

Werner Backman & Erika Grafenberg Immigration Journey to North America

Report about the Immigration Journey to North America

Finally, it's our turn. A link in the long chain of those who must take up the traveling staff to try and build a new existence in a foreign land. Never before have we been so conscious of the meaning of the word 'collective destiny', as at this moment when we leave Germany. I think that if I use the term 'communal destiny' at this instant in time, it will not sound like empty rhetoric, but will convey the true feeling for the enormity of the hour. But this communal destiny ties us to two opposite places. It ties us to the many thousands who will journey, or have already journeyed with us, into a new, and hopefully better future. It also ties us, in a much stronger manner, to our loved ones: our parents, siblings, relatives, and good friends, whom we leave behind in Germany, or who are creating a new life in a far-away land.

All you dear ones in Goettingen and Hamburg, in Berlin, Cologne and Frankfurt/Main, showed us so much love and kindness, that we would like to thank you one more time from the bottoms of our heart at this hour of our parting. This feeling of sincere thankfulness will accompany us as we travel into the wide world. And even though the physical distance between us will be large, the inner ties that bind us together will be stronger because of it. With these thoughts as a preamble, we will now tell you how we fared on our journey, truthfully, without concealment, and without embellishment.

December 28th, 1937 After passing through the finance, passport, and custom check without incidence, (although it took a while to find our three pieces of luggage in the huge hall) we, together with my parents-in-law, went aboard the ship 'Washington' at about 6pm that evening. We were quite pleased with our cabin, it was nice and spacious, and on the outside. It even had a private bathroom, which, as it turned out,

came in very handy later on. Little Ruthie was very tired, of course, and was put to bed right away.

We then went to our first 'dinner' aboard, and had a bottle of French Champagne to accompany the good food. Together with our in-laws we drank a toast to a happy future and everyone's good health. We wrote wishes to each other on the menu card of this first meal aboard, and saved it as a memento. We sat congenially together in the 'smoking room' until 10:30 pm, at which time the signal was given to all visitors to leave the ship. The hour of our last good-bye had arrived, a heavy, yet sweet adieu. Little Ruthie slept and was not aware of any of this. I will never forget the last words of my father-in-law: May this child bless you.

December 29th, 1937 I'm sure no one will think worse of us when we admit that we did not sleep well this first night aboard. To many things had happened during those last few weeks, and we had to quiet down a little first. At about 9 am we per chance found out that the ship had already been underway for 15 minutes. We had not noticed at all, that's how quietly it took place. Of course we immediately went topside to experience the departure out of the Hamburg harbor, and I was quite astounded about the immensity of the harbor, which I had not imagined as big. After that we went to the luggage room to sort out our suitcases. That was quite an undertaking, as everyone's luggage was at terrible disarray, but after a while we had it all sorted out. In spite of the cold weather, we went back on deck after we ate. The three of us wrapped in warm blankets and rested for an hour. Ruth immediately became the center of attraction, and instantly had a cadre of big and little friends. After a while Cuxhaven became visible in the distance, followed a little later by the isle of Helgoland light tower. After that we veered to the southwest and headed into the English Channel. At this point I had my first 'strange feeling', but the dark cloud, mercifully, soon lifted. In the evening we introduced ourselves to Mrs. Wolfes, a very nice, elderly lady, who had been recommended to us by San Francisco, Berlin, and Hamburg, and with whom we frequently got together during our journey.

December 30th, 1937 The next morning already the coast of France came into view. The sun was blazing over the channel, a beautiful sight. Everyone was on deck, in spite of the cold. We decided to take a thorough excursion of the ship, climbed around everywhere and were amazed at the sheer amount of rigging necessary for a ship of only 24,000 tons. We saw the many lifeboats and all the other things that go along with it. Later we entered the harbor of Le Havre, and that, too, was a beautiful sight. Thousands of seagulls surrounded the ship, and it was very interesting to observe the docking in the harbor. We sunbathed in a deckchair for one hour to soak up energy for a land excursion, which we enjoyed in the company of Mrs. Wolfes and her son who had come from Paris for this purpose. Mr. Wolfes was very familiar with Le Havre, and thus was able to show us the most important sights. Ruth, of course, came along in her carriage. Le Havre is not a particularly pretty town. The harbor area is exceedingly filthy, and full of dance halls, dirty cafes, bordellos, and grocery stores so dirty, that one would rather starve than shop there. Later we walked along the quay, from where we had a beautiful view of the sea (the Channel.) We saw the monument the Belgian government, which temporarily resided in Le Havre during the last war, had erected in honor of the French-Belgian friendship. Then we walked along one of the main streets to the café 'Guillaume Tell', to which Mr. Wolfes had invited us. Since we had never been to France before, it was very interesting to observe the French. The ladies use an enormous amount of powder and make-up, and the gentlemen keep their hats on even in the café. We also saw acquaintances from aboard ship in the café. Later we walked via a shopping area, where we saw a kind of Christmas market and many beautiful public buildings, back to the ship. Many new passengers were coming aboard, and we watched as the luggage and a number of cars were loaded. When seen for the first time, everything is interesting. We were fairly tired after our land excursion, and went to bed early.

December 31st, 1937. At 8 am the next day we were already in Southampton. Strangely, only the 1st class passengers were allowed to

go ashore, and the protestations of our 'lower class' were to no avail. Still, we had no time to be bored. The biggest surprise was, when my friend Kurt Schloss stood suddenly before me. He knew of two other friends from Nuernberg aboard ship, and had on the spur of the moment, decided to visit us from London so that he could talk to all of us. That was very nice, of course. We spent several pleasant and congenial hours together. Since we hadn't seen each other for quite a while we had much to catch up on. In the evening (Friday) services were held. Never in my life would I have dreamt that I would one day say Caddish for my father on board a ship. A likable gentleman from the East, lead very nicely in prayer. The service was heavily attended. I heard that there were over 400 émigrés on board. For the most part all were very nice, simple people, not conspicuous at all. There were more southern than northern Germans, which became obvious by the dialect. Because of Ruth, we became quite know. Several little girls would fight over who would get to play with her. She would also attend Kindergarten now and then, and felt very comfortable among the older children. We stayed up until shortly after midnight, since it was New Year's Eve, but felt no great urge to celebrate. We sat together with our acquaintances and went on deck shortly before midnight. We recalled all the hardships that the old year had brought us, and were glad that it was over, even though the new year lay before us, shrouded in uncertainty as this cold night was dark and gloomy. At this moment we hoped that this next year would somehow bring a new beginning, no matter how small.

January 1st, 1938. Outwardly, the new year did not start well for me. All preventative measures to ward of seasickness had been without success. We were heading towards Ireland and the dreaded Irish Sea, which is usually very stormy. Experienced passengers had warned me that everything the shipping line offered up on New Year's Eve, the enormous amounts of good bread and cold cuts, the balloons, and carnival atmosphere producing toys, would be paid for threefold in the next few days when the dining halls were nearly empty due to, as it was put nicely, the loss of appetite of the passengers. I, too, was overcome by this loss of appetite, though Erika and Ruth weren't bothered by it at

all. On the contrary, while I, in a state that I do not care to describe any closer, staggered from my bed to the deckchair and back again, Ruth was in the playroom, gleefully rocking back and forth on a rocking horse! One who has never been seasick cannot possibly imagine what a 'wonderful' feeling it is. Not only the body, but also the spirit is weak and completely without will power. One lies about, dozes, and has only that one wish: to die. Thank God, wishes take their time to come true, thus I escaped with my life. It was small consolation to know that others were in the same condition as I, and that in this manner we were experiencing a 'collective destiny' as well. But something beautiful occurred on this day, too, the entering of the last European harbor, Cobh, Ireland. With the sun shining brightly, we had even from afar a magnificent view of the town that had grown up a treeless mountainside. We couldn't really enter the harbor since it was very small. A little boat came alongside and collected our mail, and I was astonished about the huge number of mailbags that were being unloaded. The boat also brought a few more passengers. A small fortification dominated the harbor of Cobh, and high mountains were visible far inland, covered only with grass or small shrubs, no forests. Several Irish peasant women came aboard too, to sell their truly beautiful embroideries.

By leaving Cobh, we also left Europe irrevocably behind. The coast disappeared from sight and for the next five days we saw nothing but water. For a while huge flocks of seagulls accompanied us, and it was a pleasure to watch them, but when these, too, disappeared we knew that we were on the high seas. There is nothing much to say about these five days. Surely it must have been nice to observe the sea, at times quiet, and at times moving, pretty pictures all. Once we also had to content with thick fog, the foghorn sounded constantly and the ship had to move very slowly. One day a small children's fest was held, and Ruth, though the youngest, amused herself royally. Wearing a red paper hat and a little white apron she ran about everywhere, making the prettiest music with a trumpet. What a sight! That evening she couldn't go to sleep until she had 4 balloons, trumpets, and various tin toys next to her in bed. Erika and I woke in the middle of the night because everything had fallen to the floor, but Ruth slept undisturbed.

Two days out from New York, it suddenly turned very warm, and we were able to take some lovely sunbaths on deck sans our coats. It was the Gulf Stream! What we had learned about years ago in school, we suddenly were able to experience in reality.

January 6th, 1938. We were scheduled to arrive in the morning of this day. But due to the fog that we had encountered along the way, we didn't arrive in New York until about 10 pm that night. No one knew if we were to disembark that night, or wait until morning, as it is usually done when a ship arrives late. But we were unloaded that night, and I'm sorry to say that our arrival in New York was in every way a catastrophe. We had seen the first lights of New York in the distance at about 9 pm that night, but suddenly the order was given that all tourist class passengers had to go to the smoking salon. That was around 9:30 and from that moment on we were no longer allowed on deck.

In our hats and coats, with our children and small pieces of luggage, we were squeezed like cattle into the overheated room. Thus we were not able to observe the lovely sight of entering the harbor. We were shoved from one room to the next, the many small children became restless, and dead tired. With other words, it was horrible. At about 11 pm we happily stood in front of an immigration officer, but the child in my arms had become inconsolable. The officer said the child must be very tired, and I said it was so would he work as quickly as possible. Now I could finally get rid of all the papers, except for the green ones with our photos that were attached to the visa. We were now allowed to go back on deck now, but not to leave.

Suddenly I could see Rosi Katz and Rosel Nussbaum in the arrival hall below, and the two, after spotting me, too, started to wave furiously. But my brother-in-law Walter was nowhere to be seen. At about 12:30 that night, we were finally allowed to leave the ship 'early', but only because a gentleman from the Jewish support league was collecting families with children; relatives were not allowed to come on board. At last, though, we walked down that famous gang way and were in America. Many friends and relatives were there to greet the arrivals,

even though it was the middle of the night, and they all had been waiting for hours.

Happiest to see that we had finally arrived, was my brother-in-law Walter. My cousin Alma Katz (nee Bachmann) from Warburg with husband and child, Alfred Levy from Kassel, Friedel Halberstadt (excuse me, Halstedt) , Rosi Katz, and Rosel Nussbaum, were also there. In the meantime it had become

January 7th, 1938. We were wrong in thinking that things would become less weary now. After greeting everyone we started to look for our luggage so that we could take it to customs. Of the 20 pieces that belonged to us, only two were there when the customs officer wanted to begin. Walter, Alfred Levy, and I stared to look for the other 18 pieces in the huge hall. The luggage was strewn about everywhere, and came only slowly off the ship. The workers were swearing for having to work through the night, but it wasn't a cakewalk for us either. One after the other our friends said good-bye, except for Walter and Alfred Levy who stood by us until the end. A stuttering custom officer, who seemed especially interested in our little supply of pharmaceuticals, inspected every single piece of luggage, perhaps he suspected morphine. By the time we were finally done, it was 4 o'clock in the morning, and we all felt 'done in' in the truest sense of the word. Ruth had fallen asleep in Erika's arms, where she slept for about an hour. We watched our luggage descend an electric staircase, and then we got, in the pouring rain, into the car and drove to our hotel --- we were in N e w Y o r k.

End of Part I.

Part II of our Emigration Report to America. N e w - Y o r k 14 days New York.

They'll say that it is impossible to form an opinion in such a short time about this world class city. But we are able to do just that, because we used our time very well. We fell into bed every night totally exhausted, but we didn't care because we wanted to see as much as possible of this city before we headed west. That we were able to see so much was made possible by two facts, for which we are truly thankful: one is that our friends, Dr. & Mrs. Loewenstein of Flushing, took care of Ruth, gave her full 'room and board', as they say here in America, and, two, because my brother-in-law, Walter, sacrificed a lot of his precious time to show us all the interesting and important sights.

We lived together with Walter in the Hotel Mansfield, near 44th Street and 5th Avenue. The hotel was very nice and centrally located. The four of us, then three, experienced some beautiful family life. My brother-in-law made sure that we adopted the American way of life as quickly as possible, that we would eat our cornflakes and grapefruit before we had our coffee. That was not difficult at all since we had experienced it aboard ship already.

The first day we were so exhausted from the journey, the lack of sleep the previous night, and all the other rigmarole that went along with it, that we did nothing but eat and sleep (but we did unpack our suitcases.) One thing we noticed right away, though - New York is a city of extreme opposites. It was pouring rain the night we arrived, the next day the sun was blazing and it was so warm that we didn't need our coats, but only two days later it turned bitter cold. It stayed that way for the remainder of our days in New York. It was a strange feeling the first time we entered Walter's office on the 24th floor of a skyscraper. His office consisted of two small rooms, but due to his skillful furnishing, they looked great and allowed a wonderful view of a variety of other tall office buildings.

We walked along the prettiest and biggest shopping street, Fifth Avenue. We had heard of it so often and had seen so many pictures, and then suddenly we, too, were there, right in the midst of all the hustle and bustle. Without a doubt, at first everything made a huge impression on us. For one, there was the horrific traffic (the traffic on the Potsdamer Platz in Berlin paled in comparison) the length of the private cars, the huge number of skyscrapers between 30 and 100 floors high in which there are thousands upon thousands of offices (one had 2,500!), all dressed in expensive marble.

Each building has 5 –10 elevators in which thousands of people go up and down (hourly), a constant coming and going, or better a constant running and rushing. One and two story busses, streetcars, subways, highways (*elevated*,) cars and huge trucks - everything sped by at a ferocious speed, next to, below, and above us. All the people seemed to be constantly rushing about, even though one has to only wait five minutes for the next public transport to come by.

Now I will make a short report about some of the interesting points we saw in the city:

The NY Public Library, the main library of N.Y. is a comparatively small building surrounded by giants, but the content is incredible. Outside appearance: pretty, old building style; inside very regally, everywhere beautiful white marble. Several giant reading rooms in which hundreds of people are seated and reading. Students read something necessary for their studies, professors looking for lecture material, journalists looking for an item for their next piece, the unemployed trying to fill their unwanted leisure time by reading a book, girls reading the newest novels, business owners and employees with a special interest in one thing or another. In other words, people of all ranks of life and employ are seated here and educate themselves. And it doesn't cost a thing because the entire education and social education system in the U.S.A. is free. There are special rooms for children where they can read juvenile literature, special rooms for newspaper reading with newspapers from all over the world written in Chinese, Yiddish,

French, or even Russian. Nothing exists that cannot be looked up. Anything that has ever been written about in the world is available here. The Jewish section alone encompasses three halls. Of course one can also "loan" books here, and frequently view small art exhibits. We saw one as well.

Temple Emmanuel, the biggest Jewish house of God in the world, and the third largest church of any kind in the world. Entering the temple is like entering a cathedral, as big, as high, and as colorful. Oddly, one is not allowed to keep one's hat on. If it isn't immediately removed, a gentleman will quickly appear and remind you of it. The service is 9/10 in English and only a few words are in Hebrew. The prayer leader and the rabbis only wear the tallit. Three rabbis take turns reading preprinted prayers. Each is busy for about 10 minutes. In between, the prayer leader and the choir sing something. The only reason I had come was to say Kaddish, but here it was done where one stood, without tallit, and only the grieving stood (but only because it is written in the prayer book) and the rest sat.

The Torah reading lasted about 5 –10 minutes, no one was called upon, and the rabbis divide the work amongst themselves. The sermon with the theme: 'what makes a city big' was very good. Like most rabbis in the U.S. this one also spoke only about social problems - religious subjects are hardly ever mentioned. They speak about current subjects that could just as well be discussed in a lecture hall. I was delighted that I was able to understand most of the sermon, but all in all I did not feel very comfortable there. The service had veered too far from a traditional Jewish service, even for a liberal German Jew. I left the synagogue feeling as though I had been to church: one is reverent and in a solemn mood, but misses the feeling of belonging. The whole service focused too much on worship and musical pleasure, and I sorely missed the true interaction with the congregation. I may have more to say about this whole subject later.

Wall Street. One morning an acquaintance showed us the world-famous Wall Street, the financial center of the world. Walking among

the giant bank palaces, one feels crushed. One banking giant next to the other with names one has always heard about, be it Morgan, Kuhn Loeb Inc., or any other. And then, suddenly, among all the bank skyscrapers—a church! Again and again, one becomes aware that this is a city of contrasts.

Thanks to the ‘press card’ of our friend, we were able to enter the “Stock Exchange”, the biggest stock exchange in the world, so to speak, - the heart of Wall Street - at a time when it is almost impossible to get in - during trading hours! We had to get past three check points in order to be deemed worthy, but thanks to the connections of our friends we were able to enter this ‘Temple of Money.’ Horrible screaming and a giant confusion of people greeted us. Large projectors constantly beamed the current stock prices onto giant boards, while employees of the stock companies moved about with headphones on their ears; a very impressive picture to watch from the gallery. This was the first time for Erika to visit a stock exchange, and she promptly lost something, but only a glove, which she got back. One of the friendly officers, who first told us his family history, gave us a pretty brochure, which explained the purpose of the exchange very well. (Though I must say, it did not entice us to speculate).

After Wall Street it was interesting to stroll through **China Town** and **Little Italy**. An Italian market place we saw was so filthy, you can’t imagine it. The comparatively small China Town was somewhat insignificant, and I will report later about the much more interesting China Town in San Francisco.

After that we went to the so-called ‘**Diamond Quarter**’, with one diamond selling business next to the other. Jews own most of the businesses there, and it was not uncommon to see eyeglasses costing \$5,000 to \$6,000. Many of the owners also trade with each other, so that the area is also known as the ‘Diamond Exchange’.

The name of the Street is **Bowery**, and in the past it was the amusement center of N.Y. Frightening looking individuals can sometimes be seen

there today, reminding one that this is where the gangsters are! And only a few minutes away is the beautiful ‘**City Hall**’ together with the ‘**Court House**’ - the latter built in a wonderful Grecian style, with wide stairs leading up to it, just like in ancient Greece. And only minutes from there the Woolworth Building, a 60 –70 stories high skyscraper----- again, contrasts everywhere!

Libeth Loewenstein led us another day to see the famous N.Y. department stores: Macy’s, Gimbels, Saks, and Bloomingdales. All of them are like little cities! Some are up to 12 stories high and we had a good opportunity to see how many things are different in the USA. Especially the house wares department was very interesting, as most items are much simpler, and they left, as always, the impression that everything is a lot more practical! There was no end to our amazement. Many of the items look good, but are in reality cheap junk, because the American doesn’t save anything. (after two years he throws stuff (i.e. house ware items) away and buys new ones). We Germans are different in this respect; we rather buy something once, but make sure it lasts for a lifetime.

On another morning, it was snowing and the streets were covered in slush. I walked through the **Ghetto** of New York, (Grand Street area). It is a fairly large area and one reads more Hebrew and Yiddish here than English. The central point of this ghetto is the Jewish “Onward”, a tall building about 30 stories high. At the very top in big Hebrew letters is written “Onward”, a somewhat unusual picture. But looking at the surroundings, one realizes that there is nothing ‘onward’ about this area. To describe how the poor eastern Jews eke out an existence here would take a whole other chapter. During cold and snow, rain or shine, they are standing in the streets trying to sell something. Mostly food, but also used shoes and clothes—anything used can be bought here. Conspicuous are the many fish and poultry shops. Old men, as we know them from the drawings of Hermann Strucks, at times with the same beautiful features, walk with cheap handcarts through the streets to sell roasted chestnut or to buy scrap metal. They warm their frozen fingers on a piece of wood that lies lit on their carts. I have the feeling

that these people never leave here, that they have formed a little district for themselves, just like the Chinese. Somewhat odd was an advertisement I saw on a Jewish restaurant: displayed on a wooden stand was a bad painting of two rabbis toasting each other with a mug of beer! I left this area with two distinct emotions. One, a feeling of doubt, because I had to seriously ask myself: is there still a common threat between these people and myself? And two, a feeling of despondency as to how these people live, only minutes away from the hustle and bustle of the world city New York.

We also walked through the famous **Negro Quarter Harlem**. It was between 8 and 9 pm and I must admit that I felt a little awkward walking there amidst all those dark figures. Only a very few white people were to be seen. Aside from Harlem, where they live en masse, many black people must live all over New York, because I saw them everywhere. I also have a little more to say about the skyscrapers.

One is the **Rockefeller Center**, five buildings 60 – 70 stories high. 20,000 people work there, and about 80,000 people visit it every day, making for a ‘daily population’ of 100,000 people (according to statistics.) All the buildings are subterraneous connected, as we found out when we suddenly exited by a different building than the one we had entered. In between the buildings is a beautiful skating rink, where people can skate to the sound of radio music. It’s difficult to find your way around in this center. There is a restaurant with a dance floor on the 65th floor, and an enclosed observation platform on the 70th floor, where 90 valuable sculptures stand about. The floors, ceilings, walls, and pillar, are all covered in the finest marble!

One evening we went to the **Empire State Building** at about 6 pm. With 102 stories, it is the tallest building in the world. The building is outstanding in the truest sense of the word - it is visible from anywhere in N.Y. We visited Dr. Loewenstein there, in his office on the 30th floor. All those skyscrapers with those thousands of lights, the garish neon lights of Broadway and Times Square, the view of Brooklyn and Long Island, all that is the meaning of the word New York!

I just mentioned **Broadway and Times Square**. It is the entertainment center of New York. Night after night, people of all nationalities flood the area, and one who has never seen it could not possibly imagine it. Movie house next to movie house, bar next to bar, restaurant next to restaurant, night club next to night club, many with questionable performances, and everywhere thousands upon thousands of light bulbs that shimmer and flicker in white, red, yellow, blue, green, short in all the colors in the world. ‘Wrigley Gum’ owns the best neon sign of all. It is unbelievably big and—I was told—had cost ‘only’ 1 million dollars.

Anything is possible in America, especially when it comes to advertisement. It’s not as if everyone ‘goes out’ every night, but people like to just stroll, and why not, across Times Square, which always presents a pretty picture. There is a frightening surge of people when the theaters and movies let out at 11:30 pm—the last movie show not until 2 am. This area, called the heart of the world by Americans, only calms down around 2 am. Some of the drug and grocery stores are even open until 1–2 o’clock in the morning! Sometimes we, too, took advantage of that, when on occasion we came home late. _

Scientific points of interest were **Columbia University**, (we nearly froze to death the morning of our visit there), the **Museum of Natural History**, and the famous **Aquarium**. The aquarium was especially interesting. We saw fish of rare beauty. It would be too much to report about these attractions in detail. Walter also showed us the two prettiest movie theaters in N.Y. One was the Paramount on Times Square where we saw the excellent movie “Wells Fargo”, very interesting to us, because its subject was the development of California. New to us was the fact that an orchestra played before the movie. The musician performed all sorts of shenanigans to the delight of the audience.

Well, Americans are known for enjoying ‘fun’, which more often than not is really bad. Together with Rosi Katz we went to Radio City, the biggest and most beautiful cinema in the world, 6,200 seats! Its nice, smooth shapes have a pleasing effect. We saw “Tovarisch”, not a great

movie, but hearing the organ and watching the ballet (though I usually don't enjoy ballet and dance) in synergy with the colorful décor and furnishings, was a rare treat. One evening we went to Madison Square Garden, with Walter, Libeth Loewenstein, and Walter's friend Hermann Hengst and his wife. Boxing matches and the like are usually held here. That night we saw a very suspenseful, and hard fought ice hockey match, between a Canadian and a New York team. The hall has 10,000 seats, and was almost sold out. How the people follow the motion, how excited they get when the play comes close to the goal, and how they scream (until hoarse,) was very interesting to watch. Everybody yells, even refined people, or calls out, or whistles when they don't like something. All put together, one could call it "the boiling soul of the people." Americans, after all, are renown for their love of gaming contests, no matter what kind. They are more interested in sports than in politics, and therefore get very excited during a game.

There's a lot more I could report about, but I think I have covered the essentials. You all must admit that we were able to get a good impression of New York based on what we saw. In conclusion I would like to say that we did more than sight seeing in N.Y. We also had a "private life." We frequently met with relatives and friends, like Alma Katz (nee Bachmann) and her family, the Halsteads, Alfred Levy, Dr. & Mrs. Kamberg, the Rulaus (sp.?), the Barthes, Rosi Katz, Rosel Goldenstein (nee Nussbaum), Joe Schulz, and of course Dr. & Mrs. Loewenstein out in Flushing , because we had to look after our daughter. Flushing is in 'the country' and a wonderful feel good place. After a one hour ten minute trip from New York, we would arrive in Flushing in deep snow, none of it noticeable in the city.

One day, while it was freezing cold, we took a two-hour walk around Flushing with Dr. L. He led us through forests and meadows, past farms and real manure piles. The last one was introduced as 'our manure pile', and Dr. L. asked if we had thought it possible that the world metropolis New York included a small 'country town' as well! Utilizing a cheap 'Sunday ticket,' we went to see my cousin Richard Bachmann one Sunday in Springfield. There and back took 7 hours on the train, but

was only \$2. It was a beautiful, sunny, but cold winter day, with deep snow and frost. Richard was very nice and he has a nice, big boy. In the afternoon Richard drove us a little through the countryside, which can compete with the German countryside any day. We saw several kinds of winter sports: skiing, sledding, and ice skating, and some American kinds that we were not familiar with. Springfield is a very beautiful place; it has extraordinarily beautiful parks right in the middle of town, not like parks in Germany, but actual forests.

On our trip to Springfield we also got to know the American ‘Pullman Wagon,’ which really is very nice, comfortable, and practical. There was no dining car, but porters were constantly walking through, offering one thing or another. Arriving back at Grand Central Station, the main train station in New York, we wanted to push open the door to exit, but it was not needed, the door opened all by itself. One only needs to come close to the door and it opens automatically. It looks pretty funny. (To Grete in Berlin: you see the principal of ‘Step up, open up!’ already exists in America. So much for that patent.)

Accompanied by music we returned to the ship on Saturday the 22nd of January. That’s not a lie. Our taxi, like most cars in the U.S.A., had a radio. Packed to the gills, accompanied by the beautiful sound of music, we left what in my opinion is the most interesting city of the world. Filled with new impressions we were also looking forward to the new impressions we were about to gather on our 16-day trip to California.

End of part II.

Report about our Immigration Journey to America Part III. New York – Panama Canal – San Francisco.

January 22nd. We arrived in New York in the rain, and we left New York in the rain. My brother-in-law accompanied us aboard ship. The weather was wet, cold, and downright miserable. We went to see our cabin, which was not even close to as pretty and spacious as the one on the ‘Washington.’ We went on deck in spite of the bad weather, because we wanted to watch the hustle and bustle of the harbor. The difference between this ship and the ‘Washington’ became immediately apparent on deck. No more German sounds, mostly English of course, but also already some Spanish and Italian. It didn’t take long before Americans photographed Ruth.

Walter had to leave the ship shortly before noon, and at 12 o’clock on the dot the ‘Virginia’ started to move. Walter kept waving at us from the pier, and we were able to see him for quite a while in the mass of people, but then thick fog swallowed everything up; we were on our way. Just as we had to miss the entry into the New York harbor, we also had to miss the departure due to the fog. The skyscrapers of Wall Street loomed like ghosts above the fog for a while, but then they, too, disappeared from view. We left, barely able to make out the silhouette of the last symbol of New York, the Statue of Liberty. The weather didn’t improve but everybody remained on deck anyway, to look around and to familiarize himself or herself with the ship.

We observed all the new people, and noticed that the skin color was now darker on many faces, reflecting Central America. We had to allot space very carefully in our cabin, because it was, as I mentioned, very small. Aside from the beds there was only room for a chair. That first night we slept very well.

January 23rd. First day on the high sea, fog gone, brilliant sunshine! We are on deck all day long playing ping-pong, shipboard golf, and other deck games. Ruth is very interested in all of them. In a welcome contrast to the ‘Washington,’ this ship is sailing so smoothly that one

hardly feels the movement. The 'Virginia' is 33,000 tons, 9,000 tons more than the 'Washington.' In the evening we watch the dancers in the 'Lounge Room.' All those nigger dances are getting on my nerves, always the same recurring, monotonous rhythm. Personally I find these Negro dances with Jazz non-musical and aesthetically non-pleasing, in short a catastrophe. The 'Ladies' wear dresses with a deep décolleté, made of material so thin I can see their skin through it, and out of their open-toed dancing shoes protrude big toes with nails painted bright red. (Ladies in general seem to wear lighter, open toed shoes, even if they are not for dancing.)

January 24th. We can tell by the temperature that we are heading south. Today is already warmer than yesterday. We continue to experience bright sunshine, although the wind is so strong that everything not tied down comes sailing past. Nevertheless, the ship still sails almost motionless. The ocean really is of a deep blue here, just as I had read many times, but never seen. The sun, the blue ocean, the cloudless sky, the peace that we experience as we sail along, finally brings the longed-for relaxation of an ocean journey. We got acquainted with some Americans today, and had some interesting conversations; we also continue to play the deck games. Slowly but surely the coast of Florida came into sight with the beautiful villas of the rich Americans who head south in their resplendent private yachts when New York gets too cold. This day was crowned with the view of the brightly lit coast of Florida. It was a wonderful sight, especially when we entered the colorfully illuminated harbor of Miami, the 'Soul of Florida.'

January 25th. Looking out of the porthole at 6 am this morning, I could already see the coast of Cuba, meaning we could not be far from Havana. Sure enough, we entered the harbor while we were drinking our coffee around 8 am. We cut our breakfast short and hurried on deck to watch the spectacle, a colossal back and forth. A suitcase fell into the water as the luggage was being unloaded, and Erika took a photo of it with her camera. We participated in the land excursion organized by the shipping line. To see beautiful **Havana** and its

surroundings, we shared one of the 30 – 40 cabs lined up, with a very nice, young German woman from Mannheim.

We had barely left when it started to rain torrentially. Of all places in the world, it had to happen in beautiful Havana. First we visited a nice cathedral, which had world-renowned gold and silver treasures that, I imagine, are seldom seen anywhere else in the world. The treasures are in the form of candelabras and other items needed for rituals. Some of these items are only used once a year, at Easter. On we went, to the biggest tobacco factory. Just as Offenbach is famous for its leather, Havana is famous for its tobacco. We were able to watch the whole cigar making process, from raw tobacco leaf to packaged ‘Havana.’ Hundreds of workers sit in a large hall and stuff the tobacco together. To avoid their getting bored, someone reads to them: education Cuba style. Workers in other halls only attach the cigar band, and in yet another hall workers pack them in the boxes. A pretty Negro girl gave one of the cigar bands as a gift to Ruth, who in general was a little sensation among all these workers. Many were very friendly and quite a few made some kind of nice comment. At the end of the factory tour one can purchase the cigars, although they are more expensive than one would think. (I didn’t buy any.)

We continued through town and then saw the beautiful cemetery, where the graves look in large part as they do in Italy, like monuments. Of all places it was the cemetery where fate caught up with us. The car in front of us suddenly stopped and our chauffeur ran right into it. We flew out of our seats. Erika instinctively wrapped her arms around Ruth, but hit a metal pole and immediately felt a severe pain in her arm. Ruth got a little scratch under her eye, and of course started to scream horribly. Miss Neuberger from Mannheim had abrasions on her knee and blood on her teeth. Miraculously, I was the only one who did not get hurt. The cab hardly had a scratch. One of the guides of our ‘trip’ had the driver take us immediately to the hospital. That’s how we got acquainted with a public clinic in Cuba. Erika’s arm was minimally wrapped, and I had to hold Ruth now since Erika’s arm hurt too much. For a moment it looked as if Erika was going to faint, so I got her a stiff drink, which

helped her recuperate a little. We then continued on our way. Ruth had screamed herself tired, and fell asleep in the car.

We saw the beautiful Capitol, the seat of the Cuban parliament, and a tropical garden filled with an indescribable treasure of flowers and trees, whose wonderful fragrance was intensified by the recent rainstorm. In the center of beautiful Quay Boulevard was also a 'Statue of Liberty,' a monument erected to thank the Americans for winning Cuba's independence for them at the turn of the century. At the Quay the ocean was roiling so hard that swells of water came over the seawall, landing in the street. The university is beautifully located on a hill, and is attended by about 4,000 students. We saw gorgeous villas, most built in the Old Spanish style, with fairy tale gardens, where banana and melon trees, palms, piñons, and bamboo grew.

We passed the famous casino, called the Monte Carlo of the Americas, and many club buildings, because here, too, clubs are an important part of life. We had lunch aboard ship, but went back on land - this time to strike out on our own, and on foot. We walked into Havana and visited the wonderful old harbor and the old city center. There was a lot of traffic in those small old streets, cars racing past as though they were on a country road. In a pretty city square we sat down on a bench and let Ruth play with a little Havanese girl, while we observed the interesting Cuban life. Since Erika couldn't hold Ruth any more, I would carry her, but mostly she had to toddle along beside us, which she did without complaints. In the evening the ship sailed on.

January 26th. First thing this morning we went to see the ship's doctor who rewrapped Erika's arm and put it in a sling. He couldn't really tell yet what the matter was with the arm. Being wrapped, though, it brought us in contact with many good people, because everyone wanted to know what had happened. Luckily it was the left arm, and Erika, adroit as she is, was able to continue playing the deck games, even playing ping-pong better than I; a nice, healthy activity in this beautiful weather. All the while Ruth happily ran about. A so-called turtle race was held in the afternoon, very amusing. Instead of the usual

horse figures, one bets on real, live turtles. Each turtle has a chalked number on its back. We laughed heartily, especially when racers decided to make an about face just before the goal. Together with the horse race, the turtle race was held a lot.

January 27th. It rained on and off all day but always just short showers. During those times we would carry our deck chairs under the overhang, because we definitely wanted to stay on deck. There was a sandbox on the upper, first class deck, where Ruth loved to play. She had the company of a little boy there, but he only understood Spanish, and thus communicating with him wasn't all that easy. We usually stayed on deck until about midnight because the cabins and public rooms were unbearably hot. Dancing now took place on deck, no longer "inside."

January 28th. Rose at 5:30 this morning! Breakfast was scheduled for 7 am instead of the usual 8 am. (I need about 1 ½ hour every morning now to get Erika, Ruth, and me washed and dressed.) It was still pitch-black night outside when I looked through the porthole, but I was able to make out the first lights of the coast of Panama. After breakfast, at about 7:30 in the morning, we entered the Panama Canal. The picture on deck had changed completely; the crew had switched from blue to white uniforms, since we were going to be in the hot region for a few days. The five-hour trip through the scenic landscape surrounding the canal was the high point of the entire journey. I feel totally incompetent to even minimally describe adequately the beauty of the scenery. We saw forests with real jungle, black skinned natives in the bamboo thickets and in front of their huts built on stilts, copaiba trees, palms, in short a real tropical landscape with its lush vegetation. (Panama, after all, was the most southern point of our travels and we were very close to the equator here.)

In some areas the canal widened to little lakes with small islands covered in jungle. Boyhood memories of reading Robinson Crusoe and Leather Stocking awakened. The passage of the steamer through the locks was extremely interesting, and Erika was able to take several very

good photos. At the end of the canal, hundreds of people, including a lot of military; all in white, a wonderful sight.

Panama itself is an independent republic, but the “Canal Zone” is heavily guarded by American military. Quite understandable, because this passage from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean is very important.

Surrounded by magnificent palms are beautiful pile dwellings and villas, in which the officers of the canal administration live. We saw several soldiers being “marched” to duty; made a cozy impression. Suddenly we saw the German steamer “Columbus” enter the harbor of Christobal. With the exception of the “Queen Mary” and the “Normandie,” both of which are too large, all ships fit through the canal.

Of course, the passing through the locks is extremely expensive for those large steamers and costs several thousand dollars each time. At noon we docked in the harbor of Panama, Balboa. We didn't let the Havana experience discourage us and again participated in the organized “trip” through Balboa and environs. Our chauffeur this time was a real Negro, a good driver and a very knowledgeable tour guide who explained everything very well. The communication in English also went very well. First we saw the military base. We had to leave our camera at the gate, so that we weren't able to divulge any military secrets. Looking at the pretty little houses where the soldiers and officers live (no barracks' because the soldiers live here with their families,) one almost gets the urge to become a soldier in Panama. The beautiful buildings of the American canal administration are built higher up in the hills, and tower over the whole city. The city and its surrounding area is very tropical. Everywhere are beautiful, palm-lined avenues, and built into the jungle are houses built on stilts, covered in mosquito nets. Idyllic family life is taking place there. Coconut trees, deciduous trees, cypresses, jungle, bamboo - in short, everything is lavishly abundant in this tropical environment. Just outside the city a golf course with an extraordinarily wonderful view.

We saw the ruins of the Old Panama, where Erika took a picture of me with a native. Panama has a racetrack for horses and one for dogs. In

the center of the town a constant coming and going, narrow streets, and shops open, without doors. There are a huge number of children here, all running about the streets. Our Negro chauffeur smiled brightly when he told us of his six children. On a small hill were two terrific restaurants, the "Balboa" and the "Atlasgarden," through which we drove with the car, because everything happens outdoors here including restaurant business.

I almost forgot to mention the nice hospital where Erika's arm got x-rayed. Anxiously we awaited the results, which sadly showed that her lower left arm was fractured. Thankfully, though, it was one, clean fracture, not multiples. The American doctor was very nice, and told me that I only had to pay \$5 instead of the usual \$10 for the x-ray, since we were German refugees. By the way, this is an especially nice hospital located higher up, with a wonderful view. Everything was kept in white and the breezes kept it cool, as opposed to hot Panama.

The population in Panama is largely mulatto, and blacks and whites peacefully live next to each other. We saw a beautiful memorial hall for the French who died from yellow fever during the building of the canal. The French had originally started the canal, but lost so many workers, that they abandoned the project. The Americans finished the canal later. Miss Neuberger, our trusty companion, and Erika and I, walked back into Balboa after our 'dinner' aboard ship; Ruth was sleeping soundly from the day's exertions.

It was supposed to cool off in the evening, but it was still very humid for us Europeans. We strolled through the deserted streets, through which an idyllic little streetcar drove, the driver of which knew all his passengers by name. Erika must have really impressed the driver of a horse-drawn taxi, because every time he saw us, and we saw him frequently, he waved at her! Well, that's how we experienced what they call 'dangerous southern nights.' We even went all out and had a Coca-Cola in a restaurant for 5 cents! Interestingly, each table had four seats permanently attached, which could be slid under the table when not in use. Space savers! After leaving the restaurant we stood,

refreshed by the Coca-Cola, in the street when we suddenly heard beautiful zither music emanating from somewhere. The wonderful starlit sky, the big palm lined streets, the humid night even now at the end of January, the view of our brightly lit ship docked in the harbor, all that made us feel for a moment as though we were in a dream. Who would have thought that we would one day stroll through Panama by night!

On the way back to the ship we passed what we, for a lack of other words, would call a fruit stand. Four very old, wrinkled crones came storming at us (if it can be called storming at their age,) and offered us their wares. One offered bananas, one apples, the other oranges, and the fourth had whole pineapples. We decided to get the bananas, mostly because of Ruth, because for some odd reason they were doled out very sparsely in our second class. Erroneously, we received one too many, but lost it again; obviously we were not meant to have that one. A sign of righteousness!

11 pm on the dot the ship started to move again. It made for a beautiful view to watch all those white clad people on the pier, who kept waving at us. Among them the two ladies who had shared our table aboard ship, and who had disembarked here. For a long time we were able to watch the pilot boat leading us out of the harbor, and then watch the pilot jump back on his boat at the last moment. With that the last lights of Panama disappeared from sight. Now we were sailing north on the Pacific Ocean, full steam ahead, along the west coast. We had been awake this day from 6 am until midnight, 18 hours! We had seen so much; without a doubt, it was the most impressionable and content rich day of our journey. We went to bed at 12:30, very tired, but very satisfied.—

January 29th. The next morning, we could still see the coast of Panama, Costa Rica, and the other Central American states. Beautiful high mountains with thick forests. We sailed fairly close to shore, and the ocean was wonderfully calm. On this day I went swimming on deck for the first time. The water was salty, but very refreshing. Played some more deck games, had lunch, and went back into the water. As [*bad*]

luck would have it, I got water in my ear that didn't come back out. I had to go to the ship's doctor; it wasn't dangerous, just unpleasant because it affected my hearing. It lasted for a week, and I had to visit the doctor every day. (Thank God that in our five years together we had never needed a physician as often as on this trip.) We stayed up until midnight again, because the starry sky was so beautiful that we had no urge to go to bed. We would check on Ruth now and then, but she was always asleep. She lay in bed every which way, but always slept through the night. In addition I must say that she showed great interest in swimming. I had to play "splish-splash" with her; she didn't mind getting sprayed by the water, and the on-lookers loved to participate in these water games with my daughter!

January 30th. Today the heat in the cabin was unbearable again. But on deck it was nice and cool, because it was quite windy. In the afternoon the turtles were raced again, and in the evening we participated in 'community songs.' It was quite nice; it was our first introduction to American folk songs, which for the most part were very nice, nicer than those modern nigger songs. At the end we all sang the American National Anthem, Erika and I for the first time. It was an odd, but wonderful feeling, and that on January 30! This night we even stayed on deck until 1 am, because during this night the clocks are set back an hour, and because it was very humid.

January 31st. I woke at 6 am already. First the obligatory look through the porthole. A wonderful sunrise presented itself. The rising sun made the coast glow, and painted the edges of the mountains a brilliant red. It was pretty hot already, even this early in the morning. Very suddenly, we were in the middle of a very thick fog. Nothing could be seen anymore, only heard, namely the foghorn (which we hear enough here in San Francisco.) The fog lasted for about an hour and disappeared as suddenly as it had arrived. In the afternoon a big children's party (parties are extremely important) was held again in first class. It was very busy. Ruth didn't really want to participate in this one, even though she had loved them on the "Washington." Nevertheless, she, too, received cake and toys. Some amusing water games were

later held: diving for plates, and race swimming while keeping a lemon on a spoon, or a balloon in one hand. After dinner more deck games, in short, there was always entertainment. As a rule, tea and biscuits were served on deck in the afternoon.

February 1st. Had to get up fairly early again this morning, 6 am; still pitch black outside. By 7 am again a beautiful sunrise over the coast of Mexico. We were fairly close to shore and were able to make out the (at times) ragged, forested, slopes. Whether Rocky Mountains, or palm forests, everything was brightly illuminated by the morning sun. It was a wonderful entry into Acapulco harbor, Mexico's only pacific harbor. Actually, calling it a harbor would be exaggerating. We had to anchor fairly far out, since the ship couldn't dock there. We were all put into small boats, but to get into them we had to descend the steep, narrow ship's ladder. Ruth participated without complaint. A picture similar to Havana: lots of children, clad only in swim trunks, dive from their little boats to retrieve 1 and 5 cent pieces that people are throwing at them from the ship. There is a lot of screaming as they beg, or encourage people to throw the coins.

Our little motor launch didn't want to start at first, but after some expansion of energy it did, and brought us ashore in 10 minutes. It was the hottest day of our journey. Acapulco is a sorry, wretched little place, and the people here live almost exclusively off the strangers that the ships bring ashore. Of great importance, therefore, are the little sales booths, which sell lots of Mexican wares very cheaply. Especially the Americans buy a lot here and return heavily laden to the ship. (Giant straw hats that are supposed to look very Indian, and many straw wares in general, like paper or laundry baskets.) We saw very old, very wrinkled, barefooted, women walk around. They were glad when someone bought something from them for a few cents. Some of these women sat in the dirt, smoking deep dark cigars!!!, and making the most beautiful necklaces while doing so. We walked in truly searing heat, (Miss Neuberger had joined us again,) through almost the whole town.

One of the squares we came to spontaneously reminded us of a biblical scene. In the foreground a simple, primitive well where women natives were fetching water in giant crocks that they were carrying on their heads. All around were primitive huts, and, a little further out, palm groves. The searing, tropical heat blanketed everything. This 'street scene' mirrored the unbelievable simplicity and poverty of this place. We Europeans couldn't even imagine living like that. The lower half of the wooden doors to the houses were kept open to mitigate the heat inside. I said houses, but really they are just bamboo huts, which have, suspended in the middle, a hammock in which the housewife lies, homely surrounded by cattle, pigs, chickens, cats, and dogs.

A market was being held in a little street on an incline. The filth and stink is unimaginable. All the groceries are exposed to the heat of the sun. It looked so 'unappetizing,' we didn't even dare to buy any fruit there. Erika took a picture of me there, holding Ruth in my arm. In contrast, there were two drug stores and a pharmacy, which looked fairly clean. We also saw the shingle for a birth helper. From the street we were able to look straight into his room, which had a section curtained off, behind which everything was happening, so to speak, right in the street. Mexicans in general seem to be very blessed with children. We even saw young teenage girls pregnant; it seems to be commonplace. Also, the young women nurse their children right there in the street. When a customer approaches they hand the child to a neighbor until the purchase is complete, and then they continue nursing. It was interesting for us to watch these scenes. We stopped to rest on a bench under a tree, right in front of a Mexican house. The housewife was in the process of doing laundry, hanging the washed items on rocks and fences to dry. Laundry lines don't seem to exist. Important is only the sun, which dries everything very quickly and bleaches things to a nice white.

After that we visited a Mexican fort and were able to observe the Mexican military. The soldiers, totally without discipline, lay about - their women with them, nursing their kids. What an idyllic family life! A 'museum' had been set up in one of the rooms of the fort. Some

paintings of Mexican generals, an ancient canon, war paraphernalia, and a map dating back to 1733, made up the content. From the walls one had a beautiful view of the deep blue bay of Acapulco, of the mountains on the opposite shore, and of the miserable huts of the natives, built on their slopes. We wrote some postcards purchased in the comfortable post office, and put pretty Mexican stamps on them. Ruth was very interested in the postal worker. We hope all the cards arrived at their destinations. We also checked out the local schools, easy to do since everything takes place in the street. Please, don't make me describe the beauty shop we saw! The only thing we bought was a pair of light sandals for Ruth. A clerk was of course not available, like at Leiser's, so I had to chase our lively miss about to make her try on the shoes. After six different pairs I was beaded in sweat, because she kept running off; too many interesting things to see.

Needless to say, our overall impression of this little Mexican harbor town was that it was terribly primitive, but precisely for that reason very interesting to us 'civilized' Europeans. By 2 pm we were back on the 'Virginia,' just in time for lunch. 5 automobiles were being brought aboard, under great difficulty due to the primitive loading conditions. We were able to watch the whole process quite well from the I. Class deck. Not surprisingly, we left two hours late due to that, (around 5 pm.) At about 6:30, we saw an especially beautiful sunset. The day ended with a masquerade party on deck - the masks being pretty good, causing much fun. This evening, we were joined by our acquaintance, Mr. Hirsch!

February 2nd. The Mexican heat is still with us; therefore I got up early and went swimming. During lunch, at noon, we met our sister ship the 'Pennsylvania.' We got pretty close, and the passengers on both ships were able to wave to each other. Around six o'clock, we have started to wait for them, another beautiful sunset. The whole sky seemed to be on fire. The clouds were in such beautiful formations, that we couldn't tear ourselves away. Then, after dinner, it suddenly got so cold we had to put our winter coats on. (And only this morning I was running around in swim trunks!) This sudden temperature swing is

actually typical for California, and happens here in S.F. as well. Due to the cold, this evening's entertainment took place inside. During our last stroll on deck before turning in, we saw for the first time the crescent of the moon standing on its head. What a day; the title for it could be: from swimsuit to fur coat!

February 3rd. Today's weather was nice and warm. Now and then we are able to see the coast. Partially forested, partially with enormously ragged mountains. We played ping-pong and golf. In spite of being able to use only one arm, Erika played excellently. In the afternoon Ruth played golf by herself, to the delight of the passengers. It was quite amusing. Even at not even two years old, she is quite talented. She actually would hit the ball with the club, and then, every time, pick up the ball and put it in the hole. She played the game with great delight and perseverance. The evening was very cold again, and we wrapped ourselves in blankets (several each,) and, as we were almost alone on deck, sang German folksongs together with Miss Neuberger, in memory of times gone by. It was nice and cozy.

February 4th. We are getting into ever-colder regions. The ship is being heated again, which is needed. This temperature change is enormous. Some ships passed us. The sea is strong today; I noticed the effect on me right away. But not too bad yet!

February 5th. Early morning we arrive in Los Angeles. Our first sight is that of a number of warships, heading out for maneuvers. Those were some big ships!! In spite of being in the 'Californian Sun,' it was pretty cold. It took a long time to get our shore permits. We had to say good-bye here to our trusty friend Miss Neuberger; Los Angeles was her final destination. The bus ride from the harbor to the city center took one hour. During the ride we could see the enormous oil and petroleum fields with their untold number of derricks, many of them working; hundreds of gas containers. On the horizon snow covered mountains, about 6,000 feet high, a wonderful sight. The city itself was awash in the prettiest spring flora. In the streets, enormous traffic and everywhere construction.

The city gives an extraordinarily busy impression. There are relatively few really tall buildings here, only about 20 – 30 floors high. Most of the houses are single storied, but therefore the expansion is great. Los Angeles is with its 100 square kilometers the biggest city in the world, (but only width wise.) Out from the city center are wonderful housing areas. Small houses with carefully tended gardens; tree lined streets. After a nice lunch at a friend's house, we drove out to Hollywood. We had a very interesting and instructive conversation with a photographer about color photography. After that we acted very refined and hired a taxi, which chauffeured us first around Hollywood, and then Beverly Hills where all the film stars live. We saw many studios, (but sadly only from the outside,) belonging to Paramount, Goldwyn-Mayer, Fox, and so on. Wonderful, very distinguished shops, villas! Most of the film stars have moved to Beverly Hills though (into, as the name eludes, hilly terrain.) The homes of the film stars are like palaces, fantastic like movies, or better like the sets of movies. Small forests or very large parks surround them. I'm sure there are few estates like it in the world. Among others we saw the property of Douglas Fairbanks and Charlie Chaplin. Whereas we were able to see a few pedestrians in the suburbs, there were none whatsoever to be seen up here. Of course the stars who live here go everywhere by car. Due to it, we saw many really nice! Automobiles.

Los Angeles has 1.2 million inhabitants, and 500,000 cars. That means that almost every other person has a car. Even lowly apprentices drive to work! Out of necessity, because of the unbelievable distances; nothing gets accomplished without cars. We went to the 'Japanese Teagarden' located above Hollywood. From here we had an enchanting view of the entire city, of the ocean, and in the other direction of the snow-covered mountains. Typically American: on a rocky outcropping are letters, tall as houses, which read "Hollywoodland." This sign can be seen for a very long distance. In the middle of a street in Hollywood we saw a miniature scene of the movie 'Snow White and the Seven Dwarves.' It was really very cute. Too bad that we were running out of time; we would have liked to let Ruth look at it a little closer. Our taxi excursion ended at 6 pm. We strolled

through town for a while and ended up in a 'coffee shop.' We had a good, inexpensive dinner there. As usual, Ruth took everything in stride. Around 8 pm we returned by bus to the ship. Many, many illuminated derricks, and an ocean of lights as far as the eye can see.

After putting Ruth to bed, we remained on deck for a long time, watching the ship getting unloaded. Thousands upon thousands of coconut candy boxes were being stacked up. Finally, we too, went to bed, tired from this exhausting day. We slept very well; after all, the ship was still in the harbor.

February 6th. In the morning we watched a 20,000 lb transformer being unloaded. Trying to get it on shore was no small feat. A ship with big, high masts arrived for this purpose. Several lifts were unloaded as well. They dangled from the huge cranes like little boxes. Instead of 8 am, we departed at 4 pm, apparently due to the huge amount of freight that we unloaded here. It gave us the opportunity to watch the hustle and bustle in the harbor. In the foreground are about 10 battleships at anchor in the deep blue water. Behind them, a small part of Los Angeles is visible, and beyond that the snow-covered mountains. 20 warships sailed along side us when we finally left, but they were later replaced by peaceful fishing boats, on their way out to catch fish along the California coast. As soon as we got under way, it got really cold again. Wrapped in our winter coats and blankets, we stayed on deck for another hour. In Los Angeles the ship had emptied out considerably, since only a relatively small number of passengers were taking it to its final destination - San Francisco.

February 7th. On this final day of our journey, the ocean showed us its wild side one more time. It was quite stormy, and we had to stop packing several times. It was no fun; all that packing in the small cabin, the problem with Erika's arm, and my unpleasant, storm-induced condition! After that—for the first and only time—I had the German barber aboard give me a shave. We had lunch at 11:45, for the last time on the ship. Shortly thereafter, the bay of San Francisco came into sight.

Sailing into the bay and passing under the “Golden Gate” bridge, the symbol of San Francisco caused us some odd emotions. Then the first tall buildings of the city became visible and at about 2 pm we docked at the pier. On deck, the band played a few more tunes for our parting. We saw the old and young Ressings [?] on the dock, and Ruth got busy waving. As beautiful as the journey had been, as many interesting things as we had seen, we were glad to have arrived at our destination.

The emigration officer was very nice, he had absolutely no questions for us, and the checking of the passports went very fast, all in a pleasant contrast to New York. Only one suitcase was opened, and then we were done. Our baggage was turned over to a freight hauler, and now we were really in San Francisco. Ressings invited us home for coffee, and in the evening we were in the ‘apartment’ (as the locals call it) that the Ressings had rented for us. That was our immigration journey to California.

Since we will probably never again take a similar trip, I thought it prudent to note down the impressions of all the enjoyable and beautiful encounters we experienced along the way. Hopefully it will allow all of you who will get to read it, to form a small ‘picture’ of all we saw and felt. For us it will be in later days a nice memory.

The End