

CW file

Diary Of J. F. Jewett on Oberlaender Tour

On Wednesday, October 7, we had our memorable day with Baron Von Keudell. That night we said goodby to the rest of the party and left on the 11:43 train. Julian McGowin, Mary and I, under the leadership of Dr. Franke, made up the party.

We reached Konigsberg in East Prussia at 7:45 the following morning. We went to the Park Hotel for breakfast. We spent the morning seeing the sights of Konigsberg. Beyond objects of historical interest the one significant thing we saw was some modern construction of apartments, and we visited the warehouse section where activity was greatly reduced by reason of the German territory that had been ceded to Poland.

At noon Oberforstmeister Dombois took us in a government automobile to Cranz where we had lunch at the Schloss am Meer. Here we watched fishermen pulling their nets to the beach right under the hotel windows. After lunch we drove up the Kurische Nehrung to Pillkopen, about 50 kilometers. This was within 5 kilometers of the Lithuanian border. The Kurische Nehrung is a strip of land about 100 kilometers long, half of which is in East Prussia and the other half in Lithuania. It is from one to two kilometers wide and divides the Kurisches Haff from the Baltic Sea. The Haff is a large body of fresh water, being about 35 kilometers wide at its widest point. The afforestation of the Kurische Nehrung is designed principally to affix the large sand dunes which threaten to engulf four or five fishing villages. These dunes are very large, reaching a height of 100 meters. The method of afforestation depends upon varying conditions. Where there is a bare sand surface it is necessary to plant grass for a period of 20 to 30 years to provide a little foundation for planting trees. We saw some conifers planted on ground of this kind which were 25 years old and yet had reached a height of not much more than six inches although they had spread out sideways a little. I could not believe that such little conifers could be so old, especially as they seemed reasonably thrifty and bore cones. Where there was more soil below these trees were probably a meter high. Other places where soil had existed for a long time there were fully developed trees of 20 meters in height I should guess. Where trees were planted on the sand that had previously been covered by grass plantations, the entire area was divided up into squares about two meters on a side. The divisions were made of bundles of reeds stuck in the sand with about 8 to 12 inches exposed. These miniature fences were to prevent the sand blowing. While this process must be very expensive it is successful in its purpose. In the areas where there is sufficient soil to support the larger trees thinnings are used by the local population for firewood. There are also regions protected by the forests where there is sufficient grass for the fishermen's cows to graze. These forests produce very little timber large enough for making lumber. I understand that such lumber as is produced is used locally.

The Kurische Nehrung is a haven for migratory birds. It has been made into a bird sanctuary with a station for studying the birds at

Rossitten. We visited the station where we saw a museum of stuffed birds of all species found on the Nehrung and also an aviary of live birds. A staff studies the habits of migratory birds. Many birds are caught and bands put upon their legs. Reports from all over Europe and Africa come to them when these banded birds are found.

We returned to Cranz for dinner, picked up our baggage at Konigsberg and drove East to Insterburg which we reached at 11:00 o'clock. We spent the night at Hotel Dessauer Hof which was Hindenberg's headquarters at various times during the campaign against the Russians in 1914 and 1915. Mary and I were honored by having Hindenberg's room. The following morning, October 9, an Oberforstmeister whose name we all neglected to record met us and drove us thru Gumbinnen to Trakehnen where we visited the Prussian stud farm. As I remember it they have about 1500 head of horses. This farm is maintained by the state of Prussia and is the source of the famous East Prussian horses.

We drove from there thru the forests of the Rominter Heide to the Jagdhaus Rominten where we had lunch. This took us within 10 kilometers of the Polish border. After lunch we visited Von Goring's hunting lodge which had just been completed. It was a large log building furnished in excellent taste with every convenience. From here we drove to the ex-Kaiser's hunting lodge a few miles distant. This was much more elaborate with several large buildings and a chapel built in the Norwegian style. We did not go inside but it was not in nearly as good taste architecturally.

From there we drove to Goldap and Angerburg. Just south of Angerburg we stopped at a very impressive cemetery on a hill overlooking Dargainen See. Here Russians and Germans are buried side by side. We drove on to Lotzen where we had tea. Here Julian McGowin left us to take the train back to Konigsberg and Berlin. We drove on to Rudezanny which we reached shortly after eight o'clock. During the first part of the afternoon we had driven thru agricultural country which was interspersed with small forests occupying the higher ground. The farm houses were mostly new and we were told there was quite a colonization by people moved from the cities. Towards evening we went thru large forests of Scotch pine thru much of the region of the Masurian lakes.

We were impressed by the tremendous military barracks at Angerburg and Lotzen. In several other towns of East Prussia we saw similar barracks. We had breakfast early on the morning of October 10. Landforstmeister A. Conrad, whose address is Soldanerstrasse 6, Allenstein, met us with his two sons. They took us first to see the seed factory at Rudezanny. I understand this factory belongs to the state and represents an investment of 200,000 marks. It was built first in 1927 but burned down so the present factory is two years old.

it was designed and constructed by a man named Pentz. It employs three operators and one office man. In good seed years it operates the entire year, but in bad seed years only three or four months. It has a capacity of 34 hectoliters of cones per day. One liter of cones produces .8 kilogram of seeds. There are 140,000 seeds per kilogram. Two kilograms of seeds are required to plant one hectare. The seeds are worth 30 marks per kilogram. The seeds are stored in large glass jars which contain between 5 and 6 kilograms. They can remain in these jars 8 to 10 years. Their inventory in seeds is valued at 180,000 marks. The seeds are kept at a constant temperature of 8 degrees centigrade. The seeds are tested in a testing room where 100 seeds are placed on a small square of porous material placed in water at a temperature of 25 degrees centigrade to germinate. Similar samples are also sent to the Prussian Forestry School at Eberswalde. About 97 percent of these seeds will give trees. The cones are first stored in bins. Then they go thru a process which takes about 36 hours. They are carried in small cars into a room where they are heated first to 20 degrees C., then 35 degrees and then 45 degrees, and finished with a heat of 58 to 60 degrees. They spend approximately 10 hours at each stage of heat. This opens the cones which pass into a large rotator. This rotator jiggles the seeds out of the cones and they pass thru screens into large sacks which are then taken to the storage room where they are bottled and valued for inventory. After the seeds are extracted half of the cones are burned for fuel to heat and run the factory, and the other half sold at the rate of 10 pfennigs for 30 to 35 pounds. They are used locally for fuel.

Near Rudczanny is a large state forest of 11,500 hectares. This is the largest reserve in Prussia. Six thousand hectares of this area were destroyed about ten years ago by *Panolis flammea* (Forlcule.) This was all replanted in one year's time with mixed seed of pine, larch and spruce. It is divided into square compartments of about 400 meters on a side. The fire brakes between the compartments are plowed annually. A terrific battle is being waged against beetles. One year they collected 102,000 liters of *Melolontha Melolontha* (Mai kafer). These forests and swamp lands all belong to the state. The residents of the nearby villages formerly worked in the woods. After these were destroyed by the beetles they cleared the swamp areas and then the men rented the land for agriculture. They received 44 pfennigs per hour wages in day work and average earnings of 50 to 60 pfennigs per hour piece work in the woods. It is of course anticipated that when the forests grow up again they will provide additional work for the population.

We drove thru vast forests passing thru Puppen and Ortelsburg until 2:30 when we reached Hohenstein. The prevailing species was Scotch pine. In a stand of large trees the average age was 150 to 180 years. The trees are about 35 meters in height. We measured one tree 1.35 meter D.B.H. Landforstmeister Conrad stated there were 20 cubic meters in this big tree. The average stand was 250 cubic meters per hectare

with an increment of only 2 cubic meters per hectare. Where there are cutting operations the cut is about $4\frac{1}{2}$ cubic meters per hectare. The natural generation is broadleaf. They get no pine regeneration except in clear cut areas.

South of Allenstein we went thru the Ramucken Heide. This area contains 40,000 hectares of forest land divided into seven reserves. Here we saw even aged stands of 130 to 140 years averaging 400 meters per hectare. We were told that 60% of this figure produced best quality lumber. The best stumpage sold for 80 marks per cubic meter in the forest. Conrad thought the average value of all timber was about 50 marks per cubic meter cut into logs in the woods. This timber was worth 105 marks per cubic meter in Konigsberg. The freight from Allenstein to Berlin was between 12 and 15 marks. These prices and freight rates are many times as high as they would be in the United States for similar qualities and distances.

After lunch at Hohenstein we were shown around the Tannenberg Denkmal. A retired army captain showed us around and afterwards took us to a building containing a lecture hall. Here he showed us a wonderful map of the battlefield. This map contains over 25,000 electric lamps; a clock gives the time for the six days of the battle and the lights show the position of the opposing forces every hour for the six days. The entire map is automatic, once it is started in motion, and it runs slow enough so that the lecturer can explain the various positions of the troops and their objectives.

We then drove to Allenstein where we had supper. Then we took the train for a three hour ride to Marienburg where we spent the night. On Sunday morning, October 11, we went around the Marienburg, the principal stronghold of the Teutonic Order. It has been described as the finest and most imposing medieval secular edifice in Germany. We were tremendously impressed by it. While waiting for the guide we walked across the foot bridge to the other side of the Nogat river to take pictures of the castle. This was not a simple matter, for we had to check out of Germany and leave our German money at the little guard house and enter the free state of Danzig on the other side. To check in and out of two countries for a ten minute stroll was quite a vivid demonstration of the foolishness of the treaty of Versailles.

We had a further demonstration of this when after our hurried lunch we took a taxi to Danzig. We could not take enough German money along to pay the taxi driver. Fortunately the hotel keeper in Danzig trusted us and advanced enough gulden to pay off the taxi driver and enough for our use that afternoon and evening, for the bank being closed Sunday, it was impossible to cash our American Express Company checks. We found Danzig an interesting but very depressing place. Danzig is a city without a country, other than about 800 square miles. Its trade has nearly dried up for the Poles have built the port of Gdingen. That evening we saw the light opera, "The Merry Widow." Monday morning, October 12, we were lined up at the bank

when it opened at eight o'clock. We hurriedly paid off the hotel keeper and dashed in a taxi to the airport to catch the plane at 8:20.

We were disappointed that our three hour flight to Stettin and Berlin was mostly in the fog so that we saw very little of the country. Dr. Heske had lunch with us and we had a good two hours visit during which I gave him my reactions on our East Prussian trip. He seemed pleased as he had an appointment in the afternoon with Baron Von Keudell and he wished to report upon our trip to the Baron.

We left Berlin that evening for England.