

Across Oceans, Across Time® ...
Stories from the Family History & Genealogy Center ...



Folmer's Chile. In 1911 Folmer Rudolph Christensen of Grenå, pictured here in his military uniform, had completed his compulsory army service and was looking for a job. He accidentally met an old schoolmate who had recently returned from South America, who was looking for someone "experienced in animal husbandry" to join him in a creamery venture in Chile on parcel of land south of Valparaiso. After an eventful 58-day voyage from Hamburg to Chile a three-year adventure began on the South American frontier. Folmer found himself on the outskirts of a *hacienda* in "the land of mañana," faced with a foreign language and having to adapt to a feudal and in many respects completely alien culture. Notwithstanding his lack of experience with dairying, this inventive young man, called "Don Rudolfo," managed to get a creamery cobbled together and successfully running using half-wild cows that had to be rounded up every day to milk. Markets for the butter were found among the merchants and hotels in the cities, to the great satisfaction of his Chilean patrón. But all was not work. Folmer managed to travel extensively throughout the southern part of the continent, having many adventures, including train wrecks, encounters with *bandidos*, and earthquakes. In 1914, feeling the lure of North America, but not able to immigrate via the West Coast, he returned to Denmark, arriving just after war was declared between England and Germany. He later emigrated to the United States and settled in Dagmar, Montana. Some 50 years later he wrote a vivid and personal account in Danish of his youthful sojourn in the southern hemisphere. A translation of his memoir has been given to the Family History & Genealogy Center so others may enjoy a glimpse of life in Chile as it was nearly a century ago.

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