

# RESCUE AT URMIA

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IN AN OBSCURE CORNER OF PERSIA FOLLOWING WORLD WAR I,  
AN UNDERESTIMATED CONSUL BECAME AN UNLIKELY HERO.

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BY DAVID D. NEWSOM

**I**n June 1919, Gordon Paddock, the United States consul in Tabriz, Persia (changed to Iran in 1935), received a stark message delivered by a messenger who, to get through Kurdish lines, had hidden the paper in the sole of his sandal: “May 24. Kurds fought with Persians. Kurds driven from city. Persians massacred 200 Christians in American mission yard and wounded 100 more. Many attempts on lives of Clarence Packard and Yacob, but both are safe. City mob looted all mission property and burned some. Secure immediate protection and help. Packard.” In response, Paddock set out to save the missionaries and 600 of their Assyrian Christian followers, who were trapped in the Persian city of Urmia (also spelled Urumiah; later changed to Rezaiyeh). Letters from the missionaries and from Paddock in the

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National Archives and in the archives of the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia tell the story of the rescue, and of Paddock’s subsequent problems with the State Department bureaucracy.

## “Deliberateness Instead of Energy and Action”

Gordon Paddock was an unlikely hero. Born in New York in 1865, he graduated from Princeton and Columbia Law School. After practicing law in New York for 10 years, he entered the United States Diplomatic Service in 1901.

On June 5, 1911, shortly after Paddock took up his consular duties in Tabriz, State Department inspector Alfred L.M. Gottschalk described him as “a gentleman, trained to the life of the idle rich in his youth. He has no money left now and is trying, late in life, to learn something of business.” Knowing that background, the inspector sympathized all the more with Paddock’s living conditions. “He has to live in a mud-walled village where there is practically no social life and where the only fellow countrymen that he meets are well meaning, but certainly not broad-minded, missionaries, where clean or well-trained servants are unattainable, and where the house he lives in is not weatherproof and therefore impossible to heat through the severe mountain-winter of Persia.”

In addition, communications were poor and subject to misunderstanding, as when he reported his marriage on April 29, 1918, in Tabriz to Marie Josephine Irma Lefebvre, a French citizen. In a subsequent letter to the American minister in Tehran, he wrote: “I am entirely obliged to you for the trouble the legation has taken in

telegraphing the Paris Embassy in reply to my sister, Mrs. Alexander's, inquiries. I believe a report of my marriage was changed to my 'murder,' a rather amusing mistake when played that way, but which would have been extremely unpleasant for me if it had happened the other way around."

Another despatch to Tehran, on July 27, 1918, illustrates the problems Paddock faced throughout his tenure in reconciling the demands of the Department of State with the realities of the region. "I regret extremely that it is quite impossible for me to comply at present with the request contained in your unnumbered instruction (File 300) of the 15th instant, to supply the legation with quadruple copies of my despatches. I have, after much searching in the shops here, been able to find but five pieces of carbon paper, of poor quality and at an absurd price (\$0.10) per sheet, and unfortunately, there remain but two of these sheets, both of which are worn."

Notwithstanding such difficulties, Gottschalk was not impressed with Paddock's job performance. He reported that the consul had traits "usual in most of our American secretaries — a somewhat lofty idea of gentility; deliberateness instead of energy and action; and the acquired habit of self-effacement and tactful subordination." He concluded that Paddock's long absence from the U.S. and lack of consular experience "seem somewhat to militate against his usefulness in his present post."

One other comment from his report is particularly relevant, in light of later events: "Where he has shown less energy is in making no plans to visit Urmia (where we have an American colony, I am told)."

### **Caught in the Middle**

Paddock probably expected to spend his time following the Persian carpet trade, issuing visas and promoting American exports, but it was another consular function that was to preoccupy him: protecting the interests of the American citizens in his district. Those were primarily Presbyterian missionaries, whose predecessors had been among the first Americans to establish a presence in Persia back in 1835. They settled in an area of villages inhabited by Armenian and Assyrian (Nestorian)

Christians in the province of Azerbaijan, a region of multi-layered fear and conflict also inhabited by Shiite Azeris (the majority) and Sunni Kurds, all governed by a weak Persian regime.

The advent of World War I in 1914 aggravated the latent tensions of this ethnic mix: Turks, allied with Germany, invaded from the west, while Russian forces were already ensconced in the region with the consent of their allies, the British, causing the region's two principal cities, Tabriz and Urmia, to be repeatedly occupied and evacuated over the next few years. German propaganda during World War I emphasized the dual role of the Ottoman sultan as both the secular leader of Turkey and, as caliph, the religious leader among Muslims. For their part, Czarist Russians acted as defenders of the local Christians; the latter were, as a result, seen in the region as pro-Allied.

At the same time, strong fears of Turkey prevailed among the Armenians, many of whom had barely survived massacres in Turkey before fleeing to Persia. Similarly, the Assyrian Christians, with their own militia, the Jalus, saw threats from Turkey and their neighbors, the Kurds. The Sunni Muslim Kurds — like their fellow kinsmen in Iraq, Turkey and Syria — dreamed of an independent Kurdistan; they saw threats to their hopes from both Christians and other Muslims. Caught in the middle of this turmoil were the American missionaries, who — because the U.S. was a neutral power until 1917 — operated hospitals and schools and provided relief.

The situation created dilemmas for the American missionaries, some of whom were conscientious objectors. When Dr. William Shedd was appointed honorary vice consul in Urmia, some of his colleagues objected — fearful, with some justification, that such close identification with the United States government would imperil them. Some even urged Shedd to move outside their compound, but he refused, though only a modest sign on the gate indicated his official status.

Another internal debate involved whether to respond to calls from the Assyrian fighters to provide them bread. The missionaries did so, but were well aware that such a move supported charges that they were supporting one faction in the conflict.

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a State Department inspector  
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possessing "deliberateness  
instead of energy and action."***

The disintegration of the Russian government following the Bolshevik Revolution removed the main safeguard on which the Christians in Persia relied. In early 1918, mobs entered the several mission compounds, driving nearly all the remaining Christians around Urmia, estimated at 70,000, south toward Hamadan and the British lines. Only about half made it. In June 1918, because of a Turkish advance on Tabriz, the American consulate and many members of the Allied community moved to Kazvin, where they remained from June 29 until Dec. 27, 1918. At the same time, famine conditions aggravated by the war created a desperate need for relief and an increasingly brutal competition for the limited supplies of money, food and medicine the missionaries were providing on behalf of an American charity, Near East Relief.

Tensions between the Kurds and the Christians flared up when the principal Kurdish chief in the region, Ismael Agha, known as Simko, killed the principal Assyrian leader, Mar Simon, who had come to see him on a peace mission. The Christians, seeking revenge, attacked the Kurds, and drove Agha from his stronghold. The Kurds, in turn, attacked Urmia, but were driven off by Persian troops. The Persian government, in its own effort to restrain the Kurds, sent a package bomb to Agha. He escaped injury, but his brother was killed. In response, Persian mobs, joined in some cases by soldiers, looted the Presbyterian mission compound in Urmia and attacked Christians.

Harry Packard, in an account written later, described what was happening when he sent his appeal to Paddock: "We found about 280 more Christians and had them brought, for small presents, to the governor's yard. Surgical dressings

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were obtained and the wounded were all dressed and with a few instruments a number of operations were done in dingy rooms or in the governor's yard and many patients were seen and treated. Then, for the next 24 days, we were captives in that Muslim yard, hoping and praying for word from Tabriz and trying in every possible way to send out a report on our condition and appeal for help." It was at this point that Packard appealed for help to Consul Paddock.

#### **Riding to the Rescue**

Back in Tabriz, Paddock pondered how to respond. Urmia was, as the crow flies, 75 miles away on the other side of Lake Urmia (later known as Lake Rezaiyeh). The route around the lake was more than 200 miles over bad roads and through potentially hostile territory.

On the afternoon of June 6, 1919, he sent for three missionaries residing in Tabriz: Hugo Muller, Frederick Jessup and Dr. Edward M. Dodd. He told them, "I've been thinking a good deal about Urmia and the

Packards and I decided last night that I could not sit still and wait for the Powers to act, but that I must do something myself. I have consulted with my colleagues the British and French consuls and I have called on Sipar-Salar, governor of Azerbaijan, and have formulated a plan which I would like to present to you."

He then outlined a proposal to take two automobiles, accompanied by an ex-governor of Urmia, Sardar-i-Fateh, and a former British soldier, Donald Ferguson (who would be a driver), around the north end of the lake. After seeking out the Kurds to provide safe escort as far as their lines went, he hoped to get in touch with the present governor of Urmia and, after securing the release of the Christians, arrange for them to be transported back to Tabriz by lake steamer.

Paddock acknowledged that this would be no easy task. It was Ramadan, the Muslim fasting month, which would complicate preparations and travel. While Sardar-i-Fateh had been successful in protecting the Christians and avoiding conflict with the Kurds, that was before the assassination attempt had outraged Ismael Agha's tribesmen. Making matters worse, those parts of the territory not controlled by the Kurds were the domain of a Persian bandit, known as Kazim (full name unknown).

The missionaries, nevertheless, heartily endorsed the plan, though they recommended transporting the automobiles part of the way by train to save gasoline. In addition, Muller and Dodd volunteered to join the party; the latter knew the Kurdish language well and was acquainted with Ismael Agha, whose assistance would be vital to the mission.

Once the necessary papers arrived from the Persian authorities, the party set out at 4:30 p.m. the next day, Saturday, June 7, 1919, on the four-mile trip to the railway line

to load the cars. Letters from the missionaries, now in the archives of the Presbyterian Historical Society in Philadelphia, describe what followed.

**Days 1-2:** Because the track was in need of repair, and “wobbly,” the train stopped at dark. Starting again at 5:30 the next morning, the train reached its destination, Sheriff Khana, by mid-morning. Although the autos were successfully off-loaded and the party ready to go, it took Paddock five hours to notify the governor-general in Tabriz and receive a reply. While waiting they “begged” a good meal from a Russian woman and searched in nearby debris “left by the Bolsheviks” for a staff from which to fly an American flag.

At 4 p.m., they finally began the drive, entering what one participant described as “no man’s land.” The lead car, driven by Ferguson, flew the American flag and carried Paddock, Sardar-i-Fateh and a servant for each. Dodd and Muller, in the other car, carried the gasoline, food and personal kits. They proceeded without difficulty until about 8 o’clock that evening, when they realized they had lost their way and had to retrace their steps. Because a battle had taken place between Kurds and Persians a few days before, neither people nor animals could be seen, but they eventually found a village to spend the night. By the time they laid out their blankets and turned in, it was nearly midnight.

**Day 3:** The group started out along the lakeshore anticipating meeting up with Kurds, as Sardar-i-Fateh had sent a letter to Ismail Agha requesting a meeting. Not long afterward, five Kurdish horsemen appeared, having intercepted the messenger. One of the five dashed off to a nearby village and shortly returned with a minor chief and 30 horsemen. Four of the

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horsemen were designated as escorts, two in front and two behind.

The trip was delayed while one car was freed from sand. Then suddenly the lead car, Paddock’s, speeded up and three of the Kurds left the group and galloped toward the mountains, the fourth remaining beside the lead car. The sardar suddenly waved a white handkerchief out the car window, for Kurds from a nearby village were firing at the cars. One bullet struck in front of Paddock’s car, another behind. The party sped ahead, away from one village, only to find that they were being fired on from the next village as well.

The Kurdish escort returned, indicating it was safe to proceed. The next immediate obstacle was a large ditch, which the Kurds filled in to permit the cars to pass. At 1 in the afternoon, Paddock and company arrived in Dilman (also known as Salmas and Shahpur), the site of a governorate and four miles from the home of Ismail Agha. Anticipating that at least one night would be spent with the governor, the party unloaded the cars and parked in a nearby inn (caravanserai). Paddock sent a letter to Agha seeking advice on whether he should call on him or

whether the chief would call on the delegation. His reply came quickly, saying he was indisposed and could not come, but would be glad to receive “His Excellency, the American consul.”

Another letter arrived at the governor’s house explaining that Persian horsemen, not Kurds, had fired on the American party, thinking they were involved in a Kurdish attack. The Persians, to make amends, offered to escort the group to Urmia. Muller commented in a subsequent letter, “What strange logic — first, to mistake two automobiles flying the American flag, and fleeing like the very mischief, for a Kurdish attack; and second, to suggest the possibility of escorting us through a Kurd-infested country.”

**Days 4-8:** Patience is a virtue, particularly in the Middle East, and Gordon Paddock amply demonstrated that quality in Dilman. For five days the party remained, calling on Ismail Agha and receiving his visits. Such calls involved a great deal of sitting and drinking cups of coffee, but little talking. Twice during the time, Agha made all-day calls, coming at 10 a.m. and staying until 5:30 p.m. During one of those occasions, he excused himself, but Paddock remained seated, waiting for his guest’s return. The missionaries informed him at dinner that evening that while he had been patiently waiting, Agha had gone into an adjoining room and “had a nice nap.”

During this period, the delegation was effectively trapped by the security situation. As Muller described the scene, “Kurds go through the streets in twos and threes with lowered rifles; shops are closed and locked; most people keep off the streets; foreigners and officials move about with a guard; men constantly waiting on the governor with complaints of what the Kurds are doing ask for redress and the governor puts them off with a



diplomatic answer. The Kyargyusar [Persian government representative for foreign interests] was robbed of his clothes and became the butt of many jokes, but there was no way to get back his stolen goods nor to apprehend the robber.”

On the day of his second visit, Friday, June 13, 1919, Ismail Agha, satisfied with his talks with Paddock, called in one of his subordinate chiefs and said, “These gentlemen are going to Urmia and I want you to send a guard with them all the way. In addition, send a detachment of horsemen to Kutchi just over the pass and surround the village. If the bandit Kazim is there, kill him; and in any case open a road for these gentlemen to pass.”

**Day 9:** Transiting the pass leading to Urmia, the group did not get far before having two blowouts. They had not brought enough inner tubes, so Ferguson stuffed the tires with grass, which lasted until they returned to Tabriz. In the late afternoon they came within 50 yards of the village of Kutchi when horsemen appeared, informing them that a battle was taking place there. The Kurdish escort led the party to another village to spend the night, but their duties were not over: Wounded from the battle were brought in for Dr. Dodd to treat. Once they had been treated, supper was served, and Paddock and company bedded down, ending the day past midnight.

**Day 10:** A timely start brought the party to the village of Saatlu, just a few miles from Urmia. There they were greeted by a hundred or more Kurdish horsemen who escorted the party to within two miles of the city. There Sardar-i-Fateh received a letter from the governor saying he would be pleased to receive him and that he would order the Persian troops not to fire and to permit a safe entrance into the city. At about

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not sit still and wait for  
the Powers to act,  
but that I must do  
something myself.”***

**—Gordon Paddock**

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6:30 p.m., Ferguson drove the sardar and his orderly into Urmia to make arrangements for Paddock to enter the city. They “returned with their faces wreathed in smiles — the trip had been successful, the Packards were safe, and the consul and his party were to enter at once.”

**Day 11:** The consul and sardar entered, proceeding through sullen crowds to the governor’s house, where they were greeted by the Packards and their Christian helpers. But the mission was not yet accomplished: the several hundred Assyrian Christians still had to be safely removed from a hostile city. And rumors were rife that major efforts would be made by some elements to prevent them from leaving.

Paddock covered himself with glory in his negotiations with the governor, noting that he was acting with the authority of the governor of Azerbaijan, a fact he had in writing. He also declared that he was speaking not only for America, but for Great Britain and France. (This was a slight exaggeration, though it was true that his British and French colleagues in Tabriz were in accord with him.) Then, as Muller recounted, “Mr. Paddock said he came there under orders to take the Christians

out, that he could not discuss these orders, but was there to carry them out; if the governor prevented him from carrying them out, he himself would return to Tabriz and make a full report of the situation, with the implication that the result would not be good for the governor.”

Paddock’s appeal on behalf of the Christians resulted in requests for protection to be provided for the Persians threatened by the Kurds. A delegation called upon him to ask that, before he left the city with the Christians, he appoint an agent who could hoist the American flag in case the Kurds should break through and attack the town. There is no evidence that he did so, but he correctly took that request as an indirect signal that the Christians would be permitted to leave the next day.

**Day 12:** The party’s original plan for the return journey was to meet a boat and barge at the lakeshore and cross the lake to Sheriff Khana, where they would once more board the train to Tabriz. But first they had to escort the missionaries and the 600 or so local Christians from the governor’s compound across 13 miles of unsecured territory through crowds of doubtful friendliness.

Paddock, after conferring with Packard, decided to proceed as soon as possible in the afternoon. He sent Dodd out of the city to arrange safe passage with the Kurds and procured carts and animals to move the sick and wounded and to carry a supply of bread and the few possessions still remaining with the refugees.

By 4:30 p.m. the carts and animals had not arrived, but Paddock decided to proceed anyway. Muller wrote, “It was a tense moment; we all knew that the slightest mishap between the governor’s gate and the outside of the city might mean a miserable end for all of us — it would have required only a rifle shot, the throwing of a stone, accidental push-

ing in the crowd, a hasty word, or an angry look to have started a conflagration from which the imagination turns in horror.”

Meanwhile, Dodd reached the Kurds, who were exchanging fire with Muslim irregulars outside the city. They acceded to his request to stop the firing and, to demonstrate their friendship, produced two ears they had just cut off of the irregulars. (Back in the governor’s yard, Dr. Packard was bandaging the victims’ bleeding ear stumps.)

In a reversal of the original sequence, Muller’s car led the procession, with the Christian refugees following on foot. The consul’s car was to bring up the rear. Sardar-i-Fateh rode with Muller, a rifle at the ready. Two men with rifles rode on the left running board and one on the right. Several other armed men walked alongside. Understandably, the aged, the sick and the wounded

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also wanted to climb aboard. To lighten the car’s load, the sardar dismounted and walked. Muller commented: “I was obliged to be hard-hearted in the matter of refusing to let the poor people put their babies and their loads and their sick on the

car. ... My only passenger for most of the way was a poor little crippled boy whom I had invited to sit beside me and another little waif who tucked himself away between the tool box and the mud guard and whom I could not bring myself to throw off.”

A line of soldiers and horsemen at the governor’s gate dispersed the crowd. As other horsemen cleared a way through the streets, a long line of soldiers ensured the passage. Several miles from the city, Muller, not seeing the consul’s car, stopped and waited. Ultimately, the carts appeared and, with them, Paddock and Ferguson. Dodd and Packard stayed behind to await the return of the cars to carry the most seriously wounded.

Muller drove on ahead to the lake landing to oversee arrangements for the embarkation. The road was at times under water and at other times

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difficult to find. Darkness descended, but the moon shortly thereafter came up to light the way. Kurds at the landing assisted in housing Mrs. Packard and others. Muller reached the landing at 1 a.m.; the remainder of the procession did not arrive until after 2 o'clock in the morning.

**Day 13:** When the day dawned, the steamer and barge were visible about a mile from shore. Ferguson was able to pick up Dodd and Packard and the whole party reassembled by noon. The cars were loaded on a barge with some difficulty because the Kurds had burned the pier. But for some unexplained reason, the captain of the steamer maneuvered around near the landing for two hours before heading for Sheriff Khana.

**Day 14:** The steamer arrived at Sheriff Khana without incident. By 11 a.m., the cars had been loaded onto the train and it was making its way toward Tabriz. Muller describes the group's arrival there: "Carts, wagons and carriages were waiting to receive the sick, wounded and weary, the women and the children (which included almost all). Provision had been made for one good meal for all and for a continuance of rations of daily bread as well as houses to sleep in. The crowd at the station was large and many of those awaiting the arrival of the train were waiting to get news of relatives or friends who had been in Urmia. Consequently, many of the greetings were smothered in tears of joy, but not a few who hoped for a joyful reunion turned back from the train with tears of sorrow.

"It was a great privilege to have had even a small share in so great and successful an undertaking, and now that it is all over I can say that I have never before seen so complex a plan and so large an undertaking put through in Persia with so little delay and so little 'hitch' as this one was.

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*The missionaries  
informed Paddock at  
dinner that evening that  
while he had been  
patiently waiting all day,  
his guest had gone into  
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Not one of the whole party to leave Urmia with us — neither little child nor aged woman — failed to arrive in Tabriz, and the only accident of any kind was that one woman fell and broke her leg. Again I am glad to say that under God the credit for the success of this enterprise goes to the American consul, Mr. Paddock, and the American flag, and secondly to the Persian gentleman, my friend Sardar-i-Fateh. "

Dr. Dodd, in a letter to the mission headquarters in New York added his impressions: "It was a trip with a good many sensations and some vivid mental pictures. One of the latter was of Old Glory rippling out bravely over a swaying and jolting Ford touring car, surrounded by the tossing sea of a hundred-odd tasseled turbans of the wild Kurdish horsemen who were escorting the consul in state to their siege headquarters just outside of Urmia. Another is of six hundred huddled, terrified women and children filing out of the Urmia governor's yard in the face of a huge crowd of Muslim spectators swarming over the streets, walls, roofs, and trees ...

And a third is of the same Syrian [Assyrian] and Armenian people the next day, safe, happy and carefree on the big barge which Dr. W.P. Ellis [a fellow missionary] brought across the lake to meet us. "

### **No Good Deed Goes Unpunished**

At the time of the rescue, Paddock had been outside the United States for almost 20 years. In a memorandum written in Washington and addressed to the Secretary of State on Dec. 18, 1922, Paddock noted that he had requested the State Department's permission to return to the United States and been "granted leave of absence for 60 days with permission to visit the United States." On the basis of this authority, he left for Washington, paying his own way.

Missionaries had already brought Paddock's assistance to the attention of the Secretary of State. On Sept. 18, 1919, Mrs. Mary Lewis Shedd, widow of W.A. Shedd, wrote to Secretary of State Robert Lansing and enclosed a petition of appreciation from the Assyrian community. Relief organizations were also aware of his role and the fact that he was returning to the U.S. A letter of Feb. 2, 1922, from Charles W. Fowle, the foreign secretary of Near East Relief, to Wilbur J. Carr, director of Consular Services, reads:

"We understand that Mr. Gordon Paddock, who has been American consul at Tabriz, Persia, for such a long period, is on his way home and should arrive shortly in this country. Because of the close connection which Mr. Paddock has had with the work of Near East Relief and the very valuable assistance which he has rendered to us and other American interests in his district, we are extremely anxious to get in touch with him promptly on his arrival for conference, and also to express our

deep appreciation of his services.”

There is little evidence in the archives to suggest that these reports of Paddock’s actions ever reached the higher echelons of the department or the White House. Indeed, the Department of State, apparently unaware that Paddock was on his way home at the time, replied to Near East Relief on Feb. 7 that his “whereabouts were unknown.” It was not until Mrs. Shedd made contact with her first cousin, General Charles G. Dawes (then director of the Bureau of the Budget and later Calvin Coolidge’s vice president) that higher officials took notice.

At least partly due to her efforts, on May 19, 1922, President Warren Harding addressed a letter to Secretary of State Charles Evan Hughes, expressing the interest of Gen. Dawes in the “advancement of Mr. Gordon Paddock.” The Secretary of State replied on June 2:

“I beg to say that a careful examination has been made of the work of Mr. Paddock. ... Unless in the future Mr. Paddock should show greater ability in the performance of strictly consular duties than he has shown in the past there would appear to be little likelihood that he could properly be advanced to a higher position in the Consular Service.” (At that time, before the Rogers Act of 1924, the Consular and Diplomatic Services were separate.)

Attached to the letter was the following evaluation of Paddock’s work: “Careful consideration of his entire record indicates that Mr. Paddock is regarded as possessing good political and diplomatic ability but that he has poor ability as an executive and on commercial and general consular work. His rating for efficiency as a consular officer upon all phases of his work is ‘fair’ and in the order of relative efficiency to the other offi-

cers of Class VI of consuls he is numbered 81 in a total of 95.”

But the Secretary of State’s letter went on to say, “The inspection of his record, however, has developed other facts which I feel should be brought to your attention.” The letter noted that Paddock’s original appointment had been to the Diplomatic Service and observed: “His activities in behalf of American interests, including those of the interests of American missionaries in Persia and also in the protection of British and other foreign interests in his care, have been highly commendable. In view of these considerations, which we put before you when you wrote your letter of May 19, it occurs to me that you might feel disposed to transfer Mr. Paddock to a secretaryship in the Diplomatic Service. ...”

On June 23, 1922, a reply from President Harding to Secretary Hughes

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duly referred to the “transfer of Mr. Gordon Paddock from the Consular Service to be [a second secretary] in the Diplomatic Service,” and said: “In accordance with your letter I have signed the executive order making possible his transfer and have forwarded his nomination to the Senate. I hope, after Mr. Paddock’s nomination is confirmed, that friendly consideration will be given to him in making his assignment. Apparently he has rendered a long and faithful service without opportunity for any showing in the making of a record, and I would like his fidelity to find a way open to reward if such a thing is possible.”

### **A Tale of Woe**

Once admitted to the Diplomatic Service, Paddock reportedly requested assignment to Paris but was, instead, assigned to Belgrade. But what preoccupied him most upon his return to Washington was the question of reimbursement for his travel back from Tabriz. (He had reached the United States on the S.S. *Olympic* on March 22, 1922. Because he had returned on “leave of absence” rather than home leave, he was not automatically entitled to reimbursement for his transportation expenses.)

His first recorded meeting at the Department of State was on Aug. 4, after which he wrote the following letter to Wilbur J. Carr, director of Consular Services:

“You were kind enough yesterday to say that I might give you a memorandum regarding the question of my transportation from Persia.

“I understood you to say that it depends on whether my request for permission to come to America and the authorization to do so are on record in such form as to make it impossible to overcome the technical obstacles that I have returned ‘on leave of absence;’ in spite of the fact that I have been transferred to

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***Paddock covered  
himself with glory in  
his negotiations with  
the governor.***

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another branch of the service and assigned to the department. While I fear there can be little question about the form of my original application and the department’s reply, the circumstances under which I left Persia and came here are such, I believe, as to permit me to hope that I may not be deprived of transportation through a technicality.

“In support of this I mention the following:

“1. I have been absent from America in foreign service in distant countries for over 20 years, during which time I never asked for leave of absence, transfer or other privileges.

“2. I served for 11 years in Persia, of which 10 were in Tabriz, where conditions were such as to impose a really serious strain on one’s physical and nervous condition. In 1918, I was forced on the Turkish occupation of Tabriz to withdraw the consulate to Kazvin for seven months, and while there was requested by Dr. H.P. Judson (acting — as I was given to understand — with the approval of the department) to organize relief work of the American-Persian Relief Commission on my return to Tabriz. This proved to be a very considerable undertaking, which demanded a good deal of my attention in an advisory way for several months, and made it impossible for me to return — as had been my

intention — to America at that time. The route via the Caucasus was then open and comparatively direct and inexpensive.

“In the spring of 1919, conditions at Tabriz, where I had returned in January, again became disturbed and Christians at the American mission at Urmia were massacred and the mission property looted. I was instructed by the department to open an official investigation of this affair, which again made it impossible for me to leave Tabriz. In the spring of 1920, a combined Bolshevik and Turkish invasion of north-west Persia was threatened and the following summer and autumn, the situation became so serious that all the foreign colonies evacuated Tabriz.

“On Dec. 14, 1920, the situation was such as to warrant my withdrawal to Tehran, where, on my arrival, I found all European families were preparing for immediate withdrawal. The British had given notice of withdrawal of their forces from Persia, and it was generally supposed that a Bolshevik force then at Resht would occupy Tehran. Under these conditions I arranged that my wife should accompany the family of the American minister to France, but that I should remain with the minister as long as I could be of service. I then applied for leave to return to America, which appeared to be the only logical thing to do in case I were compelled to leave Tehran and Persia, and in view of the fact that I was away from and could not return to my post at Tabriz. I did not at that time know of the regulations as to transportation when on leave, but supposed that if upon my arrival in America I were transferred to another post, I should at least receive transportation between Tehran and such post.

“3. As the Bolshevik invasion did not materialize, it was unnecessary for me to leave Persia, but I could

not return to my post at Tabriz. I accordingly remained at Tehran, where I conducted the work of both consulates until the arrival of my successor as consul there. In the meantime, I found that the strain of my past years had begun to tell so upon my health that I consulted Dr. McDowell of the American Hospital at Tehran, a copy of whose certificate (which I think I showed you heretofore) is enclosed herewith. I believe it will be appreciated from this that I could not have thought of returning to Tabriz, even if it had been possible, and that it would have been undesirable for me to attempt to remain in Persia. Accordingly, without further explanation, which I believe unnecessary, I requested to be allowed to avail myself of my previous permission, which had been granted in February 1921. I left in December 1921.

“4. The only route available at the time of my departure was via Baghdad, Bombay, etc.; a very roundabout and consequently expensive trip; the expense of which I should not have felt justified if my object had been merely a trip to America for my personal pleasure.

“5. On leaving Tabriz in December 1920, I was forced to ship to America such articles as were sufficiently valuable and transportable, for it did not seem that they could be safely left at Tabriz and there was no other place of safety to which I could send them. It seems to me that under the circumstances this is certainly a proper official charge. Most of my belongings were, of course, left at the consulate at Tabriz, where someday they may, or may not, be recoverable, but having twice furnished the private living quarters of the consulate, I am not too sanguine about ever receiving either the articles or their value.

“I feel that this is a very inadequate statement, but as you are

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**“[Paddock’s] activities in  
behalf of American  
interests have been  
highly commendable.”**

**— Secretary of State  
Charles Evan Hughes**

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already informed of the matters mentioned I present it only as a memorandum. As I cannot believe that I should be required to suffer from the form in which my application was presented, if otherwise entitled to transportation, I venture to ask you for such assistance in the matter as you may think proper.”

On Aug. 22, 1922, Carr replied: “With reference to the possibility of the payment of your transportation on your recent trip from Persia to the United States, I have had this matter looked into ... and, while I appreciate your position in the matter, I regret that it is not feasible to consider the matter favorably.”

Four months later, on Dec. 18, 1922, Paddock, still in Washington, wrote his final memorandum to the Secretary of State, again setting forth the circumstances of his departure from Persia and his transportation to the United States. The archives contain no indication that he ever received a reply or that he was ever reimbursed for his transportation.

According to the best available information, Paddock was eventually assigned to Paris, from which post he retired to live in France until his death (date unknown). ■

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