

Marshall Luther Howver: American Dentist Caught in the Throes of World War I and the Russian Revolution

(The Family Story Corroborated by His Passport Applications)

© Susan McNelley



Marshall Hoover
Passport Photo, 1916

Marshall Luther Howver, the fourth child of George and Sarah Ellen (Paulsel) Howver, (and brother of Laura Ellen), was born on August 10, 1874 in Mansfield, IL. He was educated as a dentist, graduating from the University of Michigan Dental School in 1895, and clearly loved to travel! In July of 1914, he sailed for London, England to attend the Sixth International Dental Congress, held there on August 3-8 of that year. He took nine-year-old Helen Louise with him. Although he and the girl's mother never married, Helen always thought of Marshall as her daddy. In London, he was invited by a fellow dentist to visit St. Petersburg, Russia, and while there, he and Helen were caught in the throes of the First World War and the Russian Revolution.

Marshall Hoover's Passport Application, dated July 18, 1914, Boston, MA – Ten days before what would become the start of World War I

To give a little background here: On June 28, 1914, the Austrian Archduke Franz Ferdinand, heir-presumptive to the Austro-Hungarian throne, was assassinated in Sarajevo, Bosnia. In retaliation, one month later on July 28, the Austro-Hungarians fired the first shots in an invasion of Serbia. Violence escalated; world powers took sides and Europe descended into what would eventually become known as The Great War or World War I. It would end four years later with an armistice signed on November 11, 1918.

Of course, few people in 1914 had any idea that the assassination of the Austrian Archduke would have such serious repercussions. So Marshall Howver traveled to London to attend the dental convention there. He was not able to return home until the spring of 1919, almost five years later. Helen would spend three more years in a convent school in Dumbarton, Scotland, before returning to the states in 1922.

I had heard these stories. I had copies of the family letters attesting to these facts. Until recently I had no public documents to support

these stories. What a nice surprise to find three passport applications that corroborated and added to the family narrative. I should point out that Marshall Hoover also went by the name of Marshall Hoover. He is using the name of Hoover on these three passport applications and on the U.S. census records of 1910 and 1920. In his dental school records, in the U.S. census of 1900 and in a passport application, dated August 16, 1904, Marshall uses the surname of Howver.

42912

NOTE—This form is to be filled out in duplicate, one copy being retained in the files of the office in which it is executed and the other forwarded to the Department.

(Form No. 126—CONSULAR.)
(Corrected January, 1915.)

Fee for Passport... \$1.00
Fee for administering oath and preparing passport application... 1.00

DEPARTMENT PASSPORT APPLICATION.

NATIVE.

Issued, November 9, 1916

I, Marshall Sullivan Hoover, a NATIVE AND LOYAL CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES, hereby apply to the Department of State, at Washington, for a passport for myself, accompanied by my wife, _____ and minor children, as follows:

Selma Louise, born at Boston, Mass. on the 7th day of September, 1895 A.M.

I solemnly swear that I was born at Manfield, Ill. in the State of _____ on or about the 10 day of August, 1874; that my father is a native citizen of the United States; that he is now residing at Newport News, Va. for the purpose of business; that I am domiciled in the United States, my permanent residence being at Boston in the State of Mass. where I follow the occupation of dentist; that I last left the United States on the 26 day of July, 1914 and am now temporarily sojourning at Petrograd, Russia; that I am the bearer of Passport No. 37765 issued by Dept. of State (W. J. Bryan Secy) on the 20 day of July, 1914; that I intend to return to the United States within 2 months with the purpose of residing and performing the duties of citizenship therein; that I have not applied elsewhere for a United States passport or for consular registration and been refused.

I desire a passport for use in visiting the countries hereinafter named for the following purpose:

<u>Russia</u>	<u>residence</u>
<u>Sweden, Norway</u>	<u>travel</u>
<u>England</u>	<u>travel</u>

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE.

Further, I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion; So help me God.

Marshall Hoover (Signature of applicant)

American Consulate at Petrograd, Russia

Sworn to before me this 9 day of November, 1916

North W. Waship
American Consul

A person born in the United States in a place where births are recorded should submit a birth certificate with his application, if possible.
* See circular instruction of July 26, 1910, entitled "Protection of Native Americans Residing Abroad."

Biographical information provided in Marshall's passport applications:

- Place of birth
- Date of birth
- Residence in 1914
- Occupation in 1914
- Residence in 1916
- Residence in 1918
- Date of travel to England
- Reasons for applying for passport
- Residence of Marshall's father in 1918
- Occupation of Marshall's dad
- Color of eyes
- Color of hair
- Complexion
- Height
- Photograph
- Name of travel companion
- Date of birth of travel companion
- Birthplace of travel companion
- Marshall Hoover's signature
- Documentation that he sometimes used the surname Hoover, instead of Howver.
- Marshall's middle name
- Confirmation of details found in family letters

Passport application completed in the American Consulate in Petrograd, Russia on November 9, 1916

NOTE—This form is to be filled out in duplicate, one copy being retained in the files of the office by which the emergency passport is issued and the other forwarded to the Department.

(Form No. 1765.—CONSULAR.)
(Corrected April, 1915.)

Fee for Passport..... \$1.00
Fee for administering oath and preparing passport application. 1.00

26 ✓

EMERGENCY PASSPORT APPLICATION.

AMERICAN EMBASSY
DEC 30 1918

NATIVE.
Issued. LONDON

I, Marshal Luther Hoover, a NATIVE AND LOYAL CITIZEN OF THE UNITED STATES, hereby apply to the American Consulate at Glasgow, Scotland, for an emergency passport for myself, accompanied by my wife, and minor children, as follows: Helen Louise, born at Boston, Mass., on the 7th day of September, 1905; and on the ___ day of ___ 19___, born at ___ on the ___ day of ___ 1___ and ___

I solemnly swear that I was born at Mansfield in the State of Illinois, on or about the 10th day of August, 1874; that my father is a native citizen of the United States; that he is now residing at Newport News, Va., for the purpose of Contractor; that I am domiciled in the United States, my permanent residence being at Boston, in the State of Mass., where I follow the occupation of dentist; that I last left the United States on the 25th day of July, 1914 and am now temporarily sojourning at Glasgow, Scotland; that I am the bearer of Passport No. 42012, issued by Department of State, on the 16th day of November, 1916; that I intend to return to the United States within one month with the purpose of residing and performing the duties of citizenship therein; that I have not applied elsewhere for a United States passport or for consular registration and been refused.

I desire a passport for use in visiting the countries hereinafter named for the following purpose:

British Isles (Name of country.) Return to U.S.A. (Object of visit.)

(Name of country.) (Object of visit.)

(Name of country.) (Object of visit.)

OATH OF ALLEGIANCE.

Further, I do solemnly swear that I will support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic; that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the same; and that I take this obligation freely, without any mental reservation or purpose of evasion: So help me God.

Consulate at Glasgow, Scotland,
Sworn to before me this 21st day of December, 1918.

United States Vice-Consul
(Signature of applicant.)
(Name.)
(Title.)

AMERICAN CONSULAR SERVICE
\$2
FEE STAMP
DEC 20 1918

AMERICAN CONSUL
GLASGOW

*A person born in the United States in a place where births are recorded should submit a birth certificate with his application, if possible.
† See circular instruction of July 26, 1910, entitled "Protection of Native Americans Residing Abroad."
9-18 (OVER.)

More information is found on the reverse side of the emergency passport application filed at the American Consulate in Glasgow, Scotland on December 21, 1918. Identification of the applicant, that is, Marshall Luther Hoover, is provided by Helen Louise Hoover, residing at 5 Elliot St. in Glasgow, Scotland. "I have known the above named Marshall Luther Hoover for 8 years." The statement is signed by Helen Hoover and dated December 21, 1918. At the bottom of the page are listed identifying documents: Expired Dept of State Passports No. 42012 issued on Dec. 16, 1916 and Expired Dept. of State Passport No. 42013 of Helen Louise Hoover, dated Dec. 16, 1916.

Passport application completed at the American Consulate in Glasgow, Scotland on December 21, 1918.

The Russian Odyssey- More of the story, as told in letters written over the years:

The following is from an undated letter written by Josephine Hoover Pullen, sometime before her death in 1984. Marshall was her uncle.

I so well remember that Marshall came by Gibson [Gibson City, Illinois] before he went to Russia in 1914. He had this beautiful child with him, but he refused to say it was his child. When he came back after the war, he arrived at our front door with a buffalo [bearskin?] robe coat, which was half way cured. Mother ordered him to the back door, even before she greeted him. I was there, so I know.

Now, a letter from Helen Long to Sibyl Hoover Middleton . Helen was the child Marshall took with him to Europe and to Russia. There is no date on this letter, but it appears to have been written shortly after Marshall's death, sometime in the 1930s.

My Dear Sibyl,

You can't really know how happy I was to hear from you. (At) last a word from someone close to my beloved "Daddy". He was that and more to me for nine years and meant more to me than anyone else in the world.

My heart was broken to learn of his death. I had hoped to once again see him, to talk to him and let him know how much I worshiped him, but too late...

Dad and I exchanged letters weekly, more often sometimes, while I was in the convent in Scotland. He always mentioned you, your mother and Josephine.

So many vivid things happened in my young life that all is very clear. I remember 1914 when we went to Gibson City. I remember "Granny" and Josephine, then to Canada, (then) on the famous liner to England, and the Wembley Exhibition. Then we met Dr. X, a Russian dentist, friend and college mate of Daddy's — and an invitation to visit his homeland. We went. War was declared then: 1914. The waters were leaded with mines. It was thrilling and exciting to me. Drills. Lifebelts at all times. No lights. No noise. Then Norway, Sweden, Finland. It seemed time meant nothing. We saw everything. Had fun and life was so gay. Then Petrograd [St. Petersburg], the city I learned to love. We couldn't leave, so to school I went. Before long we talked Russian and lived Russian. There were many hardships, days without food, lives of people, endless waiting for bread, then the Tartan stores closed. No more horse meat. Easter Sunday, 1917, we had an alley cat, cooked like for a special dinner. Daddy skinned it; Mademoiselle cooked it. Then [in] 1918 we managed to flee to Murmansk in the very [northwest] part of Russia. We lived in a boxcar for weeks while a shack was being built. We wore reindeer clothes and ate bear meat. During all these years Daddy never once missed reading out of the Gospel at night, then I was tucked in and kissed. He was always good to do without things for me. Of course I then didn't realize such things. Then finally a boat was going to England. He put me in second class and himself went steerage. I was the only female on the boat except the stewardess.

Our Family History

We landed in Hell [?]. Still wearing our skin clothes. We smelled of fresh skin and were the object of all eyes. The Russian money was worthless and Daddy gave me his shoes to wear. He had small feet. I forget what he wore. Then he left me alone in a convent in Dumbarton, Scotland. It was after midnight. In the morning he was gone for America, and I was a stranger, peculiar looking, Russian speaking and practically uncivilized.

From a letter written to Susan McNelley by Helen Long on September 2, 1988:

I loved Russia. The first year was beautiful. We lived in luxury. I forgot English and spoke Russian fluently. I went to school. I also learned German, which was the compulsory language. We suffered hunger, etc. during those bad times, but I was always happy and felt safe with my Daddy ...

I am 83 years old in a few days, September 7th, and I have a storehouse of memories. But the happy days shine in my life and most of them were with my beloved Daddy, Marshall. I do not know how he passed away, except that I was told that he had ...

Two years ago, I took my daughter with me to visit Moscow and Leningrad, which used to be St. Petersburg (Petrograd). I showed her where we lived. We went through the Winter Palace, now



*Russian Revolution: Bolshevik forces marching on Red Square in Moscow on November 8, 1917
(Source: Wikipedia; PD-Russia)*

a museum, where I used to help the empress Alexandra wrap bandages for the hospitals. I also witnessed Rasputin's body being pulled from the Neva River. We ate horse meat until all of the

horses either died from starvation or were slaughtered for food. We had a roasted cat for Easter dinner. Tasted just like rabbit! ... [Marshall] was a dentist and he helped in the hospitals during the war.

Two years later, in another letter written to Susan McNelley on March 5, 1990, Helen wrote:

[I] was nine in July of 1914, when we sailed on the Lusitania from New York to England. From there we roamed around ... Norway, Sweden, Finland and many other countries. Finally settled in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Other public documents adding to the story:

Marshall, traveling under the name of Hoover, sailed from Glasgow, Scotland on the ship *Cassandra* on February 6, 1919 and arrived at the port of St. John, New Brunswick, Canada on March 6, 1919. (Source: Border Crossings: From Canada to U.S. 1895-1956, downloaded from Ancestry.com in April 2014)

Helen Louise Hoover returned home on July 10, 1922 on the ship *Algeria*, departing from Glasgow. (Source: Ellis Island Passenger Lists, downloaded on February 21, 2014)

After he returned to the United States, Marshall appears to have had a series of jobs which took him across the country. "Marshall L. Hoover," age 45, is listed in the U.S. Census of 1920 as living in Bloomington, McLean County, IL as a lodger in the household of Isa and Clora Clark. His occupation is listed as dentist. There is a brief article in the Prescott (Arizona) Evening Courier dated February 26, 1930 under "Items of Interest from Whipple": Resigns - Dr. Marshall Howver, dental mechanic at the dental clinic, has resigned from his duties on the post. (Article found on Google News in February, 2014)

Apparently, Marshall never married. He is listed as single in the U.S. Census records of 1900 (Spring Valley, Iowa), 1910 (Boston, MA) and 1920 (Bloomington, IL). According to his niece Josephine Dixen Pullen, Marshall was working at a VA Hospital in Spokane, WA at the time of his death in 1931. Marshall Howver died in Spokane on April 14 of that year, at the age of 56. (Washington Deaths 1883-1960; downloaded from Ancestry.com in April 2014)

The exact nature of the relationship between Marshall and Helen Louise is unknown. In the U.S. Census of 1910 for Boston, MA, Mabel Kelly (age 23) and Helen Kelly (4) are listed in the household of Marshall Hoover, a dentist. Mabel's occupation is given as "housekeeper." According to her letters, when Helen returned to the United States from Scotland in 1922, Marshall met her at Ellis Island. He then left her in the care of her mother in Boston. According to Helen, she never saw or heard from him again. Helen did not understand his actions and was heartbroken. Certainly, Marshall cared enough about the child to go to great effort and expense to give her a good education in a convent school in Scotland. The family lore suggests that her

mother was young and unprepared for motherhood. Helen repeatedly noted that the happiest days of her childhood were in the company of Marshall Hoover.

Historical Notes:

St. Petersburg, Russia was founded by Czar Peter I (Peter the Great) in 1703. Peter had visited Western Europe and wanted to bring Western culture and technology to Russia. He made St. Petersburg his “Window to the West”. Its magnificent palaces, handsome public buildings and wide public squares resemble those of such cities as London, Paris and Vienna. The Winter Palace, a grand baroque-style home of the czars, was built in the city between 1754 and 1762. Also located here is the Hermitage Museum, famous throughout the world for its outstanding collections of fine art. In 1712, Peter moved the Russian capital from Moscow to St. Petersburg.

St. Petersburg lies in northwestern Russia, at the eastern end of the Gulf of Finland, which is an arm of the Baltic Sea. The Neva river runs through the heart of the city.

The city has had three names in its long, illustrious history. Peter the Great founded the city as St. Petersburg. In 1914, World War I broke out. Russians went to war against Germany and changed the name of this city to Petrograd, which means *Peter's City* in Russian. They did this in order to get rid of the German ending *burg*. Three years later, the Russian Revolution of 1917 ended czarist rule in Russia. Late that year, the Bolshevik (Communist) forces seized the city and formed a new government, headed by Lenin. The Bolsheviks moved the Russian capital back to Moscow in 1918. St. Petersburg was renamed Leningrad upon Lenin's death in 1924. After the fall of communism in the 1990's, the city reverted to its original name of St. Petersburg.

Murmansk is located some 900 miles north of St. Petersburg, on the northern shore of the Kola Peninsula, in the extreme northwest of Russia. It is a port city on the Arctic Ocean, founded in 1915, as a fishing and ship-building center. The warm Gulf Stream keeps the harbor free of ice year round. A railroad links Murmansk with St. Petersburg. It is now Russian's chief port on the Arctic Ocean and the world's largest city north of the Arctic Circle.

Additional Source Information:

Passport applications for Marshall Hoover (Howver) downloaded from Ancestry.com in April of 2014.

Catalogue of Harvard University, published in 1904 by Harvard University; Digitized June 25, 2007 by Google Books and available online: Listed: "Marshall Luther Howver, DDS - University of Michigan, 1895" on page 270 in the section on prizes, honors and degrees awarded."

Information on the Dental Convention found in *The Dental Art in Ancient Times*, a souvenir of the Sixth International Dental Congress, pub by Burroughs, Wellcome, & Co. available online, downloaded 30 Mar 2016.

Information on Marshall's travel to Russia initially supplied by his nieces, Sibyl Hoover Middleton and Josephine Dixon Pullen, and later by Helen Long, the child who went with Marshall.