

# MY LIFE STORY



*Herman Enns*

Revised edition by Irene  
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## Chapter 1

# *My Childhood*

I was born on February 16 (old calendar), 1897 in Schönau in the Molotschna Colonies. My grandfather's name was Herman, as was my father's, and so I, too, was named Herman. My mother's name was Maria, and was born a Woelk. At that time my parents lived at home with my father's parents. My grandparents owned a well-developed farm, actually they owned two, but on one of the properties all the buildings had burned down. My grandmother was born Katharina Neufeld. She and her sister Elizabeth, who had married Johann Penner and also lived in Schönau, had inherited well from their parents who owned the beer and vinegar brewery in Halbstadt, and could afford to own two properties each. Grandfather's property had very good buildings, all the roofs covered with red tiles. He owned the brickworks in Schönau, where they manufactured bricks, tiles and pots. The house and the yard were both bigger than on the other properties, because at one time Grandfather had had a shop in part of the house. A long white brick fence with tall gateposts decorated the yard along the street. In the summer, a few months after I was born, my grandfather died. He had eaten a good lunch of chicken soup, and had gone swimming right after, then died of a heart attack. My father, who earlier had been a teacher in Crimea, but was now married and living at home, took over the management of the Brickworks. His younger brother Cornelius, who was not in good health, took over the management of the



*Back L to R: Mariechen, Herman Enns,  
Herman Jr. Maria (Woelk) Enns, Jasch.  
Front L to R: Katja, Hans*

property. He had had scarlet fever as a child, and left his sick bed too soon. He caught cold, which affected his back, and he became a hunchback. Father also had a younger sister Katharina who was married to Isaac Neufeld from Lindenau. They lived on a farm 8 Werst away (1 mile=1.5 Werst).

My mother's parents lived at the end of the village. There too lived two brothers, Jacob and Peter Thiessen. Half brothers to Gerhard Thiessen, they were both businessmen and lived in big houses. Jacob had a blue-dyeing works in his basement, where cotton fabrics were dyed. *(Greta Thiessen, Jacob's daughter, owned the first bicycle in Schönau. – M.Enns)*

Peter had studied engineering in Berlin. He built himself a splendid house in Schönau, at the end of the village. The house had a wide verandah all the way around. Later, we children always played there when our parents were visiting. In the yard in front of the house there was an artesian well. For many years after, people came and got drinking water from that well. Along the street was an iron fence with two large gates, and across the street Peter built a factory for manufacturing farm machinery. Sometimes I accompanied Father and toured the whole factory with him. Of special interest to me was the iron works, as I watched the glowing cast iron being rolled out of the furnace. My grandfather- Mother's father, Jacob Woelk- was the bookkeeper at the factory, and lived nearby. When our grandmother died, our mother was taken in by Peter Thiessen as a foster daughter, and her sister Helen, was taken in by Jacob Thiessen. They stayed there until they were married. My mother also had two brothers, Jacob and Cornelius.

*(Dad said Peter Thiessen had accumulated quite a few sculpture pieces and had placed them outside, in front of his home. However, the governor from Simferopol forbade him to display the sculptures outside because he said Peter was not of the elite class. Therefore Peter moved them inside and opened an art gallery on the second floor. – M.Enns)*

Then hard economic times came to Russia, especially in business matters, due to the Japanese/Russian War. The factory closed its doors and my grandfather, who had remarried, bought a small farm (about 40 acres; the wealthier had about 150 acres) in Fishau where his parents lived, and moved there. He built an addition to his house, and opened a small store. Mother got two half-brothers then, Dietrich and Johann. The factory remained closed for a few years, until two brothers named Zehnert from Weinau (directly opposite Schönau on the other side of the Molotschna River) bought the business. The factory operated for a number of years, until it burned down completely one night in 1908. Peter Thiessen sold his large house to Gerhard Wiens' father (Gerhard Wiens lived in Newton Kansas in the 1930's) and moved into the house where my Grandfather Woelk had lived, and years later his huge house was turned into a children's home.

Now, I must get back to my own life again. There are certain events from my childhood that are still clear in my mind today. When I was about three years old, I slipped away from my mother in the kitchen, and crept down the steps into the stable. (the stable was lower than the house) In the stable, I went up behind the horse in the first stall and tugged at its back foot- I wanted to see what the bottom of the foot looked like. Anyhow, the horse was not in good spirits, and did not want to have his dreams disturbed. He lifted his foot, and kicked me so hard in the forehead, that I couldn't see or hear. I





*The author Herman Enns riding the rocking horse, and his brother Jasch*

crawled over to the opposite wall, and sat there until I fully regained my senses. I returned to the kitchen, but didn't tell anyone what happened, and never tried to inspect a horse's foot again.

It was Christmas Eve. Father drove us all to our grandparents' in Fischau to get our Christmas presents. I was about five years old, and received a nice pocketknife from Grandfather. I was very proud of it, and when we got home I went into the stable to show the hired hands my present. One of the workers grabbed hold of me and held me upside down by my feet. When I went back to the house and reached into my pocket for my knife, it was gone. I knew I must have lost it in the barn, because I hadn't been anywhere else. I went back to the barn and asked the workers, but no one owned up to having seen it. I

knew for sure, when the worker had picked me up, the knife had been shaken out of my pocket and found its way into his. And so my joy was of short duration.

Then came the year 1904, and the Japanese war had begun. One day in the summer a group of Russian officers came onto our yard. They came up onto the veranda, set up a table and chairs and sat down. The farmers in the village had to bring all their horses onto our yard, and parade them in front of the Commission, who then picked out the best horses for their army. From us they took a beautiful big chestnut horse. In the fall of the same year I began school. Father had bought me a nice wide leather belt, of which I was very proud. For the first two years my teacher was Daniel Enns. (later, he worked on the board in Rosthern.) He was very strict, and used the stick frequently. Once, however, he overdid it, and tanned the hide of Johann Thiessen (son of Jacob Thiessen) so hard, that Johann couldn't sit down for a couple of days, and had to lie on his stomach at home. Because Johann came from a prominent family in the village- they owned the dye factory- and his mother was furious, she insisted that the teacher be let go for the next year. This family, however, kept a governess in the house who tutored their daughters and several daughters of other leading families in the area. Our teacher, who was single, was courting the governess, and when he left, he married her. And so the village not only lost its teacher, but this family also lost its governess.

For my third school year we got a new teacher- Aaron Rempel from Mariawohl. He was strict too, but not as bad as the one before. He was single, and had a fiancée in Halbstadt. My brother and I had saved our money, and bought ourselves a riding horse. I paid 12 rubles, and brother Jake 8 rubles. We built ourselves a sleigh in the winter, and had a good time in the snow. I already mentioned that our teacher had a fiancée in Halbstadt, and now we boys who had horses, had to take his love letters to Halbstadt every Saturday afternoon and bring back the reply. Rempel sent letters because he didn't have a horse to go and visit. Almost every week our teacher took us on a walking trip, usually on a Wednesday afternoon. In the fall we walked in the woods, in winter we skated on the ice, and in spring we went to the meadow. Our teacher was a very Christian

man. He was able to tell us Bible stories with such passion, that some of the girls cried. A large number of students found spiritual salvation through him, including me. One day after school I went to him and asked what I should do to be happy. He said to me I should just believe. I did that, and before I got into the house, a wonderful peace filled my heart. I told my mother, and she took me to father. Now it meant that I had to clear up a number of things. We boys used to yield to the temptation of the nice apples and pears we saw everywhere, and help ourselves. Now this had to be confessed. Father was always willing to accompany me on these trips to confess, for which I was very happy.

During my fifth school year, my teacher got married, and a year later their family grew to include little Ernest. We were always very quiet then when we went into the school after playing, so we wouldn't wake up the baby if he were sleeping. In the spring of 1910 I finished school, and in the fall went to the *Centralschule* in Halbstadt. Our teacher and his family also left our village that summer and moved to Siberia. I didn't see him again until many years later during World War I. By chance, I saw him at a train station in the interior of Russia, when we were both serving in the medical corp. One morning we had to wait at a station in order to allow an oncoming medical train to pass. As it arrived, we all stepped out in order to see if we would meet any acquaintances. To my astonishment, I recognized the first person to step out of the train as my former teacher Mr. Rempel, with a cigarette in his mouth. He recognized me immediately too. I believe we both felt somewhat uncomfortable, as I had never seen my teacher smoke before. We didn't have much to say to each other, and soon we got into our trains and went off in opposite directions. I never met him again. I heard later from others who came from Siberia and were acquainted with him, that he had abandoned his family and was living with a Jewish woman.

The end of our school year was always early in April. Then the good times began for us boys. With fishing rods over our shoulders, we went to the pond early in the morning to fish. And we took many a fish home. In spring it was time, too, to drive the calves to the pasture. We boys absolutely had to take part in this. We had our whips in order in plenty of time. Then we waited for the announcement to come from the mayor. Early that morning we were all gathered at the end of the village, waiting for the young cowherd. When he arrived and blew his horn, all the farmers brought their calves out to the street. These calves had never been outside of the barn, and didn't know what had happened to them. They leaped and danced back and forth, they dashed here and there with lightning speed everywhere on the yard. We went after them and brought them back to the street. It made for a lot of fun. We then helped the cowherd take the calves to the pasture, and before evening we went to meet him, and helped drive the calves back into the village. We repeated this procedure for several days, and by then the calves were sensible enough so that the cowherd could cope on his own.

As soon as the weather warmed up we went to the pond every afternoon, where the artesian well bubbled from the earth day and night. We spent many hours in the water there. In spring, too, the farmers periodically had to send a man with a hoe and a ladder into the woods to destroy the crows' nests in the trees. The crows could take the upper hand and do a lot of damage. We boys sometimes went to the woods on our own to take the eggs from the nests. One time our teacher caught us at it, and gave us a severe

warning. Naturally we didn't understand why. If the farmers could destroy whole nests, why couldn't we just take the eggs?

When the harvest time came our good times were over. We had to get up at about four o'clock in the morning, as there were many things for us children to do during threshing time. During the mowing we had set up the sheaves in the field, and when it was time for threshing, we had to pile the sheaves properly as they were being loaded onto the wagon. When the threshing was being done, we boys had to stand on the platform with a whip to see that the horses kept going in circles around the threshing mechanism, drag the straw away from the machine, or shovel wheat at the fanning mill. The girls had to stand on the platform by the threshing machine and cut the twine around the sheaves. The twine was used to make rope in the winter. We always threshed two or three wagon loads before breakfast while it was still dark, and were happy when a belt came off or broke somewhere on the machine, so that we could close our eyes for a few more minutes while lying on a pile of wheat in the barn.

Often the gypsies set up camp at the end of our village. Then we had to go there to see what was going on. Sometimes they brought along a monkey, or even a bear. It was interesting to see how they lived in their camp. As soon as they had set up their camp, the men walked into the village with ropes over their shoulders, looking for straw. The women followed with a few children to beg. The men also tried to earn some money by doing blacksmith work, and the women by telling fortunes.

In late fall, the pumpkins and watermelons were brought in from the fields. On every yard syrup was made from the watermelons. The seeds from the pumpkins were washed, dried and roasted. There were always buyers who came to buy the seeds for *Halva*. We liked to crack the seeds in winter. After the fruits had been brought in from the garden in fall, we boys found many an apple or pear still hanging on the trees, and we could eat our fill. We especially enjoyed the *Kruschken* (small pears, about as big as hazelnuts) when they were allowed to ripen on the trees. We also liked to pick them and hide them in the straw for ripening, and then put them in our pockets to take along to school. We also made our own ice cream. We got the ice for this from the ice cellar by the woods. The cellar was filled with ice from the pond every winter, and covered with straw. If someone died in the summer, ice was brought from the cellar and used to cover the body.

In the fall of 1910 I went to Halbstadt to the *Centralschule*. I lodged at a Widow Friesen's home, along with four other students. At that time room and board for the school year cost about 110-120 rubles. I enjoyed going to school. With my marks I stood second in the class. On Saturdays we always drove or walked home. At Christmas and New Year's I spent the holidays at home. In the middle of January, 1911, our family increased- I got a baby brother. I had been home on Sunday, and mother and the baby were doing well. I went back to school, and around noon on Monday someone told me my mother had died. Naturally, I couldn't believe it, because I had just been with her the day before and everything had looked fine. Then I was called in by my religion teacher William Neufeld, (who later moved to Reedley, California) and was told the bad news: my mother had died very suddenly, and our servant was waiting with a wagon on the street to take me home. I drove home then with our servant Anton. At home I found out what had happened. Mother had eaten a good dinner, and soon after she started to

hemorrhage heavily. She knew her end was coming. My brothers and sisters were brought home from school, and with all four siblings around the bed, Mother had cried out, "My children, my children," and then she was gone. Mother died on the afternoon of January 26, 1911, and on October 11 of the same year, baby brother Cornelius died too. Father took it really hard, and never fully recovered from the shock. It was January, and very cold when Mother died, and so a grave could not be dug. She was buried temporarily in a shallow grave at the cemetery. In spring, Father had a new grave dug, which was lined with bricks, and Mother was laid to rest there. I had to go back to school, but every Saturday when I came home, the house felt empty - Mother wasn't there anymore. Father hired a German cook who managed our household.

The next year my younger brother Jacob went to school with me in Halbstadt. That was the year 1911-12. We both had living quarters at Mrs. Friesen's. For my third year I changed my lodgings and lived with the Peters family. My brother had quit school, and got himself a job in a store in Memrick.

While mother was still alive, Father had been to Germany and Austria several times. He had bought a number of machines there to make flagstone and roof tiles from cement. He always brought us lovely presents from Berlin. Once he brought a small steam locomotive, and another time a steam kettle, that were both heated with alcohol. Then we got a platinum needle to do wood burning pictures. He also brought along two telephones, one for us, and the other for Grandmother, who lived across the street. In this way we could always communicate, and always knew what was going on in each other's homes. In summer I had to work at the brickworks. I had to lead a horse in circles at the gearbox, which caused a drum to turn. In the drum were many large and small pellets which ground the colours for the tiles.

During my last year - my third in *Centralschule* - Father's health began to fail. Instead of improving, he steadily became worse. Grandmother lived right across the street from us, and so as Father became very sick, we all moved into her house. They used coal oil lamps, and had a shower outside in a separate building during the summer. In the new house at Grandmother's they had a well outside and a pump inside. Father always had to go to Peter Reimer's (*my Mother's place - M. Enns*) to get water for tea. Early in the spring, Father had gone traveling with a Mr. Hamm from Lichtenau. When they arrived back at the train station in Lichtenau, Mr. Hamm offered to drive Father home, but he declined and said he would walk. It began to get dark then, and the road between Lichtenau and Fischau was covered in slush. Father arrived at Grandfather's in Fischau, soaking wet. They brought him home from there. That was probably the beginning of his illness. He had caught a severe cold, and had to stay in bed. One day Rev. David Derksen from Fischau came to visit Father. Father died on Easter, April 16<sup>th</sup>, 1913. The people were just coming out of the school from the church service. The funeral was held in Grandmother's barn.

That summer I worked at Mrs. Neufeld's, helping with the harvesting, and in the fall I went back to school in Halbstadt. I attended the teacher training classes, and boarded at Penners in Muntau. The next summer, 1914, World War I broke out. We had to drive many of the mobilized men from Halbstadt to Melitopol. The women and girls lined the street in Halbstadt at the county seat, saying good-bye to their loved ones, and crying. Long rows of wagons left for Melitopol sending up high swirls of dust clouds

into the warm air. We also had to take our horses to the Remonte in Tokmak, where the Officer's Commission picked out the best ones for the army. That summer I worked again for Mrs. Neufeld at harvest time. In the fall I began my last school year. Before Christmas I had lodgings at Johann Klassen's in Neu-Halbstadt, but after Christmas I rode my horse every day. I left my horse at Hermann Neufeld's, and also ate my lunch there. Since the war was still going on, we had to take all our horses to Berdjansk in the spring. Long lines of handcarts loaded with fodder and food, horses tied to the sides, made their way to Berdjansk. It took two whole days to get there. Because it took several days for the Commission to look at all the horses, we were able to explore the town.

That spring our mayor, Margaret's father, asked if I wanted to teach in our school the following year, as the current teacher had been drafted. I agreed, and taught there for a year. I had brother John, and Isaac (*Neufeld?*) in my class. For the Russian subjects we had a Russian teacher.



## Chapter 2

### *IN THE MEDICAL CORPS.*

It was in the spring of 1915 that I graduated from teacher training classes in Halbstadt, and I was offered a teaching position in Schönau for the following year. The school had no teacher because he had been drafted, so I taught there for one year. At the end of the school year, my age group came up for the draft. My friend John Kroeker and I went before the Commission in Berdjansk, were accepted, and sent to Jekaterinoslav. Here we spent some time doing drills in the military, then were sent to the medical corps in Moscow. When we reached Moscow, we made our way to the Mennonite headquarters for first-aid attendants. This organization supplied all the Red Cross medical trains with attendants. Here too, for the first while, we had to march up and down the street to music, in the hot summer sun. Then we were given instructions regarding our work and the dangers of the big city, by our superior Jacob Dueck, later the tent-missionary. At the officers' club we acquired the black leather jackets and leather hats that every medic wore at that time. The ordinary soldier could not go into the Officers' club; we on the other hand, could. Now we were ready for the service. We could hardly wait to get away from there, because our bedroom was teeming with bed bugs that wouldn't let us sleep at night. We set the legs of our bedsteads into cans containing kerosene, but the bugs plagued us anyway. They crawled up the walls, along the ceiling, then dropped onto our beds.

My first assignment was on train #1181 that was going to the north and east of Moscow. We reached Samara, Pensa, Kasan across the Volga River. The Tartars from early times still lived here. As soon as we had unloaded, we made our way to the farms where we bought oats, meat and apples, which were very good there. We took these products back to Moscow with us, where we could sell them for good prices. The people in this area lived very simply. Their houses were built up on poles, probably because of the amount of water from spring thaws, as the land was very flat. Each house consisted of mostly an entrance room where the cow or calf was kept in the winter, and a large room with the baking stove in the corner, in which the whole family slept. In the middle of the room was a small trapdoor. When we asked about it, they told us it was their toilet in winter when they were snowed in.

On our way back to Moscow we had nothing to do. We sat in our car and read, played games, or sang - we had several good singers in our midst. Only single young men were on this train, and sometimes they allowed themselves to play a prank. Once we were moving slowly past a station, and on the platform stood a number of young girls in their short white sheepskins. Suddenly, one young man jumped down from the car ahead of us, dashed over to the girls, kissed one of them on the mouth, and in the next instant

was back on the train in the car behind us. The young men who saw this from the windows had a good laugh, while the girls looked after him in confusion. When we stopped at the train station in Moscow, we always had enough time to visit the Kremlin and the museums. We also went to the bazaars, but we didn't go into the alleys, because there were too many scoundrels. After the outbreak of the Revolution it became too dangerous to go to the bazaars. There was no order anymore. One day in the bazaar, a woman screamed and accused a man of stealing her money. The crowd came running, and without investigating the matter, immediately clubbed the man to death.

After I had been home for the holidays and got back to Moscow, I was assigned to a different train, train #185, that went from Odessa to Jekaterinoslav. On the way from Moscow to Odessa, as we were changing trains at the station in Kiev, a thief stole my wallet from my pocket. Train 185 was a much better train than the one before, here all the medical cars had been passenger cars, while on the other, only cattle cars were used for the sick and wounded. On this one the nurse could visit the wounded while we were traveling. Each car had 48 beds. I was assigned to the last car of the train. Our wounded came from the Rumanian front, many still in their uniforms. They had to take these off on the train, and we gave them clean clothes. We didn't dare touch their clothes with our hands, as they were teeming with lice. Using the poker from the stove, we flung the clothes onto the roof of the train. The soldiers still had enough lice on their bodies that they caught some, sat down at the table, and organized lice races.

Our train was always loaded before evening, and before midnight we began our journey. The area around Odessa was very hilly, and there were many sharp curves. The train was long, and from time to time it came apart. While the front part went on, the back part was left standing somewhere on the steppe. A locomotive then had to come and get us. Once our trip had started, we mostly stopped just for meals. It was much easier to get the food by going outside the train, than to wind our way through all the cars as we did when the weather was bad.

One day, soon after breakfast, our train was stopped. That seemed very odd, but we would soon find out what the reason was. Our superior came and wanted to know who had emptied the toilet pail at the last station - which was strongly forbidden. Someone had done it, and the stationmaster, who was standing on the platform near the tracks to ensure clear passage for the train, had gotten wet. He had hurried into the station and telegraphed ahead to stop the train so that the guilty one could be punished. Since no one owned up to having done it, we were finally allowed to go on.

As soon as we reached Jekaterinoslav and had unloaded our train, we had to take all the bedding to be disinfected, and then later get it back. This was no small task, since each time there were 48 beds to be made up. Here, too, we had a couple of washerwomen come to wash out our lavatory. Since Russians used their fingers instead of toilet paper at that time, the walls were always decorated from top to bottom. Now when they were washed off, they were ready for the next trip. Around midnight we began the return trip, and finally had the opportunity to rest again. When we had 48 patients, and they all had typhoid, there was very little time to close our eyes at night. When we got back to Odessa, we stopped at the station in the suburbs. Only Jews lived in this area. We knew we had to guard the train here, as the Jews would steal. It was a cold, stormy, winter night, with a snowstorm raging outside. It was Herman Lenzmann's and my turn- he was

my neighbor on the train- to guard the train. As it was very cold, we went to the kitchen around midnight to get something to eat, and to drink a glass of hot tea. When we went out again and made our first round of inspection around the train, we found the door to my car standing open. As we investigated more closely, we found that all the sheets and blankets had disappeared from all 48 beds. We knew well who had done it, and that in a few days this bedding would be offered for sale at the bazaar in Odessa. At the moment there was nothing we could do, but in the morning we reported our circumstances to our superior. We were not held responsible however, as they knew only too well that it was impossible for us to see what was going on at the other end of the train in a snowstorm, and I was given new bedding and blankets.

The woman in charge of our train was the wife of a Jewish doctor. She didn't like to see us idle, and so she gave the order that when the weather allowed, we were to scour our lavatory pail with a piece of brick. And so we sat outside on the embankment and did as we had been ordered to do. I can still picture my neighbor on the train, Herman Lenzmann, sitting there with a benign smile on his face. He, a wealthy landowner, had to sit here on the ground and do this unnecessary work, in order to satisfy the silly notion of a Jewish woman. Occasionally, too, she would be accompanied through the cars, carrying a white handkerchief in her hand. She would lift the mattresses and check for dust with her handkerchief. If she found something, the person concerned had to clear all the beds and clean them. She took this opportunity to turn her resentment against her husband, with whom she lived in conflict, on us. Her husband was a doctor on another train. Later on, when I was no longer in the medical corps, I learned that she had thrown herself under the wheels of the train one day, and so ended her life.

In Odessa we always had enough time to sightsee at the harbor or in the city, and often went to the bazaar. One day I bought a pair of boots from a Jewish dealer. When I went out with them in the wet weather, I lost the soles. In typical Jewish fashion, the soles were only made of paper. Cold weather brought its own problems with it. Only the train cars used for living had water in the washrooms, as these were heated. These washrooms were situated right above the axles and wheels. The wastewater then froze the wheels and rails together in one big lump. We had to crawl under the cars, armed with a short axe, and chop the ice off the wheels, or the locomotive would not be able to move the train when we had loaded the wounded. It was not a pleasant job. We also had to keep the stoves in our cars hot. Because we used coal for heating, this was not easily done. In the North we used birch wood for heating, and it was easy to make fire, but coal was different. We discovered that if we used a piece of towrope soaked in the oil from the axle bearing, the coals would soon be crackling. However, we had to make sure that the railway officials who accompanied the train did not see us, or they would have become very indignant. Overheated bearings could easily result.

When the unrest in Russia steadily increased in the spring, I saw to it that I got back to Moscow, and from there, home. In February of 1917, the Tsar resigned and Kerensky took over the government. He wanted to continue the war, but the soldiers didn't want to fight anymore. Then everything really got out of hand. The soldiers deserted and went home. I got home safely in time for the harvest. While I was home on vacation, Kerensky was removed from government and Lenin came into power. After this there was no government and I did not return to the medical corps.

## **UNDER THE REDS AND ANARCHISTS** **1917-1918**

I left Moscow at the beginning of summer and headed for home. As I mentioned before, there was no longer any order in the land. The police had disappeared. On my way home on the train, a woman accused a soldier of stealing her purse. Without investigating the matter, the crowd was immediately willing to beat the man to death. Later the woman found her wallet under the seat, and she too had to pay with her life. On the same trip, a soldier had attempted to jump off the train at his home, but fell under the wheels and was all cut up. When the train stopped we all went to look at the body. I got home safely just before the harvest.

My Aunt Neufeld worked both her own land and Grandmother's at that time. The harvest was still pretty good. A pud (40 lbs.) of wheat brought 20 rubles of Kerensky money. Right after the harvest, the price of wheat went up to 40 rubles. Then the officials came to our village and wanted the landowners to double the wages of the workers who had worked for them in the summer. One evening a couple of men came to my aunt's (*Olga & Isaac's mother - M. Enns*) house and wanted her to sign this agreement. She, however, pretended she had to get something from the other room, opened the window, jumped out, and disappeared in the garden. When the officials realized they had been deceived, they left the house. Later, my aunt was arrested and taken to Halbstadt where she was forced to sign anyway.

In October there was a coup. Kerensky fled across the border, and Lenin, with Trotzky, took over the leadership. Where in the beginning we experienced very little of the revolution going on in Moscow and Petersburg, gradually the waves of revolution reached us too. Again and again followers of Lenin, who were spying out those who were against Lenin and Communism, came from Moscow, seeking to inform us about the new government and our role in it. We knew only one thing: things got worse from day to day, instead of better. The bank in Halbstadt was closed. Everyone who had money there lost it, and had to sign papers of forfeit. The government took it all. The thin paper of printed books was used by the Reds to roll their cigarettes. It was dangerous at that time, too, to wear glasses, or a tie, because the ordinary Russian did not have these things. Only those belonging to the upper class would own these, and so they were seen as enemies. In Halbstadt it happened that, if someone walked down the street wearing a good pair of pants and met one of the Reds who took a liking to them, he'd have to take

them off in the street and hand them over. The Reds had also changed their clocks to new time. If they stopped someone on the street and asked the time, and it didn't agree with the new time, he had to hand over his watch. All kinds of Red riff-raff came into our villages as well. They came and took the hams from the loft, rummaged through everything in the house, and took what they fancied.

In February 1918, a band of sailor anarchists came to Halbstadt and took control of the county seat. This gang began their true reign of terror in Halbstadt and the surrounding area. (Another account of this is given elsewhere) A man by the name of Penner was taken into custody in Tiegenhagen. Many weeks later someone found his body in a field. Margaret, who was just coming from the meetinghouse in Tiegenhagen, went into the yard to see the body, which was lying on the wooden wagon. He lay there without a nose or ears. In the evenings then, we sat in the dark at the window and watched the street to see if any strange riders came into the village, so that we would have time to flee. I spent many a night sleeping in the field, in the hedge of olive trees, with the horse tied to my foot. It was too dangerous at home. In the spring of 1919, we had a group from Don-Bas settle in our area. They were coal miners with their families. They were very demanding, and wanted to drink only whole milk, not skim. Luckily they didn't stay very long. When they heard that the Germans were coming, they disappeared like smoke.