

Continuation of Diary No. 1

Journey of Isaac Boskowitz  
from New York to Mobile, Ala.

from December 18th 1854  
to December 31st 1854

ISAAC WAS BORN IN 1849

December 18th

To-day I got up a little after 6 o'clock, dressed myself, laid Tefilin and then took my breakfast.

8 o'clock. I went right away to Mr. Lehrberger, met him on the way and he asked at the New Orleans steamer if she would leave to-day and at what time. He ordered the tickets for us, so that we should not get bad places. I went to his house and came back at 11 o'clock for dinner, then came L. and told us that our boat would leave at 2 pm and I had to be at his house in an hour. We ate very quickly, very good but I had not much appetite, because this is always the same if I am on a journey or just before one. So we made ourselves ready and I took my underwear and sewed \$30.- in it and Frcs 20.- in gold.

At 12 o'clock sharp we met Lehrberger, but they were still eating. Meanwhile I bought Joe, Sarah, Jenny and Judy candies for 25 cents. When they had finished their dinner they called a car man, who had to take us to the boat. We took leave from Mrs. Adelheid Bloch, Buckman, Jette and Iekelman. Mr. Lehrberger took the stage to bring Pety to the boat, but we were a little earlier. When Lehrberger came, we took our trunks and then we went on board of our ship and brought them into steerage. The boat was nicely flagged and she began to smoke. We both, Joe and I made an arrangement that one at a time, each of us had to watch our trunks and we went to the starboard. Mr. Lehrberger heard a man talking German. We learned that he made the trip to Havanah only and Mr. Lehrberger introduced us to him and begged him probably to find a man, who made the same trip as we and would take care of us then. Now the mail came and the visitors had to leave the ship. Mr. L. left the boat and went to the other side, so that we were able to see him. I said adieu to him and went downstairs and Joe came upstairs. Joe and Pety stayed on board till the boat departed and therefore I was not able to go up again, but I saw it directly when the boat moved.

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Here there were more sleeping places than on the other steamer, but it had only 40 steerage passengers, 14 of them stopped at Havanah. Then people went down to look after their tickets. Everyone got a red one and we had to keep it until New Orleans. This work was done by the First Officer and the Purser. A little later we met a young fellow. He told us he was an American, but he talked German like a German. After a while I heard very many people speaking German. There were about 10 Germans on the boat and we thought we heard angels and G'd helped us again.

In the evening I went upstairs and now I saw where we were. We had to go out the same way we came in, I did not know this. We always saw land and we saw lighthouses. Our boat was twice as big as the sailor-boat, which brought me from Germany to N.Y. It was an old boat, 66 years old and had not a very strong engine. For the evening meal the table was set very nicely and we ate tea, meat and fine toast and butter, but I did not eat very much. The temperature was very low but after 2 or 3 days it began to get warmer. To-day I went to bed very early. Joseph and I, we slept upstairs and Pety downstairs, although we paid only for one bed, but there were not so many passengers.

#### December 19 th

To-day I got up at 7-o'clock, drank a little bit of coffee and had some toast and butter, but I did not like it very much. I was glad we brought some food along with us. We had 2 lbs. of Limburger cheese for about \$ 1.00, apples, half a jar of honey, a loaf of bread, sugar and lemons, wine and brandy, a bottle each and sausages. It was very nice of Mr. Lehrberger that he gave us this. Later we could not eat very much of the food, even though the boat was much better than the German ship. To-day I felt very cold and I wore my fur the whole day long. Today came the seasickness to almost all the people, but we were brave. Everyday we could see many sail boats .

The cold did not go away and last night we did not have enough blankets to cover ourselves to keep warm.

Pretty soon I knew very many people, Germans, Hessians and Prussians , who were already a long time in America. There were also many Irishmen on the steamer, but they were not very much in favor of the other people. I learned that 2 men (Irish) were going to Mobile, but they were not able to speak German, so I couldn't make myself understood and tell them we were also going to the same town.

This evening we had a rather strong wind and the ocean was not calm. We had pretty high waves and in the night between 11 and 12 we were very afraid, when a big wave shook the boat and all believed all would be over! We all went out of our beds and one of the Americans went out to look, but it was all right. Then we went back and slept until 7 o'clock.

December 20th

We ate our breakfast, Pety, Joe and I. We took some toast and after a while we ate some apples. To-day the sun was shining pretty warm, but the sea was not really quiet. I heard that an Italian packed his bundles and kept all his cases in his hands to be able to save himself. That was of course fine fun for us. To-day we felt that it was no longer as cold as on the first day. The gentleman from Havanah visited us every day and asked us how we were doing. He went with us to the steward and we got warm blankets. Very often I went to mid-ship and looked how the machines worked. Some of the sails were made of silk, but they were not used very often, only in a good wind.

December 21st

To-day we had the longest night and the shortest day, but we did not feel it so very much, because it was such a beautiful day, but I was glad when it was over. The wind was very strong, but it was as warm as May in Germany. To-day I tried to smoke a cigar, but when I finished I didn't feel well and had to go down and take a little of my Karmelite extract. Then I felt better.

Joe went to bed and looked nearly like dead; he thought that I was also seasick, but with me it was only the cigar. I went upstairs to Pety and told her, but she laughed. Then we went to dinner. They had pudding to-day, but I couldn't eat anything till evening and then we had cheese, bread and brandy.

December 22nd

Now we were not able to drink coffee, because our milk turned sour and we had to put it away. To-day the sea was quiet and the boat went her way. With a steamer it was possible to move, but on a sail ship we had to wait for a good wind. May be that with a steamer there is more danger, but I think it will be quite equal. There is a risk everywhere, but when G'd is around the human beings, there is no danger. To-day the man from Havanah came again and we asked him if we would soon be in Havanah, we thought perhaps to-morrow, but he told us that we should be there by Monday. We were surprised, because we thought we would be in New Orleans by that time, but he was right. We arrived in Havanah on Tuesday morning. The man told us that this steamer would take a much longer time than usual. Other boats would need only 4 or 5 days to Havanah. When we told this to the other Germans, they laughed about it, but he was right. On this ship we had very many sailors. They were the captain, the first officer, 2nd officer, 2 steermen, engineer, many sailors, stewards, cooks and a barber. To-day we prayed with devotion Mariv al Hanissim.

December 23rd and December 24th

The weather was always fine and and we did not have to cry "bruh", for it was nice and warm. This evening we saw a lighthouse and the 24th we saw land. To-day we celebrate Sabbath and drank a small cup of wine. The food on the ship did not taste good to the other passengers too.

In the afternoon I always went to the top of the mast to see Cuba and there I always found others who looked out too. They always took their glasses when they saw a boat or anything like it. We were served well at mealtimes; the steward came ringing the bell to dinner etc.. There were very many black people on the boat. They worked in the kitchen. We had plenty of drinking water and we could get it as often as we wanted, but we had to take a piece of ice to make it cold. The first day it was cold and we did not care for water. To-day, the 24th we ate "Nudaling", it was very hot. I ate a big piece of it and if they would have offered me another piece, I would have eaten it, but all the passengers came with their forks and scraped it all together.

December 25th

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This afternoon we were about one week at sea and we had not reached land. Some people thought that we were not on the right way, but I did not believe this. Our captain was an old man, his wife was with him and he was a captain since 14 years of age and came this way very often. The Germans told us that they knew very well where they were. In the evening the 1st officer went to the head of the ship and after a little while we saw land, Cuba, and Florida on the right and everyone was pleased. When we saw the land it seemed to be clouds at first. I went on deck at 10 o'clock, it was wonderful.

The next morning we ought to be in Brakless, Havanah. We slept until next morning, then Joe came and told us we should hurry up. We could see a lighthouse at 7 o'clock. Now we saw forests and houses; all things were coming nearer and nearer and at 8 o'clock we could see the city of Havanah.

All the passengers went to starboard. The weather was very fine and the sea calm. The giraffe looked too. It was, as if he wore his neck high on a mast. It had a neck about as big as a man, very long legs but a very short body. It had very short ears and two little horns. His color was spotted, white and yellow. Everyone who wanted to see him, could do it. I never in my life saw such an animal and looked twice. It stood near one end of the mast in a little wooden house. All day it had its head out of the house and at night time it put the head inside. The whole body of this animal was covered with linen and a woolen blanket. When the weather got warm, the blanket was taken away. It had its own attendant come from New York and should go to New Orleans. I myself gave it a little bit of hay. It put its head down and ate from everybody. We had to take a ladder to look into its house.

When it was about 9 o'clock, we came into port. The city seemed to be very nice from a far distance with nice buildings. Horses seemed to swim in the water. We could see some boats in the harbour, but it was a quarter of the port of New York. When we came nearer we saw very many small boats. The people wore white dresses and straw hats and looked very nice. The pilots came on board and showed the way and commanded the ship. Now we approached Havanah. The pier was about half an hour's distance from the town. We passed a fortification with very many cannons. The 2nd officer and 2 sailors went out in a strong boat to fix up the ship on the pier. 0.30 am.

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Now we arrived in Havanah. When we arrived we saw an American steamer, which was just leaving for California. When we arrived in the port, we saw the place, where Columbus passed and on the right we saw the monument. The people were standing there in bright summer outfits and straw hats, at a time, when our people usually wear dark furs. Small railways came to bring new passengers to the steamer and took those who were going to leave with them to the city. Then several small boats came to bring oranges, cigars and bread. When we came into the harbour, the captain commanded and even the engineer stood at the megaphone. The coals were there and the negro slaves worked to bring them into the ship. I think there were about 60 men working there. Some of them did not wear clothes, but the water ran down their bodies. I also perspired, for it was as hot as July in our country. I had to think of our ancestors, but I learned that these slaves are used to this life. In Havanah there are about 25000 slaves.

#### TRIP FROM HAVANAH TO NEW ORLEANS

from Tuesday till Saturday morning (December 26th - 30th)

The boat took new passengers and freight. Six boxes with oranges, which the Negroes had to handle. We ate plenty of these oranges. We got 40 new passengers,

who came from California. Three were Germans and one of them came to our room. We were very afraid of these fellows at first. They were big and strong men with long beards and untidy suits. I told a man from Berlin, that I hoped these fellows would not be passengers and he replied "why not?" All people in California look like that and may be you will find better friends among them than you had before. They brought a sick man down to the steerage. He was always lying on the floor and they said he had a fever. It is always not nice, what is called the steerage.

All passengers went on land and I too. In front of one boat stood a soldier, white uniformed and no one was allowed was allowed to go to town without a passport.

Havanah belongs to Spain, but I think America will take it back pretty soon. I saw very many white uniformed soldiers with little skirts and Bohemian caps. Very many people came to look at the giraffe. Among these people I saw a negro with his wife and child. The child was quite naked , but it looked very pretty. I observed very many green trees and on the other side I saw wooden houses, where the slaves live.

Punctually at 3 o'clock the boat started, the gangway was taken away and the Negroes began to cry like animals. The captain came and again the boat turned and we went out the way we came in. We passed many ships, most of them were Spanish and French vessels, but there were also a few Americans. The sun was nearly set and it became evening. We could see the town of Havanah the whole evening and during the night we saw lighthouses. Now we were able to eat a little more, for now 2/3 of our trip was over.

December 27th

J

This morning the water was so beautiful. I never saw it like this before. To-day I made the acquaintance of those Germans from California. One of these men showed me a piece of gold, which he found in California. He had several of them, sometimes a piece was worth about \$5.00. The other one showed me a large heavy ring worth \$20.00. They told us they were about 4 weeks on their trip by boat and by railroad. They stayed only 2 years in California. They told us they made this trip by land with 25 oxen and they took 5 months for the journey. They came through very many sections of the country, where they met wild animals and wild men too. They all had double pistols and knives and we were afraid.

December 28th

Now we saw more boats. The water was still and the ship went very quietly. In the evening we had a storm from 7 pm until 4 the next morning and all the time we went through the Gulf it was very stormy. The wind began to rise and all at once we had big waves in the ocean. Each minute a big wave went over the vessel. Around 2 o'clock it got worse. The people woke up, it was really something. One of the Californian passengers packed his cribs, sat down on the floor and took 2 life jackets which were lying in steerage (for passengers in case of accident). Then he went upstairs to see that he could soon save himself. Next he went to the captain and begged him to let him jump into the ocean, even if all would be lost. The captain made fun; that this would be too late now. Sometimes the boat shook so badly, that we really believed "now it is over with us". It was worse than on our last journey. The machines had to work very hard to come through the heavy sea and when they work so hard, an accident could easily happen. The storm lasted till about 5 in the morning. I was not able to sleep, but I did not leave my bed. Petty and Joe went out, but I really could not. Every time I asked one of the Germans, they told me there would be no danger; but next morning we learned that it had been very bad. The waves overflowed the deck several times. I was nearly seasick from all this fright.

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December 29th

I got up at 7 o'clock. The water came in from all sides and it was pretty wet. I went upstairs and looked out, the water became calmer, but the boat went up and down and sometimes a wave flooded the deck, where I tried some of the salty water. Although I stayed all day on the foredeck and the sun shone, it was not as warm as in Havanah. Around noon the water became quiet and no more waves went over the deck while we passed the Gulf of Mexico. We saw 2 vessels nearby and around 2 o'clock we could see land and pretty soon we saw the Mississippi River. It's color is like coffee. Now we came into the river and said good-bye to the Gulf.

3 o'clock.

Now we were very close to land and we had only 90-100 English miles to travel to New Orleans. We saw small houses on one side of the river. It was quite a pleasure now to be on the water, the river with its dark yellow color was so pretty. Now we went downstairs. I packed my crib, laid my clothes out and got my suit ready, so that I had no work with it the next day, for I wanted to look around.

5 o'clock.

I went again to the foredeck. There I had a wonderful view of the sunset; the sun was like a red ball.

6 o'clock.

I went down. We ate cheese and crackers and cookies and drank a little cup of wine. Then I said my prayers. I thought I would be able to pray at Mobile that night, but man thinks and God rules.

7 o'clock

I went again to the foredeck and from there I saw a fire. I had never seen such a big one; they burnt shrubs and we could see it for a long time. We saw how a steamer transported 3 large boats. She was in the center with 2 boats on each side and one behind. I stayed on deck until 9 o'clock, then I went to bed and did not wake up until New Orleans.

NEW ORLEANS, December 30th, 1854

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I slept very well the whole night long, but at 3 o'clock I heard a shot, a sign that the steamer was reaching port. I did not know this and had a fright, so I went upstairs and learned that we were in New Orleans. Now it was a little past 3. We saw very many sailing boats pass by and pretty soon we could recognize houses of New Orleans. The steamer reached the pier at 3.15 am.

The people all got up and some of them left the boat, but we intended to stay in case some of our folks from Mobile would be there, because Mr. Lehrberger wrote that they would. We found out later that this was not so.

4 o'clock

One among the German Californians looked for a hotel and came back at 5 am and told us we should go there, because it was a good house, but I did not want to spend money. The people told us it cost only \$1.25 per day, so we took our trunks there and went together with these people to the "Crescent City Hotel". Before we left the boat, our luggage was examined; it was much stricter than in New York, because the ship came from Havanah.

At 5.30 we arrived at the hotel. We took breakfast there, liver (?), coffee and bread. I had a good appetite. Afterwards I went back to the steamer and looked out if any of my folks had been there. I left my address from the hotel at the steamer, in case anyone should come. They understood my English. After 10 o'clock we went to the rail road and asked for the next train. It was at 11. This was too late for us, so we decided to take the train at 2 o'clock. We went back to the hotel and there I played the piano a little. We had our dinner a little after one. We took it in a hurry and then rushed to the train. I had to pay \$3.- for 3 breakfasts and 3 dinners. Three of the Californians went with us to Mobile, but not the Germans, the American Californians. We took a car which brought us to the station. We arrived there five minutes before 2 o'clock, ordered

our luggage and took our tickets (25 cents each) and went into the train which started right away. We were very glad that one of the American Germans was so helpful to us. I was always very angry before this all and thanked God that He helped us on our way. I liked the railway here better than the one in Germany, for the seats here were all upholstered in red velvet. I thought this trip would take about 2 hours, but it took only half an hour.

The train stopped and we saw the steamer "California", which should take us to Mobile. We went directly to the boat and I got the tickets. Pety took cabin class for \$6.- and we on deck paid \$4.-. I had to cut off the gold which was sewn in my clothing. It was not enough without this, as I had only \$5.- in my pocket. At 4 o'clock our trunks arrived and we left at 5 pm. I met some Germans from Old Bavaria. They had come overseas a short time ago. On the same pier was another boat which went to Montgomery. This boat goes very fast, but it was 8.30 the next morning when we arrived at Mobile. I didn't sleep very much that night, only a few hours on deck.

December 31, 1854

To-day, the last day of our journey, we saw some big fish jumping up and down in the water.

7 o'clock

Now we saw forests and houses and later on we saw plenty of boats with two and three masts. They could not go directly to Mobile because of sandbanks and low water. We could not see anything off Mobile until 8.15 and the city looked very nice from the distance. Now the boat turned to the left and shortly after 8.30 we arrived happily and well in MOBILE:

When we arrived we did not see more than a forest and little houses, very few steamers and very many people. Then Joe came and told us his brother William was here and I hurried to him and said hello to him. He ordered our luggage to his house and I went with his brother-in-law , Joe Bloch. He brought me to the store where my brother was. Mr. Bloch went with me to Dauphin Street. We came to the store and I went in. I met Ignatz Hoenigsberger, who called my dear brother Anton. He hurried to me and we kissed each other and I cried for happiness. He inquired after home. We stayed in the store until after 10 o'clock. Then we went to the house of William Leinkauf, who showed us the Post-Office. We had to take a long walk.

I went to W. and said hello to his wife and sister-in-law and there I had to sit down for a while. Afterwards we had dinner. In the afternoon I took a walk until evening. I had so much to tell Anton. He showed me the Mobile Railroad. Later I took my supper.

End of the Year 1854.