

Dear Maria,

So on the fourth of December 1907, at 6 o'clock p. m. we arrived in Bremen, Germany. Uncle Hugo recommended a good hotel and Mr. Grimer himself met us at the depot. That afternoon we were vaccinated. At 7 o'clock the next morning we went to Bremerhaven, Germany by train, and upon arrival we immediately went aboard ship.

On the ship between decks were 6 small and 8 large rooms where 2,000 humans could sleep. We were with 2 small families in one of the smaller rooms. They had one child each. One family lost their child during the trip. The mother was only 19 years old.

Except for Edu and Hugo, we all became sea sick. We found the movements of the ship very funny. The waves were more than house high. The higher the better for our fun. About the 13th or 14th of December we had a big storm and the ship would tip on its nose into the water then back down into the water. The sky was all black and the sea so rough that even the ship's crew was uneasy, but told us that it was nothing. Next to our room was a bar, during the storm we all had to stay in our rooms. All of a sudden the door flew open and a man rolled in directly under the beds. He picked up his hat and left. It was not long and another man was flung into our room and under the beds. In spite of our discomfort, we laughed and laughed. We had to get our food from the dining room. If someone had not held us and helped us, we would have returned without food. Yes it did happen that the people fell with their buckets and gave everyone something to laugh at.

During good weather, we, the Germans, spent the time in the ship's hall or we would go walking on deck. On every ship the Germans were treated well or a little better than the other people. For that reason the Germans received a room. In the dining room was good music, a mandolin, zither and mouthharp and sometimes there was dancing. So we met more and more people. The officers and sailors were exceptionally nice to us. The people in the kitchen gave us something extra each day. The doctor gave Father a slip of paper each day and we could take it to the kitchen and get 7 portions of ham, 7 portions of sausage, 7 portions of cheese and cocoa twice a day and we never missed a day. Usually in the evening Father brought us a baked chicken or a piece of baked goose. He played cards with the baker in the evening; also with the interpreter. Many times he brought us tarts. The man in the bar gave us apples and oranges at Christmastime.

The young women and I helped Mother trim the Christmas tree and were given all the things that were left over. The stewardess who gave us these things also gave us milk that was left over. They had to bring the children milk. The employees of the ship were allowed to give the food that was left over away, but were not allowed to sell it. At Christmas all the employees received plates full of sweet-meats and many of them gave them to us because they did not want them. The evening of the 24th of December was sharing for the children. Each child brought its food vessel and received a large helping of apples, oranges, almonds, nuts, nut cookies and marzipan. Then all sang Christmas songs. The Captain and Officers were present and talked to us of many things. Then in the morning Christmas Day, our children received Christmas presents. Edu had a little horse given to him, Annie and Hilma a doll, Heini a domino set and the others a food vessel full of different things. The officers

were much interested in Annie's and Hilma's dolls and Edu's little horse. The third officer told them about the stupid things he did. He also told them about Max and Moritz, similar to our Katzenjamer Kids. Once Hilma and Heini had an argument. The Third Officer came along and told them to kiss and make up and get along. Hilma did not think that was very funny, looked at him with her black eyes so angry, and walked away. He told us about it on Christmas Eve and wanted to make it up to her because she was still mad at him. He showed her how to get things from the tree without anyone being the wiser. Our Hilma goes at it immediately to copy him. Now they are good friends again. At first he called her "My Lottie" then she told him "My name is not Lottie" and not to call her Lottie again. Since then he calls her Hilma. She was his darling. I don't know why. Once he retied the bow on the front of her dress and said she must not go so sloppy, or he would playfully bump her under the nose or chin because she was still a little mad at him. She was a little brat. Once the Third Officer came into the room and Emma, Hilma and Heini were quarreling. He took a piece of rope and playfully hit Emma a little. Heini crawled under the bed and he crawled after Heini but could not catch him. When he came out, his clothes were very dirty and Hilma escaped without punishment. I could tell you many things but this is sufficient to let you know that the children had many good times while aboard ship.

On the second Christmas day Emma and Edu sat on deck. Edu threw his little horse overboard, so again, the Third and Fourth Officers came but said they could have gotten a sailor to fish for it but when they thought of it it was too late. We often visited the head machinist. He is second in command of the ship. We spent many happy hours there especially Christmas. I was on deck walking with Edu and Annie one time and we met two American ladies and one gentleman. They smiled so friendly, motioned us to come and stand still. They took three pictures, thanked us and walked on.

While we were on ship 4 children died. They were sewn into sacks of sailcloth along with a piece of iron and then buried during the night. No one was allowed near. They were put overboard into the ocean.

When we arrived in Baltimore, Maryland USA, we were not allowed to leave ship to visit. If someone left the ship and did not come back, the ship company had to pay \$1,000 fine. There were 8 plain clothesmen aboard. We could not recognize them but the Fourth Officer pointed them out to me. By this time we were very familiar with every part of the ship and could go where we wished and there was always something interesting going on. We exchanged gifts with many people. So from Baltimore on, nothing eventful to tell about.

The day we left Baltimore, it was unbelievably foggy. They told us we would have to wait until the next day if the fog did not lift. By noon, the fog did lift and we went. Soon we saw nothing but sky and water. The seagulls followed us almost to the end of our journey. Also schein's fish and flying fish. Several people said that they saw sharks and whales. Hilma saw whales spouting water. I did not see any.

Dear Maria, you may believe me, a better life than we had on ship need not be wished for by anyone. That came to an end too soon. New Years Eve came and we celebrated in the

Officers cabin and at 12 o'clock the shooting, whistling and New Years wishes continued without end. I have never taken part in anything like that.

When we arrived in Galveston, Texas Mother had to be taken to the hospital and we came back to the ship. Mother had a severe eye infection which came from the sharp seawind. In America they give very thorough eye examinations. Everything else isn't very seriously examined. We saw and experienced many things in the last 8 days.

We remained in Galveston, Texas almost a week. When Mother was better we traveled by train to Muenster, Texas.

We have written Kurt Hosen but he lives so much further inland America than we.

Here in Muenster are very many girls and all are Catholic. We have two schools; one English and one German. There are more children in the German school and all of them learn English and German. German is not taught in the English school. There are three sisters teaching in the German school, and only one teaches in the English school. The priest's name is Pater Zell but everyone calls him "Barschenk"! He loves to make jokes and can accept jokes directed at him. He will go on vacation this summer and visit Rome. He will go to Cologne first because there will be a priest's meeting. Emma is in the First communion instruction class. The children make their first communion on Whit Sunday.

Mother was sick recently but is much better now. The sisters and many women asked us often if Mother was well. We wondered about that until Mother soon was sick. The women visited often and said that when they first came over they were sick too. Then we did not wonder anymore.

Love,

Elly

(Note: While the Starke family settled into Texas well, sadly Elly died from a ruptured appendix on July 12, 1909.)