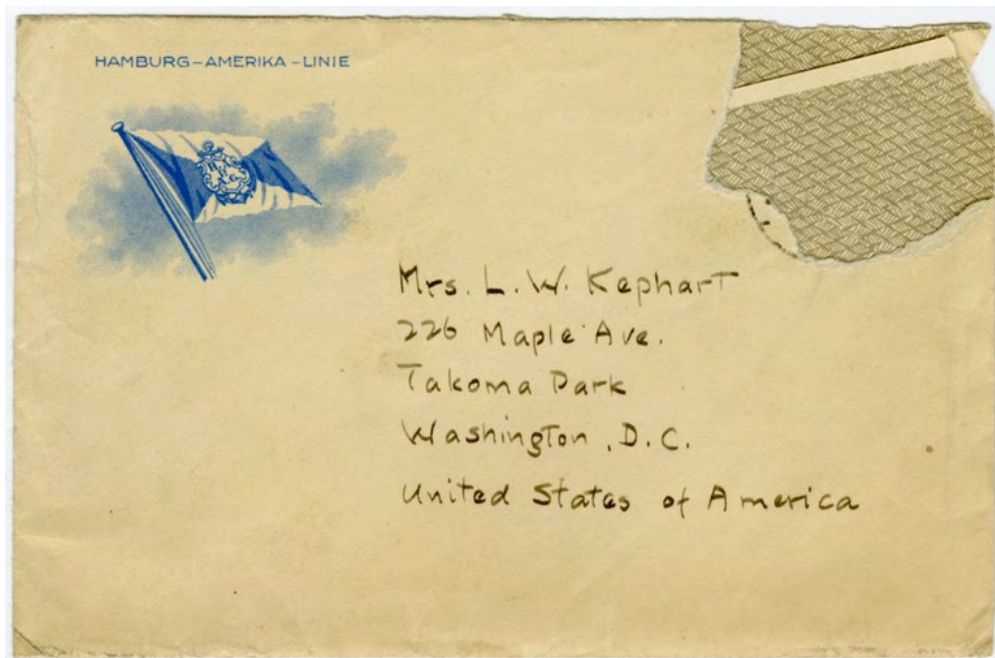


Leonard W. Kephart's Letter to Frances F. Kephart
January 26, 1928

Hunter Library MSS22-04_08_49_02



Above: Envelope in which this manuscript was sent.

Transcribed and Edited by
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For ENGL 618: Research Methods in English
Instructor and General Editor: Dr. Brian Gastle

11 December 2024

Introduction to the Series

This transcription and its attendant annotations, explanatory material, and bibliography was prepared by students in ENGL 618: Research Methods in English, the required gateway class for the MA in English degree program at Western Carolina University (WCU). The learning outcomes for this class include the following:

1. Conduct appropriate, effective, and ethical scholarship.
 - a. Effectively find and use advanced research tools (handbooks, databases, guides, bibliographies, etc.) appropriate to a subject.
 - Students will be able to use a wide variety of such tools and evaluate those tools.
 - b. Find appropriate advanced research (print and electronic scholarship) and apply that research to specific disciplinary questions or issues.
 - Students will be able to find a variety of scholarship, evaluate both the appropriateness and rigor of that scholarship, and incorporate that scholarship correctly and effectively.
 - c. Develop accurate bibliographies and reference citations.
 - Students will be able to annotate, abstract, and cite materials following standard MLA format.

2. Understand the process by which the texts we use are made available.
 - Students will be able to conduct basic editorial work and evaluate the editorial work of others.

All work is presented as submitted by the graduate students. While they take great care with their transcriptions and annotations, errors are possible. As they learn throughout this class, good scholarship requires meticulous research and corroboration by authoritative sources. Our objective is to provide transcriptions and annotations of WCU's Special Collections materials that will be useful to the institution, students, scholars, patrons, and all users of our library's resources.

If you wish to submit an emendation or correction for this document, please email Dr. Brian Gastle (bgastle@wcu.edu).

Introduction

This letter was written by Leonard Wheeler Kephart (1892–1988) to his wife, Frances Frazer Kephart (1887–1971). When it was written, he was returning from an expedition to Africa, spending a few days touring Europe before making the voyage back to the United States.

Kephart was an agronomist, a type of environmental scientist specializing in soil management and crop production. He worked for the US Department of Agriculture from 1913 to 1949, and conducted multiple international expeditions in that time, collecting foreign plant samples for study and potential introduction to American ecosystems. On this particular trip, he was studying sisal, a plantation crop harvested for its fiber, as well as various forage grasses, plants grown for animals to feed on. A major goal of the trip was to bring back grasses that could withstand drought and had strong root systems to hold soil in place, to replace native American grass systems that had been destroyed by large-scale farming; a prescient goal, but unfortunately one thought of too late, given the onset of the Dust Bowl only a few years later.

Kephart was accompanied on this expedition by Robert Louis Piemeisel, a botanist with whom he collaborated many times over the course of their careers; together, they are credited with collecting 160 different plant types on this trip, identifying eight new species along the way. Piemeisel does not play a large role in most of the events described in this letter, until the end, but it is clear that Kephart considered him a friend.

When this letter was written, Kephart and Piemeisel were traveling on the SS *Njassa*, a ship of the Hamburg-America Line. While Kephart writes the ship's name as *Nyassa* in this letter and some others in this series, he writes it as *Njassa* in two letters written in November 1927 (MSS22-04_08_47_03 and 04), and the latter is more likely the correct name. He describes the ship as a German one throughout these letters, and this particular letter is written on Hamburg-America Line stationery; the *Njassa* was a German ship, operated at the time by the Hamburg-America Line. The *Nyassa* was a real liner, one that also took passengers between Africa and Europe, but it was a Portuguese vessel at the time, not German. The differences in spelling are likely because *Njassa* is the German version of the English toponym Nyassa, deriving from a province in Mozambique (also spelled Niassa or Nyasa); so, when Kephart wrote *Nyassa*, he was simply translating the ship's name into English.

At the time of writing, the *Njassa* was traveling upriver along the Scheldt, a river that flows from northern France to the North Sea, on their way to Antwerp, a port city in Belgium. However, the letter only briefly mentions their current plans and destination, being mostly spent recounting how the passengers of the *Njassa* spent their time on the long voyage from Cape Town, South Africa to Southampton, England.

The primary subject of interest in this letter is Kephart's retelling of an equator-crossing ceremony performed on board the *Njassa* as they made the return voyage to Europe. The majority of the letter is spent on this story, and naval historians, or those interested in maritime folklore and traditions, will find it fascinating for its uniqueness.

Equator-crossing rituals have existed since at least 1614, with many variations across cultures and centuries. In all versions, the point of the ceremony is to be an initiation rite for sailors who are crossing the equator for the first time; early on, they may have been performed out of genuine superstition, but by the nineteenth century and on into the modern era, they were performed as a bonding exercise or to test the hardiness of new shipmates, or, on passenger ships, as entertainment.

By the twentieth century, these various traditions had coalesced to the point that one could point to a "standard" version of the ceremony, most popular in the American and British naval forces. Core elements of this standard version include: the ship being visited by the god Neptune; those who have already crossed the equator (called "shellbacks") performing various roles as servants of Neptune; and those who are crossing the line for the first time (called "pollywogs") being tormented or humiliated in various ways by the shellbacks, in order to make them into hardened "sons of Neptune" who would respect the god's mastery over the ocean. Many early versions of this ritual were quite brutal, involving significant amounts of hazing and violence; some sailors were even reported to have died in such ceremonies. Over time, controversies and scandals (and changing cultural attitudes on hazing) led to much stricter rules being imposed on the shellbacks' behavior, and today these rituals are largely harmless, though still unpleasant for the pollywogs.

The versions performed on passenger ships— for entertainment, rather than for the initiation of military sailors— were always much nicer, and usually voluntary, though still involving no small amount of schadenfreude for the shellbacks and non-participating audience. They generally still followed the same standard pattern, especially on American and British passenger ships: the presence of Neptune, the performance of characters by the shellbacks, and the humiliation of the pollywogs.

The ceremony described in this letter is of particular interest because it was performed aboard a German passenger ship with a primarily German crew. Line-crossing ceremonies are most heavily associated with Anglophone countries; but in this letter, Kephart contrasts his experience on a British ship, where "no ceremony was made about crossing the line" because "that crowd was too self-important for such foolishness", with his experience on the German ship, where much time was spent on a complex ceremony, complete with the awarding of certificates afterward. There is significantly less historical and scholarly documentation of German line-crossing rituals compared to American and British ones, so Kephart's detailed account provides a unique look at both the

similarities and differences between the ceremonial procedures. In the same way, most accounts focus on military line-crossing rituals, as those are generally better documented than civilian passenger ones. So, this letter offers a unique look into a form of the line-crossing ceremony that is largely unaccounted for, in multiple ways, in the wider literature on the subject.

Editorial Statement

This is a diplomatic transcription, so the text will be presented in a way that matches the original manuscript as closely as possible. Specifically:

- Misspellings are not corrected; some words and phrases which may appear to be misspellings but are actually dialectical or archaic spellings are marked with footnotes.
- Line breaks, page breaks, and indentations are preserved. In some cases, this makes certain lines look significantly longer or shorter than others, due to Kephart's original handwriting sometimes being narrower or wider in certain sentences.
- Words that were crossed or scribbled out of the original manuscript are included; Kephart's excision of these words is represented by them being struck through (they will look like ~~this~~).
- Words that were inserted into the text with a caret are placed on separate lines and marked with ^, approximating how they appeared in the handwritten text.

As mentioned previously, this letter was written on stationery of the Hamburg-America Line, heavily yellowed by age. Letterhead at the top of the first and fifth pages reads "HAMBURG-AMERIKA-LINIE" and "AN BORD DES DAMPFERS", meaning "on board the steamer"; there is a blank space after "dampfers" for the writer to give the name of the steamer they're traveling on, but it was left blank in this letter. The letterhead also has a logo for the company, consisting of a waving flag, which on page five caused Kephart to indent his text sharply to the right so as to avoid writing over the logo.

Unlike some of the other letters in this series, Kephart did not number the pages himself; page numbers included at the top of each transcription page are my additions, for the sake of clarity, and not part of the transcription.

The text itself is written in pencil, in a mostly-cursive handwriting (certain letters, particularly capital Ts and capital Ps, are written in normal print). Kephart's handwriting has several quirks to it: for example, his capital Ls, Gs, and Ss tend to all look more or less the same, his lowercase Ns, Ms, Us, and Rs tend to be strung together in a way that makes it difficult to distinguish individual letters, and the dots above his lowercase Rs and Js are sometimes separated from the letters themselves, usually appearing off to the right as though he only remembered to add them after he

had already written the rest of the word. Struck-through or scribbled out text, and clarifications or word choice changes added in by caret, are fairly common; Kephart shows a habit of rethinking his phrasing and revising as he goes. He also has a tendency to abbreviate names: "Thomas" is always written as "Thos.", and Robert Piemeisel is only referred to as "P." throughout the letter.

The letter was held in an envelope with the aforementioned Hamburg-America flag logo on it, and addressed to Frances as such:

Mrs. L. W. Kephart
226 Maple Ave.
Takoma Park
Washington, D.C.
United States of America

The corner of the envelope, where the stamp would have been, has been ripped away.

Transcription

[MS page 1]

January 26, 1928
Going up the Scheldt, on
the way to Antwerp.

Dear Frances —

I did not get a letter ashore
at Southampton¹ yesterday as we were
there only an hour, instead of several hours
and we once again had to scramble like
Billy-ho² to get our luggage attended to. This
time we wanted to leave all our baggage,
except two small hand bags, at Southampton
calling for it when we returned on Febr. 2
to board the Republic³, and then avoid lugging
big
seven trunks and three ^ hand pieces all
England
over Germany, ^ Belgium and Holland. Our
idea was to have Thos. Cook + Son⁴ take charge
of it, place it in a bonded warehouse during
our absence and deliver it on board the Republic
thus avoiding going through the customs

¹ A major port city in Hampshire, England, which to this day remains England's busiest port for passenger ships. Kephart and Piemeisel would later depart from Southampton again, on their return to the United States.

² Dialectical variant spelling of "like billy-o", a superlative/intensive phrase that was popular in the early- to mid-1900s before falling out of use; a modern equivalent would be "like hell" or "like crazy."

³ The ship Kephart and Piemeisel returned to America on, according to immigration forms from the Department of Labor. It was most likely the SS *Republic* operated by United States Lines, which was originally a military ship called the *President Grant* before being rechristened and operated as a passenger liner between 1924 and 1931.

⁴ Thomas Cook & Son Ltd., a travel agency. Kephart abbreviates the name as either "Thos. Cook + Son" or simply "Thos. Cook"; references to "Thos. Cook" are to the company, not its namesake founder, as Thomas Cook had died thirty-six years prior, though Kephart sometimes refers to the agency as though he is talking about a person.

[MS page 2]

houses of four countries and perhaps paying four duties¹. But no, such a procedure was irregular, unheard of, too simple and therefore impossible. Eventually we argued them into it and the baggage stayed at Southampton. We haven't a scrape of paper² to show for it and hope that Thos. Cook's man is honest, otherwise we will never see our beloved properties again. But for the time being it is off our minds and we are happy.

In the letter that I mailed on board the Nyassa³ I did not tell about the two big social events of the long trip up from Capetown⁴. The first occurred on the 11th⁵ when we crossed the equator. On the B.I.⁶ boat going down to Mombasa⁷ no ceremony was made about crossing the line. That crowd was too self-important for such foolishness. But on this boat they aren't so afraid of their dignity so a big initiation party was planned for those who had not met Father Neptune. P.⁸ and I

¹ Specific type of taxes placed on imports and exports; tariffs.

² Dialectical variant of "scrap"; a *scrap* of paper, i.e. any form of documentation or receipt.

³ Most likely a translation of *Njassa*; see introduction. Also note that, while he phrases this in a way that implies he is no longer aboard that ship, the other letters in this series show he was still on the *Njassa* when writing this letter.

⁴ Properly spelled Cape Town, an Atlantic port city near the southern tip of Africa. At the time, it was the legislative capital of the Union of South Africa, a dominion of the British Empire that had gained sovereignty in 1926.

⁵ January 11th, 1928, based on the travel timeline established in previous letters.

⁶ The British India Steam Navigation Company, abbreviated as BI, was one of the largest shipping companies of all time, with over five hundred ships in its fleet. Despite the name "British India", the company's routes included ports all over Europe, Asia, Africa, and Australia. The BI ship mentioned here is the SS *Madura*, aboard which Kephart traveled from Marseille, France to Mombasa, Kenya.

⁷ A coastal city in Kenya, on the Indian Ocean. At the time, it was part of the British Crown Colony and Protectorate of Kenya, and had been the capital of British East Africa before Nairobi took its place in 1907.

⁸ Piemeisel (see editorial statement).

felt that having been back and forth across the line about twenty times we were ex-officio members of his court. But as there seemed to be a dearth of male initiates I volunteered to be inducted. I suppose its because I am such an indefatigable "joiner". Anyway when the appointed time arrived I put on white clothes and took my place in the crowd assembled on the forward deck. Soon a blast of discordant music split the air and here came Father Neptune, long beard flowing and trident in hand, summoned by the members of his court.¹ His personal body guard was a coal-black Senegambian², whose blackness however turned out to be black grease which he proceeded to smear across the faces of all those who tried to take snapshots of his majesty. With a great fanfare of tin pans, whistles and horns his majesty mounted the rostrum³ and the ceremonies began. The ladies went first.⁴ One by one they were escorted up onto the

¹ In a traditional line-crossing ceremony, Neptune would be played by either the ship's captain or the most senior shellback, and the "court" typically consists of Davy Jones and the sea goddess Amphitrite as the core characters; Kephart notably describes only Neptune and a single "bodyguard" rather than the usual trinity. This may have been due to the smaller size of the ship, having fewer crew members available to participate, or it may have been a deliberate choice as part of this crew's unique version of the ceremony.

² The literal meaning of this term would be a person from Senegambia, a historical region in West Africa now consisting of the countries Senegal, The Gambia, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, Mali, and Guinea. However, at the time of Kephart's writing, it was also used generally as a derogatory term for African Americans; the latter usage is presumably the one being used here, as the "Senegambian" in question is a person in blackface.

³ This term can mean either a section of a ship's front, or a raised platform like a pulpit; in this case, despite them being on a ship, the latter definition is more likely, as line-crossing ceremonies often involved the erection of a temporary dais upon which the court of Neptune would sit in "judgement" of the initiates.

⁴ The inclusion of women in this line-crossing ceremony is significant, as the ritual is often characterized as heavily masculine and even misogynistic, with the participants usually all being men and dressing in drag being a frequent part of the pollywogs' humiliation.

[MS page 4]

dias. A false "physician" and his assistant¹ then took their temperatures with a thermometer two feet long. While it was in their mouths someone poured a mixture of vinegar and pepper down it.² As the astonished candidates coughed and spluttered the doctor calmly dropped a handful of crushed ice down the backs of their necks. Naturally the antics of the victims as they tried to spit out the vinegar and wriggle out of their clothes simultaneously brought gales of laughter from the audience. Finally, the assistant cooly³ picked up a huge paint brush and with a quick movement smeared their faces with a mass of nice sticky meringue. And this the candidate had to wash off with thick soap suds as
mixture of
best she could. Unfortunately the ^ soap and the meringue was worse than either alone so she had eventually to retire to her cabin and have a bath.

When the men's turn came they "officials" put on steam and added a few fancy

¹ The presence of a "physician" character in a crossing ritual is an uncommon one, but not unheard of. Various accounts include a long list of potential roles the "shellbacks" could perform as part of Neptune's court, including "Lawyer, Counsel, Herald, Policeman, Priest, Chaplain, Devil, Princess, Doctor, Undertaker, Electrocutationist, Pallbearer, Torturer, Cannibal, Skeleton, Hangman, Dentist, Taster, Clerk, and Scribe" (Bronner 13). Note the absence of the aforementioned "bodyguard" character from this list, suggesting he was unique to this ship's version of the ritual (though he may have been a variant of the "Herald" role).

² The "doctor" character force-feeding initiates foul mixtures like this was a common part of the performance, though most accounts (especially from the American and British navies) describe it as an oversized syringe administering "truth serum" to ensure the initiates are honest in their obeisance to Neptune, rather than an oversized thermometer "taking the temperature" of the initiate; this is another unique variation on the ritual.

³ Dialectical variant spelling of the adverb "coolly."

[MS page 5]

~~put on~~ touches, such as
holding a bottle of ammonia
to the nose during the vinegar
and ice performance. But the¹
grand finale arrived when the candidate, all
nicely plastered with meringue was placed
on the edge of the swimming tank², with his
back to the water and assailed with soap
suds splashed in his face until in self-
defense he flipped over backwards into
the tank. Thereupon his sins were considered
washed away and he was welcomed into
the mystic order.

When my turn came the crowd set
up a yell that you could have heard half
a mile away. Some days before one of the
ladies, not being able to remember my name
had begun calling me "United States." The
name caught on and soon that was the

¹ These four lines are indented due to being written around letterhead on the original paper (see editorial statement).

² While some passenger liners in the early twentieth century did have swimming pools on board, especially luxury ships like those of the White Star Line, no record of the *Njassa* having one could be found, and it is unlikely to have had one due to its size (being 433 feet in length, whereas the luxury ships that had swimming pools were much larger, typically between 700 and 900 feet). It is therefore likely that the "swimming tank" mentioned here was a temporary one made from canvas and set up on the ship's deck, as an alternative to dunking the passengers into the actual ocean, which may have been unsafe due to few people being capable swimmers at the time. The use of deckside canvas tanks for line-crossing ceremonies is documented from at least 1923.

[MS page 6]

only name I had. And as I had been almost a complete teetotaler it seemed very appropriate. Consequently when I appeared on the hatch everyone began to yell "Yeh, United States. Give him a good one. Make him drink it." And believe me they did. They soused me and doused me until I was fairly dizzy and I swallowed at least a quart of sea water in the tank. But that evening at dinner each of us was presented with a beautiful colored "diploma" and on mine as a special honor was written "Authorized to operate all manner of sea-going vessels in all the waters of the earth, not over three feet deep."¹

So now I'm a full-fledged son of Neptune.

The other social event was a fancy-dress dance² given on the night before we reach³ Las Palmas⁴. Neither P. or I had ever participated in a proper fancy-dress party

¹ It is unclear what exactly this "special honor" means; similar statements could not be found in other sources regarding line-crossing certificates. Most likely, it is meant to be humorous for its pointlessness as an award: granting him the right to operate ships, but restricting him to an overly shallow depth where any ship of significant size would run aground.

² A costume party. "Fancy dress" events were a common form of entertainment on passenger liners in the 1920s, according to fashion historian Debbie Sessions.

³ This use of "reach" as the past participle of itself (rather than "reached") was common in multiple American regional dialects in the early 1900s.

⁴ Las Palmas de Gran Canaria, a port city in the Canary Islands. A year prior to this, it had been named the capital of the newly formed Las Palmas Province (*Provincia de Las Palmas*). The name "Las Palmas" typically referred to both the city and the province, akin to saying "New York" to mean New York City in New York State.

[MS page 7]

before and felt a little hesitant about it, as the British, and the Germans too, are long on¹ that sort of thing and very clever at it. However we took council with Mrs. MacKinnon², one of the ladies at our table, and she suggested that I dress up as Uncle Sam. But as P. was better proportioned for the long lanky Uncle I insisted that he take it. So they went to work and made a costume out of odds and ends and bless me when the prize was awarded for the "best costume made on board" Uncle Sam was elected. Really he made an excellent characterization. He was just the right build, had the right kind of face and the slow sort of shuffling walk that you would expect Uncle Sam to have. It could not have been better.

I was rather put to it for a costume myself but finally made a high pointed collar out of black paper, made a black shirt

¹ Having great knowledge or command of (a subject, etc.).

² Almost certainly Beatrice MacKinnon, maiden name Beatrice Mary Simmonds, based on a record of British passengers who disembarked the *Njassa* at Southampton in January 1928. During the South West Africa campaign of World War I, Beatrice MacKinnon served as a military nurse in Kenya and Tanganyika; between that conflict and earlier service in the Balkan Wars, she received a total of six medals. She was also fluent in seven languages, and served as an interpreter during World War II. When this letter was written, she was traveling aboard the *Njassa* with her husband, bank manager Charles MacKinnon. She passed away in 1972, at the age of 99.

[MS page 8]

front, trim wired my glasses with heavy
black rims, put on a long pointed false nose
slicked my hair down flat and, looking

as

as lugubrious¹ ~~and~~ ^ possible, and dangling
a string of empty whiskey bottles labeled
"Pure water" "Grape juice" and "Near beer"²,
went as "Prohibition".³ When Uncle Sam
and I came in arm in arm we nearly
brought down the house.

Those were the high lights of an
otherwise long and rather uninteresting trip.
It took 25 days from Capetown to Southampton
and we had a hard time finding anything to do.

But now we are started on a whirlwind
tour of Europe. In 7 days we are going to see
as much of Belgium, Holland and Germany as
possible. This part of the trip isn't official so
don't say too much about it. It won't appear in
our report.

Will write again in a day or two. With love Leonard

¹ Characterized by, expressing or causing mourning; doleful, mournful, sorrowful.

² A type of malt beverage resembling beer, but with minimal alcohol content. During Prohibition in the US, which was still ongoing at the time of Kephart's writing, the maximum legal alcohol content for all beverages was 0.5 percent, so many breweries stayed open by producing "near beers" that stayed below that threshold.

³ This costume may have been inspired by various personifications of Prohibition in political cartoons; in particular, it was potentially a reference to a Joseph Keppler cartoon that depicted Prohibition as a witch-like woman whose clothes dangled bottles of water and non-alcoholic soda. This connection cannot be proven, but the resemblance is noteworthy.

Works Cited

"BI History." *BIShip*, www.biship.com/history.htm. Accessed 8 Dec. 2024.

This website contains detailed information on the British India Steam Navigation Company, used for historical context regarding the "BI boat" mentioned in the letter.

Bronner, Simon. *Crossing the Line: Violence, Play, and Drama in Naval Equator Traditions*. Amsterdam UP, 2006.

This text provided a detailed account of the history and cultural variations of equator-crossing ceremonies, which were helpful for examining the unique aspects of the ceremony Kephart recounts.

Chirnside, Mark. *The Olympic-Class Ships*. Stroud, Tempus, 2004.

This text provided information on the amenities available onboard passenger ships of various sizes, helping to determine that the *Njassa* likely could not have had a proper swimming pool onboard.

Field Museum Library. "Neptune Party, Grace Line Steamer." *Flickr*, 25 Mar. 2010, www.flickr.com/photos/field_museum_library/4462496987/in/photostream/.

This photograph from an online collection provided evidence of the use of canvas swimming tanks in line-crossing rituals.

Hall, Hessel Duncan. "The Genesis of the Balfour Declaration of 1926." *Journal of Commonwealth Political Studies*, vol. 1, no. 3, 1962, doi.org/10.1080/14662046208446970. Accessed 11 Dec. 2024.

This article was used for historical information regarding South Africa's colonial status at the time of Kephart's letter.

Hunter Library Special Collections. "Boxes 8–18 (Leonard Kephart's Travels in Africa), MSS 22-04.8–18." *Horace Kephart and Laura Mack Kephart Family Collection, MSS 12-05*, Western Carolina University.

wcu.lyrasistechnology.org/repositories/2/archival_objects/2017

Texts from this collection were used to confirm various details of Kephart's trip, particularly aiding in the identification of the SS *Madura*.

Kephart, Leonard letter to Frances Frazer Kephart. 26 Jan. 1928. Box 8, Folder 49. MSS22-0.48 Leonard Kephart Collection. Hunter Library Special Collections, Western Carolina University, Cullowhee, NC.

This is the document transcribed here.

Kephart, L.W. Sisal in East Africa., 1927, Subseries IV.A., Box: IV.A.6, Folder: 17. USDA Crop Fiber Research Collection, MS0059. National Agricultural Library Special Collections. This report, written by Kephart to another USDA official, provided context regarding the purpose and results of his trip to Africa.

Keppler, Joseph. "Prohibition is Coming!" *Getty Images*, 17 Mar. 2016,

www.gettyimages.com/detail/news-photo/prohibition-is-coming-practical-effect-of-the-revived-blue-news-photo/516467390.

This is an image of a political cartoon which resembles Kephart's "Prohibition" costume, providing support for speculation that said costume was inspired by similar anthropomorphic personifications of Prohibition in political cartoons.

Marine Photo Service. "The British India Steam Navigation company passenger/cargo liner Madura (1921) transitting the Suez Canal." *Royal Museums Greenwich*, www.rmg.co.uk/collections/objects/rmgc-object-1161114.

This image, cross-referenced against an image Kephart took of his ship on the way to Africa, confirmed that the "BI boat" mentioned in this letter was the *Madura*.

"New York, U.S., Arriving Passenger and Crew Lists (including Castle Garden and Ellis Island), 1820-1957." *Ancestry Library*, 2010, www.ancestrylibrary.com/search/collections/7488/.

These documents gave details on Kephart and Piemeisel's return to America aboard the *Republic*.

Oxford English Dictionary, Oxford UP, December 2024, www.oed.com/.

Unless otherwise noted, all definitions and etymologies given in footnotes were obtained from the Oxford English Dictionary.

"President Grant." *Dictionary of American Naval Fighting Ships*, Naval Historical Center, 2004, www.history.navy.mil/danfs/p11/president_grant.htm.

This webpage had useful information about the *Republic*, the ship Kephart references in this letter, aboard which he and Piemeisel returned to America.

"Science: Green Grass." *Time*, 16 Apr. 1928, time.com/archive/6777751/science-green-grass/. Accessed 9 Dec. 2024.

This magazine article gave some information about Kephart and Piemeisel's return to America and what they accomplished on the expedition to Africa.

Sessions, Debbie. "1920s Cruise Clothes for Women and Men." *Vintage Dancer*, 24 Sep. 2023, vintagedancer.com/1920s/1920s-cruise-clothes-for-women-and-men/.

This article, from a website run by a fashion historian, provided information about the historical popularity of costume parties on passenger liners, like the costume party Kephart describes in this letter.

"Ship Fact Sheet: Madura (1921)." *P&O Heritage*, April 2009,

www.poheritage.com/Upload/Mimsy/Media/factsheet/93691MADURA-1921pdf.pdf.

This document provided additional confirmation that the "BI boat" referenced in this letter was the *Madura*.

WDM. "S.S. Njassa." *Ships Nostalgia*, 9 Sep. 2007, www.shipsnostalgia.com/media/s-s-njassa.89897/.

This webpage provided photographs of the *Njassa*, as well as information about her size and other statistics. It was this source that first led me to suspect the *Nyassa* mentioned in this letter was actually the *Njassa*.

Street, Francesca. "Nautical Nostalgia: 'Sailing to the Sun' Pictures Reveal How We Used to Cruise." *CNN Travel*, 12 Feb. 2019, www.cnn.com/travel/article/vintage-cruise-ship-pictures/index.html. Accessed 8 Dec. 2024.

This article gave photographic evidence of and historical context for the use of canvas swimming tanks on passenger liners in the early twentieth century.

"UK and Ireland, Incoming Passenger Lists, 1878-1960." *Ancestry Library*, 2008,

www.ancestrylibrary.com/imageviewer/collections/1518/images/30807_A000880-00114.

These records provided information about the route of the *Njassa* and helped identify Mrs. MacKinnon as Beatrice MacKinnon.

"We Remember Beatrice Mary Simmonds Later MacKinnon." *Lives of the First World War*, livesofthefirstworldwar.iwm.org.uk/lifestory/4964903. Accessed 10 Dec. 2024.

This webpage gave historical information about the life of Beatrice MacKinnon, and lent support to her identification as the "Mrs. MacKinnon" mentioned in this letter.