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# DETOUR VIA AMERICA

by Carl SIGERIST-Schelling

The truthful report about my trip over Stuttgart, Frankfort, Hamburg, Havre, (LeHavre) New-York, Philadelphia, Niagara- Falls, Chicago, to Pepin in the State of Wisconsin and back home again over New York, Liverpool, London, Folkestone, Boulogne, and Paris.

Dedicated to my family and friends

**C.Sigerist-Schelling**

Schaffhausen February 1879

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This writing, laying before me, is the result of a promise, an oath I made to myself. When I, through my, in the spur of a moment taken decision to make a detour over America instead of my intended holiday trip to the town of Ragaz, in Switzerland. I realize fully that I caused my dear wife, children, relatives and acquaintances no small grievance through this unexpected trip overseas. I promised myself then to compensate my loved ones with an interesting and detailed description with this day to day travel-journal. I hope that this writing on long winter nights represent a little bit of a compensation for the experienced anguish. The ten day return trip by passenger steam ship from New York to Liverpool gave me a perfect opportunity to fulfill my promise. Enjoying the nicest weather possible, sitting every day on the high deck, from where I did have a perfect view about the sea and its movements, all the while enjoying there the mostly soft, lukewarm air while writing this travel journal.

That I decided to give it into print is that in my judgment a hand written manuscript does not demand as much attention as a printed one, and besides that print is without any

doubt easier to read. Above all it fulfills also my intention to make my experiences available to a greater circle of friends and acquaintances. I hope, that nobody will put my travel experiences aside, totally unsatisfied and hope for a merciful critique.

### **The Publisher**

It was end July 1877. The renovation work on my newly acquired premises "To the old Bear" (Zum Alten Bären) which I bought at the beginning of the year was finally finished. Tired as I was from all the dealings with the trades, from all the disappointments, I needed desperately to recover with a extended vacation.

My plan was, to travel through Switzerland, and stay either in Ragaz and enjoy the bath facilities there or to go on to the beautiful Appenzellerland to enjoy the clean air and regain my strength and health. Before that my business demanded that I first, had to travel to Stuttgart and from there to the most important Tannery Town of Württemberg.

I left Schaffhausen by train in the morning of August 2nd, traveling over Singen, Rottweil, Reutlingen arriving late at night in Stuttgart. Next morning I took the first train to B., looked a little bit around town, and after I finished all my business affairs, I returned to Stuttgart with the intention to travel the next day over Ulm, Munich, Innsbruck, through the Inn river valley, down into the St.Gallen region and once there, to stay either at Ragaz or Gais.

Since I am a friend of mountain climbing and I this time wanted to stay longer as usual, I took as a precautionary measure just in case an unforeseen accident would happen, my Military Service Reserve Identification Papers with me. I did not have my passport with me, which I for the projected trip not needed anyway.

That this precautionary action turned out later be a good, as one can see later on, in the continuum of this travel journal.

My luggage was minimal and intended only for a trip of short duration and for a travel destination not to far away. This time I had because of previous embarrassing experiences the right medium of the well known "too much" and the "not enough" in clothes and underwear. With the first it is too difficult to travel the world's on fleeting feet, but with the last it is, if not just about dangerous, the least, often very embarrassing

The embarrassment of such a situation I well remember. Some years ago I chose a detour by way of Ragaz- over the "Spluegen" to Milan in Italy. Because of an extraordinarily heat wave I did gulp down a glass of bier, due to this I attracted diarrhea, this thought me a hard lesson next time to travel less foolhardy. Therefore I carried this time more shirts, woolen and linen underwear with me than otherwise. A small suitcase and a leather briefcase, a coat and an umbrella, completed my travel luggage.

Before I was about to leave Stuttgart I wanted to see the capital City of Württemberg at least roughly. I hired for this purpose a carriage that showed me the streets of the City. The simplest and easiest medium to get an impression of a City in the shortest possible time without getting tired.



Horse drawn carriage common around 1870

That day, it was rainy and since I assume that most of the readers are familiar with or could become familiar with this City, I therefore do not submit a detailed description of that City. I left with the 9 o'clock evening train, who not, as originally planed, traveled toward Ulm, Innsbruck and back into Switzerland, but toward Frankfort (am Main), and Hamburg.

The day before, during the trip to Stuttgart, evolved in my mind a totally different travel plan. For a long time was it my wish, one day to make a trip to America. I did have a brother living there for 26 years and whom I did not see or talk too during the last 20 years. Besides that I also had a brother-in-law living in New York for 6 years. My brother did invite me already many times and ask to visit him. I often discussed the subject of a visit over there, with my wife, and my mother. All I got were objections, often with tears as the result of my attempts to discuss this.

I denied myself from year to year the realization of my dearest wish, also because I thought that my business did not allow me to be absent for such a long period of time. Now this time, it was, considering these points, a different story.

This year I hired the older brother of my brother-in-law who already in my business is employed. Therefore, this time I could dare to take the step, if only I wanted too, and had the courage to do so. My two brothers-in-laws can run the business fro while. Nothing would hinder me anymore at the fulfilling of my dearest wish. Surely would have also this time the tears and cries moved me in such a way that I would not have found the courage to do so.

But there was now a big difference, I was not at home, I was away; liberated! -- I saw no sad face, no tears, heard no cries, no ifs and buts from relatives and acquaintances. Never did I experience such a feeling of freedom as today. Not even when I as a state convict, finally was released. I was convicted because of my religious belief and matters of principle, after more than 6 month incarceration from being attached to a chain-gang and forced to hard labor,