

Wives Say Sad Farewells As Poles Prepare To Entrain For Siberia

(Continued from Last Week)
 Hours every day were spent in thinking of our loved ones. Our hearts went out to them. The days passed, each day like the preceding one. Always the same curses and rough treatment from the guards, the quarrels, the everlasting yearning. And always the question why? Our heads well high burst under the impact of striving to find an explanation for the terrible injustice done to us.

Because the factory building in which we lived was packed to overflowing, all newcomers were dumped into a very dilapidated riding academy that was lacking windows and doors. They constructed very primitive three-tier bunks on their first day in the camp. The very first night the bunks along one wall caved in. A number of people were hurt, some of them seriously. Thanks to this accident these "lucky ones" remained in Poland.

A persistent rumor circulated throughout the camp to the effect that the box cars were ready for us, that stoves, pails and toilet gutters were being manufactured, that we were to be shipped to Russia. We, incorrigible optimists, refused to believe this. We still maintained that if they shipped us anywhere, it would be to another part of Poland, to a special camp where there were only Home Army soldiers.

In the camp forge we discovered prisoners were hammering strips of thick tin-plate about a yard long and two inches wide. And we learned that they were indeed making pails out of big tin cans, and that in the carpentry shop they were making wooden gutters. These facts made us somewhat uneasy. We gathered that if they were planning to move us to some other camp in Poland, they would not be making such elaborate preparations for the trip.

Melania came again on Friday. Her visits were a Godsend. After all, this life was still worth living, I decided. She brought a big bundle, clothing and food. I wondered how she could carry such a heavy bundle weakened as she was by the long years of "Occupational Dieting." They did not permit me to talk to her. She stood for about an hour among some women who were about 100 yards away. The soldiers would let none of them come closer. She called something to me, but it was impossible to understand her words amid the shouting of scores of voices. All I could make out was that she would come on Tuesday. She walked away. Had she any tears left?

A few of the inmates in the camp we felt were not very high-principled. During morning roll-call on March 19, a prisoner, one Giergon, a ridiculous figure, wished to ingratiate himself with the Russians on the occasion of Stalin's namesday, which it happened to be. He raised aloft a scrap of red rag, attached to a piece of water pipe, on which he had somewhat painted a poor replica of the hammer and sickle, and gave three cheers in honor of Stalin. Not a soul repeated the cheer after him. Our departure began to appear imminent. On March 24, the group that had been the last to arrive at the camp, was called out. These people were told to take their belongings and were driven to the railroad station. Some four hours later, they were back. They told us they had all been in the bathhouse train*, from which they had been

taken to the prison train for loading. During the inspection before the loading it was noticed that the *bathhouse train—a train equipped with showers and disinfective units which possibly had been used by Russian soldiers during the war.

prisoners were covered with lice. Prompted by hygienic consideration, the NKVD did not load the transport but sent them back to the camp for delousing. All night long the battle against lice continued. Again and again they sprinkled an insecticide over the underwear and outer garments of the prisoners. All night long clouds of this choking and tear-producing powder filled the barrack. In the morning the "clean" prisoners were escorted to the railroad station under heavy guard. This time they did not come back.

Now the NKVD turned its attention to those of us left in the camp. The guards cut off all our hair prison fashion, called out the list of those scheduled to leave and devoted the afternoon and night to "culturing" us, as we dubbed the delousing operation.

In the morning of the next day, March 26, they told us to take our things, read the roll once again and escorted us outside the camp gate. Only the very ill and the concussion victims of the accident in the former Riding Academy remained in the camp. They led us to the railroad station, to the bathhouse train where we showered; and then under very heavy guard they herded us into the woods near the railroad siding where the trains were waiting. Again a very minute inspection.

They took away anything that was sharp as well as anything that happened to be to their liking. I was wearing trousers and shoes from paraded supplies, which by now were not too clean. This circumstance saved them from being confiscated. When they asked what I did, I stated that I was a male nurse by profession and showed the soldier conducting the inspection my medicine chest. He meditated over the problem for a while, but fortunately he apparently arrived at the conclusion that all these items would be of little use to him and he contented himself with appropriating a small bottle of rubbing alcohol. The fact that I was permitted to keep the kit was a rare stroke of good fortune. Thanks to it my soldiers were able to withstand our Dantesque long journey and arrive at our destination in fairly good physical shape.

We were loaded onto the train. Fifty-five of us were assigned to each group, for that was the number of people allotted to each box-car, which normally carried six horses. Along each wall of the box-car a tier of bunks had been built, there were four windows, three were covered up with sheets of heavy tin, while the fourth was open, but tightly barred with strips of the heavy tin plate that had been prepared in the camp smithy. We were twenty-three Poles and thirty-two non-Poles, mostly Germans. Most of the Poles were those whom I had selected after our arrival in Rembertow. There was also a Belgian, Gill, the box-car commander Ivanov, and a captain of the Polish police, Dyminski. The guard slid the door shut and turned the screws. We distributed the space among

ourselves and sat down. One question plagued us: Where were they taking us?

My men asked me to sleep with them on one of the upper bunks. I agreed readily. We lay down in our clothing, our heads touching the short wall of the car. There were nine of us squeezed together on that bunk. In accordance with "cultural" requirements, as they put it, the Russians eternally applied the word "cultural" to the strangest situations—they had installed a stove in our box-car. Unfortunately, they had neglected to provide any wood. The icy wind whistled through the car.

That evening a train carrying a transport of soldiers in Polish uniforms—drew up on the track beside us. But Soviet soldiers, guarding us, forbade us to communicate with our compatriots under pain of death. We heard them telling the Poles that our box-cars contained only Germans. The Polish soldiers must have thought it odd that before retiring these "Germans" sang Polish patriotic and religious songs such as "Wszystkie nasze dniennie sprawy" and "Boze cos Polskie." It must have given them plenty of food for thought.

*Wszystkie nasze dniennie sprawy—All our daily cares (like "Now I Lay Me Down to Sleep") (evening song)

*Boze cos Polskie—God Who Has Covered Poland With Brightness and Might (morning song—same melody as above)

Morning came. We had spent a very uncomfortable night, but the over-crowding had made for warmth. We had all slept on our side, for there would never have been room for us to lie on our backs. The transport of Polish soldiers left, (probably for the front). Before their departure, however, they still had the opportunity of hearing our "German" larynxes emit the traditional Polish morning hymn "Kiedy ranne wstaja zorze."*

*Kiedy ranne wstaja zorze—When the morning star arises

From early morning we could see at a slight distance away from the tracks knots of women, who having heard that we were already on the train, had come over the field from towns and villages to the station with packages. The nearby barred and guarded trains, the incredible overcrowding, the peevishness and vulgarity of the soldiers guarding us, must have made a ghastly impression on these poor women. I was thankful that I did not see Melania among them. She was supposed to have come on Tuesday and this was only Palm Sunday. God grant that she be spared this sight. But my prayers went unanswered.

Around nine in the morning, an empty freight train pulled up alongside of our train and cut off our view of the field. Fortunately, or unfortunately, directly before our open but barred window was a space between two freight cars. I was seated in front of the window, looking out through the bars. Suddenly, I caught sight of my friend Kupla's wife passing by. Involuntarily, I called to her. She peered through the space, turned around and signaled to someone. A moment later, Melania was at her side. Her face drawn, her eyes mirrored the horror,

ONLY YESTERDAY

Ten and Twenty Years Ago In The Dallas Post

From The Issue of June 16, 1944
 Two local boys are reported missing in action, one officially reported killed, and one wounded:

Samuel Galletti, Lehman, is dead in Italy, returning to the land of his fathers to give his life for the U.S.A.

Robert Girvan, Dallas, is missing in action in Italy.

Raymond F. Sutton, formerly of Kingston Township, is missing in Germany.

Charles Lacy, Alderson, is wounded in action in the Pacific.

Pvt. Al Shaffer's back is broken in a truck accident at Fairfax, Virginia, while on maneuvers.

Heard from in the Outpost: Evan Jenkins, South Pacific; Bob Roberts, Pacific; Sandy McCullough, England; Fred Schobert, Fort Jackson; Tom Tomplin, Italy; Howard Johns, Iceland; Joe Walto, Italy.

G. W. Frantz, Dallas Township, dies at 70.

From The Issue of June 15, 1934
 John Dolski, 19, Tunkhanock RD, is instantly killed by a truck on Main street in Dallas, when he crossed to the Nelson Shaver residence.

sorrow, and impotence she felt. We exchanged a few words in English, I did my best to comfort her. Meanwhile the empty freight-cars rumbled away.

Near our car stood a group of Soviet officers, among them a colonel and a major. Suddenly the major turned and shouted at us, "You're forbidden to speak German."

I explained through the bars that we were speaking English, not German. The officers looked a little abashed. After a considerable pause, the major blusteringly stated that we could speak only in Polish or Russian. We paid no attention to his admonition and went on in English. Melania wanted to come closer so as to hand me the parcel she had brought, but a soldier jumped out from behind the car and gave her such a vicious push with his gun that my poor darling fell on the tracks. She got up quickly and went over to the group of officers. Saying she was an American citizen, she asked their permission to hand me the food parcel. They replied that it was forbidden to hand us

THE DALLAS POST

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A non-partisan liberal progressive newspaper published every Friday morning at the Dallas Post plant, Lehman Avenue, Dallas, Pennsylvania.

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Unless paid for at advertising rates, we can give no assurance that announcements of plays, parties, rummage sales or any affair for raising money will appear in a specific issue. Preference will in all instances be given to editorial matter which has not previously appeared in publication.

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anything. They shoved her away and told her to move on.

I strained at the bars. "God," I murmured, "if only I could do something to help her."

(Continued Next Week)

Barnyard Notes

(Continued from last week.)

The usual banquet followed, the usual speeches were made, and the usual free rides were enjoyed by the leading citizens. Here even the school children were treated to a sail on the river, and then the Codorus dropped down to the Susquehanna again, and as reported by Niles Register continued its voyage up that river to Owego and Binghamton, where the customary receptions awaited her arrival.

It is quite difficult to follow the travels of the Codorus with any degree of accuracy if one has to depend on her voyage as recounted by the press of the day. Due to slow communications, notices of her arrival and departure were frequently run days late in down-river papers, and no dates were given. The Harrisburg Chronicle several times ran the line, "No word of the Codorus today."

At times local papers are strangely silent on her comings and goings. The Lycoming Gazette seems to have been unaware of the Codorus having reached Williamsport. This is hard to explain, for the arrival of the ship must have been big news. As recounted elsewhere, it was. There is also considerable discrepancy between papers when it comes to dates. However, in spite of these difficulties, one can piece together the week-by-week account of the voyage, and thrill with the good folk who greeted the ship at every stop, on her wonderful accomplishment.

Under the date of May 10, the Milford Gazette had stated that it was the intention of Captain Elgar to proceed with the ship to the headwaters of the North Branch where the Codorus would be placed on rollers and transported overland to the Delaware River, down which it would proceed to Philadelphia. Either this was a wild rumor, or proved to be utterly impractical, for the Codorus was tied up at dock in York Haven by the end of July, having descended the river with which it had been struggling for many weeks.

This was a noteworthy achievement. To anyone who knows the Susquehanna it seems absolutely incredible. Maybe there was more water in the river during the spring and summer of 1826 than is common during those seasons today. The very fact that the Codorus was able to move so far upstream would indicate that this was the case. Yet, lack of adequate water was one of

the reasons why Captain Elgar reported that it would be impractical to attempt any regular steamboat service on the Susquehanna. Another was the riffles which in so many places rendered passage up or down stream very dangerous. In spite of the apparent success of the voyage it showed the owners it would be foolish to continue with further plans for steam navigation. No wonder one disgruntled stockholder remarked that the voyage of the Codorus was one of the adventure rather than usefulness. After her remarkable journey the boat remained tied up at York Haven for about two years without any permanent employment. In May, 1828, she was sold for \$600, and removed to Baltimore. In 1829 she was sent to North Carolina and placed in service on the Neuse River, running from New Bern across Pamlico Sound to Beaufort on the coast.

While the Codorus was embarked on her wanderings up the river, two other steamboats failed to conquer the Susquehanna. These boats were built and launched about the same time as the Codorus, and attracted considerable attention up and down the valley. One of these boats was named the Pioneer. She simply was not provided with powerful-enough engines to move against the current. To quote from the Harrisburg Chronicle of April 3, 1826:

"The Pioneer returned to Harrisburg Wednesday last. The machinery of the vessel is not of sufficient power to stem the current of Hunter's Falls."

The other boat was named the "Susquehanna & Baltimore," but was commonly called the "Susquehanna," and may have been the original Susquehanna rebuilt. Much seems to have been hoped for from both of these ships. The Lycoming Gazette of Williamsport, under the date of May 3, 1826, noted:

"The steamboats Susquehanna and Pioneer are expected here today." They may have been "expected," but they never saw Williamsport. The item, at least, indicates that they may have tried.

(Continued Next Week)

Woman's Republican Club

Back Mountain Woman's Republican Club will hear Atty. Robert Fleming at the final meeting of the year, June 21, 8 p. m., at Shavertown YMCA headquarters.

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