Folder 21 – Klassen, Issac – 1936 - 1938

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Contains handwritten letters, one in German that's faded and difficult to read.
See also Kirman -- Kuntz. The file for Klassen is located in "Additional Files" at the bottom of the page.

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January 3, 1936.

In Re: Isaac T. Klassen,
wife & 6 children, &
Jacob T. Klassen,
wife & 2 children,

Mrs. J. C. Guggenheimer,
205 West 57th Street,
New York, N. Y.

Dear Mrs. Guggenheimer:—

I wish to acknowledge receipt of your telegram, and I presume the check will be forthcoming in the mail.

The people for whom you sent this money are Mennonites consisting of four adults and eight children. When I found them, their plight was most desperate, living in one room, sleeping on a dirt floor and no food. Thanks to Dr. Goldschmidt, we were able to feed them and remove them to better quarters. Their destination is Canada, and the American Immigration is prepared to permit them to travel thru the United States to Canada, but they do not have money for transportation. They require 6½ tickets. They cannot go back into the interior of Mexico because the Mexican Government has forbidden them to worship according to their religious instincts and the Labor Law in Mexico does not allow them to work. The case is most deplorable, but with sufficient funds to buy the tickets for their transportation, we could send them to Canada to their people.

Would it be possible to contact Mennonites in New York City and interest them in this humane case?

Thanking you most heartily for your cooperation, I am

Most Sincerely,

MRS. FRANK ZLABOVSKY.

P. S. Kindly give my kindest regards to Dr. Goldschmidt.
January 1, 1936.

My dear Mrs. Zlaborsky,

I just sent you a telegram saying that I was sending you twenty-five dollars for the Canadian émigrés of which Dr. Goldschmidt told me, and I am glad to enclose my cheque for that amount. I am only sorry that I cannot make it larger.

Could you give me some further details about this situation? It is just possible that I might do something more adequate if I knew all the facts.

Hoping to hear from you,
I am cordially yours,

MRS. J. C. Guggenheimer
January 8, 1936.

In Re: Isaac T. Klassen et al.

Mrs. J. C. Guggenheimer,
205 West 57th Street,
New York City, N. Y.

Dear Mrs. Guggenheimer:

This will acknowledge receipt of the money sent to assist the above mentioned families, and wish to thank you for same.

The money arrived at a most opportune time. Unfortunately, Mr. Isaac Klassen, has contracted Typhoid Fever, and will be bedridden for several weeks, delaying the trip to Canada for some time. With the money sent, we are able to give Mr. Klassen the medical care needed, and have had all other members of both families inoculated against Typhoid. Due to the seriousness of this disease and the duration of same it is going to be necessary that we move these families to more desirable quarters entailing a greater expense than we ever anticipated. If it is possible for you to contact any Eastern Agencies and interest them in this case, it will be greatly appreciated. I will keep you posted on this case.

Again thanking you, I am

Most Sincerely,

MRS. FRANK ZLABOVSKY.

LG:S
January 11, 1936.


Miss Cecelia Razovsky,
625 Madison Ave.,
New York City, N. Y.

Dear Miss Razovsky:-

My attention was called to the above case by American Immigration authorities. Upon investigation, we found them living in one room, dirt floor, no food, on a pallet in a corner of the room Isaac Klassen was lying sick. We have since called in medical aid and found that he has typhoid fever. Thanks to the generosity of Prof. Goldschmidt and Mrs. J. C. Guggenheimer, of New York, we were able up to the present time, to move the families into better quarters where the sick man is resting on a bed. We have also kept them in food and clothing. Their destination is Canada, their birthplace, and when Mr. Klassen recovers, if we could get transportation for these families, it would be a most humanitarian act to send them to their people. They require 6\frac{1}{2} tickets. We have taken every precaution and have had all other members of the families inoculated against typhoid.

The contributions received for this case, are as follows:

Prof. Goldschmidt........ $ 5.00
Mrs. Ralph Hanau........ 5.00
(Mrs. J.C. Guggenheimer,
(205 W. 57th St., New York)-25.00

If there is any further information you desire, will be glad to furnish it.

Yours very truly,

MRS. FRANK ZLABOVSKY.

P. S. The American Immigration will permit them to travel thru the United States to Canada as soon as they have transportation.
Mr. R. Hofheimer,
1415 Hawthorne,
El Paso, Texas.

Dear Sir:-

Your letter with the letters of Jacob & Isaac Klassen were sent to me the Treasurer of the Emergency Relief Board of the General Conference of the Mennonites of North America. I am enclosing $25.00 to be used to help them. At the same time I am making contact with Canada to find some way to move them. Will you please get me their address or have them write to me.

I hope to hear from you soon.

Yours truly,

PETER H. UNRUH,
Goessel, Kansas.
January 15 1936

AIR MAIL

KLASSEN, Isaac (dec)
Wife and six children

KLASSEN, Jacob
Wife

Juarez, Mexico.

The Vice Chairman,
Foreign Operations,
National Headquarters,
American Red Cross,
Washington, D. C.

Dear Sir:

We have been requested by a local organization to assist in the return of the above named family to their former home in Canada.

The facts as given to us are as follows:

This family migrated from Saskatchewan Canada thirteen years ago, and settled in the Mennonite colony in the State of Chihuahua, Mexico. Because of certain restrictions affecting their church there is a general exodus of these people to their former home from Mexico.

We have been unable to determine how they got to the border, but they have been in Juarez, for perhaps thirty days. This week the man of the family, Isaac, died, and is buried in Juarez. The family is destitute, and is now being assisted through funds collected by the Council of Jewish Women. Mrs. Zlabovsky, Social Worker from that organization, secured permission from the United States Immigration Department to bring the family over the border, providing arrangements can be made for their immediate transportation to Swift Current, Saskatchewan, Canada. She also claims that all letters she has written to Canadian authorities remain unanswered. Therefore she has asked us if possible, to get in touch with the Canadian Red Cross, or some of the following Canadian people given as references by the family:

Abe Hiebert, Box 26, Blumenhoff, Sask., Canada.
Jacob Peters, Wymark, Sask., Canada.
Argue and Cooper, Swift Current, Sask., Canada.
Swift Current Grocery Co., Swift Current Bottling Co., Cameron and Heap
It may be possible that the Mother Church of the Mennonite order will pay for their transportation. If not perhaps some of their relatives or the above references will authorize the cost of transportation. We understand the tickets will cost approximately $250.00.

Mrs. Zlabovsky tells us that Mr. Hiebert mentioned above has, within the past month, sent them $30.00, and knows of their plight.

A Mrs. Frank Guggenheimer, of New York, through the Council of Jewish Women, sent $25.00, within the past week, which was used for food and medicine during Mr. Klassen’s illness.

Thanking you for your assistance, and trusting that it will be possible for you to assist in making arrangements for the early return of this family, to Canada, we are,

Yours very truly

(Mrs.) R. B. Stevenson
Executive Secretary

El Paso Chapter
American Red Cross
El Paso Texas
January 16, 1936

Mrs. Frank Zlabovsky
El Paso Section
National Council of Jewish Women
1016 Olive Street
El Paso, Texas

Dear Mrs. Zlabovsky:

re: Isaac T. Klassen, wife & 6 children
Jacob T. Klassen, wife & 2 children

I thank you for your letter of January 11th regarding the Klassens.

Will you not be good enough to give me the exact address of the relatives in Canada. Let me know also whether Canada has agreed to accept these people, the names and addresses of the relatives, how long the Klassens have been living in El Paso, and such additional information as will be of help to us in getting people interested.

Please give us this additional information so that we can see what can be done.

Sincerely yours,

Cecilia Razovsky
Associate Director

P.S. 2 hours for your fine work in connection with Prof. Goldschmidt.
January 20, 1936.

Re: Klassen families.

Miss Cecilia Razovsky,
625 Madison Avenue,
New York City, N. Y.

Dear Miss Razovsky:

Since our last communication regarding the above families, Mr. Isaac Klassen died of Typhoid Fever in Juarez, Mexico. These Mennonite families are not in El Paso, but in Juarez, Mexico, and their plight is desperate.

I have made appeals thru the El Paso papers, and while I have received donations of clothing and food, have been unable to receive much in cash. At the present time I have $18.00 on hand towards transportation expenses, and we need at least $250.00.

These people were born in Canada, and therefore will be received at the Canadian Border as citizens. The El Paso Section of the Red Cross has appealed to the Canadian Sections to assist, and as yet have not heard. Will keep you posted regarding this case.

Yours very truly,

MRS. FRANK ZLABOVSKY.

FZ:LG

P. S. I have written to Mr. Abe Hiebert, Box 26, Blumenhof, Sask., Canada, Jacob Peters, Wymark, Sask., Canada, and Swift Current Grocery Co., Swift Current, Sask., Can. but up to the present time have not heard from any of them.
January 20, 1936.

Mrs. J. C. Guggenheimer,  
205 West 57th Street,  
New York City, N. Y.  

Dear Mrs. Guggenheimer:  

Re: Klassen families.  

Since last communicating with you regarding the above families, Mr. Isaac T. Klassen died of Typhoid Fever.  

The plight of the remaining members of this family is desperate. As yet I have not been successful in raising enough money for the transportation of these people to Canada their birthplace.  

Any assistance you can give will be appreciated.  

Assuming you of my appreciation for your interest in this case, I am  

Sincerely yours,  

MRS. FRANK ZLABOVSKY.
Mr. Peter H. Unruh,  
Goessel, Kansas.  

Dear Sir:  

Your letter of January 15th addressed to the writer to El Paso, Texas, was forwarded here where I reside. You say that you are enclosing $25.00 to be used to help Jacob & Isaac Klassen, but the check from the American Express is issued only to the amount of $20.00. I have immediately forwarded this letter together with the money to my cousin Mrs. Edwin Wisbrun, 519 Hague Street, El Paso, Texas, who is a charity worker, and who will see to it, that this money is given to the Klassens. They will no doubt acknowledge receipt of the money direct, as will Mrs. Wisbrun also.

I do not know the street address of the Klassen's, but Mrs. Wisbrun will give you their address. They live in Juarez, Mexico, across the border from El Paso, 12 people in a hut without a chair to sit on. I have never seen such misery and poverty, as when I was shown their place. I made up my mind to do something for these people. I am very glad to know that you have taken hold of this matter and I trust that they will be able to return to Canada and get to their folks in due course.

It would interest me to know whatever has been done for them, as I feel very sorry for these people.

Very truly yours,

R. HOFHEIMER.
January 21, 1936

Mrs. Edwin Wisbrun,  
519 Hauge Street,  
El Paso, Texas.

Dear Beate:

We returned home last Friday and have been very very busy ever since. No doubt Frieda will write you all details of our trip. Needless to say that we enjoyed our stay in El Paso immensely.

I received today, reforwarded from El Paso, the enclosed letter from a Mennonite at Goessel, Kansas, in behalf of the unfortunate Mennonites at Juarez; and would thank you to hand this money to Mrs. Zabatsky (I don't know if this is the correct spelling. Please let me have her name and address.)

Although the letter says $25.00 the amount of the check is only $20.00. I have endorsed this check to you and you can cash it and give the money to them. Please acknowledge receipt of this letter direct to Mr. Unruh and give him the address of the Mennonites in Juarez. No doubt these people will help them. Also please see to it that the Klassens will acknowledge direct to Mr. Unruh.

I was very glad indeed that I was the means of getting them in contact with the Emergency Relief Board of the Mennonites of North America.

With love to you and Edwin and all the family,

Sincerely yours,

Rudolf.
January 24, 1936.

Miss Cecelia Razovsky,
625 Madison Avenue,
New York City, N. Y.

Dear Miss Razovsky:-

With reference to the Mennonite families, we have succeeded in contacting the Colony in Chihuahua, Mexico, and they sent their representatives to Juarez for the purpose of taking the widow and her six children back with them. It appears that Mrs. Isaac Klassen had registered in Mexico and therefore her return papers were readily granted. They leave today for San Antonio, Chih., Mexico.

Mr. Jacob Klassen and his family are not faring so well. He failed to register with the Mexican Government, and as a result, is now being held for deportation. The Mexican Immigration gave him 66 Pesos, the equivalent of $18.00 American money, and told them that they must leave Mexico by Saturday, tomorrow, or be thrown into prison. We received $20.00 from a Mennonite Colony in Kansas, and several contributions in El Paso would net about $85.00 towards their transportation to Sask, Canada. The required amount for this family of four would be about $150.00, and we shall make an appeal to the El Paso public for the difference.

The case was brought to the notice of many thru the El Paso newspapers publishing the sad plight, but it also created resentment on the part of the Mexican Immigration because it reflected unfavorably upon their Government.

Yours very truly,

MRS. FRANK ZLABOVSKY.

FZ:LG
January 24, 1936.

Mrs. J. C. Guggenheimer,
205 W. 67th Street,
New York, N. Y.

Dear Mrs. Guggenheimer:—

With further reference to the Mennonite families, we have finally succeeded in contacting their Colony in Chihuahua, Mexico, who sent their representatives to Juarez for the purpose of taking the widow and her six children back with them. It now appears that Mrs. Isaac T. Klassen had registered in Mexico and therefore her return papers were readily granted. They leave today for San Antonio, Chih. Mex.

Mr. Jacob Klassen and his family had not registered, and as a result, is now being held for deportation. The Mexican Immigration gave him 66 Pesos, which is the equivalent of about $18.00 American money, and ordered them to leave Mexico by tomorrow, otherwise they will be thrown into prison. We received $20.00 from a Mennonite Colony in Kansas, and in all have about $65.00 towards their transportation. We are making an appeal thru the press, and hope somehow to raise enough to take care of them.

Again I want to thank you for your interest in this case, and for your generous contribution made, which enabled us to give them the very necessities of life. Also want to thank Dr. Goldschmidt for his kindness.

With kindest regards to both yourself and Dr. Goldschmidt, I am

Sincerely,

MRS. FRANK ZLABOVSKY.

FZ:LG
January 28, 1936.

Mr. Peter H. Unruh,
Goessel, Kansas.

Dear Sirs:-

We wish to acknowledge receipt of Express Money Order for $20.00 forwarded to us by Mr. R. Hofheimer of St. Joseph, Mo.

The enclosed copy of a letter sent to Mr. Hofheimer explains the sad plight of the Klassen family living at 200 Miguel Ahumada Street, Juarez, Mexico. The room in which they live has neither window nor floor. They sleep on the bare ground with a covering of blankets such as kind friends were able to contribute.

We are appealing to you to get these people out of their misery.

Yours very truly,

MRS. FRANK ZLABOVSKY.

FZ:LG
January 28, 1936.

Mr. R. Hofheimer,
714 Francis Street,
St. Joseph, Mo.

Dear Mr. Hofheimer:

In acknowledging receipt of express money order for $20.00 sent to Mrs. Wisbrun for the Mennonite families, we wish to thank you in their behalf, and also for our Department for assisting us and taking such interest in suffering humanity.

Since your departure from El Paso, Mr. Isaac Klassen died, due to privation. After his death, we were forced to give this case newspaper publicity because of its tragic plight. It came to the attention of the Mennonites in San Antonio, Chih., Mexico, and they sent their representatives to Juarez, Mexico. They arranged for the necessary papers for the widow and six children, and they returned to the Colony where we are sure they will be properly taken care of. Jacob Klassen, wife and two children cannot return to the interior of Mexico because they are not registered as Mexican residents, and as a result the Mexican authorities have ordered them to leave Mexico within the week. They cannot enter the United States other than for transportation to their destination in Canada, and they cannot remain in Mexico. In addition to the $20.00 which you sent us, we have $40.00 collected from kind friends. Of this amount it is necessary to pay $16.00 head-tax, leaving $44.00 towards their transportation to Wolford, Alberta, Canada, their destination. The amount necessary for such transportation including the necessities of life requires not less than $150.00. We have appealed to Canadian Mennonites and the Red Cross has also loaned their assistance, but without success.
Our Organization and kind El Pasans have contributed towards better housing, food, clothing, and medical aid for these people since the 27th of December, 1935, also giving the widow a hundred pesos, the equivalent of $25.00 American money upon her departure to the Colonies, and we feel that we cannot tax our community further. We therefore ask that you again appeal to the Relief Board of the Mennonites of North America to help Jacob Klassen and family with the necessary funds to reach their destination.

Thanking you again for your assistance, and with kindest regards, I am

Yours very truly,

MRS. FRANK ZLABOVSKY.
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February 3, 1936

Mr. P. H. Unruh,
Goessel, Kansas.

Dear Sir:-

In acknowledging receipt of the $75.00, it affords me pleasure to inform you that Jacob Klassen and family left El Paso for Wolford, Alberta, Canada, Friday night. They left by way of Sweetgrass, Montana.

I secured half-rate tickets which amounted to $56.71. We bought clothing and food for $17.06, and gave Mr. Klassen the small balance and the $20.00. Enclosed you will find a letter from said Mr. Klassen.

We were glad to have been of service to the two Klassen families, and we want to thank you for your ready response in relieving the suffering of these people.

Respectfully yours,

MRS. FRANK ZLABOVSKY.

FZLG
(FNCS)

Copy sent to R. Hofheimer, St. Joseph Mo.
February 5, 1936

Mrs. Frank Zlabovsky
El Paso Section
National Council of Jewish Women
1016 Olive Street
El Paso, Texas

Dear Mrs. Zlabovsky:

Thank you for keeping us informed with regard to the situation of the Mennonite families. I know you have done a very fine job on this. I hope that the Red Cross of Canada will help settle these families.

Sincerely yours,

Cecilia Razovsky
Associate Director

CR:JS
Dear Mrs. Zlabovsky,

Your letter acknowledging the $20 from Mr. Merril with its pitiful contents reached me here in New York where I am at present on business. I immediately wrote to the Mennonite Relief Agency and enclosed your letter and am very happy to note from copy of your letter sent to Mr. Merril dated 2/3 that you received $500 from them and able to assist the Klassen.

It did my heart good to be able to be of assistance and you deserve a "medal" for your splendid work.

It has been a pleasure to have met you.

While here I inquired as to the possibilities of bringing over...
my nephew from Germany, but have had no discouraging results placing him. - May I ask you is an affidavit of support for permanent entry legally binding? I feel it a great responsibility, and yet I want to help if I can. There are no jobs to be had even for those who have lived here a long time and are born in U.S. Everywhere I go I hear the same story. - Please let me have your opinion on this matter. Do you think the Council of Jewish Women might be able to do something for him in N.Y. if he comes over? - and to whom should he go? I expect to be back in St. on Monday. With kindest regards. - Sincerely, thanking you for an early reply. - R. Hothiemer.
February 11, 1936.

Miss Cecelia Razovsky,
625 Madison Ave.,
New York City, N. Y.

Dear Miss Razovsky:—

I am in receipt of your letter of the 5th inst., relative to the Mennonite families stranded at our Border, and am attaching hereto a copy of letter sent to Mr. P. H. Unruh of Goessel, Kansas, which is self explanatory.

No doubt by this time the Klassen families have reached their destinations, and I am closing my files on the case.

Thanking you for your interest, I am

Yours very truly,

(Mrs.) Frank Zlabovsky.

LG:S
(ENC)
February 13, 1936.

Mr. R. Hofheimer,
714 Francis Street,
St. Joseph, Mo.

Dear Mr. Hofheimer:

Acknowledging receipt of your letter of the 7th inst., I wish to thank you for your kind expression, assuring you that it is most gratifying to meet a person who has a sympathetic understanding of suffering humanity.

With reference to your inquiry, I am afraid you will find that bringing him to the United States for the purpose of finding work, will be most discouraging. An affidavit of support is most binding, and while we have had very few unpleasant results, it is known to our Department that young people who have been admitted into the United States have demanded such support because the person who signed that affidavit is held absolutely responsible until such a time as the alien may become a naturalized citizen of this United States.

I realize that you are anxious to help your nephew, and if he has the ability to create a business for himself, he would not be a burden upon you, but for job seeking, I would advise you to think twice before you send for him. If I remember correctly, you mentioned that the relatives in Switzerland would be willing to deposit a sum of money for this young man in the United States Banks. If they would make you guardian over that money, then you would be safe in having the young man come here, and you could guide him in the proper use of this money.

I do not think that the Council of Jewish Women could help you in placing the young man in New York, because they have thousands of such young men and women whom they are trying to place with little success. However, you may write to Miss Cecelia Razovsky, 625 Madison Ave., New York and she may give you more encouraging advice.

If I can be of any further assistance to you, please do not hesitate to call on me. With kindest regards, I a

Sincerely,
February 1, 1938.

Mr. Peter H. Unruh,
Goessel, Kansas.
Dear Mr. Unruh:

The enclosed letter is self explanatory.
Since our Organization is in no position to help
the many appeals coming to us from the Interior of
Mexico, we are referring this matter to you, and
hope you will be able to assist Mr. David Bueckert.

Yours very truly,

Mrs. Frank Zlabovsky,
Field Executive.

FZ:LG
February 1, 1938.

Mr. David Breckert,
Käefelden No. 1,
Cuamhtemoc, Chih. Mexico.

Dear Sir:—

Answering your letter of January 17th, I regret to say that it would be impossible for this organization to assist you at this time. We are therefore taking the liberty of sending your letter to Peter H. Unruh at Goessel, Kansas, as feel that he would be in a better position to assist you in your difficulties.

Yours very truly,

Mrs. Sol Goldfarb,
Corresponding Sec'y.
Marz den 16 1936

[Handwritten text in German]
Gruß von Agnethe, 
Klassen jenseits Kindes, 
Was bleibt seinen wichtigen 
Erinnerungen, wenn die Welt 
Danksagung im Herzen. 
Mein Isaak T. Klassen

Cuanhtemoc

Schanjeufeld 89, Mex.
March 25, 1936.

Mrs. Isaak T. Klassen,
Schanzenfeld #19,
Cuanhtemoc, Chih., Mexico.

Dear Mrs. Klassen:

I was pleased to receive your letter because I am interested in your welfare, and will be glad to help you whenever it is possible.

With reference to the $250.00 you mention, this money was not sent to El Paso, but Mr. Bruce of the Rock Island Railroad Company received a telegram from their Agent in Canada to furnish you and your children with tickets to Blumenhof, Sask., Canada, and that they had the money deposited in their Canadian Office. Mr. Bruce tried to get the United States Government to permit you and your children to travel thru the United States to Canada, but there seems to have been a refusal because of your daughter's eye trouble, so Mr. Bruce informs me that the order for the transportation has been cancelled. I think your Brother-in-law in Blumenhof has that money at the present time, and I am sure if you will communicate with him, he will be glad to send it to you. I would advise you to tell your Brother-in-law to be careful as to the manner in which he sends money to you because the Mexican Government will confiscate any money unless sent thru International procedure.

With kindest regards from Mrs. Stone and myself, I am

Yours very truly,

BY:
Mrs. Frank Jabovshy
Field Representative El Paso Council Jewish Women
My dear Mrs. Jabovshy:
Please accept this small donation for the "Reassurance family of Jarmen"
Sorry I cannot do more.
May God Bless you, and help you in your work.
Sincerely, A "Friend"