

Letters from Europe

Edited by Trail End State Historic Site Superintendent Cynde Georgen; from *Trail End Notes*, August 2000

In the summer of 1920, Eula, Manville and Rosa-Maye Kendrick took an ocean liner across the Atlantic for an extended tour of Europe. Senator Kendrick, busy with the affairs of state and industry, was unable to join them on this, their first trip outside America. Kendrick had been to Europe before: in 1917 he went overseas to visit troops at the front during World War One.

The following are excerpts from letters written to the Senator by his family, describing their stays in France, Italy, Switzerland and Ireland - just a few of the many countries they visited during their three-month stay. The originals are in the Kendrick Cattle Company Collection.



Venice, 1920 (Manville Kendrick Collection, TESHHS)

From Rosa-Maye, 14 June 1920 Washington, D.C. - We're all packed and ready to leave the apartment and, on June 17th, the good old U.S.A., which I have no doubt will look mighty good to us before we get back to it ... You may be sure that you will really be with us all the way. The fact that you have been over and seen these things makes me the more keen to see what you have so vividly described to us.

From Eula, 15 June 1920, Washington, D.C. - I could not tell you before you left how very much of a slacker I feel, in leaving you to shift for yourself all summer. I somehow felt you would laugh at me and you never believe me anyway, so I couldn't bring myself to the point ...

From Manville, 17 June 1920, Aboard the RMS Imperator - Well, I'm on board and all ready to go. I never was in favor of the trip, but since I am here, I think the thing to do is to get something out of it ... Hope politics let you get at least reasonable time on and around the ranches. I wish I could be with you.

From Eula, 17 June 1920, Aboard the RMS Imperator - It is cloudy, misty and cool, so we can be comfortable from the start ... I'm glad we don't have submarines to worry about as you did; our voyage ought to be pleasant, every minute of it ... I hope you are getting along nicely ...

From Eula, 23 June 1920, Aboard the RMS Imperator - All the time I am comparing this carefree trip of ours with yours in 1917. When we walk the lighted decks at night and sit in the brilliantly illuminated salon watching the dancers enjoying the music ... I am reminded of your dark and threatening passage, with every moment one of apprehension and uncertainty.

From Eula, 7 July 1920, Paris, France - We were at the Argonne Cemetery on July 4. It was an impressive sight with each of the 8,000 or more crosses decorated with an American flag. The cemetery is beautifully laid out and kept and a mother would have a little comfort in leaving a son there if he fell, a sacrifice to his country. It will always be vivid in our minds because one of our party, a Mrs. Swan, sought and found her only remaining son there ... she was so brave. She is leaving him there where he fell.

From Rosa-Maye, 11 July 1920, Interlaken, Switzerland - Our trip over the battlefields I wouldn't have missed for anything ... in most places, the trenches, partially filled up, are hidden almost completely from view by tall grass, weeds and a profusion of wild flowers. In fact, one can almost detect the location of trenches and shell holes by the poppies growing in them, red as the blood shed there.

From Manville, 28 July 1920, Florence, Italy - Of course Mother has written you of the battlefields, so I could not add much in way of description. Even with the grass growing long over the fields, they impressed me more than anything so far on the trip; especially Verdun. Even this post-mortem view of the scene gave me a new slant on the whole affair.

From Eula, 1 August 1920, Venice, Italy - Your feelings are hurt when you look eagerly into the dirty canals to see them covered with bits of floating straw, melon rinds, mud and everything imaginable; into the gondolas to see them dirty and worn ... The gondoliers, too, were disappointing for they were dirty and half-clad and lacked all the charm of the ones we see in the picture book who wear velvet suits with red sashes and who sing as they row you swiftly along.

From Manville, 4 August 1920, Lucerne, Switzerland - We are out of Italy at last thank goodness ... Switzerland is beautiful, and is the only country I have seen on this side of the lake which lives up to what has been said of it. As fair a land as one could wish to see ... If I am lucky I will arrive in the States about Sept. 6.

From Eula, 8 August 1920, Strasbourg, Alsace-Lorraine - We hated to leave Switzerland; to us, it is the loveliest, most satisfying country to travel in over here. The hotels are so fine, the views so exquisite, the food so good, that nothing can equal it.

From Eula, 11 August 1920, Anvers, Belgium - Manville has decided he will try for return passage on the Emperor on August 28 ... Rosa-Maye and I are staying an extra three weeks during which time we want to get into Ireland for a few days ... Though it will still be sometime till we get home, we begin to feel the pull and I for one shall be happy to put my foot on my native soil once more.



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