the house of Schuller, the room was soon filled up with men from the city, who had a lot to tell about how Schempp dealt with the relief goods and how he behaved himself. There were also some men from the village of Rohrbach and they had a lot to say how Jacob Schempp dealt with the relief goods at their village. From what they all said that night is a drop in the bucket what I said in my report of what Schempp has done with the relief clothing and how he behaved as it would take many columns to write it up, not saying anything about what we heard in all the villages about the clothing affair.

**N**EXT morning Mr. Schuller and I and Elser went to the Red Cross building and they met us very friendly and gave us some letters about how the relief goods were treated. From there we went to other places and about noon I was through looking over all the relief clothing affair. After



which we went to a tea house but same only a mixed affair—half tea house and half restaurant and just an ordinary place. In the afternoon we had a few hours to spare to look over the city and I wanted to see one of those fine tea houses that used to be when I was over there last, but could not find any more of those fine tea houses. Those great tea houses used to be a credit to the city. Hundreds of people would visit them during the day and drink tea all afternoon, which was very fine tea, and listen to the great music box which took a big man to wind up, and you could drink tea all afternoon and all evening and it wouldn't cost you over fifteen or twenty cents at the highest. I was unable to find any of those large tea houses any more in the city—they were all closed up.

### A Great Seaport

From there we went to the building of the board of trade which is right next to the little park above the great wide stairway. From here we could look down to the seaport of the Black Sea which is a great sight. Those great stairways built of marble, which reach from the height clear down to the seaport, and it takes about fifteen minutes to walk those stairways down to the seaport. There are two seaports—one called the foreigner's and one the home seaport, and they used to be the liveliest seaports in the East with the ships going from Odessa to Constantinople and clear to New York, but now the seaports look like they are dead—no life whatever. Part of the seaport, near the shore, were frozen up on the Black Sea, of which I had never heard before, that the seaport was ever frozen. I was told that they had an especially cold winter this last winter. I only saw three ships in the home seaport, or harbor. One was loading a ship of oxen for Constantinople but I suppose they had quite a job cutting through all that ice before the ship left out of the harbor.

Also some of the fine buildings around the seaport, or harbor, were partly destroyed. The great statue out of bronze called the Reshilzen statue, was still there and not damaged to speak of. It holds its arm up high and points down to the harbor near the great marble stairway. The fine palace right next to the statue, where the Czar used to stay when he arrived in the city, was also some damaged from the Revolution. And going back towards Schuller's place we passed a great Sabor church, where the Czar used to go when in Odessa, as he was the head of the church in those days. We went inside of that church as it is open, and it is really worthwhile to go and see the inside of a church

like this. The many pictures and statues and the rich altar which was more or less damaged through the Revolution but which was repaired again. We saw three Russian women coming in, buy some candles which the preacher would light up for them and they brought them up to the holy painting where there were candle sticks in the sides, and they put those candles in the candle sticks and they then knelt down in front of those paintings and crosses and then they bent down and knocked their heads against the carpet on the floor, which they did several times.

We did not stay long enough to see the end of it, but take it all around the church inside was still in pretty fair shape. Right across from the Sabor church I saw the great bronze statue of the man that laid out the city of Odessa, but part of the statue was destroyed.

From there we went into a large government store which were really the only business houses holding up now and we found quite a little goods in the store and also many fancy buffets and some extra fine furniture of solid mahogany very deeply carved that were taken away from the millionaires and were displayed there for sale and you could buy all the groceries, dry goods and hardware in the same place.

When the sun began to go down we hurried to get to the residence of Schuller, where there were quite a few men with us at the table that evening and many things were said during the meal. So the time passed around fast.

#### Schempp Escapes the Authorities

Before I left Odessa I wanted to go over to Neusatz Krim and see the committee there who were to receive a shipment of clothing out of these relief goods for their village there which Jacob Schempp was to forward from Odessa the same as they were addressed and numbered to the committee of Neusatz Krim, which was valued at about five or six thousand dollars, as the people of Odessa told me that the committee from Neusatz had written to Schempp several times to ship their part of the relief goods over to Neusatz, and when they did not hear from Jacob Schempp, they wired him but he failed to make shipment. So the committee came up to Odessa to look after their part of the relief goods but found out that Jacob Schempp had them all sold out. So they had the papers made out to have him arrested, but when Schempp found that they were going to arrest him, he left the city at once with Mrs. Sokolova, and sometime later on they arrived in New York, but he was unable to get Mrs. Sokolova through into this country, so she had to go back again.

But on account of the shortness of the time I could not get over to Krim as it would have taken me at least three or four days time, which time I could not spare any more, as my passport would have soon run out and there was no chance of getting any extension of time whatsoever from the government. So when the clock struck half past nine, I and my companion, Rev. Herin, said good-bye to the family of Schuller and we owed them many thanks for their hospitality towards us. Most of the men accompanied us to the large depot.

The rooms of the depot were well filled up with passengers when we arrived there and we soon got our tickets bought and after we said goodbye to all those men and friends we went to the car. Of course, the cars were all alike but still we got a pretty fair place and the train left promptly at ten o'clock. The cars were not very crowded at all so Rev. Herin and I each had a bench for ourselves on which we could stretch out. The cars were fairly well heated and when we arrived at our destination, Satishe, when we got out of the car it was about two o'clock in the morning.

A Jew was at the depot and he asked if we wanted to go for the night and we told him "yes". That was the only chance we had so we followed him to his house. When we entered the house we found it to be very small but still there were about three or four beds in the place to stretch out on but very little undercover. The quilts were rather badly torn, still we managed, by keeping our clothes on, not to freeze. So we kept going until the next morning about half past seven. Then the man came in and asked if we wanted any breakfast and we told him "Yes." So he brought us tea and some dark bread and some ripe olives. The tea tasted all right and so did the ripe olives. Of course, the bread was rather course, but still the tea was hot and that was the main thing—to get warmed up. We tried to get a glass of wodka there, but they did not have any, so we had to warm up on hot tea.

### The Hutterers

After breakfast we told him that we would like to have a team to go to a small settlement where there were about three or four families living at Dollinger hutter, as you will find many of these places that you call hutterers. There are several different names like Hutter, Neufeld, etc. Wherever there was a settlement of only five, six or ten families they would call it a "hutter." Not far away from the Hutter Dollinger there was a larger settlement of all Russians.

We only wanted to stop a little while at Dollinger Hutter

and then continue our trip to Bergdorf. So he got around with his team at last and a large wagon which looked more like a small hay wagon than anything else. It was lucky it wasn't very cold that morning. I told him that he would never be able to get us to Bergdorf with that team of horses, but the Jew said he would surely get us to Bergdorf, a distance of about 30 werst. We started at last and had hardly crossed the railroad track and there happened to be a small snow bank on the other side of a row of trees and the team got stuck there. The Jew tried his best to get out but I saw right away that there was no use to wait so I told Rev. Herin that we had better get out and push. We had to work quite a little while to get out, but at last we got started. The horses were so poor that they couldn't hardly pull anything, but we managed to get them going again. When we got to the Dollinger settlement, only four werst, we were mighty glad to get that far, not saying anything about getting to Bergdorf. We paid him up and told him to go back and take care of his horses better as Mr. Dollinger promised us that he would take us down to Bergdorf with his own team the next day.

**T**HERE were not many people at that small village and we saw all we wanted to in the afternoon and at supper time we had a genuine Russian with us for supper. He came there to stay over night and while we could not talk to him except for a few words he acted nice to us.

About half past nine we asked Mr. Dollinger if we couldn't go to bed early that night as we said we hadn't had any sleep for several nights. So he made arrangements at once so that we could go to our room. Mr. Dollinger had a nice house and good large rooms so we were well taken care of with good beds. I told Rev. Herin that I was awful glad to get a good night's rest once and Rev. Herin and I slept together in one bed.

#### We Have a Nightly Visitor

We slept in the center room and Mr. Dollinger's room was next to ours. Then the Russian that came there to stay over night slept in the small room next to the kitchen. Before we went to sleep Mr. Dollinger came in and asked me if we wanted to leave the light burning and we told him it was all the same to us, so he turned the lamp down half ways and it was just a short time before we both fell asleep. But I did not sleep long—it must have been about 11 o'clock when I woke up and I couldn't make out what was the cause of my waking. The fumes from the lamp were rather

strong in the room as the lamp was turned down pretty well, so I thought that was the cause of my disturbance but before I laid down again I looked all over the room once more and it looked to me as though I saw a big man standing in the corner, but it looked more like a statue than anything else—there was no life to it. I couldn't trust my eyes. I looked again. Of course the lamp was turned down quite a ways, so the light was very dim, but when I looked at the corner again I could tell for sure that there was someone standing there. Rev. Herin, at my side, was sleeping sound but I saw that it was necessary for me to wake him under the circumstances, as I could not tell how soon that man would tackle us. So I thought the best thing would be to wake him up and I said: "Rev. Herin, you had better go down there and turn the lamp up, as it is turned down too low." He got up at once and went to the table and raised the wick, but as quick as he raised the wick he could see the man standing there in the corner and it scared him very much. He came running into bed very excited and told me there was someone standing in the corner there. I told him that I had seen that man there for a little while already and now that the lamp was up I could see very plainly that it was the same Russian that had supper with us at the table the night before.

While we were both excited about it, I was almost satisfied that he would not tackle us while we were awake, as the family of the Dollingers was right in the next room and if he attacked us, it would only take one scream to wake Mr. Dollinger and his family. So Rev. Herin and I laid there very quietly waiting what the result would be, but I suppose that the Russian saw that we knew all about his plan and would not go to sleep any more, so a little later that statue came to life and moved out in a hurry. He had no shoes on—only walked in his stockings and wore a light pair of pants and the way Rev. Herin and I figured it out was that his intention was to rush upon us in our sleep and try to take our clothes away from us and probably our money, as he could not have done that as long as we were awake, which he must have realized, as there were too many people in the next room.

Of course Rev. Herin and I were very excited about it and didn't sleep a bit more during the night. Before we were called to the breakfast table in the morning, I went out in the yard but I saw that the bed where the Russian slept was empty and the Russian was gone. So, before we went to breakfast, Rev. Herin and I talked the matter over and we came to the conclusion that we had better not say anything about what had happened during the night, as it would have

made him feel very bad, but for his own protection, I left it to Rev. Herin to tell him later on to protect him from that Russian that stayed there overnight that time.

As Mr. Dollinger was ready to take us to Bergdorf, we started about eight o'clock in the morning. The roads were very rough and it was hard on us with the wagon. When we got to Sackarfta, we stopped there a little while. There is a government office there and a large Russian church building, also there were a good many Jews living in the same town. On our way out from the town we passed the large estate of the Dumaner Edelmänn with his fine castle and buildings but most of the buildings were torn down and the bricks hauled away to be used for something else, as Russia has no more use for rich men so more or less they cut the large buildings down smaller, as Russia wants everything on a small scale and no more rich—all alike.

#### More Wine Than Bread

Nov 18-79

After a hard drive we arrived at the village of Bergdorf and I was mighty glad that we got there at last because my back began hurting me so bad. We stopped at Dr. Yesser's house. On our arrival they made some hot wine for us, of which they had plenty over there, as they have more wine than they have bread. The only reason for that is that when they only have 68 acres of land now, where they used to have one or two hundred, they put it into something that will bring more than wheat or corn, so most of them put their land into vineyards. They raise grapes to make wine. Of course, it takes work to plant all the grape vines but they can easily do that because they have nothing else to do and the vines grow over there like wild flowers. The only trouble was that the last two years the Russians haven't had the money to buy wine and they told me that there was hardly no market for wine at all there and instead of getting five or six dollars for a "wetro" which means ten gallons measure, now they can't get two dollars for a "wetro" as there is no money in the country whatever and the country is full of wine around those villages, especially the last two years, since it doesn't move. So the people have to drink more wine now days and eat less bread. I told many of them that it was a good thing they had a lot of wine or sometimes when they take a glass too much they forget their troubles, of which they have a plenty over there.

© I stayed in Bergdorf over night and I was invited by Rev. Schimka for supper and Rev. Herin left for Neudorf on arrival there. Rev. Schimka made a big time for that night and had invited in all the foremen of the church, and I was

going to say the richer men in town, but there are no such thing as richer men any more, but you may say the better class of people, and he did all this in honor of the American.

Rev. Schimka is a nice gentleman and I heard his sermons twice and I think he is quite a minister. Rev. Franks from the village of Kassel was also there with Rev. Schimka for supper. It was very late in the night when we left the house and I will not so easily forget that night as we had such a good audience.

The next morning our breakfast was ripe olives, tea and barley bread. We also had a glass of vodka. After breakfast I made a few calls around the village. At John Smith's house there was quite a company gathered there and we had a second breakfast there. Wine was handed around pretty freely but I have noticed whenever anybody wanted to remark about the new government he would always look around first and see who is in the room. And if he finds that he is safe he would go on with his talk as there is no confidence whatever between the rich and the poor, or what I mean to say is those that used to be rich. The rich know that the poor have their land, horses and cattle which the government took away from the rich people and gave it to the poor and so they have that feeling against each other.

### No Place For the Rich Man

For dinner I was invited to F. Hettig's house where I also met Rev. Shimpke again and they were telling their experience that they had during the revolution and when the new government was established. At that time the ministers were neglected very badly and so was the rich man, and Hettig was a rich man. And Rev. Shimpke told us that at that time most of the ministers would flee from the country, whoever had time enough to get away. And so did the rich farmers, but these two men didn't have time to get away and had to hide in the cornfield for over six weeks. Someone would bring out meals to them once a day and also told us how some of the rich men were gathered up in the village, as much as 10, 15 or 20 in some villages and were shot down like dogs. After all the horrible stories they told me about the Revolution time, they drove me out to the cemetery where fifteen men were buried in one place which were all very rich at that time and were unable to get away so they were all killed and buried in one grave. A great stone was on the end of the grave where these men were buried.

Later in the afternoon when the clock struck 4:00 I left the village of Bagdorf and they drove me over to the village

of Nidorf to my nephew. We had a big crowd that evening at Baltzer's house and Mr. Knoll from the village of Kassel was also there waiting for me.

**M**R. KNOLL gave a little history of his experience right after the Revolution. He said the new government has a new law throughout the entire country. Nobody was allowed to be shot down without having a trial and Mr. Knoll was a very rich man residing at the village Kassel and, of course, he was arrested for some little reason and taken to the city of Odessa in the big jail, where thousands of prisoners were in the same jail. Still he says they were given fair treatment and good meals which is something unusual for Russia. As a rule he said every day as many as 25 to 50 were killed. He said about every time they had a lot to be executed they took 25 at a time to the Court Room and there as many as 10 to 12 judges were in the Court and when the soldiers brought them out of the jail into the court room they mostly knew that they had to die. It happened sometimes that two or three of them out of the lot of twenty-five were pardoned and it happened sometimes that when they brought the condemned men into court that one would jump up in a quick way and knock down one of the judges and kill him instantly with his fists before any help could prevent it.

#### A Great Singer Also a Victim

So Mr. Knoll said that the judges were more kind to the prisoners when they brought them into the court and they talked to them nice and offered them cigarettes before they were condemned and they were taken in a machine, twenty-five at one time and this machine was worked by electricity and the machine would turn a few times and all twenty-five of the men would be dead.

He also said that they had a nice young lady brought in from Nesterside. She was a daughter of a high general who was also a big land owner whose name I have forgotten. She was a highly educated lady of about 20 years and he said one of the greatest singers that he ever heard in his life and the reason that she was arrested was that she handed the Roumanian soldiers some water when they asked for it. And for that she was arrested and brought to the big jail in the city of Odessa. And while she was in the big jail she was allowed every day a few hours to go in the hall of the jail and sing there. And when she sang it affected every person's heart and when her time came to die in the machine like all the rest of them they all begged for her life to be spared. But she was taken to the court room with twenty-four men



but there was no mercy on her and she had to go in the machine and die like the rest of them. After that time the prisoners were all excited and quite a bad feeling existed in the jail against the government and many of them cried because there was no more singing after that.

Mr. Knoll said his time came and he was called to the court room but there was a petition got up for Mr. Knoll from all the villages around the Black Sea Region who all begged the government that there was not enough reason for him to be condemned to death and he was freed.

It got late in the night when the people left the house and I retired and from what I had heard all the story from Mr. Knoll during the evening and about the young lady who was a great singer and that she had to die—it bothered me quite a little while before I went to sleep.

### A Radio for Every Village

The next morning at breakfast we went to the school house where about 300 children were studying. It was not far away from the Lutheran and Reform churches and also close by the government building. When we entered the school building the children would all rise until the teacher told them to sit down again. I was surprised to see the freedom of the people that they have in regard to the government school. The new government law in the school is that any nation, German or Woldwaner, or Russian, whatever language they thave, they have a perfect right to teach, half German or whatever their language is and half of the Russian. But no religion is allowed in the school whatever. There were three teachers, two Germans and one Russian. From what I sized up of the school and the benefit the children derived thereby it appeared very good to me. From there we went over to the government building. At the government building the officers welcomed us and showed us around the different offices there and explained to us, as this officer was a German, and then he showed us the big radio they had but it happened that there was nothing on to speak of so I could not say how it worked. The government furnishes one radio in every village in the government building and this radio is used whenever the government officer wants to tell the farmer about something new, how to do things on the farm in a new way, etc. The people of the village are always advised when there is to be some news from the government and then they gather there and hear the news.

Next to the government building we found a small hospital built out of stone. While it is not very large, only five rooms in it, still it was neat and clean inside and there were

three nurses there at the time and there were two sick people.

From there we went over to Mr. Kammarar's house and on arrival there we went to the table for lunch with some nice wines. There were quite a few people gathering up there and while we were talking matters over about this country and so forth there comes in an old gentleman of 86 years and brings me a jar of sheep cheese. This was the very same man that brought me the same kind of cheese in 1894. This old gentleman walked from the small village of Kronenthal which was about fifteen worst away, which means in American, about ten miles, and this old gentleman walked all the way to bring that cheese to me and all he had to say when he came in the house, to Mrs. Kammarar was to take his cap and put it on the oven as it was all full of sweat from the long walk. They have a small herd of sheep over there at his home and they make cheese out of the milk and after it is cured it goes to the high-class market and brings the highest price and is one of the greatest dishes to serve with wine.

A little later another old gentleman, named Schlepp, who is a man of about 81 years, came in and showed me a ticket and wanted me to examine it. It was a ticket sent by his sons from the state of Washington out west, to have him come over to Canada and from there they would visit him and as they have friends there he could make his home there in Canada. I told the old gentleman that he was almost too old to go on the big ocean yet, and I told him he would make good fishfodder, but he laughed and said that he still felt young and ready to go anywhere in the world.

It got late already, and Balzer's team was waiting out there for me to come home to his house. But before I left there I found there were a few more people going from Village Kassel to Canada but they have to pay to leave the country as the Russian government says that they need those German farmers to be head men in farming, so they put the passport up from ten to five hundred rubels so there are very few of them able to get away from there unless they have help from their friends in this country or Canada.

I was told that the Mennonite colonies in Malosh have most of them emigrated to Canada in the last three years as their friends and Christian brethren have raised a certain sum of money and have brought most of them over to colonize in Canada. Still there are some left yet in the Malosh district, but from now on it will take so much more money to get them out than it did two years ago. Of course, the new Russian government has promised all the German colonies and all the Mennonites a good future, but what the outcome of that will be in the next few years is hard to say.

**T**HE CLIMATE in South Russia is very nice and hard to beat. The weather often is the same for a whole week and more—not so changeable as in our country, especially around the Black Sea region. It is a beautiful country and a lot of fruit is raised, especially grapes. And further south, in the Grimer district, they have the finest climate, almost as nice as California. All the country needs is a good government.

When I arrived at Balzar's place, my nephew, it was already getting dark, and they had supper ready for me. I told my nephew then that I had only eaten one meal that day and that was from morning until night—eating all the time.

### We Prepare to Leave Russia

I looked up my passport that night and I saw that it was high time for us to think about getting started for home and especially to get out of Russia before our passport expired, otherwise we would be up against it. So I made my plans that night to start next morning to the village of Glucksthal where my companion was with his father.

The next morning we started early. Balzar soon hitched up his team to the wagon and I told him to be sure and fix up some lazy backs. We started about seven o'clock in the morning. The weather was not so very cold that morning but the road was frozen rather hard and it was rather a hard ride to go over that hard frozen road that morning. But my lazy back did not last very long as before we had gone very far it was all broken to pieces, and by the time we got a big start I had no more back left, the way I felt.

When we came to the house of Father Kessler I found John home and was talking to a big crowd of people that was gathered in the room, so I told him to hurry up as we wanted to get to Gregoriopol to report ourselves, and, at the same time, report to the government that we were leaving Russia within a few days. But it took quite a little while before we got away from there as we had to have a lunch first and some of that red wine, and then started out. We had a bad road all the way to Gregoriopol and would have given anything to have had a spring wagon for a little while.

When we got to the little city of Gregoriopol, we told them to drive us up to the government building so we wouldn't be surrounded again by the "woldewanner," as these people are curious people as many of them had heard so much about Americans but have never seen any of them. They have an idea that Americans are different looking people than they themselves are.

When we entered the government room the officer again

was very kind to us. We had our caps off and he told us to put them back on again. Then we told him that we wanted to leave Russia in a few days and wanted him to make that notice in our passports. As a rule we had to go from there to Balte, which is the highest office in the state of Ukraine, and there is another high office at the city of Odessa, but we did not have time to go that far and Balte was near by our way home so we asked them for an explanation and at last they told us that we didn't have to go to Balte at all, but to go direct to the city of Kief, and we took it for granted that the officer had told us all they knew about the rules and were pleased that we didn't have to go to Balte, which would spare two days of time, for us.

### A Delicate Subject

After they had fixed up our passports, the officer asked us many questions about this country here. We told him all we could. We also told him that we could not get along in America as they would in Russia, that is, divide up every once in a while—if anyone had worked himself ahead a few hundred dollars or had a hundred or two more bushels of wheat than his neighbor, it would never do for our government to take it away for the one that has more and give it to the other party as we believe it best to race so that one gets ahead of the other and we believe that what a man earns for himself he should be entitled to.

"Well," the officer said, "You have your idea and we have our idea." We were afraid to go too deep into politics with the officer as it might cause trouble, so we didn't want to talk any more about politics in America and said good-bye to the officer.

We also wanted to change a couple of small travelers' checks for Russian currency at the small bank there but they could not see their way clear to do so, so we did not get them cashed there and had to put the same off until we got to the city of Kieff, the holy city (it was during the time of the Czar). From the bank we went to the Woldefaner house to get our dinner. It was the same place where I was once before, but before we reached the house we were surrounded by many of the Woldewaner, as I said before, these people are a little lower class of people than the Russians, but I understand they are very religious people. We had to wait a few minutes there so they could all see the "Americans" and then they all came near and looked at our clothes and how they were made and everything else. The interpreter that these people had heard a lot about Americans but had never seen any and that they were very anxious to see

an American and also their clothes. We asked him a little more about how the Woldewaners lived at home and he said that those people do not eat many potatoes but the main thing is wine and corn meal mush—that is their main food. They are not great meat eaters at all. They are very easily satisfied. If they have their cornmeal in the house, then they are satisfied. They raise their own wine and that is about all they are doing so they take life easy. Still they are a very healthy and strong people. They are not as hearty a vodka drinker as the Russians but wine is their main object. These Woldewaner people were very friendly towards us—much more so than the Russians.

When we entered the Woldewaner house they soon got us up some vegetable soup which they called Borst, and they got some wine for us and some barley bread and they also had some cornbread, but they never use any sugar in cornbread like they do in this country because sugar is too expensive for them over there. We had to pay them for each meal 35 kopek, including the wine.

From there we left by way of Klein-Bergdorf, where I was once before, but it was not out of our way at all by returning to Klkusdal. We had again before us after we left Gregoriopol these different pyramids of very old age, which are always a wonder to see, which I have already mentioned before. We must have passed at least six or seven of them, of which two were very large. As I said before, we used to call them Cannon Hills, but in the last years have found out that they are a burying place of people that existed probably a thousand or more years ago.

When we reached the village of Bergdorf and stopped with Mr. Commerer there for about an hour, where I asked Mr. Commerer again about those pyramids and he told me that they opened one up a few years ago and found a lot of human bones and many old aged kettles and drinking cups and many ornaments, but I was unable to get any of these ornaments from him. He said they were all taken up by the government and no doubt they were put in some museum.

### They Gave us a Surprise

3/ After a small lunch we left for the village of Gluksdahl, my companion's home. I myself wanted to continue my trip with my driver to Neudorf but Grandpa Kessler would not let me go and told me that they were going to have a little doings there and he wanted me to stay with his son that evening so I stayed over at my companion's house there. There were quite a few people gathered together in the west room

as most of them knew that this was to be my last time at their village. So we were kept busy. About seven o'clock in the evening we were called over to the east room, and to our surprise, old Grandpa Kessler and all his children and friends got up a great doings.

There were three large, long tables in the room, filled with all kinds of eatables and three kinds of wines, a red, a black and a white, which they all raise around that village. My companion and I had to go and take the two front seats and then all the friends followed around the table, and after the minister arrived and had his prayer, then the large meal was served. While we were at the table the children entertained us with recitations and another would follow and later there would be a quartette of young ladies singing songs and again there would be one lady coming and give us a nice song, and for a change again, a quartette, and this entertainment kept up until about two o'clock in the morning. All these songs were sung for us two Americans and we certainly had a surprise entertainment that night. About two o'clock we retired. In the morning we had to hurry up to leave for Neudorf as I had many things to arrange yet and I only had one day and night left yet. So I said good-bye to my companion who was to meet me at Neudorf the day after, Sunday morning.

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**W**HEN I arrived at Neudorf the people and some of my friends had many things planned for entertainment for me as they all knew that I was going to leave Sunday morning for our trip home. The Baptist church which I had not been in yet, invited me to their church and had a special service in the forenoon so I attended that, as there are three churches in the village of Neudorf, the Lutheran, the Reformed and the Baptist. The Baptist church is a nice church, but only one story high. There was quite a large gathering in that church and every place was taken up. They had a nice arrangement in singing after the church was over which lasted quite a while. The ladies quartette sang, and I must say they were highly educated in singing, especially the quartette.

In the afternoon I was invited out to a private family where they had all kinds of doings, and in the evening they surprised me very much at my nephew, Balzar's house, with a big entertainment, and the Reformed teacher was there with his young scholars and the Lutheran teacher was there. Afterwards with a large crowd of young ladies, all well arranged with their singing, and the singing and speeches lasted until about eleven o'clock in the night, and I must say that they showed their good will for America, and they had

not yet forgotten about the help they got right after the war, during the year 1923, in money and food and clothing, when they were so hard up and everything was taken away from them when the several revolutions went by their places and they were robbed of everything before this new government was started there. Of course, if Jacob Schempp, the man sent along with the clothing, had done his duty as he should have done, it would have been more glory with our clothing delivery that time, but he certainly made things bad for the Marion Relief Committee.

The facts are, that I found out all over the German villages in South Russia that they thought very much of their friends over here and have not forgotten what their friends did for them during the hard times over there and even in their poor condition that they are in now, still they do all they possibly can for any American.

#### Your Speech Must Be Guarded

It was late when I retired that night and from all the entertainment and speeches by Rev. Ahl and Rev. Herin, kept me awake for a while. I was too excited to sleep well that night but that was not the first time as many nights instead of sleeping I was worrying about what would happen before morning, as only a short time before one man was taken out of the German village of Kassel and brought to the jail of Odessa at about one o'clock in the night because he said a few words against the government. Of course we must know this is a new government and they are resting on what you might call a powder barrel and for that reason they make it very hard for those that speak against them and it is a hard proposition for any stranger to go into Russia and speak all day among hundreds of people, and it is almost impossible that you may say a word against the government and not think about it and when you go to bed at night you very often think about what you have said during the day, and there isn't a word said probably that was against the government, and they may be after you any moment in the night. So you can see it was no pleasure for me while I stayed in Russia and I don't drink enough wine to forget my troubles although I had the chance every day to do that.

So Sunday morning I wanted to get started early for our trip as we had to stay over an hour in the village of Bergdorf to say good-bye to our friends there, and our intention was to get away early in the morning from Neudorf so there wouldn't be any too many people around so we would have no excitement when leaving the village, but I got up at six o'clock and they had had their breakfast and my companion,

Mr. Kessler, arrived at our place about seven o'clock, but before we started, the yard and house was filled from one end to the other and I saw no way out of shaking hands with everybody as I would never have gotten away until noon then, and we had to have all day to get to our place, otherwise the night would overcome us on our trip to the station which means danger for us. So we shook hands with the nearest while they could get hold and stood up on the sleigh and said good-bye to everybody so as to make it quick. I will never forget the time when I left Neudorf as everybody was in tears. But we broke loose and everybody hollered "Good Luck to You on Your Trip" and Give our Friends in America our best regards," "and thanks to everyone that helped towards the relief work for Russia, after the revolution and war."

Two sleighs followed us going to Bergdorf. My friends accompanied me to Bergdorf. When we reached this village we drove up to Dr. Yesser's house and we drove into the yard and there was a big crowd there waiting for us. We only wanted to say good-bye to everybody and not get off the sleigh at all as we didn't have any time whatever to spare, but they over-ruled us and we had to go into the house where there was a second breakfast prepared for and while we were at the table about twenty ladies sang several songs for us and afterwards Rev. Schimke gave his praise and they had arrangements made to give us different speeches and also more songs there but we had to turn them down because our time was up. Otherwise we would not have got to the station in daytime anymore, so we broke off and said good-bye to everybody and we could still hear them saying when we had gone quite a ways, "Good luck to you and many thanks to you for the good work you have done for us during our hard times."

The other two sleighs with my freinds returned from Bergdorf again and we got another new team from there so we had two teams in all with good strong bob sleighs, and so we started out for the trip to the station. Our passing on the street through the village, many of them stood in the front of their yards and waved good-bye until we passed the last house.

The roads were pretty fair as there was quite a little snowfall the night before, and our teamsters made good progress and kept going until about three o'clock in the afternoon when we stopped for a few minutes. It was at a small Russian village where one of those big land owners used to live and he was the owner of the whole village as they all worked for him at the Czar's time. We saw the fine castle that he used to own but the large barn and gran-

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aries and many of the buildings were torn down as they have no more use for those large buildings, they were all brick buildings and the brick was piled up in big piles and were delivered to the people as they needed them for inside work and well, etc. We stopped in front of the "track-tir," and while the weather was not so very cold, still we felt kind of chilled through, so we got some wine there and hot tea. The way it looked to me the saloons were open Sunday the same as every day. Right across from the "track-tir" there was the community store and I went in there to get some cigarettes which was also wide open on Sunday, as there were no cigars to be had anywhere in Russia, I had to break in on cigarettes. We spent only a few minutes there and then continued our trip towards the station.

### We are Welcomed Everywhere

After we went six miles farther we came to the hutter or little village called Lidle, where there was another big land owner. He also had a fine residence near by there on the hill, but the barns and sheds were all torn down already. As quick as we arrived at the Lidle place, they made us unhitch our horses. There were only about four German families in that little village and about a mile from there was a small Russian village. It didn't take Mrs. Lidle very long to get a hot lunch ready for us and so we spent a half hour there for lunch while the horses were fed. Mrs. Lidle was a widow, her husband had to leave the country as he was a very rich man, but did not get very far before he was killed. She told us that all they owned now was about 15 acres of land, herself and the two children and only two horses left in those great large barns, and a couple of cows, the rest was all taken away from them and divided up among the poor. As soon as our horses were fed we started out to complete our trip and when we were three miles away from the station the sun went down and it soon got dark. Our teamster drove very fast but we were very fortunate to get to the station Wiselgut, and within half a mile of the station there was a small settlement of German farmers and we drove to them and there we were invited to their houses and our teams were taken care of and as we had two hours before the train left, they made us a nice hot supper, and when the clock struck nine, we left those people and said good-bye to them and they took us to the station, but the train happened to be twenty minutes late. There was no fire in the depot whatever and it was quite cold.

We bought our tickets through to the holy city of Kieff, the former Pilgrim City. We asked for a second class

ticket but they told us they had no second or first, only one class—all alike, but they had some soft beds to offer instead of hard beds, so we bought tickets for the soft beds.

The train happened to be a little later than 20 minutes, as first reported and was fully a half hour late. It was very uncomfortable waiting in a cold room, when a person has to wait a half hour or so for a train. I walked out to the sidewalk to see if the train was in sight and to my surprise I saw the two dogs belonging to my nephew, Balzar, out there on the sidewalk. They had followed us from Neudorf clear to the station. Of course, I could not take them along on the train as I suppose they wanted to go to America also. They got so used to following me wherever I went, from one village to the other, so it looked as though they wanted to keep right on and follow me all over. I was sorry for the poor animals and I went to my satchel and took a piece of kuchen out of it, which they gave to me for my lunch, which I gave them to keep them alive. Since that time I have heard from Balzar that the dogs came home all right the day before the driver did.

**A**T LAST our train arrived and we got in the car that had the soft beds and had a fairly good place in the car. It was fairly heated and was otherwise comfortable. My partner and I each stretched ourselves out on each side of the narrow beds and covered ourselves with our overcoats and we could really get some sleep that night until about three o'clock in the morning, when a lady came in with four children. She was to take up one side of the bed so my partner had to move over on my side on the second bench. While the children were very noisy, our sleep was done for that night.

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### Russia Has Plenty Good Tea

When we reached a fair sized city on the way to Kieff, it was six o'clock in the morning, (I forgot the name of the city) our train stopped twenty five minutes at this place and a young man came in the car with a large can and a tray of glasses and with him came another young man who carried cake and kuchen and hollered loud in the car "Chai Chai." So we had them fill up two glasses of tea for us and ate kuchen. The tea was very good and they filled our glasses again and they charged us 40 kupec for the four glasses of tea and kuchen, which is twenty cents. That is something that I have to give Russia credit for, that they have good tea all over the country. The further we got to the north, towards Kieff, the colder it got and the country was covered

with a heavy snow. Our train was running about twenty to twenty five miles an hour. They are still using the smaller engines over there, like we had here many years ago.

About eleven o'clock our train stopped again and they brought in some more tea and kuchen, so we were well supplied with tea all day.

The surrounding country was more or less heavy timber and we could see that we were in a different country than where the great Russians are at home. They also call them "Kazappen." In the southern part, like around the Black Sea, you see a very few of these large Russians, but most of them are small Russians. They are a different type of Russians, and these great Russians also drive their teams different than they do in the southern part. They have a great yoke in front over one horse and then they would have another horse hitched up on the one that has the yoke over himself. They wear mostly those heavy sheepskin coats.

The big Russians and the small Russians are no friends whatever—they hate each other. They also have a church for themselves and do not mix with the small Russians. They also are more particular about what they eat and drink. And then the big Russian is a big tea drinker and at the same time a vodka drinker.

We were not bothered with our passports whatever on our road until we reached the Holy City of Kieff. It was early in the morning when our train stopped at the large Union depot, right on the bottom of the large river. When we got out at the depot, we noticed that there were many large Russians with their Trotske and they were after us to drive us up town as the men said they were about three miles from the Union station, but we took the street car, although there were also a few automobiles and I noticed that there were more autos in this place than I saw anywhere in the southern part of Russia.

### Some Real Cold Weather

It was the coldest morning that I have ever known in my life. You could not see anything through the street car window as there was a very heavy frost and they had to use the light in the car. When we got in about the middle of the city we got out of the street car and we were nearly frozen up but when we got out into the streets it was so bitter cold that the cold sparks would glitter around your eyes. We went into a restaurant and saloon at the same time and we asked for some vodka and then later on we sat down at a table and had some hot tea and we got warmed up at last, but the room was not really warm at all, the only chance

for us was to warm up on the inside. We inquired at the restaurant where we could find the office of the German Consul and the Polish Consul and the Russian Consul, or rather Russian officer, as we had to first go to the Russian office and report ourselves that we arrived at Kieff that morning. From there it was not very far to the Polish Consul.

When we got into the room it was not any too warm either, as they have been saving fuel all over. The Polish officer there gave us some blanks to fill out. After we had them filled out he sent them in to the room of the Polish Consul, so we were called into the office of the Polish Consul and he asked us in broken German how long we wanted to stay in Poland. We told him that we only wanted to travel thru their country, so he gave us a Visa through his country and we paid him 14 rubels for both passports, that is for the visa.

From there we went to the German Consul and didn't think there was anything wrong. When we entered his office the officer asked us what our wishes were and we told him that we wanted a visa into Germany. He took us into the German Consul's room who was very kind to us and had a nice warm room where we could warm ourselves up once, for good. He looked our passports over and to our surprise he hollered: "What have you men been doing? You have to go back again to Ukrania, to the city of Balte, as you made a foolish trip for nothing to Kieff, as you surely will have to go back again to get your release and visa from Balte in Ukrania, or back to Odessa." We were both thunder-struck as we only had three and a half days left before our passports ran out in Russia, and it would take almost two days to get back to Balte or Odessa, in the Ukrania state where we came from, and that much time back again and at least one day to stay to get our papers fixed up which would mean at least five or six days, while we only had three days and a half left before our passport ran out and we had not yet forgotten what we were told when we entered the frontier of Russia about a month before, when they told us that we should see that we were out of the country before our passport ran out and with no passport in Russia means to risk your life, so we both would have been out of commission.

#### We Meet with Some Difficulties

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The German Consul must have noticed it, what effect it had on us what he told us, and then he said he would help us all he could if there would be any way out, that is he would be willing to go with us to the Russian officer in Kieff and see what could be done about our passports as we could not think

about going back again to Odessa or Balte, Ukrania. So he went along with us to the office of the officer of the Russian government and when we entered the office we laid our passports before him but he simply told us that we had to go back to Ukrania to get our release and visa there out of Russia.

The Russian officer again repeated to us that they could do nothing for us, and that we would have to go back to Balte or city of Odessa, Ukrania. We then told him that the head officer at Balte, when we asked for our release there, told us that we did not have to go to Balte at all, and only straight to the city of Kieff for our release, so we took his word for it and came direct here to the city of Kieff, so the German Consul had quite a talk with the Russian officer and after the conversation they told us that they would wire to the head man at Moscow and get his permission to allow our release and visa to be made out at the city of Kieff as we had no more time to go back to Ukrania as our passport would have run out by that time.

**S**O THEY told us that we could come back again about noon time for our answer. We went from the head office to the large government bank as we were almost out of Russian money. It was quite a distance from there. We had to go about fifteen blocks to get to the bank. It was a large building, about four stories high. When we entered the building we found this was a great center of the bank business and filled with people.

We had a leader with us from the German Consul, who introduced us to the head man of the bank who spoke broken English, and he called us into his office and wanted to know a lot about America and about the bank business in our country. Then he also asked us what we thought about the present government in Russia. We told him that we didn't think that the combination system in Russia was as good as ours for the reason that you haven't any competition in trade, and let a man that works himself ahead be the owner of what he makes. Of course, we would have been mighty glad to say a little more about it but we were afraid to do so.

So at last he cashed a couple small traveler's checks for us and showed us around the bank. Up on the ceiling on each side, there was a small cage and there was a soldier in each of these cages with a gun in his hand looking down in the bank department and ready to shoot at any time.

We then left the government bank and when we turned into the next block we could see way up the street the great museum building, which is supposed to be almost the best in Russia. But we were kind of handicapped that forenoon in waiting to see what answer we would get from Moscow

about our passport. But we really should have gone in to see it as no doubt, there is a lot there that would have been very interesting to we Americans.

### Two Kinds of Russians

The weather was not so extremely cold like early in the morning or the day before, and the streets were well filled with people towards noon. The Great Russians were seen mostly, also some of the small Russians. There is a whole lot of difference between these two types of Russians. The big Russians are heavy, tall men, and also the women are large. I have noticed that the Great Russians all wear heavy sheepskin coats as do the women also, and felt boots. The clothes worn by the people more or less common, ordinary and nearly all alike.

Besides the Great and Small Russians, we also found some Polish people and a few Greeks and some Germans. Turks you would only see once in a while. This was too far north for the Turks, while you see many of them in South Russia, but very few in the north, as they are used to a warmer climate.

After walking three or four blocks farther, we saw way off the Golden Towers and Cupolas of the Great Holy church and we wanted to see this church but we had quite a ways to go yet. The center part of Kieff is a very nice city and has some buildings as high as six or seven stories. But, of course, all these buildings were taken over by the government and the government owns every building in the city. There are still quite a few stores run by outsiders, but I was told, by two or three of them that because of the enormously high tax, the outsider has to pay, the stores will soon belong to the government.

It was almost noon when we went into a big restaurant right in the center of town there. When we entered the place we found the restaurant pretty well filled up. It was also a government restaurant and had big long tables in the large room and benches on each side and on each table there were four large plates of rye or barley bread, mostly rye. Each plate had bread about a foot high on it, and as soon as you sat down at the table they would bring you vegetable soup. They also had some wine there to serve, and tea. The prices were very reasonable and the vegetable soup, which they called "Borst," was very good.

We watched the clock very closely at the restaurant, which room was fairly warm, and when the clock struck we left at once for the large government building, and when we entered the place the officers had already taken their places,

but when we came to ask for our answer from Moscow they said there was no answer yet, so we were told to come back at about 4 o'clock and they might have an answer then. A cold feeling came over us when there was no report from Moscow. It was a matter of only about one and a half days yet before our passport would run out and no word from Moscow as to what they would do in our circumstances.

### We Finally Receive Our Passport

We walked down about four blocks to that Great Holy church. From there we could see those golden cupolas better than in the forenoon. When we arrived there in front of the church we saw that it was an enormous structure. To our surprise the doors were not open and so we could not enter the church and see the inside. But we looked it all over from the outside and while looking over this large structure I was thinking: "So this is the Holy Church I still remembered when I was over in Russia in 1894, when I had that time, under the Czar's rule, so much trouble getting my passport without giving a tip at the police station of Odessa." I remembered as well as if it were today, when I walked up that stairway to the passport office and saw about fifteen men laying around that stairway there and everytime I went up for my passport I saw those same people lying there around that stairway. When I came there the fourth time for my passport I asked those people what they were laying there for so long and these poor Russian people told me then that they had been waiting there for the last twelve days, waiting for their passports, as they wanted to go to the Holy City of Kieff, by foot, on a pilgrimage, and they must have a passport for that, they said. But they said they had no money to give for tips so the officer always told them to come tomorrow and how long they had to lay there afterwards is more than I can say, but I was only thinking what a big effect this Holy church had on these Russian people. They would stand almost any abuse just for the sake of getting there. It was really too bad that we could not get inside of it, but of course, under the present government these Pilgrimages will be stopped entirely, I believe.

**F**ROM there we went down to the Union station and got all the information about the trains going out and what time our train would leave for the Russian frontier so when we would leave we would have all information needed. The next thing was to get our passport in shape before it was too late. From there we went back to the Russian government building. It was nearly the time set for us and when we en-

tered the office, the time was not quite up yet. We waited in the government building till the time was up and then we went before the officer and asked him if an answer had been received from Moscow about our passports, but he said "No." So we asked him what time they would close up in the evening and the officer said he would keep open as late as eight o'clock in the evening and he also said he would wire again to Moscow for an answer. Then we left and went to our hotel and got our supper there and returned again to the government building at 7:30 in the evening. When we entered the office we could see the smile on the officer's face and that was a good sign for us and surely the answer was received from Moscow that we were allowed to fix up our passports at the city of Kieff and our passport was all fixed up ready to deliver. The cost of the passport and the expenses included was 50 rubels for the visas and our passports and we offered him a few rubels but the officer refused to take anything so we left it lay on the table and said good-bye to the officer and thanked him many times for his accommodation in staying so late.

So we left the government building in a hurry and when we got out in the street we found that it was dark and only lighted every two blocks. While walking on the street I told my companion that I would watch the other side of the street so that in case of a holdup we could, if possible, make a quick move. I had hardly said that word when my companion said that there was someone following us on his side, and we then made a run all we possibly could, clear up to the third block where the lights were. We both were about all in when we arrived at the light post, but I guess it was the scare more than anything else and we were fortunate enough to find a policeman there at the light post, so we asked him if he would guide us to the hotel as we still had ten blocks to go, and that we would pay him well for it, so he went along with us up to the hotel and we got there safe. We paid the policeman and took him into the restaurant at the hotel and gave him some hot drinks there, and my companion and I were real happy that evening that our passports were fixed up O. K. and that we had a chance now to take the early morning train and, if we had good luck, we would be out of Russia that night.

The hotel man told us that they had a nice picture show up at the next building, but while I saw one of them in the city of Odessa I could not understand the Russian language to speak of and it was a very poor one compared with our picture shows here so we told him that we were going to bed early. So a little later on we went into their fine dining room and got some chai (tea) which warmed us up nicely.



They had a small orchestra playing in the dining room that evening, which was the first music I heard all the time I was in Russia, so we listened to that for a little while and then we went up to our room and it was very fortunate that it wasn't so terrible cold as it was the night before, although it was cold enough in the room to make anyone chilly. Before we went to bed we were very anxious to see that we had enough blankets and quilts for the night, but I am sorry to say that they had the same torn blankets and quilts as before, so we didn't undress, but simply went to bed with all our clothes on. In spite of the cold room and cold bed, we slept fairly well that night as we had gotten over the trouble that had bothered us so much the last few days, about our passports, and from what we understood from the Railway Co. we would be able to get out of the Russian country before our passport would expire.

But when I woke up early in the morning, I was cold all over and my legs were badly swollen from running the night before to get away from the holdup. We went down to the dining room as soon as they turned the light on and waited until breakfast was ready. They gave us an early breakfast that morning and we started out for the depot at daylight, but before we left the hotel, the waiters all got near by us. I suppose they did not want to be forgotten. And we got them to get a trotske for us who took us down to the depot which was about three miles from the hotel.

### Soldiers Are Better Cared For

The large depot was filled with all kinds of people going different directions. There were also a bunch of soldiers around there with their guns who had a special room at the depot and from what it looked to me the soldiers are well taken care of in Russia, at present. Of course, it is well to understand that the new government must have their soldiers for their best friends and I understand they are getting fair pay now where they did not get any wages at all under the Czar's rule and very poor treatment at that. The soldiers were also better dressed than any other people in the country. Also in the east part of the Union depot there were many tables spread and I noticed they were well filled with chai. The trotske drivers were very well represented there and it happened often that they would have a fight among themselves and, of course, the soldiers there would be on hand to quickly stop the fighting.

When the ticket office opened up we bought our tickets to the Russian frontier, Chivetofka. As traveling that day was all by daylight they only had one class of tickets to offer

to the Russian frontier. Before we departed from the depot our passports were examined and passed all right, so we got on the train twenty minutes before it left and we felt much better that we had the hope at last that we might get out of Russia all right.

When our train was quite a distance away from the city of Kieff, we could still see the golden towers of the large Holy church and as the reflection of the sun rested upon them, the towers would shine and we could see them from a great distance.

Our train had six passenger cars on but the appearance of our train was nothing like the trains in the United States because of the shape of the cars and some were large and some small and nothing uniform like our trains here. They also used small engines throughout the country.

### Revolution Reminders

When our train stopped at about noon at a large city, there were all kinds of people coming into the train. Some would come in and offer hot drinks, some came in with vegetable soup, and there were also some ladies that came and offered us some picture cards from the Revolution time. Some of them looked horrible, like one where the large Russians near Kieff had made a stand with their families and had torn all the Holy pictures out of the churches and the Russian Pope, that is the Priest, and some of his best men would hold up those Holy pictures in front of him, but it was very often the case that they (that is the new government) would clean up a whole small village of people that would not obey the government's demand and they were shot down like dogs. These people had an idea that these Holy pictures would protect them from their enemies' guns, but the Red Cross ladies said these pictures showed the actual truth of what happened during the Revolution and after the Revolution. I was really surprised that the Red Cross was allowed to sell these cards but, of course, the heading of the cards always said "At Revolution Time."

The country that our train carried us through, towards the Russian frontier, going north, was more or less timber and in nearly every large city near by there were large mills working sawing wood and many of the teams by the great Russians with their regular team of two horses on a wagon, one with a big bow in front and another horse hitched on the side. This is the way they came in from the timber as a whole string of those teams. The horses looked a little better to us in the northern part of Russia, not quite as poor as they were in the southern part. We also could notice that

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once in a while you could see a small stack of hay which there was none to be seen in the southern part, except once in a while a small stack of straw.

The whole surrounding country we passed through was all covered with a heavy blanket of snow and the weather was cold all day. When we stopped at the larger stations they brought us in lunch, etc., I was told by one of the Russians there that it was a very cold winter this year with a lot of snow on the ground. The wolves were more numerous this year than they have been for some time and they are all those large gray wolves. He also told me that it had been very dangerous all winter to drive on the highways in the night time as it was nothing new to be followed up by a lot of wolves, and I was told that several teams with men were torn to pieces and eaten up by the wolves on the highway at night.

The land was not covered with timber but the only crop they raised was rye, of which they claim they can raise a big crop once in a while. At one time Russia was the bread raiser for the whole of Europe and now they haven't enough wheat to supply their own country. The lumber that was hauled in and sold was all shipped out mostly to Germany and some to France, which is about the only produce they have shipped out of Russia the last two years.

**W**E WERE getting near the end of the Russian frontier and were told that we were only twenty five miles from the small town of Shevatofka, and the nearer we got to the Russian frontier the more excited we became. We had been worried what the outcome would be with our passport on the Russian frontier as we were told at the city of Kieff from good authority that anything we had said against the government during our stay in Russia would appear against us on the Russian frontier, and of course it is impossible for any man to be in Russia thirty days and be among people and in big meetings and where men speak from seven at night until three o'clock in the morning, and not drop a word once in a while against the government and as a rule there are always more or less detectives around watching a stranger in Russia. This caused us to worry. We had also been told that no writing or letters of any kind would be allowed to be taken out of the Russian frontiers, so I got busy packing away the writing up in Russia and other important matters that I didn't want to lose and then all my papers from the Custom House about the Relief Clothing affair and many other papers of proof about the Relief work. I divided up the papers among my suits so it would not show up in a big bunch at one side and it also appeared to us in the last ten

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miles ride some men with plain uniforms walked through the car every few minutes and it appeared to us that they always had a big eye on us. My companion even tried to tell me that these men must have seen me put the papers in the different pockets around my clothes, and I must say that I got real excited when the call came by the conductor that the next station would be Shevatofka, the Russian frontier, where we would all have to get out.

In about fifteen minutes our train pulled in at the Russian frontier. It is only a small city and the custom house and the offices there were only built up a short time ago, as we all know that Russia lost Poland through the last war and the Russian frontier was changed back to the present line.

We all got out of the cars and on each side of the car were soldiers standing with their guns and we were told where to go to, to the passport house. There were only three men besides us who were Polanders, that were intending to pass the Russian frontier, and when we came in front of the officer in the passport house their passports were taken up first and then we came. These passports were taken into the back room by the officer and we were waiting in the front room what the result would be with our passports and whether they were going to send us back again to the interior of Russia. So we were sitting on needles for a while there. To our surprise, the officer that had taken our passports up came back to the front room with our passports and handed them over to us in a friendly way and said—"Horesho." That means "all right." I felt like new life was coming to me. Before I could say to the officer "thanks," they told me to go to the custom house, so we took our satchels to the custom office and they were very quick about examining the inside of our satchels. I had a few ordinary papers and letters in there which they examined very carefully and said "Horesho."

Feeling much better, from there we went to the ticket office and bought our tickets. Afterwards my partner went out on the platform with his hand-baggage and I was still in the room looking after my baggage when he rushed into the room and said our train was leaving. So he went right on and I got ready to go and when I reached the platform I saw the passenger train moving and also saw the officer jumping the train—that is the officer that stamped our passports—and took my partner off the train with his hand-baggage, while the train was moving, which was a very big surprise to me to see the highest officer at the station rescuing a passenger from the wrong train. When my partner was on the platform again the officer told him that he had taken the wrong train—that it was going east instead of west.

Our train was ready to leave over the Russian frontier and I went over to the officer first, who was still out on the platform watching the trains, and said good-bye to him and thanked him ever so much for rescuing my partner from going on the wrong train. What a difference compared with those high officers that controlled the passports on the Russian frontier. Just like night and day. The officers under the Czar's rule had their breasts covered with medals and looked down on a man like a dog. These officers today take care of two jobs and are ready to serve their duty in every way necessary.

It was almost dark when our train left, and when we arrived at the frontier of Poland we all had to get out of the train and go over the same red tape again in the custom house. There were only twenty-five custom officers "Banny" all with high uniforms. Three or four could have done the job fully as well, but there were only about four or five working and the rest of the "Bannys" stayed around and talked to each other. I pitied poor Poland under the control of the officers they have as, Poland is so poor that man can hardly explain so that you can understand.

After we were through in the custom house, we were taken to the passport house where we saw some more medals again as the officers wore a lot of them. It took quite a little time before we got our passport back and we had to lay there on the Poland frontier about three hours before we got out.

### Throng of Hungry People

~~Nov 19-79~~

We got a new train from this place. The cars are furnished mostly by France, and some by Germany and were very nice cars. We rode all that night and until about ten o'clock the next forenoon. Poland certainly got a good slice of land away from Russia in the last war. In 1894 when I crossed the Russian frontier the town on the frontier was called Podvolozitska, which was a hundred miles or more further west than the present Russian frontier. We arrived at the city of Warsaw at about ten o'clock. We had arranged with the conductor to call for a policeman as soon as we arrived at the station and take us to the Union depot, which plan was carried out promptly by the conductor. He brought us through the big crowds to the dining room in the station where we took a table until our train left again. About a half hour before the train left Warsaw the policeman came and took us to the ticket office, where we had to pass through the great crowd in the station, and the hundreds of hungry faces we passed through in that great station was a sight that I will never forget in my lifetime. Be-

fore the train left the policeman came after us and took us to the train and this was a very wise plan to escape any trouble in Warsaw. It was a large train that we entered with dining car and sleeping car and our tickets were bought as far as the German frontier.

The weather was springlike and the land was all level with many factories all over the country. Whenever our train stopped at a good-sized city we could see the hungry people standing around the depot probably in the hope of getting something from the strangers. While the train we were on was a through-train to Paris, it was not as fast as our fast trains here. I don't believe we went over thirty miles an hour.

We were soon called to the dining car. This car was about the size of ours with some partitions in it and the bill-of-fare consisted of five ladies. Of course, the first offer was by the steward—liquor or a different kind of spring water. Then came our bill-of-fare of five ladies. Each guest had a big plate for himself. Then comes lady number one and puts a small piece of meat in your dish. Then came lady number two with a dish of a mixture of potatoes and kohlrabbi, and then lady number three brought us in another mixture of cabbage and a different vegetable that I could not name. The flavor was not any too good. Then came lady number four bringing the coffee—that is she had a large pot and filled up our cups. Lady number five came in later and brought us a piece of cake with whipped cream and that was all of our dinner. Later on the ladies passed cigarette packages around for sale. The charges for that meal was, in American money, without drinks, about 60c for each person. Of course, you did not dare forget the tips for the ladies and for the steward, which is very important.

**W**HEN our train arrived at the next large station the diner was taken off. Our train was well crowded with passengers and about four o'clock in the afternoon we reached the Polish and German frontier. We all had to get out again and had our baggage examined and our passports and about a half hour later our train reached the German frontier where our baggage and passports were again examined. But when the German officer noticed that we came out of Russia there was a special order given to the man in the next room and our handbaggage was taken into the next room and disinfected and was labelled in large letters—"From Russia." So we went back to our train again.

We rode second class on the train and every two, holding ten men, were partitioned off on the side like a small room, and while orders were given to us that our baggage was not

to be covered up we were really up against it. As soon as the people passed by our door and saw the letters on our satchel "From Russia" they all passed by us and my partner and I had the room all to ourselves as every passenger seemed afraid to come into the room after they saw the label on our satchels. I could not understand why the people in Germany are so particular about any one coming out of Russia. But the facts are, that while I was in Russia I hadn't seen a single case in any of the villages or cities of dangerous sickness that was contagious. So we were really surprised at the treatment they gave our baggage. But, of course, they cannot blame the officers for being so strict about the rules, as I was told later on that after the war and after the revolution, Germany had an awful time on their frontier to fight a battle of sickness, and they had to take a strong stand on their frontier, which they have kept up all this time.

#### Cool Treatment From the Germans

A little later on the Steward came and called "supper" at the dining car which was served at the rear of the car, and I said to my partner, "Let's go." But he refused to go so I went alone to the dining car which was a nice large car with tables on both sides like the dining cars in our country. The bill-of-fare was on each table and whatever you ordered you paid for. Of course liquor was served like in all European dining cars, especially wine. The prices were very reasonable.

About eleven o'clock in the night we arrived at Berlin at the Frederick St. station. It was a large strong station and when we got down to the street there was our hotel man from the Central hotel only a short distance away from the station. He took us to the hotel and when they took our baggage out and into the office the manager welcomed us but when he saw the labels on our satchels he made big eyes about it and immediately had the bell-boy take them up to our room. He gave us a nice room with bath and the rooms were well heated.

The next morning we went down to the dining room. On our way we met the manager but he had no words for us and when we entered the dining room the waiters were not so pleasant to us as before. No doubt the manager had told them that we just came back from Russia. I could plainly see that we were not wanted. Of course, they didn't say anything about it but we could feel it. We wanted to stay about two days in Berlin but under this cool treatment we made up our minds to leave in the evening. I got very busy as I had to get me a suit made and bought some underwear

and finished up my other business as much as I could. I should have gone to the crockery factories but I had to give that up. I would have been only too glad to have stayed two more days in Berlin as there was such wonderful scenery there, and the libraries and art galleries—hardly no end of it. The weather was nice and the city was full of life.

We did not have to show our passport when leaving Berlin, so we paid up our bill at the hotel that evening and went to the depot. We had to wait about an hour there for our train. They had a sleeper on that train but we did not dare to ask for a sleeper under the circumstances, our baggage being labeled as it was, so we took a second class coach and sat up all night until we reached Bremen. Our train arrived at Bremen about 7:30 in the morning at the large station. The big dining hall at the station was already lighted up but we did not enter it at all as when we passed the officer handling the depot he saw the labels on our satchels and also made big eyes about it. So we didn't want to take any chances entering the dining room, but hired a hack and drove direct to the steamship company office. We showed him our passport and found out when the boat would leave. So they sent a man along with us to go to the great bath house. When we entered the building we saw different departments with bath rooms and at the rear end of the building was the place where all the clothing had to be disinfected and all our clothing had to be steamed. So, of course, there was nothing else for us to do but go through the "red tape." It was a mean job to do so but there was no other way out for us and we simply had to undress and our clothing was all taken away from us, taken to the steam room, and then we went through cold and hot baths. The performance took a long time but at last the doctor called us into another room and we were examined and given papers that we had gone through the whole performance. We thought we were thru and could dress up as my partner had already commenced to kick as it was already after one in the afternoon and we had had no breakfast and were still in the bath house. But the overseer said we would still have to see another doctor before we could dress. So at last the other doctor came and vaccinated us. I told the doctor I wouldn't take any more vaccinations in my old age but he insisted that it had to be done as he said there were no exceptions.

### Homeward Bount At Last

It was getting late in the day and we had to go to see the American Consul before he closed his office. After we showed him our papers from the doctor, showing that we had



gone through the mill, he stamped our passports. So we were about through with all the red tape. So the next move was to go to a restaurant. We went to the large Rathskeller, a very fine restaurant and wine room, and we were real hungry, since we had eaten nothing that day.

From there we went to the steamship company office and they told us that if we wanted to go along with that steamer the next noon, that we had to get our papers in shape, and baggage. So we got busy and got ready that evening, so that we were ready to start early in the morning for our trip across the ocean. The next morning about seven o'clock, a special train left the Union Station for the Bremen seaport. It was a very large train and every car was crowded with passengers. It took about a two-hour ride to reach our destination. We could see the steamship, Dresden, from our train, and saw that the steamer was all ready to leave. The seaport was crowded with thousands of people from all over and one train after another came in. It took fully four hours until the passengers were all on the boat and located in their rooms. About a half-hour before the vessel started, the large whistle blew and the big band began to play on the boat, and the next hour was a very exciting one for everyone. This great steamer commenced moving slowly and majestically sailed out of the long harbor. The band was playing continually, and there was no end of crying and laughing, until we could no longer hear the voices—the handkerchiefs were flying on both land and ship until we got clear out of sight.

We were soon called to dinner, which was rather late in the day, but before the guests in each dining room took their places at the tables, the steward came in and selected the guests he saw fit. A young man and young lady at a table—the older men and ladies at a table by themselves—at least in the best way to harmonize while they were at the table. My partner and I had taken the second cabin and we soon found we had very nice waiters and very good service at our cabin.

Nearly every room on the steamer was taken. I have forgotten how many thousand passengers there were on the boat, but every department was filled up. I know there were over two thousand passengers.

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**O**N THE second and third day, we stopped at a French port and also on an island port to take up passengers and mail. The weather was fine and the sea was smooth. On the fourth it was raining some but the sea was still good. Sunday morning we got to about the middle of the ocean and I was told by the officer that the ocean at the middle, in

some places is about fifteen miles deep. Sunday morning the sea was not as smooth any more as it had been the previous three days, which is always the case when you get into the middle of the ocean. The deep water is more restless and the ship will always rock more or less—still we could call it a nice sea.

### Services on the Great Ship

When we got into the dining room the orchestra played some very nice pieces and an hour later a minister came in from the first cabin and looked around in the cabin and as he found me to be one of the oldest men in the cabin, he told me that I should invite everyone in our cabin to come to the church service about ten o'clock in the first-class Social Hall. So I invited everyone in our cabin and they all seemed to be willing to go with the exception of two men. They laughed when I invited them to go to church meeting and said they didn't believe in anything like that at all. So I left them stand and went on down to the lower hall and invited the people there. The service started promptly at ten o'clock, and we had a full house. The minister made quite an impression on the people and they were all pleased with the sermon. At the end, the minister called our attention to the fact that there would be a collection taken up for the seamens' widows and orphans, and the collection was quite large. The orchestra played several nice pieces after church and it looked as though everyone left the Social Hall satisfied with the service.

Dinner was served promptly at 12 o'clock, where the orchestra played again. After dinner most of them went to the concert hall and some to the smoking room. It must have been about four o'clock in the afternoon when five sailors came into the concert hall. Everyone of them had as many as a dozen round steel plates under his arm, to fit into the round windows in the boat and they began to work at once and put a steel plate on each window so it got real dark in the room, but of course the lights were turned on. Some of the passengers asked the men questions but they would not say anything whatever. I suppose they are forbidden to say anything which might excite the people. About half an hour later there came another set of sailors in and tied up all the chairs on the floor and they would not answer our questions as to why they did this. The tables were covered with cross boards. It must have been about half past five when a heavy wind commenced to blow and it did not take long until the sea waves became rather high and the boat was rocking quite strong.

### We Experience a Bad Storm

Supper was called promptly at six o'clock, but the passengers had to go very carefully and hold on to the side rails. There was quite a bit of excitement among the passengers at the table as the storm was getting worse right along and in spite of the cross boards on the table so that no cup or plate could move, it was impossible to keep it from spilling, and it got so bad a little later that many of the diners did not stay to finish their meal but left the room the best way they could get to their rooms. But I did not go to my room. I wanted to see how bad the storm was outside. But when I came to the door which leads to the deck, I found that it was locked, but I could see through the door window that the sea waves were getting higher and higher. So I went back to the hall. Of course I was compelled to hold myself every step of the way. A couple of officers passed through the hall and I asked one of them if the storm was bad. "Yes," he said, "We have a real gale which I have never experienced on any of my trips so far although I have heard of the gales, and how bad they are on the sea." The storm was gaining more and more and it was almost impossible to move from one place to another without getting hurt. Anything that was loose would fly from one side to the other with a hard strike. They were to have a big concert on Sunday night but everything was quiet and there was no music—everything was silent.

The officers were all on duty and so were all the sailors and I noticed that orders were given to the dining room waiters to be prepared for their duty. Our ship was handled awfully rough by those large sea waves and whenever one of those mountainous sea waves would strike again our boat, it felt as though it was going to throw it over. It must have been about eleven o'clock in the night when we got a terrible shock when an extra large wave struck the boat, and everyone thought that our boat was sinking. Everybody fell on their knees and cried to God for mercy. There was a terrible excitement on the boat and I saw the officers giving orders and I saw the sailors and waiters rushing through the halls to the front boat and about fifteen or twenty minutes later the water came through to the hall but we could not say where the water came from. The excitement was the most intense that I had ever seen and it seems to me that there was no end to it, but the boat was still on top of the water instead of sinking as we all thought it was, and about half hour later it looked as though our boat was not sinking but a lot of sailors and officers came back from the west end of the ship and we got word at last that the ship was

badly damaged and it knocked one of the side doors in that used to be an unloading place but that it had been closed up again.

I have heard about gales and hurricanes on the sea and I have crossed the ocean seven times, but I never had such an experience as this on the boat. I learned to know what a gale on the ocean means. After three days of the experience in the terrible gale storm there was more life on our boat again, and the seats at the dining room table commenced filling up again—also the concert room, and the guests were trying to forget about the terrible storm.

There was another service held by the same minister, a night service in the great hall of the first class cabin which was well attended and many of the wounded people at the hospital were carried into the hall where the service was held.

### We Reach the United States

The feeling was better all around after three days of nice sailing and especially after receiving the word that we would land in New York in two days. When land was sighted the next morning many of the sea-sick people that were not able to go to the concert room or any of the meetings, came up on deck—some of them were carried up—as new life got into those sea-sick people when they heard that land was in sight.

At about eleven o'clock in the forenoon our boat passed the Statue of Liberty and from there on we could see from our boat the great buildings in the city of New York, and it was only a matter of an hour later that we sailed close by those buildings—the city of New York and we soon landed. What a crowd of people had gathered at the landing place, some to meet their friends, and many of them to see the damage to the boat, and there was a great deal of excitement. There was no end of yelling, crying and laughing.

The guests soon said good-bye to the waiters and officers on the boat and went to the custom house which took quite a little time as everything had to be examined.

**U**PON my arrival at the hotel I found a telegram from my folks at home to do some buying so I stayed two days in New York and finished buying but it took fully three days to get the habit out of my legs, as I always could feel the rocking of the boat.

Wednesday evening, March 26th, I left New York City, by way of Washington. I arrived at Washington at 8 o'clock in the morning. Our train for Chicago didn't leave until two o'clock in the afternoon so I had several hours time to see

more of our capital in Washington. I visited the Mint while in Washington. It is an enormous building with many departments. It took me two hours to get through the building alone, and it is very interesting. Then I went to the Capital and they showed me around for about an hour or so and I saw some of the other interesting places on the grounds and also took a ride over the city. Of course, everyone that has seen Washington, will agree that it is a nice clean city. It has beautiful parks. The White House building is really not large and is of old style architecture, but at the same time it looks fine and especially so with the large park which surrounds it. I made up my mind that I had never seen so many policemen in one city before, as I saw in Washington. The Union Station is also a very fine building and very easy to get in and out of.

Our train arrived in Chicago in the forenoon and as I also had some business there, I stayed there until evening. When I entered the Union Station in Chicago, which is also a very fine station, having been built only three years ago, I met an acquaintance from North Dakota, but he left on a different train.

### No Place Like Home

The next morning I arrived at home all well, and found everybody here the same. I was glad I was home and was going to have a little rest but as soon as the people from north, south and west, found out that I was back, I was simply swamped with visitors—people that wanted to hear about their friends in the old country—and very often sat up until two or three o'clock in the morning telling them what I could about their friends over there. This is the way it kept up for about two months. We had visitors from all over until I was almost laid out, but I thank the Almighty that I got through so well over in the forbidden Russia as it is hard to get into Russia, and also hard to get out. But I hope that the people of the almighty Russia will have a change in their government, at least in several ways.



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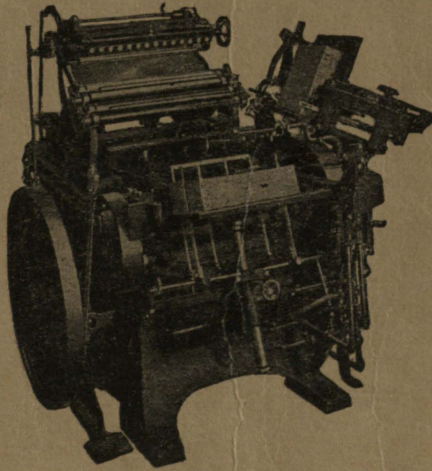
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