

Along the Riverway

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In Our Collection — The Letters of Tess Mueller

Part Four

By late February 1938. Tess Mueller Sauk City High School graduate had arrived in Egypt. It had been seven months, since her departure from San Francisco. She had toured extensively in the Far East. Tess included a photo in her next letter from the Savoy Hotel in Luxor, Upper Egypt, on February 26th, 1938. *"Florence and I are on camels, which we hired to ride around the pyramids and Sphinx at Giza. It was 5:30 in the afternoon and so the light was not very strong." "Egypt is painfully expensive because this is the height of the tourist season, but it is a source of never-ending joy to an ancient history fan like me. We saw the temple of Karnak yesterday morning under the guidance of a dragoman, but we really enjoyed the temple at Luxor more on our own." "The Savoy is a German hotel and very pleasant, except for the comments my companions make on the large group of Germans staying here. They look on them as Hitlerites and therefore villains."*

On March 10th. From the Hotel Fast in Jerusalem, Tess writes to her brother Otto. *"I am wishing you many happy returns for March 23rd. With the \$5 enclosed, I want you to buy yourself a real birthday present. I'd dearly love to be in Sauk to help Mother, and you celebrate the two great events only a week apart. Flowers are out on the hillsides. There is a beautiful Palestine anemone in deep purple and dark red which looks like a poppy of which I'm going to try to get some seeds. The flowers will look decorative on Crocus Hill."*

"Jerusalem is getting under our skins. We just love it. Half a dozen people warned us that we would be disappointed and disillusioned, but instead we have been tremendously impressed by our two days of sightseeing under the guidance of a Syriac Christian Arab who certainly knows his Bible history. Yesterday we drove to Bethlehem to see the Church of the Nativity. Every part of the stable has been parceled out. One sect controls the spot where Christ was born, another the manger etc. To prevent vindictive rivalry and bitter quarreling among the sects, all denominations have been forbidden to place articles of which are old or worn out. So, everything is tawdry and shabby and somehow touching and pleasing and in keeping with the tradition of poverty. Yesterday we also saw the Mount of Olives, today the Garden of Gethsemane, Bethany and the ancient and modern Jericho. Crossed the muddy River Jordan and ate our lunch on the shore of the Dead Sea. The mountains of Moab and the hills of Judea are green now after the spring rains, and the grazing flocks of sheep and their shepherds probably look

exactly like those of 1,938 years ago."

"You suppose you can find Aman and Moan and Jerash and Petra on the map? They are all in Transjordan, one of the new British mandates. The head of the American Institute of Oriental Research told us yesterday noon that the road was open for the first time since the winter rains, and by 3:00 Florence and I had changed all our plans and agreed to go on a 5-day auto trip."

On March 12, 1938 Tess writes *"We started early this morning and have been driving up and down mountainsides all day long in the same comfortable 7 passenger Buick, I mentioned in an earlier letter. We ate our picnic lunch sitting on some boulders on the sunny top of the Moab mountains. Then we went down, Florida River and started up the Gilead Mountains. This afternoon we visited Jerash an ancient Roman city (Jassassa), ruined by an earthquake, I believe. The main street, with its paving blocks still in excellent condition, was colonnaded from one end to the other. The Temple of Artemis was another imposing ruin."*

"We shall have to start out at 7:00 AM tomorrow in order to reach Petra before dark. The last few miles must be made on horseback through a gorge, too narrow for a car. I sent Otto a postcard picture of it. You can see why it is difficult for me to furnish you with an itinerary. It is wonderful to be able to change one's mind at any time in order to take advantage of a good opportunity."

By March 27th, 1938 Tess had arrived in Athens Greece. *"I am really ashamed to start in again by telling you how crazy we are about Greece after raving at such length about Palestine. Perhaps it is a spring season which is casting its spell upon us in each country in turn. But if I hadn't decided that the Altar of Heaven in Peking was the most perfect thing in the world, and then a few months later decided that the Taj Mahal was even better, I would maintain that the Parthenon in the rain-washed air this afternoon was the most beautiful of all. I won't even try to describe the view from the Acropolis. The memory of it is one of the treasures I shall lay by for my old age. When that time comes, I won't envy my more thrifty friends of their dollars but shall cheerfully count out my pennies and revel in my memories."*

After leaving Greece, Tess visits the island of Crete and then a week in Sicily and planned to arrive in Rome by April 25, 1938. (Continue on Page 3).



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From the Desk of

SPAHS Board President

John Hart

A Hundred years ago, 1925 truly was an in-between year. The nation had recovered from WWI, and it would be a few years until the Great Depression.



John

Like other rural communities of the time, Sauk Prairie did not ride the waves of economic extremes. But the Roaring 20's did bring Sauk Prairie solid economic growth. The power grid anchored by the hydroelectric dam at Prairie du Sac had for 10 years served to provide momentum for economic development. The village businesses and increasingly the rural farmers were beginning to live more than a subsistence life.

Recreation and entertainment were becoming more important. Nationally popular songs included Gene Austin's "Yes Sir! That's My Baby", Ben Bernie's "Sweet Georgia Brown", Marion Harris's "Tea for Two" and Bessie Smith's "St. Louis Blues". Bonham's Theatre showed silent movies such as "The Lost World" based upon Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's story, which "is unquestionably the strangest and biggest motion picture ever made." The Bonham also booked traveling stock shows and vaudeville shows. Baseball was the dominant spectator sport with attendance reaching several thousand to watch the Twin City Red Sox play.

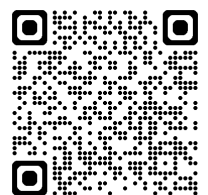
The worldwide the sport of golf had a centuries long history, but locally it began in the year 1925. John Radlund (1892-1968) was a long-time superintendent at the PdS dam. John was born in Chicago and his family moved to Wisconsin Dells then named Killbourn when he was a child. His family was instrumental in the hospitality and resort industry for over 40 years. In his high school years John worked summers as a drill boy for Bates and Rogers, the contracting firm hired by Magnus Swenson to construct the hydroelectric plant at the dells.

After working several years for Western Union installing telegraph infrastructure though out Wisconsin and Iowa, he was recruited to the PdS dam in 1914, first as a blacksmith and machinist. By 1923 he became plant manager. John held this post until retirement in 1957. It was through his vision that led to the creation of the Lake Wisconsin Country Club.

The club was formed with 105 members in October 1925. They elected John A. Radlund, Jr., president; Max H. Ninman, vice-president; W.A Schreiber secretary-treasurer; and C.H. Lehman and E. S. Setske as members of the board of directors. A.E. Mayo, professional at the Nakoma Country Club in Madison, laid out the nine-hole course. He fitted members with the necessary clubs besides giving the new converts to the game their first lessons. The first event consisted of a driving contest on November 2, 1925, with 35 members participating. Prizes were won by Arthur Boehmer (1899-1971), Horatio Moore (1880-1949), Dr. T.H. Ragatz (1874-1946) and Matt Mettel (1860-1945).

News accounts of the time indicate that fairway and greens construction started in 1926. The riverside club house was built in 1927. It appears they had their first golfing season in 1928 as that fall the club had their first end of year awards banquet.

To see a listing of the 1925 Charter Members please scan the QR Code.



(Continued from Page 1) There were many German tourists in Rome when Tess arrived. *"The town is jammed with Germans and most of the important museums and galleries are closed to our great annoyance and to the annoyance of a great many of the Germans also, I am sure. Germans are not allowed by their government to travel anywhere except in Italy and at times in Yugoslavia, because the exchange is unfavorable everywhere else. And at that they usually have to wait four months for their travel application to be granted. It must, under the circumstances, be very annoying to have to have nowhere to go in the rain. In Rome there will be a big parade tomorrow for which the Germans will have seats and we not."*

"Don't worry about war scares, we always go to see the American Consul and take his advice and he knows more facts than our jingoistic American newspapers. Our schedule is never hard and fast as you have learned to your annoyance by this time as I gather from your protests, and if conditions look bad anywhere, we just change our itinerary, even on few moments notice."

Upon arriving in Germany Tess's letters become shorter in length and less frequent. She spends just a week in Germany and ten days to see Vienna, Prague, Warsaw and arrive in Moscow in late June staying four days. On June 25th Tess writes: *"Dear Mother, It seem hard to believe that at last I am to see Russia". ... "It is nine o'clock and the sun is just deciding to set. It is light until 10:30 PM.... This New Moscow Hotel counts as third-class hotel. We pay between \$4.50 and \$5.00 a day for an all-inclusive program, including two hours of sightseeing each day. The New Moscow must have been one of the finest hotels in Czarist days. The dining rooms on the eighth floor command the most superb view in Moscow and are lined with light gray polished marble and have quantities of exquisite crystal chandeliers and wall brackets."....*
"Moscow is all torn up in a most ambitious building pro-

gram. Whole blocks of houses are being torn down to provide modern huge open squares and the widest streets in the world.... The food also been very good so far, although have not been offered any caviar for my three meals up to date."

From Leningrad Tess writes to her brother Otto. *"Moscow is a city on the make. One is impressed with its energy and force and also with its ugliness. The only beauty spot in it is the ancient Kremlin, and that tourists are not permitted to see.... Leningrad, on the other hand, is pathetically shabby, but lovely. It is built on 101 islands and has 574 bridges and number of parks and palace gardens and tree-lined boulevards with water and water everywhere. In Moscow you just long for the sight of a tree. But the force, the power of this Russian nation is overwhelming."*

During the next four weeks Tess visits Finland, Sweden and Norway. She sails to England and departs Southampton aboard the SS Washington for home "which after all, and considering all, is the best place of all." Tess's fourteen-month trip around the world visiting 29 countries just prior to the start of World War II concludes. Upon returning to America, the Pioneer Press published her account of the trip on September 1, 1938. By 1952 Tess retired to Sauk City from her teaching career. She was a member of the Unitarian Fellowship Free Congregation and it's Ladies Aid, the National Federation of Republican Women and its Sauk County Club, the Sauk City Historical Society. And the Sauk-Prairie Hospital Auxiliary.

Scan the QR code for a link to all four parts of Tess Mueller's 14 month journey.



Upcoming Events

Ice Cream Social, October 18th 1-4pm

Featuring the JS Trippers—a bluegrass country band. Pie and ice cream. Ragatz Honey Creek Historic Church, S9505 Church Rd. Prairie du Sac.

20 Year Anniversary of Bradford Bison Discovery

by Josh Bradford and Bob Weiss. **November 18th 1pm.** Speaker is Amy Rosebrough, WHS Archeologist

Christmas Carols in the Country, Dec. 6th 6pm

Holiday Sing-a-long in the Historic Ragatz Honey Creek Church, S9505 Church Rd. PdS

Holly Jolly Christmas, Dec 6th 9am-1pm

Visit with Santa, Tripp Heritage Museum, 565 Water St. PdS

Haraszthy-Hungary, Then & Now Presentation.

December 18th, Speaker, Dr. Balaz Martonffy, Consul General of Hungary (Chicago).

Partnership with the George Culver Library, 615 Phillips Blvd., Sauk City

Litscher Family Reunion

On Sunday, July 13, descendants of John and Susanna Litscher gathered at the Ragatz Honey Creek Historic Church for a family reunion. As written by Kris (Litscher) Lee, great-granddaughter of John and Susanna:

Our ancestors were John Litscher and Susanna (Bartnik) Litscher. John, born in 1859, came on his own to the US from Switzerland in 1876 at age 17. Susanna Bartnik was born in 1863, came to the US with her family when she was 12 yrs. old in 1875. They married in 1882 and John worked as a mason. In 1897 they bought a farm on Cty O, farming there from 1897 until about 1911, when the couple moved back to Prairie du Sac to a house John built at 353 4th St. The farm now has only a barn standing and is across Cty O from the fire number 10104. John & Susanna and 3 of their 5 children, along with spouses, are buried in the church cemetery.

We very much enjoyed our family reunion at the church. The space was perfect for us at 40 people. We also had appropriate space for 2 6' tables we brought for family photos/info that we set up by the room dividers along the wall opposite the kitchen. The room temperature was OK, a little warm but the outside temp wasn't extreme that day.

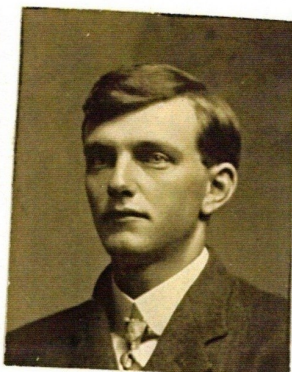
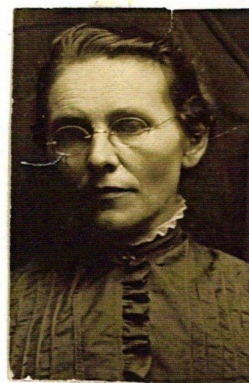
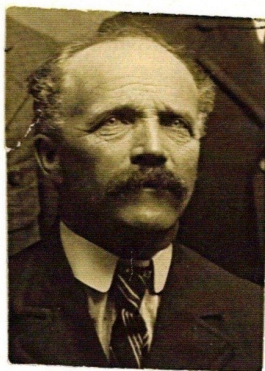
Author's Note: The Ragatz Historic Church has an industrial AprilAire Whole House dehumidifier in the basement that is connected into the duct system. Along with Air Conditioning for the upstairs room. As we go to press, a second AC unit is being installed by Dischler's Heating-Cooling and Fireplaces for the basement area. These amenities will benefit the church building throughout the year & increase the summer comfort for any future weddings or gatherings.



The LITSCHERS

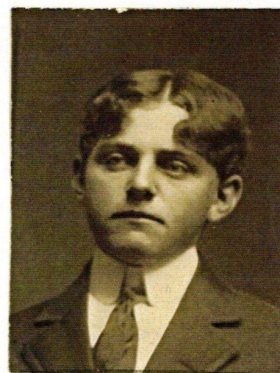
John
1859-1934

Susanna
1863-1945



Rosa
1883-1931
Walter
1885-1954

Carl
1888-1966
Adolph
1891-1953



John II
1894-1964

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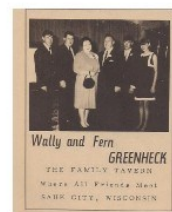
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