

THE DIARY OF GRANDFATHER CORNELIUS DUERKSEN

Aunt Anna, daughter of Cornelius Duerksen, copied this from her father's day book. Father Cornelius Duerksen, on the trip from Russia to America, the year 1874, July 19 to September 30, 1874.

July 13, 1874. Our trunks left Berdjake for America. (November 14 according to the old calendar, which is November 26 by the new calendar) the trunks arrived safely, also one wagon.

July 19. At 2 P.M., we left Alexanderthal, where we had been since our last sale, to go to Rosentor, to prepare for the trip. The passes had arrived July 10. Saturday, we had many visitors, among them our children which stayed in Russia. They are Peter Lorenz, Frantz Jansen, Johan and Daniel Jansen; the later two went to their home.

July 22. Monday at 7 A.M. we left our home, Rosentor. Brothers-in-law Klaus Dick, Geo Ewert, Abe Riedger took us. Lorenz and family also came along, and my wife was in their wagon. At 10:30 we arrived at the R. R. Station, at Hochstadt. Here everything was arranged, and we all registered. The baggage was loaded and we boarded the train. We started at 5:30 P.M. The first hour we traveled 20 werst (one werst is .66 of a mile.) We were delayed 40 minutes in repairing an axle. At 10 we came by Schoenwiese. We stopped at the station till 11 P.M. We traveled 104 werst.

July 23, Tuesday, at 7:30 A.M. we came to Lisawaga—we had to change cars. But at 8:30 we were traveling again.

July 23. at 7 P.M. we arrived at Carkow. Since Henry Penner was sick, I went to the apotheker-of this we gave him one teaspoon, evening and morning, and the next day he was much better. When we left Lisawaga, we could see wooded areas. From Lisawaga to Charkow is 132 werst. We left Charkow at 8:20 P.M. and arrived at Billigrad at 12 midnight. This town is at the foot of snow-capped mountains. It has 13 churches. 79 werst from Charkow.

July 24. Wednesday, at 1 A.M. we left Billigrad. It is 229 werst to Kursk, where we arrived at 8:30 A.M. Here we had to change trains, and at 12:30 we left Kursk and came to Orel at 8 P.M. We again had to change trains; but not till the next day. We slept on a board floor, one side of the roof of the shed was covered. The distance from Kursk to Orel is 140 werst.

July 25. Thursday at 9:30, we left Orel and passed by Praegesk. We traveled through woods from Charkow, always becoming more dense, for a long distance, to travel with a vehicle would have been monotonous. We seem to travel real fast, and we feel the protecting area of the Lord around us.

Today the 25th of July at eleven A.M., the wife of Rev. Jacob Klassen from Sparau gave birth to a son. The whole car had been vacated for her, with the help of the Lord, everything went well. At 10 P.M. we arrived in Southern Russia. It is said that from Orel to here are 180 werst.

July 26. Friday at 6 A.M. we arrived at Witgask. At 10 we had to change cars again, and at 10:30 we were on our way again. It is rainy weather. The trees are getting closer and larger. Now there is only now and then a small wheat field. The rye is ripe and they begin to harvest it. The oats are all green. The potatoes are small, and we see no wheat at all, barley is scarce. At 2:30 we passed through Polyk. Now we see much flax and peas,

between the woods. At 8:30 we arrived at Dunaburg, where we changed cars again. From Orel till here we were very crowded. Now we have more room again. From Witgask to Dunaburg is 244 werst. We fly through this world so fast.

July 27, Saturday 7 A.M. we arrived at Wilma, where we left at 9:30. At 3 P.M. we came to Kavna. We came through two tunnels between Wilma and Kavna; the first one was dark, but the last one was darker. We could not see anything. It is supposed to be 1½ werst long. From Dunaburg to Wilma is 163 werst; 97 to Kavna; 68 werst to Werlotowe. This is the Russian Border. We arrived at 7 P.M. Our tickets were inspected, and we were in the same cars when we passed through the iron gates into Prussia, to the border town of Eidkuhnen. Here we exchanged our money in Prussian. For 100 Rubel we got 94 Thaler. We left Eidkuhnen at 11 P.M. At 4 A.M. we were at Koeningberg in Germany. The German date was August 9 Sunday. From Eidkuhnen we were in German cars that should take us to Hamburg. At 9:30 A.M. we passed Marienburg. It has rained. Some grain had been cut, but some is to green. Five minutes after ten we went over the large bridge that crosses the Weichsel River near Dirshou. At 11:05 we left Dirshou and at 12 Noon we were at Stargard till 1. At 4 P.M. we passed through Mulhausen, at 8 Schneidemahle, at 10:15 Krenz, at 2 A.M. Landberg.

August 10, 4 o'clock Kustrin at 9 A.M. we arrived at Berlin. Here our train was pushed here and there. First forward and then back, now over a high bridge. As we looked down we saw a train go through. Soon we were under the bridge. Such travel back and forth one cannot imagine. At 12 we left Berlin, passed by Neudorf. At 3:30 P.M. we passed by Wilburn; we were 169 miles from Berlin, still 21 till Hamburg. Really in all Prussia and Germany the train traveled so fast that we cannot see half of it. In Prussia the farms are so far apart that if you want to visit your neighbor, you have to walk at least one whole hour. It seems it must be lonesome. Well, there are 2 or 3 that live closer together, but now much further again. Between Berlin and Hamburg the farms are a little closer. The farms are separated by fences, or some by ditches. Some have two, others as many as 30, pretty, black and white spotted cows. They are well built and really are pretty to look at. We saw them haul home their grain at places. There was a span of horses, and one wagon was hitched unto the other one. The first loaded one, then took it to the road, and went and loaded the other one. Hooked it to the first one, and took them home. There are no hills, so even if they have only two horses, this way they can use two wagons. At 9 P.M. we arrived at Hamburg.

We were housed at the Meier and Martens. A five story house with many, many rooms. We were assigned to the second floor, therefore had only one stairway to go up and down. We are to stay here till Saturday. The ship, which is to leave Wednesday, the 12th, which is of the Boldtschen Line, is not able to accommodate all of us.

August 11, Tuesday, today we checked all our papers, our trip expenses and what we had bought so far. Everyone paid his share. It came to Eight Dollars per person, and for the Q.D. freight above the allowance of free weight, was 24 Groschen (German money). From Hochstadt to Eidkuhnen we paid 22 Rubel and 72 Kopeken. For the ½ person, eight Rubel. Per pound freight, 3 Rubel

and 66 Kopeken. I have paid 352 Rubel and 58 Kopeken. Now we paid for the passage to New York, and our board for three days and living quarters were 18 Dollars. The fare to New York for meals 18 Dollars, all together 376 Dollars and .55. We stayed till Sunday. The David Penners Maria was buried Friday the 14th of the month. Anna, Sara and Maria went along to the cemetery, which is near the Zoological Garden. After the funeral we went to see the imported and also the native animals. There were elephants, anshorn, antilopes, deer, apes, giraffes, buffalo, strups, swans, geese, nasherovogel, parrots, bears, panthers, large and small bear, many monkeys and many more. One cannot describe all of them. Cornelous and Heinrich Penner had been there the day before and seen many mammals and fish, but we did not have time.

August 16, Sunday morning, at 4:30 we started to drive to the wharf. The freight was loaded the day before on the 15th in the afternoon. The ship that was to take us to America is named Teutonia. When the freight had been loaded, there were some boats that went further into the sea, although it was getting dark. We stayed on deck late. At 10 P.M. we passed another island on the left, we were very close. It was a tall island, straight up.

August 19, Wednesday, we had much wind the result was that many became sick. My wife was quite ill. On Monday she vomited frequently; in fact all of us had to throw up. This afternoon towards evening it cleared up. So far it has been cloudy and rainy even this afternoon. We are travelling West.

August 20, Thursday, the wind had quieted during the night. The ocean is calm. At 10 A.M. everyone was called to come on deck. The ship was to be fumigated. It took 2 hours. We are sailing north-northwest.

August 21, Friday, the sea is calm. At 4 P.M. we stopped for one half hour. There was some trouble with machinery. We are travelling northwest.

August 22, Saturday, we have medium wind. At 10 P.M. we had fire in the bottom of the ship, where the boiler is, due to too much firing. We that were in the middle of the ship had to go to the front and those in the hind part, up to the deck, till the fire was extinguished, and the floor inspected to see if there was any harm. After 2 hours we all returned to our places. We have a medium wind from the Southwest.

August 23, Sunday, we had services morning, afternoon and evening. We have evening services every night. The wind is from the west. We have a medium fog.

August 24, Monday, all is calm. Toward evening we saw a ship. It cleared up towards evening. The wind is now N.W. It is 9 degrees warmer.

August 25, Tuesday, A strong N.W. wind is blowing. The sea is very restless. My wife had to go to bed.

August 26, Wednesday, the wind blows strong, the sea is turbulent.

August 27, Thursday, good weather the sea is calm and my wife is better, she was on deck for several hours today. The ship was fumigated for the second time. All passengers were ordered on deck. Today we saw two ships. At night we had a storm, the waves are very high.

August 28, Friday, it is cloudy, but no wind, the sea is calm. This morning we have seen five ships, and four this afternoon. We were told that today our ship has passed Newfoundland.

August 29, Saturday, we have a strong wind the ship rocks heavily. On days like this, my wife has to be in bed. We saw three ships.

August 30, Sunday, it is quiet and pleasant, a beautiful Sunday. The temperature is 15 degrees warmer. We had three services.

August 31, Monday, before noon we entered the gulf stream. It met us forceful. We had no wind, the ocean was very calm. It gets warmer all the time.

September 1, Tuesday, we see ships near us. At 2 P.M. the pilot, that takes ships into port, came on board. We see a number of ships.

September 2, Wednesday, A.M. when we came on deck, we saw land to our right. Houses as far as we could see to the right and to the left. Also a light house. Along the shores are several ships. At 1:50 P.M. we enter the harbor of New York. We thank God for his protection. At the entrance of the port, we are examined by a doctor. At three P.M. we reach the landing place and stop. Our belongings are loaded on a small steam ship, after we had marked them. We are also taken on board, and we were taken to Kessel Garden, where we landed at 6 P.M. and stayed for the night.

September 3, Thursday, it has rained all day. We made two trips to town to get our money changed and further plans had to be made for further travel. Each one had to decide. Sixty families go to Nebraska, and all the rest in two trains to Kansas. Today we met Reverend Wm. Ewert and a friend David Goertz from Starfield. They had come to meet us. Ewert has been here since Monday. They were good help in continuing our trip preparations.

September 4, Friday, at 5:30 we were leaving Kessel Garden by ship, to go to the R. R. Depot for our trip to Kansas. At 8 P.M. we left the R. R. Station, to go west on two trains. Reverend Ewert was on our train, and David Goertz was on the other train accompanying the immigrants as far as Summerfield. Our train does not go through Summerfield.

September 5, Saturday, Last night was the beginning of our trip to Kansas. We saw the land was mountainous and covered by forest. By evening we came to Buffalo, where we crossed the Niagara River. The bridge is 118 feet high and 828 feet long. We wondered how long it was? Would we ever come to the end? We heard the water falls. Where we had to change cars. At 8 P.M. we came to the Railroad Station. At 10 we boarded the train again and waited for those that were going to Nebraska. They had taken a different Railroad. They had caught up with us at 11 P.M. and now were to travel together to Chicago. We left at 1:30 A.M. The land is more level and looks better.

September 6, Sunday, we traveled during the night and morning till 12:30 noon, when we reached Detroit. We were taken by ship over an arm of Lake Huron. At 2 P.M. we left Chicago.

September 7, Monday, at 6 A.M. we arrived in Chicago. We left at 8 A.M. Those that go to Nebraska leave on another train. Chicago is a large inhabited city, almost as large as New York. We had to change cars. They are much nicer and more comfortable. The seats are for two, they are also upholstered. There is a large window at each seat. The windows can be opened to let in fresh air. The cars seat fifty four. There are two iron stoves. There is a water container which is filled with water and ice, and replenished as it gets empty. The drinking cup is a tin cup fastened with a small chain. In one corner also is a rest room. This is the only train equipped like this from New York to Kansas for immigrants. After leaving Chicago we saw very plain land, and now it is hilly again. We see many different kinds of trees, also we saw many fruit orchards. They were so beautiful.

They were covered with delicious fruit. Nice horses, beautiful horned cattle, and hogs were on freight trains coming from the West and going East to the slaughter houses. Also horses were shipped by train.

September 8, Tuesday at 9:30 A.M. we arrived at Atchison, the boarder of Kansas. Here we left the train. There were several wagons, some drawn by two, some by four horses, to take us to the other train. We had to cross the wide Missouri River on a large steam boat, then we came to the R. R. Station, where the train was waiting for us. We loaded the train at once. Here we met other immigrants of our group who had left New York on a different train. They came there at midnight and had been waiting for us. Now we went on together. Left at 12:30 and arrived at Topeka at 4 P.M. We were taken to a large, empty manufacturing building. In one end of it we all were to lodge. We were given boards to put on the ground (it was very dusty) to sleep on and to put our belongings on. In the evening a number of us went to the Railroad Station to inquire about the price of land.

September 9, Wednesday, this morning we voted for ten men. of our group to go see the land. At noon we were summoned to the R. R. Co., to get more information and were shown a map of the land. At 5 P.M. we left to view the land. I took my family along to brother-in-law Riesens. Mr. Riesens had telegraphed twice already to invite us to come. Cornelious Dalke went with us, also Rev. Balzer took his family. Wielers, Nikels, Funks, Andre Flemmings and Heinrich Kliewers had left the evening before. The 8th we came to Peabody, and from there to Jacob Funks, Riesens and Mrs. Peter Funk and Reverend Ewert went with them. We came to Florence at 11 P.M. where we stayed all night.

September 10, Thursday at 8:30 A.M. we hired a wagon and horses and left Florence. At 10 we met Rudolph Riesens, who came to get us. Since Dalke's stayed in Florence because they did yet have a vehicle, so Riesens went to meet them, but before he left he greeted us and we talked together. We went on, and at 12 noon we were in Marion County and at 4 P.M. we arrived at Riesens, where we were lovingly welcomed and entertained. When the guide, who had brought us here, was ready to leave the owner of the team and wagon came. He was German, his name was Becker. He offered to sell the wagon and horses, one mare the other a male horse. Mr. Riesens encouraged me to buy it. The wagon had a seat and a brake. Wagon, Harness and all, for Two hundred Seventy Two Dollars and Fifty Cents.

September 11, Friday, we, the Riesens, Dalke, and Wielers all together bought a cow to butcher at a price of Twenty Five Dollars. Coming home from there we saw the cattle, and we also looked at land.

September 12, Saturday, we had a heavy rain. In Riesens barn we butchered the cow, looks real good, we figure we will get one onehalf pounds tallow.

September 13, Sunday, Still raining. We had services. We are four families without Riesens, including them we are Fifty. We are too many of us all together.

September 14, Andreal Flemmings, from Sharden, left us today. Brother-in-law Riesens, C. Dalke and I went to see land. We went to see Rev. Ewert but he was not home. He left with the deputation to further look for land. I stayed back.

September 15, Tuesday, Dalke, Riesens and I went to Peabody to buy some things we needed, also some feed wheat for the horses, at .65c a bushel. On our way we went to Jakob Wiebe in Gradenau to get their oldest wagon, and see their land. We were going home, Dalke

and I both bought a cow. Dalke paid \$34.25 and I paid \$22.75. They are both red spotted. At Jakob Wiebe we made a down payment on land of section 35. He took the money to Topeka the other day.

September 16, Wednesday, we went on to Marion Center with brother-in-law Riesens, he got some seed Winter Wheat from Eullings. Dalke went to Peabody for wood to build a shed. This afternoon Riesens, my wife, Mrs. Dalke and Wellers and I looked over the land. We went to Marion Center, also the Jakob Funks flour mill and bought some 100 lbs. of flour at \$2.75.

September 18, Friday, C. Dalke is building his shack, Son Cornelious helped him.

September 19, Saterday, we went to look for hay. After that to Marion Center to buy wood for heating. Towards evening we went to look for some cows. Dalke's moved on their land into their hut.

September 20, Sunday, this morning we met for services in the American School Rev. Ewert brought the sermon, followed by Rev. Peter Balzer, who had just arrived. He had looked at some land. In the afternoon we went to Jakob Wiebe to make the last payment on that land, for this year. We have the East One Half Section. Each was \$169.00 for the first year.

September 21, Monday, bought two stacks of hay at \$50.00 each, one for Dalke and one for me. Later I went to Funks mill to get some flour for Riesens. I also bought some 500 lbs. for \$15.00 and .75c.

September 23, Wednesday, went to Peabody for lumber for our shack. Cornelious helped dig a well at Dalke's.

September 24, Thursday, it is raining. Dalke bought him a hog at \$11.00.

September 25, we helped butcher the hog for Dalke.

September 26, went to Marion Center to buy things we needed, also bought a red cow and a bull calf at \$50.00.

September 27, went to the American school where Rev. Ewert preached.

September 28, Rudolph Riesens and Cornelious put the rafters on our shack(house) while I went to Peabody for another load of lumber.

September 29, we put the roof on our house.

September 30, we moved into our shack. Hitherto the Lord has brought us. The Lord has lead us we praise and thank Him, may he continue to do so, and lead us according to the Word of God, and after life to our eternal rest. Amen.

Eight weeks and two days since we left Rosenort till we went to live in our land. Expenses of the trip in Russian money 985 Rubel = \$709.21. 109 Rubel per person ticket and food. Up in New York I paid for 9½ persons, from there for 8½ persons. We paid freight 3 Rubel = 66 Kop. on the overweight, in Russia, and in Prussia to Hamburg we paid 24 Groschen, from Hamburg on we had no charge for freight. All our trunks that left from Berdjansk the R. R. Co. paid for since we bought our land from them. The money I changed in Berdjansk into 1 Lb. Sterling, was worth here on Rubel = .72c and the money I changed in Eidkuhnen into Prussian gold dollars, and again in Hamburg changed into American money 1 Rubel = 75c - 100 cents = 1 dollar. Tickets from Russia to America to the border of Prussia 247 Rubel 85 Kopken, through Prussia to Hamburg 10 Rubel and 28 Kop. For food in Hamburg 18 Rubel. Tickets to New York \$303.18, from New York to Atchinson \$183.18 from Atchinson to Florence \$20.00, from Florence to Mr. and Mrs. Riesens \$4.50, other expenses \$7.38. Total \$709.20.

In North America, in the state of Kansas, near Marion Center, in Marion County, Township 19, Section 35, on January 1875. In 1874, March 26, in Alexanderwohl, we borrowed 200 Rubel without interest from the charity fund. The lien is for three years. After father died the 5 oldest children each received \$5.00.

Aunt Anna remembers that when we were on the ocean we passed large icebergs, and it was very cold for we traveled far north. There were 1200 persons on the ship and the captain feared sickness. There were two children born on the journey.

Family register revision Alexanderwohl, Kornelius Duerksen 50 years, married a widow Mrs. Gertrude Penner, 45 years.

His first wife was a born Franzen, mother of Kornelius, 20 years, Anna 18 years, Sarah 16 years, Heinrich 11 years, Helena 6 years, Isak 7 years, stepdaughters Marie 14 years, Anna 10 years, two brothers Jakob 48 years.

Remarks June 1874, by Kornelius Duerksen: The step sons Johann 24, and Daniel 21 years old. The Penner children Heinrich, Isak, Maria and Anna inherited from their grandfather, each 36 Rubel and 61 Kopekes.

Relief work of 50 years ago: Since we are approaching the 50th anniversary on the immigration it is proper to tell you what happened 50 years ago.

When we were going to immigrate to America, it was discovered that some did not have money enough, even only for the trip. There were arrangements made for a loan fund. For this purpose to keep an account of all the money, it was entered in a book, called Schmurbook. We looked in the dictionaries to find a definition

for this name, but to no avail. Well, this is a book of 120 pages, from the back to the front it is a finely braided wool strand passed through and about 1 inch further the strand is passed to the back, then both ends are sealed together. It was hard to read what it said on the seal. But we could read "Alexanderwohl Church at Molatchna." The rest we could not make out at all. Perhaps some of the older ones could tell us what all the seal contained. This Schnurbook contained besides the figures also the rules and regulations for the money that was loaned from the loan treasury. We bring the rules which might be interesting to many of the older readers. Most of the money was loaned for three years without interest, a few for less and also some for longer periods. When we look at the last page we are aware that many have never paid back the loan. Neither the interest on the loan. There is a list of those who received help which we omit here. We do not want to shame anyone. It is no disgrace to be poor, unless it is his own fault. Some become poor through sickness or accidents, which no one can change. It is important, however, to know that the ones that loaned money, (nearly all of them) later donated the money. That these same people are the ones that are able to give today and the ones that borrowed, also some descendants are in the same predicament. To give does not make one poor. It is more blessed to give than to receive. Again we are asked to give, let us be willing to help again. It is likely that those who give, will also be able to give 50 years from now.

Rules and Regulations for the Corporation of the Immigrants to America

Feb. 11, 1874. The church leaders of the immigrants of South Russia from the Mennonite Community, united to make the following rules and regulations in writing, regarding the proportion of immigrants.

1. Since the immigration is: Conscientious Objection to War and Military Service; it must be done in a Christian Spirit, Therefore: The Brethren that have money, established a loan treasury to help those that are needy. Recorded as follows:

A) The one's who have money pay in a certain sum as possible in cash and the same be entered into this especially prepared book, Schnurbook, in approval of it he personally puts his signature on same.

B) The giver states the sum he gives, also the duration of the loan without interest, for the needy brothers.

C) It is the duty of the whole corporation of this community loan treasury to handle it carefully to avoid irregularity and loss.

D) With all precautions used, and perhaps accidents occurring, there should be a loss in the loan treasury, then the whole corporation suffers the loss accordingly.

E) Whoever through selfishness or for other reasons leaves the corporation, proves that he no longer is a member of same corporation, and the same is not responsible for him any longer.

2. The needy one reports all he possesses, and how much he will have to borrow from the loan treasury. He agrees to the following requirements by signing his name:

A) The needy one reports all he possesses, also how many in the family. This is done to see how far his

finances will care for, and how much he will have to borrow from the loan treasury.

B) At a certain place the needy one receives what he needs. This is given in brotherly love, with the request to use only for the purpose it was loaned.

C) At the end of the term, he promises to pay back the money he borrowed, which he has industriously earned, and agrees to pay when the term ends.

D) The name and also the loan and the terms of the loan are entered in this certain Schnurbook, and he signs his name to it.

3. Whoever is elected to have charge of this has the following duties:

A) To have charge of this loan treasury. To carefully guard it, keep account of income and disbursements using the before mentioned Schnurbook.

B) The needy one receives an application blank for borrowing the needy money.

C) After the needy ones present the application the one in charge is responsible to give him the needed money from the loan treasury, in person, and recording it in the Schnurbook, which the person making the loan has signed. He also has to see that the promises are kept, if at all possible.

D) Not only the loaning of funds, but he has to return the money that comes in, to the lenders of the loan treasury.

E) Should the task get too heavy, he is entitled to get help from other Brethren.

4. To make the rules legal, all fathers have to sign them. It also furnishes information who belongs to the group.