

## Mark Hoesly - From Worldwide Wrestler to Farmer

Monroe wrestler, and farmer from Clarno Township, wrote a letter to The Times dated July 14, 1938 while on the S. S. Usambara enroute to Egypt. It was published on August 1 and shared that he had been to the bottom of the gold mines in South Rhodesia and the South African jungles. He had visited Victoria Falls, which were 360 feet tall. The roar could be heard for miles and “the spray goes nearly 200 feet high at times.” He went to Salisbury where he met a big game hunter who was a former wrestler. The two, accompanied by two natives, headed to the jungles with two high-powered rifles. The natives each had a .22 caliber repeater and a double-barreled shotgun. They traveled to “darkest Africa,” 140 miles from white people.

They shot some wild turkeys for breakfast the first morning they were there. They saw tracks from wild pigs and elephants before shooting “a few water buck.” They continued on to see elephant, hippo, and rhino tracks. “Elephant tracks were so deep it was almost possible to hide in them.” Mark was about three rods from a lion, but it disappeared into the thick bush. Another day they “were onto a herd of buffalo of about 2,000 head and about 300 zebras and wildebeests.” The buffalo, which could weigh a ton, could be more dangerous than a lion. When they reached the Urumba River, they saw about 300 hippos playing in the water. Hundreds of crocodiles, some 20 feet long, could be seen in a short time. “The echoes to roars from the lions, hyenas, elephants, rhinos, hippos, leopards, and tigers are wonderful in the morning at about sunrise; they seem to carry so much in the dense jungle.”

Mark would have liked to have stayed in the jungle for four weeks, but had his trip booked from Beira. He shared, “My hunting trip in the jungle was all too short.” On his first morning on the Indian Ocean, he was “lucky enough to see two whales.” He planned to stop at Cairo, Egypt for a few weeks to visit some of the ancient Egyptian tombs. “After sailing on the Red Sea and seeing the Nile, I shall have memories I shall never forget.”

Word was received by September 12 that Mark was headed to Berlin, Germany after having two separate visits to Africa. Since his jungle experiences in Africa, he had been in Egypt, France, England, Italy, and Belgium. At this time he planned to be back in Egypt that winter. Because of war scares in Europe he was considering making a trip back to his homeland before going back to Egypt. From different postcards that he sent it was gleaned that he was on the Red Sea during a monsoon where they had to stop the boat for two hours because of visibility. He got off the boat at the Suez Canal and took a car across the desert to Cairo. He visited the pyramids, sphinx, and ancient tombs as well as rode camels. He arrived in Hamburg on August 28 after “a perfect trip taking 45 days.”

Unfortunately, Mark’s father, Matt, passed away on January 12, 1939 at the age of 53 while Mark was in Paris. It is unknown when Mark came home, but the Times shared that he was here on February 9. Mark had visited the Canton Glarus, his father’s home area, during Christmas. His father had been there only seven months earlier.

Mark was nearing 30 and was “the same broad-shouldered, trim but powerful athlete” who was known here. “He is more cosmopolitan, perhaps, what with interesting travel experiences, but still quiet and not at all formidable - when off the mat.” He figured that he had traveled 30,000 miles on water, being on ship for 78 days, “from the Indian Ocean to the North



Nancy Krattiger Ziltener shared this photo of her aunt, Marie Blumer Hoesly, and her husband Mark. They met at the Monroe Turn and Schwing in Monroe in the 1930s. Marie was an Olympic gymnast and Mark was a professional wrestler who travelled the world in the 1930s.

Sea,” crossing the Mediterranean twice. He had been impressed by Sweden, “finding an appreciation of athletes and a clean, smooth running country, unbothered by the troubles of lower Europe.”

Mark shared that he wanted to see South America and maybe even travel around the world. “But Green County looks good, of course, and someday I may be back to live here again.” He was planning to leave for Minneapolis a few days later and to Monroe for a short time. “He may revisit Green County several times again before going on a long trip.” It is unknown what Mark did for the next 11 months.

Mark and Marie Blumer, his former Turn and Schwing partner, were married at St. John Church Friday afternoon, December 29. They later left by automobile on a wedding trip to New Orleans and Miami. After the beginning of the year they planned to travel to Mark’s next wrestling engagements in Montreal and Toronto before Buffalo, New York. It is unknown how much longer Mark wrestled after a match in Oakland, California in 1941.

In the mid-1940s Mark and Marie acquired a 100-acre farm at N805 Highway 69, across the field from the farm where he grew up and settled into their life here. Mark would spend the rest of his life on this farm and a 240-acre farm on Deppeler Road that they acquired from Mrs. John U. Kubly for \$43,200 in 1951.

Besides farming Mark and Marie stayed busy with their athletics. Marie was gone for seven weeks in the summer of 1952 for the Olympics in Finland. They trained together in their barn and put on an acrobatic exhibition at Recreation Park on Sunday evening, August 14, 1955 as a benefit for Shrine-KC, the evening I remember from my childhood.

Mark passed away on September 1, 1960 at the age of 50. He and Marie had finished the morning chores on the west farm and were eating breakfast there. He became ill, went out to the porch, and slumped over dead of a heart attack. Mark had so many interesting experiences that were not typical of other farmers.