AMERICA symbolized many things to the immigrants who came to her shores in the early nineteenth century. To some, it provided political freedom, so weary were they of the oppressive tyranny of their native land. To others, it represented the unlimited economic opportunity that an unimaginative, monarchical, and bureaucratic Europe could not afford them. To John Augustus Roebling, America was the New World that his teacher and friend, Hegel, predicted to be the destined land where Reason would at least reign supreme, and the true State would at last be actualized.

Roebling arrived in America on August 6, 1831, from Germany, where he and his boyhood friend, John A. Etzler, had formed the Mühlhausen Emigration Society. Although the group split up immediately upon arrival in the United States, Roebling felt a mandate from the members of the emigration society still in Germany. As leader of their society, he scrupulously investigated the advantages and disadvantages of almost every section of the United States as the site for his intended settlement. Entrusted with the money of his friends in Germany, Roebling was keenly sensitive to his responsibility of making a correct choice for his site. The accompanying letter demonstrates the pains Roebling underwent in his exhaustive investigation. After much thought he decided that the Pittsburgh area would become the “future centre of the universe,” and therefore purchased a tract of land on its
outsskirts for his proposed colony, Germania. (He actually named the settlement Saxonburg.)

Shortly after his arrival in August 1831, Roebling began to write down in exact detail the reasons he chose western Pennsylvania in which to settle, as well as his reasons for rejecting other seemingly advantageous sites. The record of his reasoning is incorporated in an enormously long letter he wrote on November 1 and 2, 1831, to his friend, Ferdinand Baehr, in Germany. As his son, Washington Roebling, later pointed out, "It is by no means a duodecimo edition, but covers a hundred pages and more, each leaf being 15x10 inches," too long even for him to translate.¹

It should also be noted that this remarkable letter, remarkable in its perspicacity and in its estimate of American life and values in the 1830’s, was written by an energetic man of only twenty-five. What made Roebling actually choose the environs of Pittsburgh is ultimately unanswerable. It is true that Pittsburgh was close to good markets, unlike the slightly less expensive land in the more remote regions farther west in Ohio and Indiana. The land here, while not the cheapest in the United States, was still considerably less expensive than in eastern Pennsylvania, while having all the convenience to market of the latter. Furthermore, Pittsburgh offered a healthier climate than Philadelphia and other sections in eastern Pennsylvania. Roebling was much impressed during his journey by canal from Philadelphia to Pittsburgh with the pale complexion and malarial condition of so many people in

¹ In a letter written to his own son (Roebling’s grandson) during the winter of 1893–1894, Roebling’s son, Washington A. Roebling, summarized in a few pages the main events of this remarkable letter herewith published for the first time. He says, “Had it been shorter I should feel tempted to translate it.” Although Washington Roebling says the letter was written in September 1831, he undoubtedly was referring to this letter dated November 1 (and later continued as November 2, 1831), since this is the only one hundred page letter in the Roebling collection at Rutgers University. It is hardly conceivable that Roebling wrote a hundred page letter in September and a few weeks later on November 1st wrote another hundred page letter. A note to the typescript letters in the Washington A. Roebling Papers (Vol. 4, p. 14) prepared by Clarence E. Case for the Roebling Estate reads: "With the estate papers is a manuscript letter (now bound) written in the German language by John A. Roebling to Mr. I. Bähr, under the date November 1, 2, 1831. The pages are numbered 1 to 101, inclusive, and are 8½ by 13¾ inches in size. It is believed that this is the letter referred to by Colonel Roebling and that it has not been translated. But two other letters, probably of similar import dated December 13, 1831, and January 14, 1832, respectively, have been put into translations now in the possession of Mr. Charles Tyson. The major portions of these translations were published in The Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine for June 1935 (Vol. 18, No. 2)." The original manuscript of these later two letters were recently acquired from the Roebling Estate by Rutgers University. P.R.B.
eastern Pennsylvania. Only when he reached the Allegheny Mountains near Pittsburgh did he find healthy-looking, red-faced people again. It is this latter reason that Washington Roebling cites as the "real motive" behind his father's decision to settle in western Pennsylvania. This same fear of malaria prevented Roebling from choosing Illinois, which he considered a fever district second only to the coast of Guinea. In his eyes, Indiana and Ohio were not much better for the same reason. But Saxonburg, outside of Pittsburgh, was ideal. It was too high (1600 feet above sea level) for malarial fever, was level, and had good drainage. Since the price was adequate ($1.50 per acre) he purchased what actually was a wilderness tract of 2-3000 acres from the widow Collins. His son Washington describes the land more vividly as "a primeval forest where wild pigeons would not even alight."

The letter that follows is a record of an odyssey. It is a miniature odyssey on the physical level, but of no mean proportion on the spiritual and mental levels. Here, then, is the adventure of a soul confronting a new nation and a new way of living and thinking. His response is edifying to us today in the nobility of spirit and largeness of soul it portrays.


The contrast of pragmatist and prophet that is here revealed between Roebling and Etzler is paralleled in George Rapp and Count Leon, both mentioned in the following letter. Roebling was too intellectual and pragmatic in his comments on George Rapp, not realizing that the very points he considered ridiculous about George Rapp pro-
vided the cohesive element that made Rapp’s work so outstanding and which Roebling’s cold intellectuality so undervalued that it was the real cause of the break with Etzler. If Roebling had teamed up with Etzler this might well have been a team as successful as the team of George and Frederick Rapp. Both George and Frederick knew what Roebling either did not know or underestimated, viz., that man does not live by bread alone. Most ironic, however, is the fact that Roebling reports a crisis as imminent within Rapp’s Harmony Society and at the same time in good faith reports the arrival of a “real” prophet and Latter-day Saint, Count Leon, who, even more of a visionary than Etzler, was soon to head the revolution that almost destroyed George Rapp’s Harmony Society. For detailed discussion of these events see: Karl J. R. Arndt: George Rapp’s Harmony Society, 1785-1847 and “The Life and Mission of Count Leon” by the same author in American-German Review, June and August 1940. The translation published here was done under a grant to the translator from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Other publications on Rapp’s Harmony Society will appear later. K.J.R.A.

TRANSLATION OF J. A. RÖBLING’S LETTER TO MR. F. BÄHR

[Introductory note of the translator, Karl J. R. Arndt: The original German manuscript consists of 101 pages of text written in beautiful Gothic script on legal size paper. On a separate page preceding the text the following is written: “Mr. G. Bahr Mühlhausen. Postage: Part according to percentage.” The letter proper is addressed to F. Bahr. G. Bahr was probably the name of the firm. Authorship of notes to this article is identified by the initials of the contributors.]

Pittsburgh in Pennsylv. November 2, 1831

Mr. F. Bahr in Muhlhausen:
My respected Friend!

Good news follows bad, at least as far as we are concerned! My brother Carl and I, Manco and Genss have advanced so far in our undertaking, that we can say: our future in America is assured. But I do not want to get ahead of my story, instead I will give you a short resume of our history from the time we left Philadelphia and turned to the West of Pennsylvania. I take for granted that you received our
letters from Philadelphia in which we told you and our other Mühlhausen friends the story of our voyage across the ocean and the state of our emigration society. As we informed you, our voyage took 11 weeks and we arrived at the city of Philadelphia on the 6th of August. On August 7th I wrote a simple letter on board ship to our parents in which I very briefly reported our trip and mailed this via New York on the packet ship to Havre de Grace. We stayed in Philadelphia 2 weeks to prepare ourselves for the journey to the interior and to gather information. On the 20th of August we gave our second letter to Mühlhausen to Captain Probst, with whom we had sailed, and who weighed anchors on August 21 to return to Bremen. This second mail included a detailed diary covering our ocean voyage, also an outline for a ship’s contract based upon our experience. With that mail we also gave you a detailed report about our relations to the other emigrants and the reasons which persuaded us, and also Genss, Manco and Januss, to separate ourselves from the others and from Etzler. From our longer association with these people only disadvantage and not advantage could result, both in pecuniary and social relations. Etzler would have brought us only disadvantage, no advantage; he demanded only more sacrifices from our side after we had already sacrificed enough; and what was even more annoying, he demanded that every man should subordinate himself to his views, which we did not like to do. The following persons joined Mr. Etzler: Panse and Wolfram from Nordhausen, Dreise from Saalfeld, Nollner from Treffurt, Reinhold and Rothens from Mühlhausen and the hunter Schreiber from Rothenburg. All these people possess few means and little education, and are of little value to us, so that our existence would have been endangered, had we stayed with them. Etzler and his society left a few days earlier for Pittsburgh than we, in order to go downstream from here and to move to the western states. Not one of these people took leave of us and only Etzler wrote me a letter composed in a friendly but somewhat mystic tone, copy of which I have sent you. The cabinet maker Sondershausen found advantageous work in Philadelphia and is still there. Edler and his son also remained in Philadelphia, but did not yet know if his business would bring him advantage there. As yet we have no news from him, but we want to give him some good advice and in near future write to him. Dr. Kling,

2 See introduction about Roebling’s Diary. P.R.B.
3 Etzler settled for a short time in Ohio during 1831 and 1832, including Cincinnati, before returning to Pittsburgh in late 1832. He published his Paradise Within the Reach of All Men Without Labor By Powers of Nature and Machinery in Pittsburgh in February 1833. P.R.B.
who has behaved toward us and especially toward me and Genss like a stupid ass unacquainted with the world, stayed near Philadelphia. It is very easy for a man like Kling, who can teach music and other subjects, to make a good living. As we hear, Kling wants to have his bride come over and he will follow Etzler, who, as Kling expresses it, is leading the people to their higher life's happiness. Etzler may have a very good purpose in mind, but he has not acted as a man should act who has been in America 8 years, which I will explain further below. 4 I still respect Etzler and have the best opinion of his mind and heart, only he has too stubborn a head, offends all the world, is not a businessman, not in the least and he does not know how to ingratiate himself with people or how to behave toward them. I bear no anger toward him nor toward these people and wish them well, only I should not like to live with them, with the exception of Nollner and Dreise, who are good and honest farmers. Etzler was indispensable to these people because he speaks the English language very well, for us, however, he was dispensable in this respect. Upon our arrival we found a letter from Harseim and Dachroden, dated Baltimore, July 10, 1831, in which they reported to us that they have been in Baltimore for 14 days and vainly waited for us or a letter from us. 5 They wrote us that they had parted from Kleber and the Darmstadt farmers, and that they would set sail from Savannah on July 15, in order from there to ship up the Savannah River to Augusta, and from there to go to Mount Vintage in the Edgefield district, where a Mr. Breithaupt, a rich plantation owner, who is a relative of Harseim, lives. They gave us the following address: H. Harseim, Care of Mr. Christian Breithaupt at Mount Vintage, Distr: Edgefield of South Carolina. From there they wanted to obtain further information about the South, especially about Albania [sic, i.e., Alabama] and send us information as soon as possible. We replied to this letter on August 15 from Philadelphia and sent the letter to Edgefield. In Philadelphia we waited in vain for 14 days for news from Dachroden and had to

4 Etzler spent the years 1822-1829 in the United States, and returned to Germany in 1829, only to be imprisoned for promoting political unrest and urging his fellow intellectuals to emigrate from Germany to the United States. P.R.B.

5 Two members of the Darmstadt contingent of the Emigration Society founded by Roebling and Etzler. Harseim, Dachroden (a chemist), and the rest of the emigrants from Darmstadt came to America on the Henry Barclay, whereas Roebling, Etzler, and the emigrants from Mühlhausen came over on the August Edward. Although the ship with the Darmstadt contingent left only a few days before Roebling's ship, it arrived almost four weeks earlier (July 10, as opposed to August 6). P.R.B.
reach some decision, in order not to waste our time. From Pittsburgh we again wrote to Harseim at Edgefield under date of September 21, and still we are without news. On October 21 we wrote to Heinecke and Schumacher in Baltimore and asked if they had received news from Harseim, Dachroden and Hupfeld and if these had disposed over the letter of credit of $1500? Yesterday we received a reply from Heinecke and Schumacher wherein they wrote us: "as yet they had no news from Harseim, but they must be very much mistaken if shortly before our arrival in Philadelphia they had not received a letter for us from Mount Vintage and sent the same on to Hagedorn Leupold and Co. in Philadelphia to be delivered to us; they had strongly advised these gentlemen against the South and the slave states; and the letter of credit for $1500 in favor of Mr. von Dachroden has not yet been cashed." Now we do not know what to say to this; we have our suspicions but cannot say what has become of Harseim, Dachroden and Hupfeld, whether they are still alive and where they are keeping themselves. We knew nothing of a letter from Mount Vintage. We will inquire about it at Hagedorn and Leupold in Philadelphia. It may be that our or Dachroden's letters were lost, the post to the southern states may not be quite secure. In the northern states the post is very correct and fast and here one has nothing to fear. We have given Dachroden information about everything in our letters and explained our reasons why we have given up the slave states. We are convinced that Dachroden etc. would not have gone South if Harseim's relative had not lived there. We still hope for news and also expect that they will not stay in the South but will follow us here.

As far as our plan is concerned, which we followed from Philadelphia, we have given you our reasons in an earlier letter. Now I can express myself more surely and more clearly about it. You know how strongly I formerly was in favor of the South, in spite of my brother-in-law's concern about health. In part I still favor the South, but only as far as the climate is concerned. I have unwillingly, very unwillingly foregone the southern climate; other, but for us far more important reasons have inclined us (at least me) toward the northern slave-free states. According to what I have read, heard and myself seen and experienced in Europe and here up to date about America in general and about the climate of the north and south especially, further about

6 The symbol used in German may be "Reichsthaler" but it made more sense to read it as dollars because he quotes American prices. For this reason I have used the dollar sign for his German symbol, which has no American equivalent. K.J.R.A.
the character of the inhabitants, about the life and activity in the United States, about the conditions of the immigrants, etc., I find that which I heard from Etzler still to be most correct, most thorough, and most objective, except in several points. Etzler gave me the most correct idea about the United States. In some points he was too easy. As far as the little book General View etc. which he wrote is concerned, I find everything in it good up to his mercantile calculations, in which he is mistaken. In general I have found that Etzler has failed completely as far as mercantile interests are concerned, and he has made the same mistake when he took his body of people deep into the West distant from all advantageous markets. I do not recall reading a book in Germany which would give an emigrant thorough guidance and which would properly throw light upon the advantage of the one or the other region. We have given up the South mainly because of the climate. No educated man can feel well there where he is surrounded by slaves; the slave states will never make progress in culture and in human education, never will factories and manufacture blossom there, they will always remain barbarian states. In Philadelphia we got the news and I myself read it in the newspapers, that a great association among the blacks in New Orleans had been discovered in time to stop the plan of the slaves to murder all the whites during the feverish time of the year. That was the first news which dampened my prejudice for the South. Soon after all the newspapers were full of news about the conspiracy of the slaves, almost in all Southern states, especially in Virginia, even Washington, and in the two Carolinas; later also in Delaware State, where slavery also exists. In North Carolina many families of planters have been killed, and in Virginia, President Jackson even called up several battalions of the standing army to help against the blacks. The whites are superior to the blacks, but the latter will revolt just as long as they are contrary to nature being suppressed and robbed of their human rights. I wish them all luck. In the South no individual can undertake anything without considerable property because of the conditions there, least of all as a planter. No white man

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7 Roebling and Etzler collaborated on a secret pamphlet, General View of the United States of North America, together with a Community Plan for Settlement, which appeared in Germany in December 1830, shortly after Etzler was released from prison for inciting emigration. The work was mainly, if not completely, of Etzler’s doing. The pamphlet is not extant. (Cf. D. B. Steinman, The Builders of the Bridge, N. Y., 1945, p. 20.)

8 Evidently the revolt led by Nat Turner in 1831. William Styron’s The Confessions of Nat Turner (1967) is the most famous fictional account of this incident.
will put up working on a plantation because it is a disgrace. Workers taken along from Europe are not dependable and of little advantage; —what do there then? Of this neither Etzler nor we have thought.—If we had gone to the South, our existence would have become very precarious. If the Society had been very large, entirely united, and heavily endowed, had we been able to wait a year and been able to prepare everything, then it would have been different, then a settlement in West Florida could have been undertaken. But all this was not the case. With our few tools and short wings we could undertake nothing significant, we were very limited and like the virgins with the lamps had to adapt ourselves to the circumstances. Our conditions now, however, have taken as good a shape as I could only hope for, and I look forward to a happy future. In such an undertaking much depends upon good fortune and at least it has been favorable to us, after I had already in part given up the hope. From Philadelphia we (Genss, Manco, Jancke, Carl and I with the family Graben) departed on August 22 for Pittsburgh here. We moved along on the canal over Reading, Libanon, Middletown, Harrisburg, Lewiston to Hundington. The canal was completed only to this point, and from there we had to rent a freight drayman up to Pittsburgh here, where we did not arrive until September 19. This entire trip was unpleasant, costly and boring. It cost me and Carl, with transportation of 26 hundredweights (Zentner) baggage and the family exactly $100. On the canal travel is cheap. We paid up to Hundington in freight per person only $2, per 100 lbs 72 c. From Hundington to Pittsburgh, ½ the entire way we had to pay $2 land freight per 100 lbs. In future the freight from Philadelphia to here will be very cheap and not more than $1 — 1½ per 100 lbs, as soon as the canal and railroad are completed, on which they are hard at work. The canal is being continued from Hundington to Frankstown, from there a 40-mile long railroad is being laid out to Johnstown. From that point the canal begins again over Blairsville, Salzburg to Freeport (the lands we have purchased lie 2 hours distance from here), from Freeport to Pittsburgh. — In sections the canal was not in order and on account of the dry time of the year not sufficiently filled with water, which occasionally caused delay. At the end of the summer it is also always dangerous to travel on the canal because through the long influence of the warm sun miasmas which cause fever develop out of the stagnant water of the same and out of the dammed rivers. There are areas in Pennsylvania and in all the other states, where the people every summer are regularly attacked by fever. Mr. Genss became feverishly ill on the canal and had to stay
in Reading. Manco stayed with him to care for him and both stayed there 20 days, whereupon they took the stage to Pittsburgh. Genss still suffered from attacks of fever until 14 days ago. No physician here is capable of thoroughly curing the fever. My brother Carl during the last week of our trip also became feverishly ill and so weak that I could transport him only in a hammock, which was strung up in a freight wagon. My brother, who up to now had to keep to his room constantly, is now fairly well restored, although still quite weak. As far as my health is concerned it has constantly been the best and I have always felt well and strong. The Grabens Family likewise in part for a while has been feverishly sick. During our trip from Philadelphia to this point I got a bad opinion of the famed climate of Pennsylvania. In all Philadelphia with 180,000 inhabitants I did not see one single healthy face, such as one is used to seeing in the German cities. All male and female faces are pale, not the least bit rosy, although often the features are very finely formed and interesting. That is the way the appearance of people in New York, Baltimore and all other coastal cities is said to be, and the conclusion is: it is not healthy there. — I believed when we left Philadelphia that it was different in the country, that the people in the country would have red cheeks, but I was very much in error. Nothing but pale suffering faces! — Now I believed that was so all over America and a peculiar effect of the American climate, but soon after I changed my view. In the little town Evensburg in the Allegheny Mountains, which lies high and open and is exposed to the fresh draft of air, I again found blossoming and healthy looking people. Here toward Pittsburgh the color of people in general became increasingly better and in Pittsburgh itself it is healthy and much healthier than in Philadelphia: the most undeceptive proof of healthy air and healthy water is the blossoming appearance of the people. In part the American way of life contributes to the unhealthy appearance, especially of the feminine persons, who have less exercise. The pale faces are found, as I have discovered, almost all through Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, and Missouri. Duden in his report ascribes the pale color simply to the way of life and especially

9 Grabe indentured himself and his family to Roebling for two years in return for his passage to the United States. P.R.B.

to eating a lot of meat, but I believe that the reason lies in the climate. I claim that the climate of the United States in general is much unhealthier than in Europe and especially than in Germany, individual regions there excepted. To the exceptions belong mainly the more northern and higher regions of Pennsylvania, where the rivers originate. These regions enjoy free drafts of air and healthy water. When America first is as cultivated as Germany, it will be just as healthy. From Philadelphia we were well recommended in Pittsburgh to a merchant Charles Volz\textsuperscript{11} (from Frankfurt), who has shown us many favors and is helpful to all Germans. When you come to Pittsburgh, do not fail to visit this man, who lives in Wood Street near the Monongahela. The regions we got to know on our trip did not very much correspond to our wishes. On the east side of the mountains in the front part of Pennsylvania land costs everywhere are high. In the vicinity of the canal they ask $30-$40 for an acre of good land, and often much more, far away from Philadelphia. At a distance of 10, 15, to 20 miles from Pittsburgh near the Ohio the demands for lands are rather the same. The prices decline, the farther the location is from the main markets and from the main arteries of traffic. We here gathered various information about the vicinity of Pittsburgh and about the State of Ohio. By earlier news we were very much taken for the State of Ohio. Here they advised against the State of Ohio and pictured it to us as generally \textit{unhealthy}, but everywhere they admitted that there in the unhealthy parts there was very fertile land; the other mountainous and healthier parts of Ohio have the same soil as Pennsylvania. Later we heard more about Ohio. The entire state, several few countries excepted, is unhealthy in general and land costs are almost as high as in western Pennsylvania.\textsuperscript{12} The States Indiana and Illinois in general are likewise disreputed as unhealthy. This at least is the opinion in this region. I find these claims confirmed by information of several persons who traveled through these western states. There are no printed descriptions or news here, also I would trust such least of all. \textit{Here} no one would

\textsuperscript{11} In Samuel Jones, \textit{Pittsburgh in the Year Eighteen Hundred and Twenty-six . . . Containing a Directory of the City}, 149 (Pittsburgh, 1862), Charles L. Volz is listed as a merchant living on the east side of Wood Street between Front and Second Streets. Volz was a close friend of the Harmony Society and also did much business with the society. They ordered their music and musical instruments from him. K.J.R.A.

\textsuperscript{12} Land speculation caused the price of land in Cincinnati, another large German community in the U.S. at this time, to exceed that in Pittsburgh, despite the greater accessibility of the latter city to markets near the coast. (Cf. Roebling’s letter to Bähr on January 14, 1832 in \textit{Westr. Pa. Hist. Mag.}, June 1935, p. 102.) P.R.B.
speak of Missouri because this state due to its distant location offers least advantage to the northern and eastern main markets. As far as the advantage of the different states insofar as agriculture in relation to marketing produce is concerned, you will be able to judge this after the following remarks concerning the subject: the main trade is in wheat and wheat flour and then in cattle. In Philadelphia a bushel of wheat this summer cost one and a quarter dollar, and from there to the mountains in the front part of Pennsylvania 1 dollar. There wheat is most expensive, therefore they there mainly grow fruit and less cattle. Around Pittsburgh here the price of wheat runs from 62 to 70 cents, sometimes higher; when the canal is finished, the prices here will rise. In Ohio the price in the vicinity of the river and the Ohio Canal runs from 40 to 50 cents, and in the interior, more distant from the greater markets the farmer is forced to trade his fruits to the nearest store keeper, who does not give him cash but who saddles him with all sorts of goods at high prices. Even schoolteachers there are paid only in produce. Such barter takes place in the interior of the western lands, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri, and the farmer cannot earn money there, although he has an abundance in all food. Such a farmer can live very happily and in peace, but he must fabricate his clothes himself and deny himself advantages which one can have in the vicinity of large cities. In Missouri the prices are even lower. The western states, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri for the marketing of their produce must depend mainly on New Orleans because the Mississippi is the only canal for export. In Philadelphia I heard with astonishment that a great deal of flour is brought to market via New Orleans to Baltimore, Philadelphia, New York and in general to all the eastern coastal cities. The supply of these articles to New Orleans from the western states is large, so that the sale to the West Indies and South America is not enough, and thus the surplus is brought to the northeastern coastal markets. Now consider what a distance these products have from the western states to New Orleans and from there to Philadelphia, where their prices must compete with the prices of Pennsylvania flour. What freight costs! The farmer in Missouri gets probably scarcely 25 to 30 cents for one bushel of wheat, while the farmer in front Pennsylvania gets 100 cents. One acre of land in front Pennsylvania therefore would have four times the value as in Missouri, if the labor on one acre in the first region would cost as much as the work on 4 acres in the latter. The latter, however, is not the case. The daily wage in Missouri is fairly similar to that in Pennsylvania, and in the latter the workers are
more easily obtained because of the greater annual influx of foreigners.\textsuperscript{13} In Ohio besides growing fruit there is much raising of cattle, and innumerable cattle dealers are brought to the eastern seaports to sell cattle. The cattle dealers, however, have the most advantage from this trade in cattle, i.e. those who buy up the cattle, and the farmers who raise the cattle have the least gain. This state of affairs we learned to know better in Pittsburgh, which is the gateway to the West, and it became clear to us, that the farther we moved West, the more advantages we would lose, and that it would be more advantageous in a well-situated part of Pennsylvania to pay 6 dollars for an acre of land than one dollar in the interior of Ohio. Furthermore, in the western interior all artificial products, such as tools, clothes, etc. are much more expensive than in the east in the vicinity of factories, especially around Pittsburgh. Further our advantage demands to get as close as possible to a large city, where food consumption is great, and whence one can easily obtain one's own needs; further to settle in a region which is suitable to all sorts of undertakings, and lies closer to the eastern main cities and therefore nearer to Europe. The region around Pittsburgh meets all these demands more than any other to the West of the Allegheny mountains. Twenty years ago Pittsburgh was only an insignificant place of several hundred inhabitants and now contains 25,000 inhabitants, it is the first manufacturing city in America, the main place of work between east and west and the key to the great western river region of the Mississippi. By virtue of its situation on the Ohio, which here is formed by the union of the Monongahela and the Allegheny River, Pittsburgh holds the first rank as interior place of storage and of trade. As a place for factories Pittsburgh has endless advantages, because nature here has done everything which is necessary for the existence of factories. The vicinity of Pittsburgh is rich in rich bituminous coal beds, which are inexhaustible. There is an important nail factory here which lies between the Monongahela and the mountainous wall by the river. The bituminous coal mine is directly by the factory, and the coal runs in a trough directly from the mine to under the steam boilers and under the furnaces. — Further Pennsylvania is rich in iron ores, which all go to Pittsburgh. More and more iron ores are being discovered in western Pennsylvania. — Also the richest salt mines are found here.

\textsuperscript{13} Later in this same decade, a group of German immigrants known as the German Settlement Society of Philadelphia did establish a colony at Hermann, Missouri. Conrad F. Stollmeyer, later Etxler's friend and partner, was one of the officials of this society. P.R.B.
Between here and Freeport along the Allegheny River there are a great number of salt works, where the rich brine without passing through a grading process is immediately boiled and produces a very sharp salt, and where everywhere the fuel is brought directly from the bituminous coal mines to under the boiling kettles. Beside the iron factories there are important wool and cotton factories, which are all blooming. Pittsburgh by virtue of its location is the main wool market in the United States.\(^{14}\) The city is spreading out more and more, more and more establishments are coming into being and the life and activity here are astonishing. The stages are always filled with travelers, on the Ohio a great number of steamboats move up and down the river and at present seven new steamboats are under construction in order to give further life to water travel in a short time. Here in Pittsburgh one can best observe the mobility of the Americans. The time is not distant when this place will have developed into a city of 100,000 inhabitants; the factories are just beginning to be built. The advantages of Pittsburgh and vicinity will increase, as soon as the canal is completed from here to Philadelphia, which will be done in 2 years, since only a little is still missing. Furthermore a railroad is being worked on heavily, which will combine Pittsburgh with Baltimore.\(^{15}\) Thus the means of communication of this place are increased more and more. The distance from here to Philadelphia is 300 English miles, one can cover it by stage in 2½ days, a fast carriage by which one drives day and night, and once the railroad is completed one will travel by steamwagon from here to Baltimore in 1½ days. After Pittsburgh the main city in the west is Cincinnati, but it is not a manufacturing center and lacks the natural advantages which Pittsburgh has. Cincinnati each year suffers from fever, and the mosquitoes are said to be terrible there. Land around Cincinnati stands very high in price and even higher than here. We therefore decided that if we could buy good and cheap land in the vicinity of Pittsburgh, we would settle there. Regarding the price of land we as yet could get no assurance, but we always heard speak of 5, 6, 7, 8 dollars per acre for raw (uncultivated) land. However strange these prices seemed to us, we soon prepared ourselves for $4-$5 per acre. Chance and fortune.

\(^{14}\) Indicative of the Harmony Society economic power at this time is the fact that it set the price of wool at "Economy prices" for the Pittsburgh area, i.e., the United States. K.J.R.A.

\(^{15}\) 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. K.J.R.A.
later opened our eyes. A certain Mr. Bonnhorst from here was recommended to us. He offered us a stretch of land of 500 acres with 70 acres clear and a simple blockhouse, at $8 an acre. The land lies 60 miles from here, not far from the union of the French Creek and Tobys Creek, there where the two rivers form the Allegheny River. At that time we had little knowledge of the state of affairs and believed the location was good and decided to view the lands if Mr. B. would come down to $5, however without making any previous commitment. Mr. B. left with Manco, Genss and Jancke for that point. I had to stay back because brother Carl at that time just was very weak and sick; also I myself felt strained by the just completed river journey from Hundinton [sic] and needed several days of rest. After six days these gentlemen returned from their land expedition and made report. The lands of B were good, but too far away and without connection, no important place in the vicinity. Mr. B. had probably wisely chosen the way there through the roughest and wildest areas, so that his land would appear in so much better a light. On the way back the roads with heaviest traffic were chosen, and our friends learned to know more beautiful regions. In Freeport (on the Allegheny River and on the Canal, there where the Kishiminitas flows into the Allegheny, 30 miles from here) land was offered our friends at $5-$6 per acre; 2 pieces; one of 150 acres with 20 acres clear, without house, for $800 lowest price; another of 300 acres nearby for the same price. Manco & Genss moved somewhat too quickly and for themselves bargained for the 150 acres, which they wanted to take together for $800. These lands lay 3-4 miles from Freeport, down from the Canal. They returned and recommended the other piece of 300 acres to me and Carl; they believed, that they would find no better, cheaper and better situated land and were in a hurry in order finally to settle down and make an end to travel. Nothing could be said against the advantageous location of these lands, near the Canal and

16 Charles von Bonnhorst often served as the attorney of the Harmony Society. He was a colorful man who lived on a high level and composed music which was performed at Economy in concerts there. Volz and Bonnhorst were the unofficial city greeters for German immigrants. Volz was economically more solid and often loaned money to Bonnhorst, who was so slow in repaying that Volz once was forced to attach his house. He then turned to Economy for help and Volz was asked for a confidential report on Bonnhorst. K.J.R.A.

17 Manco, Jancke, and Genss were members of the emigration society that Roebling and Etzler formed in Germany. Manco and Jancke (and probably Genss too) came over with Roebling and Etzler on the August Eduard. (Cf. Washington A. Roebling Papers, typescript pp. 866-869, in the Rutgers University Library.) P.R.B.
not far from Pittsburgh. Whether more lands could be bought in the vicinity Genss & Manco did not know, and they did not bother about this either. The latter was one of my points of concern. Jancke praised these lands also. I traveled there alone to view the lands. I arrived in Freeport and examined the lands with the owner. The piece which Genss & Manco have selected for themselves was beautiful and well-situated and appeared to be worth $800 in comparison to the demands of other land owners. The other 300 acres contained about 150 acres of good land and some beautiful meadow land, the rest was very steep, stony and good only for forest land. Buffaloe Creek, a river like the Unstrut near Mühlhausen, flowed through the land and with another brook on this land formed two powerfully deep and steep wild valleys, whereby this land was quite torn and stood less in value. The river was suitable for a mill site, for which I was looking. Nearby there were other pieces of land for sale and in all there were together about 1200 acres which could be purchased in case our German friends would follow. I myself believed I would find nothing better. Up to this point strangely no region in Pennsylvania had pleased me. Everything which we had seen up to this point was mountainous land, from Philadelphia on along the Canal to here. As yet no pretty, undulating, gently rolling acres and meadowland, as I had wished, had come into my view. Also the region around Freeport is broken and very hilly. According to the information I have gathered all counties around Pittsburgh are of this mountainous character, and in general the greatest part of Pennsylvania. Only the more northern counties of this state are said to be more even. We did not want to go into a region completely flat because this has less healthy air and less healthy water, and is less suited to raising sheep than, e.g., the flat part of Ohio and the flat lands of Indiana and Illinois. Hence I was not yet satisfied with the choice near Freeport, although I had not yet seen anything better; also I wanted to go there where a large piece of land belonging together would be available for our friends who would be coming after us. Genss & Manco took no account of this and seemed to be ready to settle down. Only their cash did not seem to reach that far in order to cover all the other expenses, and for that reason they still held back with the complete conclusion of the sale. I did not give the owner of the land a definite answer as yet and reserved several weeks for making my decision. During my presence in Freeport, Genss & Manco came there with their belongings in order to live there for the time being. It was known everywhere that we were looking for land, and now offers came from all sides. We looked at a farm of 200 acres
with 70 acres cleared, a dwelling, barn and stable, in the usual block manner, 4 miles from the Canal, 6 miles from Freeport. The land was fenced in and everything in good condition so that we could begin immediately. In part good land, the location, however, very hilly, closed in and fearful. We could have had everything for $900, a reasonable demand and from the economic point of view everything advantageous. This got Genss & Manco away from their earlier purchase. — The location did not please me at all, also no other land around was to be had. For the adjacent farm they asked $10 per acre. The above reasonable farm had to be sold because of circumstances.

— In Freeport I heard about many lands for sale in Buttlar [sic] County, which belonged to the widow Collins in Pittsburgh. I decided to look at these lands and in general to ride around for a while in this region, to get better judgment and to become more familiar with land trade before I completed a purchase. I returned to Pittsburgh and made report to my brother Carl and Jancke. I arranged to be introduced to Mrs. Collins through Mr. Volz; I found out from her that in Allegheny and Butler County she had over 20,000 acres of land for sale. This lady is rich and has inherited these lands from her father, who formerly bought them for speculation, without ever having seen them. In Freeport I heard that Mrs. Collins had good lands and sold them cheap and that she was not so Jewish in her trading; as the American land speculators are accustomed to do. From Mrs. Collins I received a letter of recommendation to her agent in Butler, to a certain Court President Breden; to her son-in-law the attorney Evans and to the County Surveyor Dugle; further to a German innkeeper Mechling.18 Immediately I again rode to Freeport, to hold Genss & Manco back from buying, I did not meet them, however, and heard that they had ridden to Kittanning, the capital of Armstrong County. I got under way from Freeport to Butler. Freeport lies along the Canal and along the Allegheny River and is the point where 4 counties meet; namely Allegheny County, Butler County, Armstrong County, and Westmoreland County. The road out from Freeport to Butler rises a distance of three miles, then it is fairly level up to Butler, which is 20 miles (a good 7 hours) from Freeport. When I was 5 miles from Freeport I suddenly found myself in a region which has an entirely different character from all those regions which I had seen to that

18 Mechling was a famous innkeeper at this time and ran an excellent establishment in the best and most honorable tradition still found in the “Pennsylvania Dutch Country” today. For an authentic and delightful account of his inn see pages 4-6 of C. Sidons: Die Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika, etc. II Stuttgart, 1827. K.J.R.A.
point. The broken and torn terrain ceased and I rode through a gently rolling continuous level area which fairly commands the surrounding territory. The high forest ends and the ground is covered more with bushes and low wood; I often saw signs of forest fires and many bare spots, where no bushes but only grass stands, and which are easily cleared. I could see for many miles and everywhere had a free view toward beautiful sections of forest and the mountain in the distance. The soil along the road was good, and a farm through which I rode showed me land of such quality as I had not yet seen. The region conformed entirely to my wishes and I found out on the way that widow Collins owned a lot of land around here and had formerly owned everything. This pretty rolling level extends far into all directions. I hurried to Butler and made the acquaintance of those to whom I had been recommended and delivered my letters. I had the map of survey placed before me and saw that the widow Collins owned a connected tract of land of 6000 acres in this region, which I had just passed through. I now used 3 days to look over these lands with the gentleman Evans and the surveyor Dugle, which lie to the west of the road and between Freeport and Butler, in Butler County and for the most part in Buffaloe Township. I examined everything exactly. The soil in part is the best which is to be found in Pennsylvania, but naturally varies on a stretch as extended as this. There is no bad soil, and few stony stretches, which in Pennsylvania, there wherever there are slopes, are very frequent. Everywhere in Pennsylvania where there are greater or smaller rivers which form deep valleys, the soil is stony; only on plateaus does one find grassy soil without stones. The best and richest soil in Pennsylvania lies in the river valleys, directly along the rivers. This land they here call bottom land (Grundland, valley land) and is on flooded soil, which is often very rich, so that in the first years it cannot bear any wheat because too much goes into the stalk but on the other hand brings the richest corn harvest. These valley fields even along the great rivers, however, are very narrow, not very extensive, and are high in price. As far as the rest of the soil in Pennsylvania is concerned, and also in the higher parts of the state of Ohio, it is as different as in Germany. I find myself compelled to tell you that I found myself deceived in this when I came to America. I brought along a too high conception of the good American soil, and believed that everywhere there must be deep humus. The soil of Pennsylvania, the higher parts of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Missouri and in general of all America, in general is just as varied as in Europe, and no better. — What one calls good soil in Germany one here also calls
good soil, only with the difference that the soil here is new and not yet sucked out as in Germany. One finds few lands here which are not covered with a layer of pure humus; the humus which has been formed from decayed vegetable matter, but it is not as strong and deep as one dreams in Germany, and as so many travel reports describe it in exaggerated manner. If one here finds the layer of humus a half foot deep, and beneath this a loose clay soil, there the soil is the best, and only in the river valleys is humus found now and then in richer quantity. With a half foot deep pure humus earth, by the way, one can be satisfied, since the plow does not work beneath that. The fertility of a land, by the way, does not depend on rich soil alone, but even more so on the climate, and in this America stands on top, perhaps in all parts of the world. The climate here is very different from ours in Germany; the warmth of summer is great and often continuously as great as in the West Indies. It forces growth. The growth of plants is astonishing, to which the circumstance is added that nature here distributes more moisture than in Germany, although there are not as many dreary days here as there. Pennsylvania and Spain lie fairly close to the same latitude, and a number of plants and forest trees thrive here which do not grow in Germany, e.g. the Platana, the tulip tree, southern oaks, Hickory, Life Oak, Cornus Florida, etc., etc. The forest here consist mainly of many kinds of oak, tulip trees, Hickory, Platana, Chestnut, a great number of nut-bearing trees, maple, sassafras etc. The fast growth of plants and trees is astonishing; on the other hand the forest trees do not grow as old as in Germany; they die off sooner and the forests renew themselves again and again. The trees do not grow as deep roots here as in Germany; because of storms thousands fall and everything crashes in the forests. The forests here often offer a true picture of destruction: You see a mass of half decayed fallen tree trunks lying wildly about, still standing

19 Two popular travel reports of conditions in the United States that were popular in Germany at the time were Duke Bernhard, Reise Sr. Hoheit des Herzogs Bernhard zu Sachsen — Weimar — Eisenach durch Nord Amerika in den Jahren 1825 und 1826 (Weimar, 1828) and Gottfried Duden, Bericht über eine Reise nach den westlichen Staaten Nordamerika's und einen mehrjährigen Aufenthalt am Missouri (in den Jahren 1824, 25, 26, und 1827) (Elberfeld, 1829.) For a translation and commentary on the latter consult William G. Bek, "Gottfried Duden's 'Report,' 1824-1827," Missouri Historical Review, XII-XIII (October 1917-April 1919). P.R.B.

20 In the next decade Etzler also emphasized the superiority of warm climate when he established his own emigration society in England: the Tropical Emigration Society. Founded in late 1844, the society had about two thousand members, who purchased shares in Etzler's projected paradise in Venezuela. P.R.B.
but leafless trees, beside them the younger mightily growing trees, and in summer everywhere a mass of parasites and clinging plants, wild grape vines which overgrow the trees in such a way that the latter often cannot be seen. In autumn the forests form more beautiful shades than in Germany, because of the many scarlets with red foliage and the Hickory with the foliage colored a high yellow. The total view of forests from the distance and of the fields in summer and in general the massive view of the land is little different from that of the wild regions of Germany; and it takes on a different character first in the deep south, where the tropic plant life begins, which I do not like to miss here. It is further asserted here by old, experienced German farmers, who have lived here a long time and have had much experience, that because of the very fact that nature here drives on with such force, the fruits such as wheat, corn etc. becomes less concentrated than in Germany, and that therefore 1 bushel of German wheat has more inner value than a bushel of American. This assertion seems to be in accord with the judgment of several natural scientists. Here one does not have as good beef as in Germany, although cattle here thrives quickly on the fat meadow. Corn is entirely adapted to the climate here and thrives wonderfully. 1 acre produces from 50 to 100 bushel, often more; 60 bushel is here figured for a regular good harvest; wheat 20-30 bushel, sometimes more (3 bushel are fairly exactly 2 Berlin bushel (Scheffel) and 2 acres are somewhat larger than 3 Magdeburg "Morgen"). In the level and low lying marshy regions of the more western parts, especially in Indiana, Illinois and Ohio, the soil is said to be much more productive than here in Pennsylvania; incidentally, all those regions in summer are very much infected with fever and have unhealthy water; the produce there has less value because the markets are too far away, of what use now the good soil? A great number of people who moved from Pennsylvania to Ohio have returned because they could not get rid of the fever there.21 The good soil in Pennsylvania is of the kind that it at the start can be planted over six years without needing fertilizer; after that it must be fertilized or allowed to lie fallow for a while. Some farmers never fertilize, but harvest their field and let the used lands for a while lie in pasture. If one has considerable sheep, their fertilizer suffices. In the near future I will write you more about this. I found the above explanations

21 Unlike Etzler later on, Roebling never overlooked the danger of diseases, especially fever attendant to warm climates. In fact he and his son, Washington Roebling, had almost an obsession with the dangers that threatened their health. P.R.B.
necessary in order to leave you in no error regarding the lands, and so that you will not be deceived when you come here. Now back to our lands.

The region where the aforementioned lands of Mrs. Collins lie, to a degree dominates the area and forms a kind of plateau, where a number of springs originate, which flow in all directions. Thus the branches of 3 creeks (little rivers) start here, namely Thorn Creek, Buel Creek, and Buffaloe Creek, and with other small branches form gently sloping valleys, which can be transformed into the most beautiful meadow lands. These lands offer everything for farming: a good, partly best soil, extended meadow lands, such as I have seen nowhere else, with the most beautiful water supply; a great number of pure springs and several rich mineral springs. In the eyes of the Americans these lands have one mistake, which in my eyes is an advantage, namely they are sparsely covered with high forests and more with young wood, beechwood and in part only with high grass (Savanna). The reason is this: the forests here were formerly burned down each year by disorderly settlers who only made a business of their hunting. They did this to drive the deer together, and thus the young wood could never really grow and develop into high forest. Even 10 years ago there was a shortage of wood here, but since decent farmers have settled here, new young forests have grown everywhere, which need only be protected in order to provide an abundance of forest trees in a few years. The lands of Mrs. Collins taken as a whole have more forest than is needed for fencing and building houses, and all beyond that is not necessary and would have to be burned because it would be bothersome. For fuel one there prefers bituminous coal, because it is more easily obtained than to cut up wood. Coal here provides a powerful heat. For the first years, by the way, the young forests provide enough fuel, those that have to be cleared away. As far as the working of this kind of land is concerned, I have the examples of several men before my eyes who started there a few years ago. We have a neighbor Walker, who 6 years ago bought 1,000 acres of this land from Mrs. Collins. Everyone suspected him because of this and his land at that time really was completely bare of high trees. He made thickets and kept the fire away to spare the young forest. Now this man has 250 cleared acres and fenced in land, a good sheep farm, and next year wants to begin building a new larger dwelling. His spared forests are all in the best state of growth and he now has an overabundance of fencing wood. In a short time he will be one of the wealthiest farmers. The Americans are used to handling wood destructively, and they divide
their fields into many small fenced-in sections, which requires a tremendous quantity of wood and work. If an American settles in thick and high forest land, then he has a great deal of trouble to clear a large piece; he eternally remains enclosed by the forest, like a forest animal and never in his life enjoys an open view. This condition never pleased me and I have a strong well-founded objection to live in such a narrowly enclosed spot in the forest which is scarcely exposed to free draughts of air. Anyway, most of the tall trees, after they have been chopped dead are allowed to stand until they decay and are blown over by the storm, whereby it often happens that men and cattle are killed. It would take the settlers too much work to clear away the tall trees; he cuts down only those which he needs for fencing and fuel. In those lands there stand, as I have said, enough groups of high forest trees to cover all needs for fencing, houses, and fuel. In several sections there is already more than needed and everywhere young wood enough which will be ready for cutting within 10 years. It grows very rapidly here. We will, however, follow the system of the farmer Walker, who fences in only large fields and thus saves himself a lot of work. From several points of this region one has an open view to a distance of 60 miles and can see the first series of foothills (Chestnut Ridge) of the Allegheny mountains. Very distant views are extremely rare in the America, because the thick forest everywhere limits the view. When this region is cultivated and especially when the low meadow-lands have been cleared this can become a paradise. Extensive cultivated fields, gentle sloping, will then alternate with beautiful valleys with meadows, and on the higher spots the spared forests will form a beautiful interruption. Everywhere there are living springs which never go dry and near which there are suitable places for dwellings. My description is not an exaggeration; it is the best which I until now have seen in America, and if this region is cultivated by industrious people and worked by them, I would compare it to none in Germany. The region where these lands lie and which has this pleasant character, extends about 6 miles from North to South, and 4-5 miles from East to West. Outside of these limits where the brooks flowing downhill have already torn themselves down deeper and formed deep valleys, the land again becomes broken, very hilly and torn, where the plow can be drawn along the slopes only with great effort. The lands of Mrs. Collins begin 5 miles from the Canal (from Freeport) and extend 6 miles long to Butler. The main road from Freeport to the County seat Butler runs partially through these lands. From Pittsburgh the nearest lands lie a distance of 24 miles (8 to 9 hours) by the
nearest road. In order to bring produce to Pittsburgh, however, we will in future drive to Freeport and use the Canal. The prices of the produce of this region will always be those of Pittsburgh, because the distance to the Canal is only 2 hours and because in future a heavy traffic in produce will develop toward Philadelphia. In addition this region, besides its good connections and the preferences mentioned above offers those advantages which are to be found in this vicinity. There is an inexhaustible supply of coal, which can be mined directly along the banks of the creeks without further construction; also iron ore, sources of salt and mineral supply, several excellent mill-sites to run machines. Very close by there are already grinding and saw mills (100 boards there cost 50-75 cents), a small town Freeport 2 hours distant, which in future will become important because of its location, when the Canal is finished; the main city Pittsburg is only 24 miles away and I can ride there in 4 hours. Because of the beautiful pasture and the many meadows the region is especially suitable for cattle raising and sheep farming. 1 lb middle-fine wool now costs 60-70 cents in Pittsburgh; fine wool 90 cents and prime wool $1. Wool prices, however, were not always that high, yet sheep raising is very profitable. There is a heavy duty on imported wool and home consumption is constantly increasing. Factories increase each year. Here everything strides forward while in Europe everything moves backwards. The region described above, as said, corresponded in every respect to my wishes and that which I had been looking for up to the present in vain was found.

I hurried back to Freeport to inform Genss & Manco, but it was too late; they had already concluded a deal. Together they have bought a farm of 200 acres for $800, which lies between Freeport and Kittanning, 8 miles from the former locality. I saw the farm the next day. In itself the land is good, the vicinity is also pretty, however the location is lonely and closed away and in from the entire world. The connecting road to Freeport and thus to the Canal is very bad. 70 acres on this farm are cultivated and there are 30 acres bottom land there along Buffaloe Creek. There are 2 small common block houses in bad condition and a new barn on the farm. The cultivated lands are well fenced in and in order. This farm lies 6-7 miles from our lands and along Big Buffaloe or along the eastern branch of the Buffaloe Creek. On our land the springs of the small Buffaloe or the western arm of Buffaloe Creek originate. The combined arms at Freeport flow into the Allegheny River. Manco & Genss' farm therefore lies to the east of our land and 6-7 miles distant from Pittsburgh and in Armstrong County.
The buy is reasonable and the farm in itself is good, the title to the property is secure. In spite of this Genss & Manco acted too quickly. I tried to get Genss to look at the lands of Mrs. Collins with me once more. We rode from Freeport again to Butler and from there to Kittanning, in order to get to know that region also, which, however, also is very hilly and broken and contains much poor land. Genss and I thereupon spent 3 days to look over the lands of Mrs. Collins. Genss shared my view entirely and confirmed me in my decision. Meanwhile I had investigated the opinion of the neighborhood about the price of those lands and also discovered that the widow had formerly sold land at $2 (uncultivated). After what I heard in Butler I could anticipate that the same would be asked of me. I had informed Mrs. Collins and her agent that next spring many of my German friends would follow by whom I was instructed to select a considerable stretch of land. The people in Butler very much wish that German settlers will move to their county and thus increase the population and the value of the region. The people do everything possible to attract newcomers and this circumstance a foreigner can often turn to his advantage. My information made a good impression and I could foresee that I would get a cheap buy. I therefore did not wait for the offer of Mrs. Collins but made the following suggestions.

"My brother and I will take 1,600 acres now immediately at a price of 1 1/4 dollars, and to be specific these special tracts. Further we offer for 2000 acres (the tracts were specified) the same price; and on 3000 other acres (the other tracts) $1; but we reserve the right to make report to our friends in Europe and await their reply with regard to the latter 5000 acres. — The first 1600 acres are registered in our name, we pay $1000 at once, the remainder next year without interest. Further 6% of the land is added as indemnity for future roads and the like, as the government does; all claims of earlier settlers must be deleted and a clear title to the property must be given. The land is to be surveyed at the cost of widow Collins and the boundaries fixed." —

I then got the following declaration:

"The desired and designated tracts of 1600 acres more or less should be granted us at 1 1/4 dollars per acre, $1000 to be paid at once, the rest in 2 equal annual payments without interest; further 6% allowance (taken for roads). As far as the remaining 5000 acres are concerned these should remain at our disposition for one year from this date on, for our friends who are coming later. The price for the remaining 5000 acres can, however, not be fixed now because one cannot know what kind of changes will take place in the course of a year on the land
market. All other suggestions are approved."

Thereupon I had a friend in Butler, who has a great deal of influence with Mrs. Collins, and who then was staying there, tell the latter that I would not pay more then $1\frac{1}{2}$, under no condition. This friend was very effective and made representations in our behalf. Although the agents of Mrs. Collins did not want to lower the price, Mrs. Collins finally agreed and sold us the land at that price, but without saying anything about the price of the remaining 5000 acres. The sale was now agreed to by both parts, brother Carl was also in agreement. Although I knew that we were dealing with realistic people and would receive a sure title, we wanted to make completely sure. We here got acquainted with a German, a certain Mr. v. Bonnhorst, who is justice of the peace and lawyer here, has been living in the country 20 years, has himself dealt a lot with land, and who knows the business, and in addition is well acquainted with the situation of widow Collins. With this man I again rode to Butler; he checked everything at the Court and found that there were no debts attached to the property. The widow's property rights are completely clear, and so I had the land signed over to my brother's and my name and paid out $1000 on it by a draft on the local United States Branch Bank, where we shortly before had deposited $1500. We have mortgaged our land to the widow as bond for the payment of the entire sum in the course of 2 years. The deed or warrant, written out to my brother's and my name, we have in hand. Our land consists of certain limited, adjoining tracts, or tracts lying together, which according to the former survey contain 1683 acres. After taking off 6% we then, if the contents is right, would have 1593 acres at $1\frac{1}{2}$ for which we would have to pay the total sum of $2389 and \(\frac{1}{2}\). This winter, however, the land will be surveyed and the boundaries determined, and then it may be somewhat more or less. Of this land we have purchased 400 acres for you (or also for you and Campe), and the remaining 1100 acres, approximately for us, namely for us three brothers, Christel, Carl, and myself. In my next report, this year still, I will send you a special map of our and all the other lands, wherein the boundaries of your and our sections are given. In our land, on the western boundary, a strong brook (Thorn Creek) runs through, which has enough water and fall to drive machines. In the lands there lie 3

22 Von Bonnhorst was also responsible for securing the services of Etzler in 1832 to act as translator for Rapp's Harmony Society in the court case between the Harmony Society and the seceders from the Society under Count Leon. P.R.B.
already cleared pieces of about 30 acres content. On the one cleared piece of about 20 acres, which are fenced in, a hermit has been living up to the present, and a small house and a new barn stand there. This settler has no claim on the land and will leave it next week, for which widow Collins will compensate him. For our part we pay this man $60 for which he leaves us as our property the house, the barn, and the fence. We will live in this house over the winter, but it does not lie well situated for working the entire land and is too far from the middle. We had to have the title to the land written in our name alone; it would have caused complications to have a special title written on your name for your piece, because the buyers themselves must hereby give their signatures. When you follow next year, we will again write out your property rights to you. To what extent land may be written out to a stranger's name, about that I will get more information and send you the details in my next letter. If my father should not be in agreement with this that we bought so much land for ourselves, then we can always sell a part with profit to following settlers. You can easily imagine that I selected the best for you and for us, that which affords the greatest advantages. Incidentally, we can allow $500 to stand a long time on this land and pay interest. I should not like to sell even 1 acre because later there will be nothing available here, except at high prices. I figure that in future each of us 3 brothers will obtain as much land as will suffice for a decent farm and for the support of a family, and a little more. In the future we will set several poor families on the boundary of our land, who can work the land in return for \( \frac{1}{3} \) of the produce, as the larger land owners do here. Each year many German families come here whose means are small and who gladly enter upon such an arrangement. The main part of the purchased land almost forms a square and it can be worked together profitably. In the middle lies a level area of about 300 acres of farmland at the boundary of which most springs are situated and which run in all directions and form meadow valleys. This middle level is best suited for building a house and the center of barns. From that point one can overlook almost everything. We intend to begin with cultivation there and in future to build a house there. This place everywhere affords an open view into the distance. The entire mass of land of 1683 acres contains about 300 acres of forest, which must be preserved;

23 Bähr, the recipient of this letter, emigrated to the United States the following year, 1832, with a small group of emigrants. (Cf. David Steinman, The Builders of the Bridge: the Story of John Roebling and His Son, New York, 1945, pp. 37-38.) P.R.B.
further 500 acres meadow bottom land, almost all the rest can be taken under the plow. A good third of the land contains soil of the first quality, the rest is mixed soil, as cannot be different over such a stretch. Nowhere in Pennsylvania have I found such beautiful land in one piece with such beautiful meadow bottom lands as there. There can be no doubt that in 10 years, after some cultivation, the value of the land will rise to $10 per acre. Between our lands and Pittsburgh a Swiss settled 2 years ago who bought 108 acres raw forest land, very broken and hilly with medium soil and paid $7 per acre for it. Circumstances and fortune helped me in this deal. I would not have obtained these lands so reasonably if the people in Butler had not been eager to attract newcomers and especially German farmers to their county and thus to raise the value of their own lands. I imagine that widow Collins next year will ask a higher price for the rest of her lands. But we will take care of this, and I hope that all the other lands will be obtainable at $1½, if all is taken together and if the matter is handled properly. Besides these lands there are many others in Butler County and in the next County.

(To be continued)