

August 18, 1957

Dear Friends:

We are sailing up the Rhine and it is quite beautiful - steep sided with grape fields, castles, towers, and pretty villas. I'm sitting by the rail with both movie and still cameras in readiness. The rain is still following us, about 14 days to date. However, as we are in buses, trains or boats it hasn't held us up but is bad for color photography.

Last night we stayed in Essen instead of Dusseldorf and had the most extravagant accommodations yet - single rooms with beautiful beds with eider down quilts and pillows - quite lush. We all had a large wash basin but in the true European style the most essential items are still down the hall marked "Herrens". We have been men, seniors, student, gentlemen, monsieur, and now herrens. Every so often the buses would stop and if the place was deserted we were indiscriminate.

Yesterday we left Amsterdam by bus and it was quite late by the time we reached Essen. All of the fellows are well although Wes still has an occasional temperature and we get him to bed right after the evening meal. Speaking of meals, they have been excellent; good, wholesome and much better than average.

Because of the fact that we have hotel cards to fill out every day I have appointed Dave Jung as my personal Secretary. Each day he gets the cards distributed, filled out, and returned and has handled it excellently. The personality of all of these fellows is really coming out. Tom Short gets so excited he needs four hands to talk. The Whitemans need a trailer to carry their gear, Steve Hanna did a terrific job at the Jamboree on distribution of food and control of commissary, Toni Carpenter got more out of the Jamboree than all others and can speak fluent French by now, Ron Depiazza is doing a fine job as S.P.L. but usually has to be awakened instead of waking us up. All of the fellows are growing like weeds and really enjoying the trip.

The cars, the people, the money and the stores are major sources of wonder and interest. We could buy presents by the ton but have little time and of course a limited amount of money. Things here on the whole are cheap compared to our prices but when you figure how much it costs to mail it back or the problem of carrying a cuckoo clock, a dresden vase, 3 pairs of dutch shoes and a French poodle it makes us pause and reconsider.

We all can see now why people come to Europe. There is so much to see and it is all so cheap and different. Yesterday during a bus stop we bought a whole tin of assorted cookies (filled) and about 2 lbs. of delicious cheese for a snack for the Troop and it came to 9 guilders or a little over \$2.00.

Because of the tight schedule today we just had church services (Protestant) on board and it was quite unique to sail through the beautiful valley and listen to the old hymns sung by male voices.

This is a most terrific trip - very beautiful - all terraced gardens, orchards, unique homes, castles and busy bustling river traffic. The current is very fast and boats passing us rush by at startling rates.

We just picked up a pilot because the current is tricky and the cliffs narrow. This is the spot where it is said the beautiful mermaid, Lorelei, lured sailors to their deaths as they passed her seated on the cliff. About this time a simple German girl could cause a riot on board this ship.

Some of the boys have been getting word from the parents regarding these little notes and the parents enjoy them. Thanks for doing a fine job. I know it is lots of work.

This trip has been worth every bit of effort and all the money that it cost. If every parent could take this they would never hesitate to send their sons. They learn much more than they realize both in history and economics and also in learning to live together and get along. More castles coming up.

Best regards,  
Bernard C. Hains

Thursday, August 22nd.

Dear Friends:

Well we have had quite a time. We had quite a quick trip to Heidelberg and there found ourselves in a student home (after an hour and half search). It was clean and quiet but not as lavish as Essen. Our spirits were rather low as we wanted to shop and had lost so much time looking for our hotel but we went out to lunch and then back to pick up a couple of cameras that had been forgotten. We discovered that another bus was there full of (you will never guess) girls! I've never seen a group pep up so quickly! They were Mormon girls from Utah and had been on tour since June. I talked to their leader and planned an evening get together.

We toured Heidelberg and the castle and then shopped, and how they shopped! You would think they were giving things away. Actually they bought little for themselves and many presents. Hint - parents better be there to meet them.

After supper we planned to go out to an inn with the girls (they were older than our boys but glad to see American boys). As the girls could not use alcoholics and our fellows couldn't it worked out well and they had a swell time. Actually the place was crowded and it never really got far but at least they had a chance to talk. That night Wes was quite ill and we got a German Doctor who could prescribe some medicine and we made plans to leave him behind. I spent most of the evening with the doctors and agreed to stay behind.

The next day the group left right after breakfast and I went into town. After much deliberation I cancelled the hospital arrangement we had made because Wes was much better and for the first time in several days had no temperature. I left him in bed all morning and the American Express picked us up at 1:00 P.M., got us on the Rhinegold Express and we arrived in Lucerne ahead of the bus.

The bus had made a longer trip but the needed rest and medicine was just what Wes needed and he is fine now. We were worried but he is O.K. They were afraid pleurisy would develop but caught it just in time.

Fortunately this has been our only serious illness and because I as a parent was along we were able to handle it without putting him in a hospital. If it had been any other we could not have taken the risk as it is the parent's decision if there is any doubt that decides.

Early the next day we took the most beautiful trip you can ever imagine. We took a 13 hour bus ride over the mountain passes through the heart of the Alps. It is impossible to describe the beauty of such a trip. By day's end we were out of film as the sun finally came out after 18 days of rain and overcast.

They have special busses with 8 speeds forward, the wheel on the right (to see the edge) and a more powerful motor. They are also narrower. We went up and up and up into the most awe inspiring heights. The roads cut back and forth and we could look up or down and see all of the buses. We rolled the roof back and took pictures out of the roof, out of the windows, at every stop.

We stopped at the Rhone Glacier and here is a small gift shop and you can walk right into the Glacier! Did you ever walk into a block of ice? It is beautiful - cool, green colored and wet. As we came out so did the sun revealing more peaks that we couldn't see before. It was by far the highlight of the trip. After a marvelous lunch we again toured through mountains and over passes to Montreux.

Our hotel at Lucerne was outstanding but the half (we often are divided at hotels) that got to the Palace really had their eyes opened. It was filled with elderly people in furs. They had chamber music after dinner. Strangely enough they seem to enjoy seeing the boys and many people ask us about our trip, where we are from, etc.

Today we slept late and took our bus to Geneva. Nice trip completely around the lake and a chance to see the European section of the United Nations. The buildings are beautiful and the view is outstanding. Just as we were leaving the haze cleared and we could see Mt. Blanc, all snow covered and majestic in the distance.

If we did no more than see Switzerland it was well worth the trip.

on the train to LeHarve  
Aug. 26, 1957

Dear Friends:

Well here is the last epistle! We have had a whale of a time in Paris and at 7:30 are all on the last train before loading on the boat. After leaving Switzerland we arrived late in Paris (about 11:30). The next morning we and 1600 other Scouts and Leaders tried to shop. Of course we were all given the same suggested places to shop in so you can imagine the crowd in the few shops. We tried to get an elbow in a perfume shop but it was no use what with fifty or sixty Scouts getting squirted in a 20 x 20 room it smelled like a combined wedding, funeral and flower show. During the afternoon and following day we toured Versailles, Eiffel Tower, Notre Dame, St. Chapelle, Napoleon's Tomb, and all major points of Paris. The evenings were free and the fellows had a ball.

Some of our overall impressions might be of interest. Please remember these of course are my own or other individuals' and not necessarily any one boy's. We were particularly impressed with the rebuilding job going on in Germany, Essen, Dusseldorf and Manheim (which only Wes & I saw) are almost completely restored with little evidence of the terrific (75%) bomb damage. The new stores are modern, efficient and extremely well stocked with goods of excellent quality at very reasonable prices.

Paris and London are falling far behind. London is slowly repairing but not aggressively. Paris is not taking advantage of its tremendous beauty and although it had little damage we felt it could have used some in many places. Prices are high.

Switzerland is a dream - beautiful, picturesque, costly but reasonably so and everywhere was evidence of tremendous preparedness. Fortresses dug into the mountains with enough food and supplies for five years of siege. Every able man is trained and every Sunday they shoot for practice. A good lesson here - freedom has to be constantly fought for and can never be taken for granted. Swiss, Germans and Dutch gave the impression of possessing great powers of work where the English, French and Belgians seem less so. Impressions from others that toured elsewhere seemed to confirm this and those that saw Italy say it, too, is beautiful.

To the parents - Please try to meet your sons. In most cases they have missed you and have many presents which, if not appropriate, at least show evidence of consideration. Most of the fellows have spent all they had and borrowed more (if they could). Don't scold - there was much to see and buy. Please remember he is not the same boy that left. The same in many ways but not in all ways. Don't press him for details. These will come later - especially as pictures are developed. His pictures will not be good, in most cases they were made under the poorest conditions. We had rain practically all the way or overcast skies and much was taken through windows and from moving buses or trains.

I hope you will feel as I do that we had a grand bunch of fellows, superior to many others, and that the trip was well worth all the energy, time and money that you and I and the boys put into the trip.

Best regards and goodbye,

Barney Hains

Our guide (on our bus) was new and could speak little English so on the way back Toni Carpenter sat in the guide's seat and translated all the things the bus driver told us about the area and its history. It was fun.

Tonight we are all resting for another shopping spree in the morning and then at 2:00 P.M. off to gay Paree!

We are all looking forward to Paris but more to getting back home - we are about toured out. It will be good to get back to a hamburger and a milk shake and cold milk (pasteurized) and be able to use good old American dollars instead of guilders, shillings, marks, francs, etc. Besides we're all broke.

We are all well and looking forward to seeing the Statue of Liberty and our parents and friends.

Best regards from all,  
Bernard C. Hains

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COPY OF A LETTER RECEIVED BY THE UNCLE SAM COUNCIL, B.S.A.

August 28, 1957

We have been advised, as of today, the arrival schedule of the ship that is transporting the Jubilee Jamboree Contingent back to the United States.

FAIRSEA - September 4 - Pier #42 (at the foot of  
Morton Street)

The ship is scheduled to dock between 9:00 and 10:00 A.M.

Parents may be advised of this arrival time with the additional information that if there is any change in this arrival schedule, this office will notify Councils concerned on Tuesday, September 3rd.

Information can be obtained after that date by contacting the Sitmar Steamship Lines in New York City - Telephone JUDson 6-2505.

DWIGHT M. RAMSAY  
REGIONAL SCOUT EXECUTIVE

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The Uncle Sam Council, B.S.A. will not be contacting you again so for any further information call your own Council Office on Tuesday, September 3rd. I understand that the New York Times and Herald Tribune carry arrival times of ships.

UNCLE SAM COUNCIL, B.S.A.