Opportunities for Immigrants in Western Pennsylvania in 1831

John A. Roebling

In 1831 there came to America John August Roebling, founder of the Roebling family in this country and pioneer inventor and engineer, whose genius led to the establishment of the John A. Roebling's Sons Company of Trenton, New Jersey, and the construction of the famous Brooklyn Bridge and other suspension bridges. The first Roebling came to this country at the age of twenty-five as an immigrant colonist and pioneer farmer and chose what is now the village of Saxonburg in Jefferson Township, Butler County, as the site for his first farming enterprise. Young Roebling had found the self-satisfied social and political organization in his native Mühlhausen in Thuringia too confining to his restless mind and spirit. Furthermore, he became convinced that his position as engineering assistant in building roads in Westphalia for the Prussian government did not offer him the opportunity for achievement for which his technical training in the Royal Polytechnic Institute of Berlin and his own powers qualified him. There was an epidemic of emigration fever sweeping through Germany at this time, partly as a result of the suppression in that country of the effects of the French July Revolution of 1830. In addition to farmers and peasants, many men of superior education and even rank, who had become impoverished as a result of the
constant wars and who desired to take advantage of the opportunities offered by a new and unsettled country where land was easily acquired and taxes were very low, were emigrating to America. Hence Roebling and his brother, Carl Friederich, were able to organize a society of colonists, numbering between three and four hundred, most of whom were from the Mühlhausen and Darmstadt regions. The Darmstadters accomplished the trip in the ship “Henry Barcley,” and Roebling and the people from Mühlhausen followed on the “August Eduard,” as described in the first of the following letters. The adhesive element in the association seems to have remained only until the end of the Atlantic passage; after their arrival in America most of the immigrants scattered to different parts of the country. The Roeblings, intrusted with about six thousand dollars contributed by fellow countrymen who were to come over later, set about to find a desirable location for themselves and the contributors. The letters describe the manner in which this was accomplished. The reader interested in more of the details concerning Roebling’s background will find them in Hamilton Schuyler, The Roeblings; A Century of Engineers, Bridge-builders and Industrialists (Princeton, 1931), in Johann August Roebling, Diary of My Journey from Muehlhausen in Thuringia via Bremen to the United States of North America in the Year 1831 (Trenton, 1931), in C. Hale Sipe, History of Butler County, Pennsylvania, 1:408-435 (Topeka and Indianapolis, 1927), and in Washington A. Roebling, Early History of Saxonburg (Butler, 1924).

The original letters in German script and a translation made by Mr. Conrad Schneider and Miss Louise K. Schneider of Trenton, New Jersey, were loaned to the Historical Society of Western Pennsylvania by the John A. Roebling’s Sons Company of Trenton, New Jersey, and photographic reproductions of them have been made for the society’s collections. In preparing the letters for publication minor revisions have been made in the translation and some sections of little general interest have been omitted. The italicized words are translations of words underlined by Roebling in the original letters.

Randolph C. Downes

Western Pennsylvania Historical Survey
ROEBLING'S FARM IN BUTLER COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA
DECEMBER 13, 1831

Mr. Ferdinand Baehr in Mühlhausen,¹
Esteemed Friend:

For the fourth time since our arrival I am taking my pen in hand to send you news from the western part of the world. . . . First of all, I can give you the assurance that we are now entirely well and we are very happy in our present circumstances and are satisfied with the fate that we have chosen of our own free will. We now live as free men in a land whose reasonable and humane Constitution assures every inhabitant his natural rights; where no unnatural compulsory rule robs a person of that which he acquired by his own efforts; where no laws exist that hinder human endeavor; but where everyone can go his free and unchecked way as long as he keeps peace with his fellow men. Further, we live in a section of the country where nature is beautiful and where every diligent person can easily earn a livelihood; and also, we are in one of the most advantageous sections of America, in the vicinity of a good market, which is improving from year to year, where we can dispose of all products for cash, with little trouble—what more do we want just now? Nothing more than some honest, cultured German countrymen, who are capable of forming a happy, free, and sociable community circle; we mean by this yourself and your friends, and, if possible, during the coming year—then we will live a contented, undisturbed life, in German manner, and will never long to be back in our unfortunate Fatherland in the realm of compulsory rule and slavery.²

Now I will repeat what I wrote you in my last letter: As you know, we left Bremen on the twenty-first of May, and the port of Brake the

¹ Ferdinand Baehr was a fellow citizen of Roebling in Mühlhausen and had contributed to the fund used by Roebling in buying land in America. He emigrated in 1832 and settled on the land purchased by the Roeblings in Saxonburg, where he operated a carding and spinning mill.
² Roebling's enthusiastic approval of the American people on his arrival in Philadelphia is recorded in his Diary, 110-114.

We made many inquiries in regard to the southern, northern, and western states. All the news regarding the southern states was bad news, and most of all we heard of the revolts among the slaves in all of the slavery states and that many white families were sacrificed through the revenge of the suppressed negroes. The safety of the white people is constantly becoming more and more perilous, and under these conditions we would not feel happy there. The information we gathered concerning the cotton-raising industry was likewise discouraging. After a two weeks' stay in Philadelphia . . . we knew we must come to a decision without more delay. No one wanted to go South. Etzler, together with Badens, Reinhold, Dreise, Nollner, Pansen, and Wolfram, decided to go West . . .

Edler stayed in Philadelphia with his son and found employment there; I do not know whether he can earn much in the engraving business alone; he is, however, experienced along many other lines. We have written to Mr. Edler from Pittsburgh but have not yet received a reply. I believe Pittsburgh would be a good place for him inasmuch as many molds and patterns are made there for iron foundries and other factories. The making of pewter is not a practicable business here as very little of the pewter utensils are used; tin and porcelain ware are used mostly. Young Edler is a good lad and seems to be talented: for such young people there is a promising future in business here.

We therefore decided to go to Pittsburgh and make investigations there. In eastern Pennsylvania the land is too expensive. I was told that not quite one-third of Pennsylvania is settled. Most of the immigrants in the last years went to Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, but western Pennsylvania was always disregarded. We still had no clear idea as to what would be best for us. In Philadelphia I was introduced to a certain Mr. Krumphaar, through Mr. Leupold. Mr. Krumphaar was well informed about the state of Pennsylvania and also the western states. He gave me

3 The port of Brake is about fifteen miles down the Weser River from Bremen. The voyage is described in detail in Roebling, Diary, 14–103.
much information and he advised me *not* to leave Pennsylvania, as this state has the most advantages. His reason only became clear to me later. After a four weeks' disagreeable journey we arrived in Pittsburgh on September 17. We made this trip, with our baggage, on the Pennsylvania Canal from Philadelphia to Huntingdon, and from there by wagon to Pittsburgh. The low water in the canal caused many delays. All along the canal we found many people sick with malarial fever, and in general *all* people in Philadelphia and in eastern Pennsylvania, almost without exception, had pale faces; not one fresh, rosy face like those in Germany did we see. This observation surprised me very much, and I naturally blamed the climate for this condition and concluded that it could not be healthful here. Throughout our trip in Pennsylvania I noticed these pale faces everywhere and heard much about malaria. This gave me the idea that nowhere in America was it otherwise, and I began to despair of finding a healthful place or rosy faces as were so plentiful in Germany. In the Allegheny Mountains we came through a town where for the first time I noticed healthy-looking people as in Mühlhausen. This new observation gave me courage again. In this town malaria was unknown, so I concluded it must be because the air was pure. In the western counties of Pennsylvania there were fewer pale faces, and Pittsburgh is universally considered to be one of the most healthful places in America; the city is not in danger of floods. Gëns became sick with malarial fever during the trip and Manco stayed with him in Reading to take care of him; but, at that, they reached Pittsburgh sooner than we did. The gardener, Janck, who also made the trip with us, wanted to wait in Pittsburgh for the arrival of his friend, Le Goullon, of Cassel, who had not yet reached America. My brother Carl also became sick with malarial fever on the trip as a result of a cold he contracted by sleeping out on the open canal boat when the nights were damp. He became seriously sick in

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4 In the fall of 1831 the Pennsylvania Canal was open from Columbia on the Susquehanna to Huntingdon on the Juniata and from Blairsville on the Conemaugh to Pittsburgh. Work was still being done on the sections of the canal from Huntingdon to Hollidaysburg on the Juniata, from Johnstown on the Conemaugh to Blairsville, and on the Allegheny Portage Railroad from Hollidaysburg to Johnstown.

5 Manco, or Manso, was a native of Mühlhausen who had followed the sea. He seems to have acted as an adviser to the Roeblings on the trip to America.
Pittsburgh, and then the quinine that a Pittsburgh doctor prescribed for him made him still worse, so we had to throw out the medicine and Manco treated him homeopathically. After a four weeks' illness in Pittsburgh he became well again but felt very weak. Now, however, he is quite himself again.

Genss also suffered for a long time with malarial fever. The allopaths here principally treat their malaria patients with strong doses of quinine and mercury, and many of the patients develop jaundice as a result of too much quinine.

We hope that Dr. Hamburger, of Philadelphia, an enlightened young German homeopathic doctor, will follow us here. We do not intend to call in any of the doctors of this place again. I did not have the slightest trace of the fever and until now have been in the best of health; Manco the same. The Grabens family, in Pittsburgh, were also sick for some time. But here at our country seat every one has red cheeks, and even I, who by nature have not been given any rose color, look much healthier here than in Mühlhausen and also stronger and more corpulent.

In Pittsburgh we were recommended to a Mr. Charles Louis Volz, a German merchant, who was very helpful to us. The reports we received concerning the state of Ohio and the more western states were not favorable. I spoke to many men who had traveled in the western states and were well informed about existing conditions. They were unanimous in reporting that many colonies are settling in Ohio, especially in the low-lying plains where the soil is very fertile; but they also reported that most of the sections of Ohio, as well as Indiana and Illinois, do not have a healthful climate and there is much malarial fever in all those places. In the most fruitful and productive places the air and water are very bad. We also learned that in the western states the prices of the products are very low and that absolutely no cash is in circulation, and in most sections the farmers must barter their products for all sorts of wares, which are traded in at high prices.

When we were in Philadelphia I was much surprised to hear that great

6 In Samuel Jones, Pittsburgh in the Year Eighteen Hundred and Twenty-six... Containing a Directory of the City, 149 (Pittsburgh, 1826), Charles L. Volz is listed as a merchant living on the east side of Wood Street between Front and Second Streets.
quantities of flour are being sent from New Orleans to the eastern coast cities—Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York, Boston, etc.—to supply the markets there. Until now New Orleans has been the chief center of trade for all western states and Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, West Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Missouri, etc. Through the channels of the great Mississippi River all products are shipped to New Orleans, and from there shipments are made to South America and the West Indies, and some to the western [sic] coast states. The price of flour, therefore, must be much lower in New Orleans than in Philadelphia where the cost of transportation must be included. Now, consider this! the farmer of the western states must compete in one market with the Pennsylvania farmer, the latter having the market close at hand and the former being several thousand English miles away. Think of the transportation! For the western farmer there is very little profit; he must barter his products for a mere trifle, and the merchants with whom he deals in turn use this method to enrich themselves through the farmer’s hard toil. In the western states the farmers are often unable to accumulate enough money to pay their small taxes. The western farmer has a surplus of provisions, but he must make his own clothes, and he must forego luxuries altogether. And with it all, the farms in the West cost just as much as in Pennsylvania because of the demand caused by the great rush of settlers out there. Many people go out there, lured by the reputation of the West, and they pass through western Pennsylvania without stopping to notice and inquire about conditions here. Many have returned from these moorlands of the West, sick and weak, and have then stayed in Pennsylvania. In several of the hilly sections of Ohio the climate is good, but there again the land is no better than in Pennsylvania. Why, then, go to those parts when there is no advantage in it? Recently I talked with another German, who had visited several relatives of his in Columbiana County, Ohio, about sixty miles from Pittsburgh. He told me that the great rush of German settlers there had caused an increase in the price of undeveloped land to ten dollars. He said the climate is good there and the land fertile, but because of their great distance from a market they cannot sell their products for cash but can only trade them in for the merchants’ wares. This means a continual
lack of money for the farmers, and in order to raise enough cash to pay their small taxes they are forced to cart their wheat on a three-days' trip to the Pittsburgh market. This report is authentic and applies to the nearby sections of Ohio.

What are the prospects of marketing the farm products in general? On this subject Herr Duden is silent in his book on Missouri. He writes only of the turkeys and the Missouri bears; of the other important matter, from the settler's standpoint, very few books of travel make mention....

The best way to judge business conditions is to compare the prices of products in the various states. For instance, if a bushel of wheat in Philadelphia costs a dollar, then here in Pittsburgh the price is seventy cents, in Cincinnati fifty cents, and in the interior of the western states much less, in Missouri not quite twenty-five cents. Our problem was to settle in a section that first of all had a healthful climate and where the land was fertile and also cheap, with a good market nearby where we could sell our products for cash; further, that we should not be too far away from the civilized part of America, that is, the eastern coast. No section fulfills these requirements better than the vicinity of Pittsburgh and the neighboring counties; all of these places are distinguished for their pure air and good water. Pittsburgh is situated at the junction of the Monongahela and Allegheny rivers, which together form the Ohio River. This is an exceptionally advantageous location because of the large inland traffic. Pittsburgh is the key to the West. Twenty years ago there were only a few houses in Pittsburgh; now there are already twenty-five thousand inhabitants. Trade is exceedingly brisk there. It is still more important as a manufacturing town, ranking as one of the first importance in America. This city has great natural advantages; besides its fine location, it has an inexhaustible coal bed, also iron ore and other minerals; these are also to


8 The population of Pittsburgh according to the census of 1830 was 12,542; that of Allegheny County outside of Pittsburgh, 37,964.
be found in many other parts of Pennsylvania. The ironworks and wool and cotton manufactories in Pittsburgh are very important, and new establishments are constantly springing up. Commerce and particularly the factories are the means of much money coming to Pittsburgh, and in no state in the Union is there more money in circulation. This circumstance has a great influence on conditions in general. The time is not far off when Pittsburgh will be a city of a hundred thousand inhabitants. In a few years the canal between Pittsburgh and Philadelphia will be completed; then the prices of the farm products will rise. A railroad is now under rapid construction between Pittsburgh and Baltimore. When this is finished there will be much transportation to Baltimore, and then we shall be able to travel to Baltimore in the steam cars in a day and a half.

Pittsburgh is also the best wool market in America. Merino wool costs a dollar a pound, middling-fine wool seventy-five cents, ordinary wool fifty to sixty cents. Sheep raising is the most profitable form of farming here.

After considering all these things we decided to stay in the vicinity of Pittsburgh, even if we should be obliged to pay a high price for the land. For a long time we were in the dark as to the price of land. In eastern Pennsylvania, along the canal, fifty to eighty miles from Philadelphia, the price is from thirty to one hundred dollars per acre, and likewise in the vicinity of Pittsburgh, but farther away five to ten dollars. One man in Pittsburgh offered us land sixty miles from Pittsburgh at eight dollars, including a few improvements (cleared land, house, and all fenced in). Genss, Manco, and Janck took a look at this land and they found it attractive but too far away and too expensive. On their way back, Genss and Manco learned of other farms near Freeport, along the canal, that were being offered comparatively cheap. I was detained from going along with them on that exploring trip by my brother Carl's illness. Later on I went to Freeport to see this land, which Manco and Genss liked very

9 The Baltimore and Ohio, which in 1831 had reached Frederick, Maryland. The road was not completed until 1853, when Wheeling became the main line terminus on the Ohio River.

10 Freeport is in Armstrong County at the junction of the Kiskiminetas and Allegheny rivers.
well. The particular tract that Manco and Genss wanted to buy jointly was choice, but the other tract for us was not so good and also very broken and hilly. None of the lands so far fulfilled my wishes. The greatest part of Pennsylvania is hilly and undeveloped land; there are but few easily tillable fields. In the meantime, I heard of a large tract in Butler County, owned by a Widow Collins\(^{11}\) of Pittsburgh, which was being offered at a cheap price. The tracts that Manco and Genss had picked out were unsuitable for still another reason: there were very few other farms for sale in that neighborhood for our other German friends.

I hastened back to Pittsburgh and asked Mr. Volz to give me an introduction to the Widow Collins, and from her I learned that she owned about twelve thousand acres of land in Butler County. I was told that the Widow Collins was considered fair and honest. She gave me a letter of introduction to her agent in Butler, a certain county land-surveyor named Dugle, and a certain Judge Breden.\(^ {12} \) I rode back to Freeport to Genss and Manco, who had already moved there, in order to hinder them in their purchase, but they were away when I got there. The next day I rode from Freeport to Butler, a distance of eighteen miles. The way led me through a section the first view of which gave me a distinct surprise as it was a region of an entirely different character than any I had yet seen in Pennsylvania. This section is a sort of plateau, besides being rolling on the surface; it is exactly as is most desirable for agriculture; it offers many fine, distant views, which are seldom found in America. A totally surrounded location in a thick timber forest, where the view on all sides is limited to the everlasting woods, never appealed to me. The eyes must have a clear, free view all around, and that was what I found here. All along the way I found the best soil, in some places of a sort that I had not yet seen in Pennsylvania, considerable savannah (but the shrubs are easy to root up), fine meadows, alternating with young woodlands and

\(^{11}\) Widow of Isaac Collins, a New Jersey Quaker and newspaper publisher. Schuyler, The Roeblings, 37.

\(^{12}\) David Dougal, or Dugal (1778–1881), was a prominent Butler County surveyor. See History of Butler County, Pennsylvania, 684–686 (1895) and the Butler Centennial Directory, 1876–77, 33 (Pittsburgh, 1876). John Bredin (1794–1851) was in 1831 appointed presiding judge of the seventeenth judicial district. C. Hale Sipe, History of Butler County, 2:744.
timber forests. This was a location such as I desired, and in Butler I learned that Mrs. Collins owned much land in that very section. This piece of news pleased me; I asked to see a map of that section, and I saw that Mrs. Collins owned a continuous stretch of land of about six to seven thousand acres in that very section, and that the way I had traveled led through a part of it. In company with Surveyor Dugle and a son-in-law of Madam Collins, I roved through that land for three days and checked up with the chart I had along, in order to become more familiar with each tract. . . . Genss was entirely of the same opinion as I. Nowhere else is there such a desirable section to be found; rolling land, not quite level and yet not mountainous; and nowhere did we see such stretches of good soil as here. And here, where countless springs and brooks arise in the high plateau and form gentle falls and rivulets, which irrigate the land before they flow together in one big stream, there are very excellent grassy meadows. This very desirable country continues for about six miles in length and four or five miles in width. It is here that the springs rise that flow into Thorn Creek (a small river), West Buffalo, Bull, and Deer creeks. All around the boundary of this section the territory becomes more hilly and broken, just like in most sections of Pennsylvania. According to the opinion of the Americans, the only desirable thing lacking in this tract is a large dense timber forest that they might devastate. In the earlier days of the Indians and early settlers great forest fires destroyed these large forests, and in those places are now only low underbrush or grass. Only last year a part of the young forest on our land was burned; but with care it is possible to prevent such fires. The greater part of this tract is covered with sufficient woodlands; a stretch of from a thousand to fifteen hundred acres, however, cannot be used for farming unless a section of adjoining woodland is bought along with it, in order to have good wood to build fences. For pasture land, especially sheep pasture, this stretch without timber land is very suitable. The Collins tract has every possible advantage, especially as it is on the direct road to Pittsburgh, about twenty-five miles, and on the direct road to Freeport and the canal, five to eleven [sic] miles, and also on the direct way to Butler; further, many wide, pleasant views; the best soil, as good as
can be found in any part of Pennsylvania or eastern Ohio; a comparatively large number of grassy meadows, which are a distinct advantage; the best drinking water (there are three mineral springs on our land); mill brooks; pit coal; iron ore—and above all things, very pure air.\footnote{Ganz gesunde Luft is doubly underscored by the writer.}

This country is adaptable for any kind of farming, for cattle raising and sheep raising and especially horse breeding. Further, it is also suitable for any manufacturing enterprise. The nearest town along the Pennsylvania Canal, namely Freeport, is about five or six miles distant from the next farther farm. Several places would be suitable for laying out a small town, where farming and industry could be combined. In the meantime, I made inquiries and learned that the Widow Collins had previously sold some of the land at from $1.75 to $2.00 per acre, and I also learned privately that she intended asking the same price of us. After I had acquainted Brother Carl with all the information I had gathered, I made the following proposition to Mrs. Collins' agent: we would now take six tracts of land, or about sixteen hundred acres (for ourselves and for you—our lands immediately adjoining each other and suitable to be conducted jointly) that I had selected, for a price of $1.50 per acre, with six acres out of every hundred acres free for future public roads, a thousand dollars to be paid down and the balance in two equal yearly installments without interest; further, we would want an option on the remaining five to six thousand acres for one year, for our friends who were coming over, at the same price and on the same terms. I knew that those people in Butler were very anxious to have German settlers here and that therefore they would allow us reasonable terms. I had a man from Butler on my side who knew the Widow Collins well, and I also promised Surveyor Dugle a liberal fee; these circumstances brought success. The widow wanted $1.75 and was willing to consent to the remaining stipulations but at first did not want to tie herself down to a set price for the land on option. Thereupon I sent word to her through our Butler friend that under no condition would we pay more than $1.50.

On our tract there is a small farm, about fifteen acres of cleared and fenced-in land, with an ordinary blockhouse and a good barn. This im-
improvement I reserved for myself; for the house, in which we now live, and the barn we paid the previous occupant sixty dollars extra. Soon thereafter the widow accepted our offer to her, unconditionally. Even though I had heard from everyone that the widow’s title to the property was perfectly clear and that it was entirely free from debt, still in order to proceed with caution it was better to have the title searched. In Pittsburgh we had made the acquaintance of a German, Herr von Bonhorst, who has lived in America for twenty years, is a lawyer, and holds the office of alderman in Pittsburgh. He has had much experience in real estate transactions and is also well acquainted with Mrs. Collins’ affairs. He went with me to Butler, looked up everything in the court there and found all in good order and that no debts were recorded against the property. I also received the assurance from all sides that we were dealing with honest people. Thereupon, I paid a thousand dollars in Butler, for which I received a receipt, and the deed for the sixteen hundred acres was drawn up. We had it drawn up in our names temporarily, because the tracts must be surveyed again and the part that was paid for with your and Compe’s money must be separately surveyed. For you and Compe together we have selected a tract of about three hundred acres adjoining our land, but to which will be added so much of our land as the money that you have delivered to us will buy. All landed property is measured according to the old surveying method of dividing it into squares of 250 to 350 acres, and we have taken over the tracts temporarily surveyed in this way, with the understanding, however, that the whole lands are to be surveyed again and the boundaries defined at the Widow Collins’ expense. The exact division of your and Compe’s land, I think, had better be deferred until your arrival here, and then we will have separate deeds drawn up. The land that we have selected for you and Compe has the same advantages as ours, but with this difference, that we have one of the best mill sites on Thorn Creek, which flows through a corner of our land near our house. Your property and ours together about form a square, and two pieces of our land, which will chiefly remain woodland.

14 In Jones, *Pittsburgh in the Year Eighteen Hundred and Twenty-six*, 149, Charles von Bonhorst is listed as an alderman with an office at the corner of Fifth and Union Streets and a dwelling at the corner of Sixth Street and Cherry Alley.
lie outside of this square. Both your and our lands are particularly desirable for the fine meadows and long stretches of arable land that are easy to clear. There are some places that we can plow immediately. In the entire sixteen hundred acres there are about five hundred acres of the best meadows (a great advantage in cattle breeding), and three hundred acres woodland; the balance can, for the most part, be plowed under. One part of our land, which is rocky and somewhat undeveloped, is not suitable for plowing but will serve as a pasture. This portion of our tract is the worst one of all, but on no account would I have left it out of the purchase for it contains the mill site. The soil throughout the land is a deep, spongy loam, covered with a clean humus topsoil, and nowhere in Pennsylvania have I found such good soil as here. There are many laurel-leaved oak trees here; also the live oak of the North, a tree that does not grow tall here, but short and bushy, because it really is a southern tree. Its wood is very hard, but because of its crooked branches and the short growth it isn't of much value. It is the general opinion, however, that where this oak grows in abundance, there is the warmest and most fruitful soil. Besides these trees we have on our property primarily white oaks, tall and very stately trees of surprisingly solid, heavy wood; also black oaks, chestnut and hickory trees, and also some sassafras.

In this region the best wheat is raised, and nowhere are horse breeding and sheep farming more prosperous than here, because of the clean, pure air. It was in this locality that I again met healthy-looking people, just as in Germany, which is the best proof of pure air. As seldom as the rosy faces are to be seen in eastern Pennsylvania, so seldom are the pale ones here. The malarial fever never originates here; it is only sometimes carried here through friends coming from the low-lying sections. The winter is pretty severe, but I have not yet felt such sharp air as in the great river valleys, where the cold is most intense because of the sharp wind. This year the snow came early; generally there is no snow before New Year. The winter days, however, are more pleasant here than in Germany. Such raw snowstorms as we had over there are not common here, although through the nights there is a still, severe cold. But the daytime in winter is very pleasant when the sky is clear; then the sun, which is ten
degrees higher than in Mühlhausen, shines as warm here as over there in the month of May. The surplus of firewood and coal here keeps the house warm.

Of the sixteen hundred acres, six per cent is to be deducted, or about a hundred acres, which will be considered as extra. We are therefore required to pay about $1,250 in two annual instalments. Our land is intended for both of us and my brother Christel in equal parts. We have, to be sure, more expenses than our present funds permit. But we will never regret the purchase we have made; the more I become acquainted with this section and with our land, the more clear its advantages become to me. Ten years from now, when this section is more settled, every acre will be worth ten dollars. I would very unwillingly give up this land.

When Brother Christel comes over at some future date, then each of us brothers will have land enough to support a family. Now, whether we shall keep the land depends on whether my father will aid us with five hundred dollars. The balance can stand at five to six per cent interest. For the balance due, the land is assigned to the widow as security. If we should be forced to give up some of the land, then we can sell at a profit a few years hence, as our purchase price is so low. Please talk with my father and my brother about this matter; the money will be safe here and well invested. We paid sixty dollars to the former resident on our farm; then we bought a wagon and two horses for eighty dollars; two plows, a large one for nine dollars and a small one for five dollars and a half; also a cow for twelve dollars; now we will have to buy our fruits and supplies for the winter and the coming year, as well as a pair of draught-oxen in the spring for about forty to fifty dollars. After defraying all these expenses we will have about two hundred dollars left next year. Just now we have four hundred and eighty dollars, of which three hundred and fifty dollars are on deposit in the Pittsburgh Bank. The remaining five to six thousand acres belonging to Mrs. Collins we have reserved for one year for our German friends who will come later; besides that, there are many other farms for sale here on a cash basis.

15 John Roebling's oldest brother, Hermann Christian, did not emigrate but remained in Mühlhausen and succeeded to his father's tobacco business. He died there in 1859.

16 Probably the Bank of Pittsburgh.
Kleber, of Darmstadt, who has now started a distillery in Pittsburgh, also desires to settle here and, besides farming and cattle raising, manage a distillery, which is a profitable business to conduct on a farm. Pittsburgh is a good market for cattle fattened for slaughter, and the cattle can always be sold for cash. The beginning is hard, and in the first year there are many expenses; after the first difficulties have been overcome, however, and if one then has some capital, it is possible to do a good business.

If this region is built up by industrious Germans, then it can become an earthly Paradise. ... Now listen, dear friend Baehr. We make you the friendly proposition to conduct our farms in partnership. In the center, near the large square, where your tract and ours come together, is an extensive field for farming, and all around it are fine meadows. At this point it is easiest to clear the land and from here it is possible to take in at a glance almost the whole land. This part is very suitable for a big project and offers a fine site for a house; from here you can enjoy an unrestricted view in all directions. Here we must build a house, jointly, and manage the farm. The distant parts of the land we will in time assign to those of the poorer Germans who want to lease farm land for one-third of their produce. Together with several other neighbors, we can keep one German shepherd, and in time we can raise and improve a large herd of sheep.

Bring a package of mulberry seeds with you. The keeping of silkworms is very profitable here and is carried on with much success; this is an occupation for the women and children.

Further, we can look forward to doing a good business in manufacturing vegetable oil. Cole seed (bring a peck of the best seed along) grows well but is not yet raised to a great extent—this we must also raise, as well as the garden flowers that are native and are easily cultivated. Oil for burning is frightfully expensive. We can, jointly, build a grist mill and oil mill. The millers here take every tenth bushel in payment, and in the winter even more. Our nearest neighbor has a grist mill at Thorn Creek, but it is in poor condition. There are several sawmills close by. One hundred square feet of boards cost seventy-five cents; cut timber.
can be bought for three cents a running foot. It is just as cheap to build a frame house as a blockhouse.

Brother Christel seems to have the earnest intention of coming over with you. Please tell him we will welcome him and his family with open arms, but even more happy would we be if our parents would also come. It is a sad thought for us to see our parents forsaken by their children, so far away. If we could all live together, and if more good Germans came over, then our parents could live a comfortable, care-free and tax-free life, in a beautiful scenic spot; and in the circle of their family they could peacefully spend the rest of their days and enjoy everything that beautiful nature and the companionship of friends offer. If our parents are still in good health, then I wish they would come to us; they can undertake the voyage without fear; older people have less to fear of seasickness than the young. Please take up this point with my parents and give them helpful advice; it must be their own willing decision to come, however, and they must feel happy to come to America. A few months of travel discomforts soon pass by.

My friend Baehr, if you come, either with or without my parents, and you accept our proposition as above stated, then in the spring we must build a house, for which, however, we lack capital. I intend building a spacious house and making it habitable, for from five to six hundred dollars, which would suffice for both you and us. It is necessary to have your advice about this as soon as possible, and we must be assured of the money. . . . Come as early next year as possible; bring all your machines, tools, and household utensils, whatever you can move; bring a supply of locks, chains, carpenter’s axes, key bits, shovels, hoes, pickaxes, scythes, sickles, linen cloth, durable gray trousers, and beaver jackets for the winter. Provide yourself with everything possible for the next ten years, for everything is so expensive here; all possible kinds of seeds: mulberry seeds, cole seeds, poppy seeds, linseed, clover seed; and also cultivated fruit-tree offshoots: apples, pears, peaches (these are only wild here), currants, gooseberries, all well packed in moss. Further, and especially, several thousand thorn-hedge slips for hedge fences. The thorn hedges of this place are good for nothing. Much thorn is imported here from Ire-
land. Thorn hedges make the best fences and last forever. Bring along several good technical books concerning the keeping of silkworms, and the like. A good desk, or a couple of chests of drawers, packed full—just bring them along, too. Bring everything that is needed for farming, all possible kinds of implements, so that you will not have to buy anything here.

In regard to bringing people with you, I would give you the following advice—different from that which I wrote you in my last letter: Do not make a contract as we did. Bring several young, strong farm lads, single ones preferably, or only one married one, on whom you can depend and whose passage overseas will not cost so much. Engage these young men for three years, the women too, but not the children, on these terms: the man to receive sixty dollars in wages every year, his board and lodging, but nothing else, and the advanced traveling expenses to be deducted from his pay. Do not take upon yourself any responsibility concerning clothing, or the education of the children, or sickness. I also advise you to bring along a young cabinetmaker, but above all things bring a young, experienced shepherd, with a pair of shepherd dogs, of which there are none here. The shepherd is very important; have a talk with Compe about it; we will have to give him a salary and also shares. The annual wages paid to workers here are from seventy to eighty dollars with board and lodging, but they are neither reliable nor steady workers. Besides these, you may bring several other people along, who shall pay their own traveling expenses and whom we can take as tenants on the farm. But do not commit yourself to paying the traveling expenses for large families. If a single man walks out on you, then there is only one fare lost. It would be well to bring a woman, or girl, as maidservant. After you land here, all contracts must be immediately ratified by the authorities. Concerning your trip, I would mention the following: if possible, start about the end of March, so that you may arrive early. The trip with the mail boat from Havre is too inconvenient and too costly. You can just as well travel with another boat, and the best port of arrival is Philadelphia. Then, for those of you who can afford it, take the stagecoach from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh, or buy yourself two energetic horses and a light, low-covered wagon in Philadelphia. All baggage, and the rest of the people, must
travel by canal, by way of Harrisburg, to Huntingdon. From Huntingdon the baggage must be conveyed by cart to Blairsville (along this stretch of about sixty miles the canal is not yet completed), and from there by canal again to Freeport. From this last point we can take care of it ourselves. When in Freeport ask for our nearest neighbor, Walker; I am also known there. In Pittsburgh ask for Mr. Volz of Wood Street between Second and Third Streets, who will direct you here. From Pittsburgh send me word by messenger. If you arrive in Philadelphia before summer and there is enough water in the canal, it may be that you will choose to come by the canal if you can obtain a covered boat. In the late summer it is not good for the health to take the trip by the canal, and the water is then low. You can travel very speedily by stagecoach, but it is not comfortable. Upon your arrival in the port, declare all of your things, with the explanation that they are for your personal use. You can also choose to arrive in Baltimore, which is nearer to Pittsburgh. If you arrive in New York, then go by steamboat to Albany, then by canal to Buffalo, from there by land or by water to Erie, and from there to Butler. In Butler ask for the German innkeeper Mechling. Your baggage can be transported from Erie to the Allegheny River and down the river in flatboats to Freeport. If I were you I should probably make the trip to New Orleans, however, from which place you can travel inexpensively by steamboat to Pittsburgh in ten days. The transportation charge for the baggage is cheap on the rivers. The trip to New Orleans is one of the most pleasant and safe trips, and because of the regularity of the trade winds, the trip is almost always made in eight weeks. If you arrive there before June, then you will find it as healthful as Mühlhausen. The passage fare to New Orleans is somewhat higher, but the whole trip to Pittsburgh would be the most comfortable. There is nothing to fear from pirates if there are enough people on board. In New York the customs people are very sharp.

And now farewell; our most affectionate greetings to our parents, all our friends, also the Edler family. Please write soon and come soon.

Your faithful friend,

J. A. Roebling
Roebling’s Farm in Butler County, Pennsylvania
January 14, 1832

Mr. Ferdinand Baehr in Mühlhausen,
Dear Friend:

Again a letter from far-away America to you and all our other German friends, including the newly forming emigration group...

From the time we left Mühlhausen up until the time we settled here we were restless, but now we live quiet and contented lives, not disturbed by anyone; our thoughts are often with our friends, and we cherish the hope that they may soon follow and enjoy with us the quiet peace of an independent country life.

This letter you may consider as a continuation of our last two letters of November 2 and December 13 of last year, in which we informed you of our land purchase and the beginning of our settlement.... This purchase is a bargain and the land is advantageously situated with good communication with the nearby Pittsburgh market, where all articles can readily be disposed of for cash and where one is not compelled, as in the western states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri, to take store goods in exchange for farm products, the latter to be given up for a trifling sum, while exorbitant prices are charged for the articles purchased in exchange. In these states in order to get even a little cash, it is necessary to transport the farm products on a many-days’ journey before a money market is reached. Above all things, the climate here is absolutely healthful, as much so as anywhere in Germany. Here you meet healthy-looking people everywhere, whereas in the western country, especially in the fertile plains, all people look deathly pale as a result of the malarial fever and damp air, and even in the mountainous country the limestone spring water makes the people sickly. In Pennsylvania there are many healthful sections because the land is high and mountainous and sandstone is found almost throughout, from which clear, pure spring water flows, which gives the people good drinking water.

In respect to health conditions, America must be judged differently
than Europe, as it is far behind it in civilization and is for the most part a raw, uncultivated part of the world.

... We have spoken to many old settlers who have tried out all sections and have gathered from them the following information regarding the West: the state of Missouri has better climatic conditions than Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, but it also has the least advantageous location in the country because there is no market nearby for its farm products. It is also too sparsely settled, and the greatest part is overrun by wolves and bears; all fabricated products are very expensive because of the remoteness of the factories. Here (in Butler County) the sheep can be let out into the woods and they are not molested by wolves and bears, which are as rarely seen here as in the kingdom of Saxony. Even fifteen years ago it was seldom that a wolf got astray from the Allegheny Mountains and was seen in this section. In the big forests of Laurel Hills, bears and wolves have become scarce. Neither are there any other wild beasts in these parts. During all my rambles through Pennsylvania, I have not seen a single big snake, dangerous or harmless. Manco and Genss saw a rattlesnake in a wild section, sixty miles from Pittsburgh, and they killed it. It is said that you can still find them almost all over but they are becoming less common all the time because the hogs are after them.

... Many settlers came to Pennsylvania this year, especially to Butler and Armstrong counties. One reason for the fact that large sections of good, fertile land in this most cultivated state of the Union have lain waste for such a long time is that there was too much wholesale trading carried on with these lands and thereby the titles and legal rights became confused, and much fraud resulted. Many a person bought land from someone whose right of possession was not established. Ignorant, credulous immigrants who were unfamiliar with the language here easily became the victims of such fraud. Great caution is necessary in buying land here in Pennsylvania, but one who makes himself acquainted with existing conditions and also secures the help of an honest lawyer will play safe. If a purchase is made from a well-to-do resident of this locality upon condition that all claims against the land must be canceled, then the buyer will likewise play safe. Whether there are any claims against the land can
be found out in the county court by searching the title; nevertheless, it is possible that there may still be claims of old settlers against the land that have not been recorded in the court. To remove doubt about this, the best information can be obtained from the adjacent land owners.

We have received a full, clear title to our land, and no old claims are against it. To make sure of this, I made the condition in the negotiations with the owner, Mrs. Collins of Pittsburgh, that all claims of whatsoever nature they might be must be canceled by her. In my previous report to you I mentioned that there are an additional six thousand acres of land bordering on our land, which also belong to the Widow Collins, and on which we have an option for one year, that is, until the end of this year. There are excellent stretches of fertile soil and pasture ground in this land, but one part of it lacks good woodland, which, however, could well be used for grazing. Aside from this land, which, as I hope, can be bought for a dollar and a half per acre cash, and perhaps also on credit for a number of years, there are other strips of land nearby that belong to big land owners, who would all be glad to sell if they could get cash for their property. Besides these, there also are a number of very nice farms for sale that the owners must dispose of on account of debts. Among them, a neighbor of ours wants to sell his farm consisting of four hundred acres of the best land, with fifty acres cleared, an ordinary blockhouse, and a barn; but his price is six dollars per acre. Another wants to sell his farm of a hundred and eighty acres, with ninety acres cleared, house and barn, but not under ten dollars per acre; this farm is one of the choicest and is level throughout. Genss and Manco (best regards from both) have bought their farm very cheap.

Many farmers prefer to sell their farms after having worked the land for twenty to thirty years without fertilizing it, and therefore the soil has become impoverished and no longer yields rich harvests. They then buy new land and clear it. The crops from new land are always the most plentiful. Notwithstanding the fact that many farmers settled in this section thirty to forty years ago, still they never fertilize the soil. The soil is excellent. The only restoration the soil gets is that now and then the old land is given a year’s rest and the cattle are allowed to run over it. The
land all around here has a clean topsoil; the ground consists of a deep loam that covers the mountains. On our land the humus is in many places a full foot deep. What reasons could we have had to go farther West and get farther away from the eastern coast and from the good markets? ... As I have said several times, we can never regret that we chose this section of the country, and with a clear conscience and with every right we can recommend it to any German immigrant. A group of Germans could send their representatives here to buy land for them and yet their success would all depend on chance. It was chance that provided us with timely insight (which is something no German can bring with him), and luck was in our favor. Had we stayed with Etzler, we would perhaps also have gone out West and would have missed the opportunity to profit by the advice of well-informed men.

... Along Thorn Creek, on our land, is a big salt well, which is of great value. The salt works in this section are run in a very simple way. The erection of a salt works costs from fifteen hundred to two thousand dollars, according to the depth it has to be drilled, but it returns a clear annual profit of more than a thousand dollars when managed well. The fact that there is a salt well on our land is known to only a few; we learned of its existence from an old hunter who shot many deer around here as they came for the salt. The best tract is that of Smith. On this tract ... is a nice place for a dwelling, where a fine view toward the east can be had for about sixty miles. ... In my last letter, dear friend, I made you the proposition to build a house jointly with us, on this spot, as it is possible to look over almost the whole territory from there. ... It would give us great joy if a little German town would flourish here like a plant whose growth was forced by diligent industry and farming. We would then settle down in partnership on the Smith tract and we could also add another tract of land that borders on the east. I do not believe that another section as suitable for a town site as nature has here provided could easily be found. The town and gardens would have to be laid out on the level part, which is very easy to clear; gently sloping grassy meadows and arable land adjoin on all sides. There are sawmills and flour mills nearby, without which no settler can very well get along.
Plenty of coal is nearby for manufactories and machine works. There are also open sandstone quarries, as well as a limestone bank for burning lime. Good clay, in large quantities, for pottery ware and tile making is likewise nearby. A large number of clear springs water the land. In case a town should be built here, it would only be necessary to buy another hundred or two hundred acres of forest nearby to have a good supply of building lumber, as the old forest at this place was destroyed by fire and only young shoots are growing there now. The new town would have connecting roads with Pittsburgh, Freeport, Butler, and Kittanning. If there are in your group a number of people who later on intend to start in business along with farming, such as handicraft and manufacturing, and they want to buy only twenty, thirty, or fifty acres each, it would be most advantageous for them to build their homes closely together in order to lay out a regular town. The houses could be built in two rows, with their gardens directly back of the houses; their farm lands and meadows would lie some distance back. In this way there would be no dispute about the division of the parcels, as the soil is excellent all over. Such a community settlement would surely be of great advantage to each one. The gardens, pastures, and fields could all be fenced in large areas, which would save much work and expense. The cows and pigs could run free, and one shepherd could watch all the sheep.

This place would not be suitable for commercial trading on a larger scale. No immigrant would undertake it, however, in any event, as only the Americans who are well acquainted with all conditions can successfully engage in trade on a large scale. But for manufacturing this place offers good opportunities; and almost any mechanic can find employment in his trade here, especially weavers, cloth and flannel makers, shoemakers, tanners, wood turners (who earn a good livelihood in making spinning wheels), and cabinetmakers. All these craftsmen could follow their trades in the country and sell their products in the larger cities at a profit. Weaving, cloth making, and flannel making, as well as yarn spinning, are very profitable, especially if the work is done by machinery or with the help of machinery. If you, Mr. Baehr, would bring a few carding machines and spooling machines, also looms for cloth weaving and flannel
weaving, which we could put in operation here, we could later on set up a very profitable business. In case you still have on hand a stock of the iron parts of such machines, I would advise you not to sell them but to bring them with you, in fact, bring all of your machinery. Take care of all iron parts by greasing them to prevent rust. . . .

Farming alone, without cattle raising, does not pay well and yields no returns other than the necessities. There is no profit in hiring help, just as there is no profit in bringing help from Europe. All farmers here do only as much as they, together with their families, can handle. You will not find any gentlemen farmers here who do farming on a large scale and keep hired help, even though there are large landowners. You might go to twenty farmers but could buy no products of them as they do not raise enough to sell. They all maintain that if wheat does not sell for seventy-five cents cash right along, it is not worth while to raise it. At present the price is seventy-five cents in Pittsburgh, and it will always stay at that figure after the canal is finished. In eastern Pennsylvania the price of wheat is never under one dollar; therefore it is more advantageous to do farming on a large scale there. But here there is more profit in raising cattle, particularly horses and sheep. Tell Mr. Compe that he could follow his favorite inclination here with profit if he were to invest some capital in the purchase of good mares. A farmer does not have much work in raising cattle and does not require hired help. Therefore, an important thing for farmers here is to have grassy meadows, which I took well into consideration. Once a pasture is in good shape, it requires little work, no plowing, only now and then harrowing.

Mr. Etzler’s profit calculations, regarding the South as well as the North, are taken out of thin air. The American farmer lives a very happy life indeed, enviable in comparison with the German farmer; he raises all his necessities himself, makes his own clothing, and has a surplus of the necessities of life. Contented people can in truth lead a happy, free, and unconstrained life here. The American farmer does not work half so much as the German farmer and lives like a prince as far as his necessities are concerned—but he must deny himself luxuries, as he cannot afford them. Anyone who has capital on hand and invests some in cattle raising
can earn much more here than in Germany, and more easily too. There is also less difficulty here in raising cattle than in Germany. Many farmers here have no stables, and the cattle are out in the open in winter as well as in summer. This system is suitable for the cattle so long as they are not neglected in their feeding in the winter. The cattle here are less subject to sickness. It is the general belief that cows that are always outside give more and better milk and stay healthiest.

As to horses, it is more advantageous to keep them in a stable during the winter, as they would otherwise sooner become stiff. It is, of course, a result of the Spartan system of raising horses that the horses are hardy and strong and little troubled with disease. The horses are strong and vigorous and, with it all, patient and easy to train. The same horses are used for both riding and driving. No German would be able to drive his horse as boldly as the American, who drives in full trot with his sledge or wagon down the steep mountain roads and with the greatest safety passes the most dangerous places. The stagecoaches are drawn by the finest horses. All passenger-mail coaches are express and are privately-owned undertakings. These four-horse diligences run with a furious speed even on the poorest roads, faster than the best of the Prussian fast-mail coaches on the smoothest road; they pass the most dangerous mountain slopes without slowing up the least. These horses are excellently trained and pay strict attention to commands without a whip being used on them. They make the trip between Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, three hundred English miles, over rough and most uneven mountain roads, in two and a half days; the cost of a passenger fare is fifteen dollars. If there were a good road between these two places the trip could without doubt be made in a day and a half.

Sheep raising can be conducted here in different ways. Most farmers who have only a limited number of common sheep let them run in the open during winter and summer in the woods. If the sheep are given some fodder during the winter months, they thrive very well; the free, unhindered running about is very beneficial to them. With larger herds of sheep this is not practicable as these herds often scatter and get lost. Such herds must graze in fenced-in pastures where they cannot run away and
also need no special watching. In this respect, however, farmers make the mistake of fencing in too small parcels and then keeping large flocks of sheep in the inclosure too long a time. But the farmers are compelled to do this as greater lengths of fence cost more. A sheep, however, requires constant change of pasture; it does not like to graze today in the same place it did yesterday. Keeping personal watch of cattle is not customary in America. If a number of neighbors would join together they could fence a large field for a sheep pasture, or, with small expense, could keep one shepherd in common. In my last letter to you I brought this point to your attention and requested you to speak to Mr. Compe about bringing along a young, robust shepherd and also a few shepherd dogs.

With the raising and breeding of horses there are but few difficulties to overcome; the mares and colts run about free, working horses are kept fenced in during the time they are not needed for working. But it is necessary to have a small amount of capital to buy mares. Also, it is to great advantage to keep good stallions. The breeding of a mare costs from ten to twenty dollars; good colts sell at high prices. A good, common working colt, three years old, sells at forty to one hundred dollars. There is a stallion at Kittanning for which the owner paid a thousand dollars. To breed a mare to this stallion costs ten dollars.

There is also another branch of cultivation that is receiving much attention here and has proven to be profitable, but is still in its infant state, and that is, as I have written you before, the cultivation of silk, for which the climatic conditions in this section are very favorable. Mulberry trees grow wild here. Do not forget to bring a good book with you about sericulture, or send it by mail in case you are not coming soon; also a supply of mulberry seed. The silk production is a business that can be conducted by anyone, and there is no hard labor attached to it as in the case of farming. Also grape growing would be worth a trial. Make all members of your group acquainted with these two branches of cultivation.

A few days ago Secretary Degenhardt and his cousin, from Pittsburgh came to visit us. 17 Secretary Degenhardt will settle here next spring. His

17 Degenhardt was secretary of the emigration association formed by the Roeblings. He and his cousin, a tailor, had settled in Pittsburgh.
means are limited. The tailor Degenhardt now earns in Pittsburgh just enough to carry him through the winter. Graf, from Darmstadt, a skilled carpenter... has bought of the Widow Collins two hundred acres north of our land, at a dollar and a half per acre, with our consent. There are still some desirable parcels to the north, south, and east of our land, and if a group of immigrants should desire ten thousand acres they would be able to secure them here. If they have the earnest desire to settle here and to build a town according to my proposal, then it would be very advisable for them to have a large one-story, very simple community house built first of all, with only one room, to serve as a temporary headquarters for themselves and their belongings. If every member would contribute a certain amount for this purpose and if a few hundred dollars were collected and sent by early check to Hagedorn and Leupold, via New York, and were placed at our disposition, then we could arrange to have such a house built in short order.

We would like very much to receive definite word from you, if and when you are coming, and with whom, and if you agree to our proposition to build a house jointly with us and if you can forward us a few hundred dollars for this purpose. With the means at hand we would at first build only a part of this dwelling. In any case we would build a frame house, lined with clay and covered with shingles (the covering-material most commonly used in America). If we should build such a house, so as to meet the immediate requirements of yourself, your brother-in-law, and us, we would require three hundred dollars. In case you write us definitely that you are coming with your brother-in-law and perhaps also with our parents and our brother Christel and family, and if three hundred dollars were sent to us through Hagedorn and Leupold, then we could start in short order with the erection of the house and you would find living quarters ready when you arrive.... We doubt, though, whether we can maintain the big bulk of land, as we do not believe that father is inclined to make an additional allowance and we could not expect him to make a further sacrifice. We regret that we have already asked him for such; also, we now prefer to own less land and keep more

18 Hagedorn, Leupold & Co. of Philadelphia.
funds on hand to invest in cattle raising. If we had money enough to maintain the land, without debt, and some funds to spare, then we would not part with a single acre, but as it is now our means are too small.

Your previous letters gave us courage to buy on speculation, otherwise we would have been satisfied with less. In case none of our friends come over this year, and no others subscribe for land and send us money, then we will take up with Mrs. Collins the matter of her taking a part of the land back, which will cause no difficulty as the purchase price was very low and the land will gain in value through our settling here. Such cases happen quite often. In no case would we permit ourselves to carry a thousand-dollar debt, on which we might later be required to pay interest; that would be a distressing situation for us. Of the funds that we still have on hand, we cannot use any more for land purchase. It costs a good deal for our family to live through the winter; nine heads consume something....

The price of land goes up every year; especially in the state of Pennsylvania will this be so, and particularly in the vicinity of Pittsburgh. If we could maintain our land it would, without doubt, be worth ten dollars an acre ten years from now. The state will build a road from Freeport to Butler within a few years, and it is very likely that it will run through a part of our land. You may now ask why the landowners sell their land instead of keeping it. Many of these landowners own big sections in Pennsylvania, which have been in their possession for many years because this state was neglected for a long period; the taxes on the land, although only one or two cents per acre, amount to quite an item on large holdings, and the land steadily consumes the capital investment and gains only slowly in value if no settlers arrive; therefore the owners are glad to sell if they can get a cash offer. Colonizing in Pennsylvania, however, is increasing more and more; many settlers who went out West with the hope that conditions would be better there have been disappointed and have returned, in order to escape the malarial fever and to be nearer the good markets. On account of the previous great flow of settlers to the western states, the price of land there rose higher than in Pennsylvania; in this respect conditions are not as Etzler said they are. The lands in the
western states that can be bought now, before Congress meets, for a price of seventy-five cents to a dollar and a quarter an acre are either very remote from all communication or are poor in other respects and have an unfavorable climate. The good landed properties in the better localities have been bought up long ago by land speculators and the price of such land is held high. Cincinnati lies in one of the best sections of the West but is by far not so healthful as Pittsburgh; yet the price of land in Cincinnati is by far higher than in Pittsburgh in spite of the fact that market conditions are better in the latter than in the former city. In Cincinnati the produce prices are often half the Pittsburgh prices. The latter place has the best market and is most important to the inland of America, and its importance rises more and more through its growing factories and manufacturing establishments. Where industries flourish, there the farmer also enjoys a benefit. We repeat it again to you with true conviction—we have chosen the most advantageous section for our settlement that can be found in the inland of America—it is not prejudice, but the resultant conviction from many inquiries and comparisons we have made, that is here proclaimed. We can justly recommend this section to any German farmer; it is healthful to a high degree—we breathe pure air and drink pure, clear water; this section has the best market facilities that can be found in the inland of America, as well for selling farm products as for buying the principal products and other necessities; the soil is excellent, to be sure not quite so fertile as in the low-lying plains of the West but suitable for the cultivation of any vegetation that thrives in this climate; here are the nicest and best pastures where healthy live stock can be raised; and the contour of the land is most graceful and charming, a gentle undulating plain inclosed by mountainous country, suitable for agriculture as well as grassy meadows. This part of the country also offers all advantages for the establishment of manufactories and an abundance of the best coal, other minerals, and ores, sandstone quarries for building, timber of all varieties, a good limestone quarry, brooks suitable for the location of mills, tanneries, distilleries, and breweries, and a large

19 No land could be bought directly from the United States government at this time for less than a dollar and a quarter an acre.
river with the most important canal nearby for shipping to the East and West; and all this in a state that is most suitable for Germans and that at all times has been inhabited and cultivated mostly by them. What more do we want? When you come here with other Germans and make investigations and inquiries, you will find all of this that I write to you confirmed.

What I here communicate to you and our other friends has not, before God, the purpose of persuading any man to come over to America and eventually to our place. The booklet published by Etzler and me was in many respects persuasive, and for that reason I wish it had never been printed; the hardships that are connected with emigration, especially for the one who is taking the first step, are not given enough prominence therein. I blame Etzler's carelessness and bold, unfounded assertions for this.

In the future I will gather material for a true presentation of conditions in this country and will include good advice for emigrants, based on experience, and I will make it my duty to have it printed for publication in Germany. I would not, for any price, persuade any person to come here, even if we should have to be here alone for the rest of our lives—we would not want to deceive anybody, as much as we desire to have our countrymen with us.

Mr. Kleber, of Darmstadt, is very unhappy; he is a spoiled city man; also the gardener Janck, of Cassel; both came over with exaggerated and romantic ideas. My brother and I feel satisfied and happy; also Genss and Manco, two honest, upright friends—not one of us regrets in the least having come to America.

I assure you, my dear Mr. Baehr, that I do not feel disappointed, and in the main part I have found all that I sought: a free, reasonable, democratic government and reasonable, natural relationship of the people toward each other; freedom and equality; a peaceful, generous, beautiful country the blessings of which are not forcefully and deceitfully taken away from the land toiler by tyrants. No unbearable taxes—no executor—no arrogant burgomaster, or chief magistrate—no police commissioner.

20 This booklet has not been identified.
oppresses and annoys a free citizen of Pennsylvania—these, however, are privileges that would not be satisfactory in the judgment of every German and also would not suit those Germans who have become accustomed to the force and oppression system. He who is for freedom and equal rights (this latter not every German of high rank and education can digest) and depends on his own strength and ability because he cannot afford to have servants, and who finds satisfaction in a quiet country life and can easily part with Germany, and also has a little capital, or skill, together with a strong body, he may come here and with ease will find opportunity for a livelihood. The slave-free states of North America offer advantages that Europe never had and never can have. These states can yet enrich themselves with all the advantages of art and literature that have been cultivated in the eastern world.

With this in mind, I confess to you further that it was our good fate that kept us from going to the southern states, as we had at first planned. There, freedom and equality are in bitter contradiction on account of the detestable slavery of the black race which is still permitted. These unfortunate negroes will use their natural rights and will revolt anew each year—will murder their oppressors, guilty or innocent—to secure final freedom for themselves; the slave owners will then continually become more tyrannical, and despair will force the Africans to risk all and commit horror and crime. No white man works in the South, because labor is only performed by a despised race, and the wages of the white man there are much higher than here.

How would we small planters be scorned there if we tilled our land ourselves! To take poor Germans there to work was a laughable idea of Etzler's—it would be absolutely impossible—none would stay there, not even for high wages. And how could an educated German feel happy under such conditions in the South if he must regard every negro as a natural enemy, where even the law strictly forbids him to treat the negro humanely, to educate him, to draw closer to him with kindness, or even to set him free? If you free a slave, the law puts the strange responsibility on your shoulders of giving security for his future behavior. . . .

We are very well satisfied with climatic conditions in this section. Al-
though the general opinion is that this winter is a severe one, nevertheless it is very mild compared with the winters in Germany. We are at 40° 45' north latitude. Pittsburgh is at 40° 28' north latitude. Because of this lesser latitude (than Mühlhausen), the sun is higher in the sky here, and on a clear day it shines as warm now as on a nice May day at home. We have enjoyed many nice winter days and can work out in the open nearly every day if there is no wind to chill the air. Usually there is much snow here, which the farmers like very much as it protects the grain in the ground, and besides it provides good sledge-roads, but with it all the thermometer in the daytime is seldom lower than a few degrees below freezing point; the nights are cold, but as soon as the sun rises it gets warm. This is the reason the cattle can endure staying out in the open and the trees grow so well that in Germany would have to be covered during the winter months to save them. Real winter weather generally sets in here about New Year, and up to that time the cattle find enough food out in the open; but this year it snowed a month and a half earlier than usual. We are anxious to see the snow disappear in a few weeks so the cattle can graze again, as we hope we will not have to buy hay for our two horses and our cow. Our cow now has a calf. In the spring we will buy another cow, several calves, sheep, pigs, and some fowl, to get our farm in order. As you already know, we found on our lands a small farm with house and barn, which lightened things very much for us.

We are able to buy land for people who have not yet arrived here and we can send the deed to Europe, provided the purchase price is paid in full and the titles can be completed immediately without any mortgages against the property. In such a case, the owner, living in Germany, would be required to secure an agent in this country to pay the yearly taxes for him. As we have written you before we are not desirous of carrying out orders to buy land for strangers; it is better that the people come here and see first and then buy for themselves.

Regarding the matter of bringing people over with you we have written you before. We repeat again—do not pay the passage fare for anyone, keep your money and bring it with you, if you wish to spare yourself great annoyance and sorrow. At least do not bring whole families with
you. I can only advise you to bring along a young, robust shepherd, if possible without a family, and to make a contract with him that you will promise him an annual wage of about sixty dollars, or a share in the sheep farm, this latter arrangement to be decided later, also his board and lodging, but nothing more—no clothes, etc., and no obligation in regard to children. All advanced traveling expenses are to be deducted from his wages, and his time of service starts from the day he starts to work.

If your brother-in-law and my brother Christel come with you, then we will have help enough for the present. We can, later on, have plenty of German workmen come over. Families who have enough means to pay their way may come along, and they can rent farms here on a share basis, by which they give up one-third of their produce. They would get a house and ten to fifteen acres, all fenced and cleared. If they clear some additional land themselves, they are allowed five years free use of such cleared land and after the five-year period they are required to give up likewise one-third of the produce of that cleared land, providing they furnish their draught cattle and implements themselves. N.B.: I warn you against paying the passage fare for the tailor H. Keep your money; you can accomplish more with money here than with people. Costs run high, especially the first year when you have to buy everything; later on we can hire all the help we need. Give this good advice to each friend and warn each one not to bring many people with him. Every true American will tell you, "Keep your money"—be careful. If you have funds, you can undertake something and be quite sure of success...

Give our heartiest greetings to our parents and brother and his family and talk over everything with them. If my brother Christel intends to come with you, then we very much wish that our parents would also come along, providing they are well and would like to come. Many old people have endured the voyage without detriment. Even if the voyage takes considerable time and is somewhat inconvenient, they would find their reward here where they could live quiet and satisfied lives in the enjoyment of scenic beauty and in the society of friends. You and my parents would not miss Mühlhausen when here. But it would be necessary to prepare living quarters to be ready upon your arrival.
If you bring with you quite a number of good, honest Germans who will adopt themselves here, we will receive them all with open arms and will do all we can for them. Good advice is a fine thing for a beginner; then future experience costs him less. Be careful and do not enter too extensively into obligations with anyone; above all, do not take any responsibility upon yourself. Let each one bring his own money and pay for his own land himself. Likewise, take care not to put yourself under obligation in regard to arranging for the voyage. May our own case serve you as a lesson. Do not trust anyone whom you do not know very well—be careful—above all things, keep your money; and tell everyone to do the same.

Tell my cousin, the tanner and dyer, Roebling, if he and his family could undertake to come here and could bring some funds with them, then with the will of God they ought to come. Tell the same to all industrious craftsmen who are accustomed to work and have enough funds for a start here. But all would have to commence with farming, in order to raise the necessities of life. Good carpenters, millwrights, masons, as well as smiths, could earn good money at their trades. Tell my cousin, the printer, that perhaps later on there will be an opportunity to establish a German printing and lithographing business here.

Tell young Tropus the following: it will be well for him to remain in Germany for a while and perfect his studies in music and the English language; then he can come to America with confidence and can find employment anywhere. When more German families have settled here there will be need of a German school, and then I believe J. Tropus would fill the place of an educator best of all; he can stay in Mühlhausen and wait for further news; he need not haste.... Perhaps Dachroeden has found an opportunity to establish a profitable business in the South and has therefore no reason to come North, although, being a chemist, he could run a chemical plant here to advantage, as there is need for plenty of chemical products in Pittsburgh and many such products are shipped to the West from the eastern coast.21

I would like to inclose many more letters; but then the expense for

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21 Dachroeden was a member of the emigrating group from Darmstadt.
postage would run enormously high. . . . A one-sheet letter, no matter how large the sheet is, costs only eighteen cents. Tell this to all our friends and ask them to send us closely-written letters and no vacant white paper, in order to save us the postage charges. We received a letter a few days ago from my sister and brother-in-law, which was sent via Bremen to Baltimore, from there to Philadelphia, to Pittsburgh, then to Freeport—an expensive letter, and then besides, it took seven months to reach us. It probably was held at Baltimore for a long time. . . .

Farewell, my dear friend; in case you should leave Europe soon, may a kind destiny accompany you and all friends on your way to the western shore; and you will greet the land of freedom with the same thrill of delight and rapturous feeling as the hero Columbus when he discovered America. Once you are here, you will not regret having left Germany. Again farewell—may Heaven protect you and keep you in good health.

Your faithful, devoted friend,

J. A. Roebling