

BATH MAN KEEPS PROMISE HE MADE MANY YEARS AGO

Morris Cohen Takes Family to Boyhood Home

A promise made 16 years ago was fulfilled this Summer when Morris Cohen of the city return to his native city in Lithuania to visit his parents, just as he had promised them he would when he left the little city of Vorna for this country those years ago. Mr. and Mrs. Cohen and their children, Ruth, Edward and Ida, returned to Bath last week after passing the Summer abroad.

Since Mr. Cohen left Europe, 16 years have fled by. Letters bridge the distance that lay between Vorna, his former home, and Bath, his present one. The war. Changes in his old home. Poverty. The slow return to normal life. Letters, and sometimes a picture or two. Always there was Expressed the hope of the meeting someday, when his parents would again see him, and meet his wife and little children, whom they had not yet seen.

And from Zezmer, the birthplace of Mrs. Cohen, came letters, too, from her grandmother, whom she had not seen since she came to America as a young girl. Her grandmother, the mother of Nathan Petlock of this city, too told the news of Zezmer.

This summer it all came to pass. From Bath to Boston went Mr. and Mrs. Morris Cohen, and Ruth, Edward and Ida. In Boston they embarked on the Laconia, which sailed for Liverpool on July 2.

The passage across was filled with talk of the visit to the old country. The young Cohens passed much time in thinking, "how surprised grandfather, or grandmother, will be to see us all," when they weren't busy enjoying the novelty of the trip across. Liverpool, London, Hull. Across the North Sea to Rotterdam. A train to Berlin. A sleeper to Kovno, Kashadar, Zezmer!

Halfway between Kashadar and Zezmer, the Cohen family was surprised to see descending upon them a seemingly small army of people trudging along, running along, or riding in the ubiquitous horse and wagon. Cheers and laughter and tears of joy greeted the Cohens as the entire population of the small country turned out to meet the travelers. To the home of Mrs. Cohen's aged grandmother, the throng escorted them and then lingered to hear the news of America. To them America is like one large city with a number of suburbs. St. Louis, Mo., New York City, Philadelphia and Chicago are the cities about which they have heard the most. To show how small they think our country is and how uncertain their knowledge of it is, the following incident was related. As Mr. Cohen walked along on one of the streets in Zezmer, a woman stepped up to him and asked him, without any preliminaries, to please give her regards to her sister in Chicago when he passed through that city.

Days were passed in talking about everything that had happened in the intervening years, for the littlest detail must be told again and again to be remembered and cherished in the days to come, when the Cohens would return home, and the little village once more would resume its usual routine.

Then to Vorna. When the joyful greetings had again been given, Mr. Cohen's father, as one of the little Cohen children put it, "sat for two whole hours and looked at us all 'cause he couldn't believe we were really there." Once more everything must be told and messages be given. The village was visited. Poverty everywhere—the war, you know.

And while their parents talked, Ruth, Edward and Ida visited every nook in the small countries. Wherever they wanted to go, an eager cousin or new found friend was happy to take them.

On their way to the villages of Zezmer and Vorna, they had passed three days in Berlin. Here they visited the magnificent palace of Kaiser Wilhelm. The café, "Unter der Linden" is remembered mostly for the enchantingly beautiful music played there by gypsies. Then the museum where war relics are kept was visited. Airplanes, guns, helmets and everything reminiscent of the grim conflict are stored there. During the war, it was learned, the hotels, even the most exclusive ones, were turned into hospitals to care for the wounded. The cleanliness of the streets in Germany impressed them. "Not a scrap of paper or piece of orange peel can be thrown away without a policeman coming over to you."

Everywhere the American style of dress is in vogue. On holidays the Lithuanian girls wear the native costume of bodices, full skirts, and snowy white aprons. Sunday is a holiday, and all dances and good times take place then. From places as far distant as 25 miles, come farm folk to church, starting out the previous day. They carry their shoes in their hands and do not put them on until they are near the city, for shoes are among the most expensive articles that can be purchased.

Autos are scarce, but the horse and wagon is seen everywhere. In fact, the horses are quite frightened by the motor machines, for the most part.

At Vagiva the Cohens saw a once splendid palace belonging to a Polish princess whose father, a general, had fought on Poland's side in the war. When peace came, the huge estate was divided among the peasants, and so poor did the princess become that her palace and what land and orchards she had are going to ruin for lack of attention. Attention costs money, and money is not to be had. On all sides traces of war still linger on, even in the smallest of the villages. Beautiful homes once belonging to titled people, before the war, are now thrown open to the public. Poverty is seen everywhere.

Every town has its market day once a week. Horses, sheep, lambs, vegetables, dairy products, flowers and everything imaginable are to be found on the market square. When a bargain is made, the buyer and the seller shake hands and kiss, as a finishing touch to the transaction. Two bushels of potatoes cost, in American money, 15 cents; two and one-half pounds of butter, 50 cents; a five pound chicken, 40 cents; eggs, 10 cents a dozen. Everything is cheap except clothing, which is very expensive. Sounds good? But wages are \$2 a week, so the reason is clear. The occupation of most working girls is sewing at which is earned (and most girls work the whole day) \$1 a month, or almost four cents a day.

The movies offered little interest, for "Sonny Boy" Hoot Gibson, and pictures seen in Bath long ago are now playing. The vaudeville, however, was pronounced excellent.

For two whole months, the Old World was enjoyed. The farewells, tearful and regretful, were said, and the Cohens started homeward by way of Baltimantic. The townspeople escorted the Cohens two miles out of Zezmer and presented them with beautiful bouquets of flowers, parting gifts. They shouted messages to be delivered to relatives in all parts of the country, and wished them a safe return. In Hamburg, where they passed four days, they saw the Graf Zeppelin fly over the hotel. Then to Hoek van Holland, harwich, London and Liverpool, from which port they sailed on the Laconia Sept. 6. Past Queenstown, Galway, the Irish coast, Newfoundland, Seguin, Boston and Home.